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## RESEARCH ARTICLE

### ENHANCING EMPLOYEES PERFORMANCE THROUGH EFFECTIVE APPLICATION OF HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELFARE FACILITIES, KNUST, KUMASI

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#### ABSTRACT

The general objective of the study was to determine how employee's performance could be enhanced through effective application of Health, Safety and Welfare Facilities at the School of Medical Sciences KNUST, Kumasi. The study used the descriptive survey design. The population for the study were all the staffs in the medical school. The total population amounted to 188. One hundred and thirty (130) staffs out of the total population were sampled for the study. This constituted about 69 per cent of the entire population. This was made possible by the use of Krejcie and Morgan (1970) formula for sample size determination from a given population. The stratified random sampling, systematic sampling and the simple random sampling techniques were used to select study participants. Questionnaire administration was the data collection method employed for the study. The specific instrument used was questionnaire. The questionnaire was made of both closed-ended and open-ended questions. Out of the total of one hundred and thirty questionnaires distributed, 125 were retrieved representing 96 per cent response rate. The data obtained was analysed using graphs and cross-tabulation. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was the software used for the analysis. The study found that most of the staffs were aware of a facility responsible for First Aid as required by Health and Safety and Welfare conditions / regulations but unfortunately, the majority of the staff appeared ignorant about the frequency of health checks which is very necessary for employees. Since regular health checks has the potential of diagnosing or identifying health conditions or disease states of the staff, the study recommended that education on health checks be intensified at the School.

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## INTRODUCTION

Under the African Charter on human and people's rights, 1991 dealing with Economics, Social and Cultural Rights article 15 states that everyone has the right to work under satisfactory conditions. This therefore means that employers must ensure healthy and safe working conditions and there must also be equal pay for equal work. Similarly the Ghana Labour Act 2003 (Act 651) Part XV on occupational health, safety and environment article 118 subsection 1 states that it is the duty of an employer to ensure that every worker employed by an organisation works under satisfactory, safe and healthy conditions. There are several shortcomings of the legal provisions on Occupational Health and Safety [OHS] (Annan, 2010).

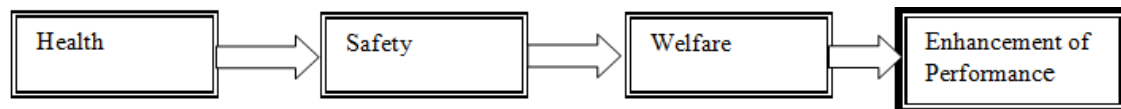
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The Factories' Act and Mining Regulations which have for years provided guidance for implementation of OHS are very limited in coverage. While the Factories Act caters for factories, offices, shops, port and construction, the mining regulations cater only for the mining sector. The vast majority of industries, including agriculture and most of the informal sector are therefore not specifically covered.

There is a lack of specification of standards which should form the yardstick against which services are to be evaluated. Compensations as defined by the Workmen's Compensation Law bear no relation to the level of risk to which workers are exposed. The law does not define funding mechanisms for Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) that should be applied both by government and the private sector. OHS programmes are therefore grossly underfunded, a reflection of the low priority accorded to it by the government and institutions (Annan, 2010).

The National Health Insurance Schemes though catering for curative care, explicitly exclude OHS provisions like rehabilitation and provision of prosthesis. Secondly, the provisions are very limited in scope providing very inadequately for prevention. Observations suggest that, there are lowly attitudes toward occupational health and safety preparation, as employers are not really concerned about the protection of employees' health and safety (Ministry of Health Report, 2007). Notwithstanding the several steps been taken to protect employees' health and safety at both the national and industrial levels, there is still little attention to occupational health and safety as this is shown by several occupational health and safety hazards, risk and diseases in industries (Puplampu and Quartey, 2012). It is in light of this that the study sought to evaluate the application of occupational health, safety and welfare facilities as a means of enhancing employee's performance at the School of Medical Sciences, KNUST. Kumasi.

The general objective of the study was to determine how employee's performance can be enhanced through effective application of Health, Safety and Welfare Facilities at the School of Medical Sciences, KNUST. The specific objectives were to identify the factors contributing to the enhancement of employee performance, determine the effect of safety, health and welfare facilities on employee's performance, determine the frequency of health checks by staff at the medical school and assess the influence of ventilation, illumination, furniture and lavatory facilities on employee's performance. The study contributes to the existing body of knowledge in occupational health and safety and also helps minimise dangers and health related hazards thereby contributing to enhancement of employee's performance at the workplace.



Source: authors construct 2015

**Figure 1. Conceptual framework for enhancing employee performance through health, safety and welfare**

### Empirical evidence

Occupational health and safety remain neglected in many industries, firms and institutions because of lack of commitment on the part of some employers to institute policies to protect safety and health of employees (Nuwayhid, 2004). Puplampu and Quartey (2012) in their study recognized the existence of occupational health and safety hazards, risks and diseases in Ghanaian industries. Several empirical studies also identified the prevalence of these occupational health and safety hazards, risks and diseases (Ghana News Agency, 2010; Ackerson and Awuah, 2010).

Further, Puplampu and Quartey (2012) identified OHS challenges such as the absence of comprehensive national OHS policy, inadequate OHS infrastructures and OHS measure. Ghana Health Service (2007) indicated that ignorance and illiteracy and inadequate support from employers, employees, and the government are some of the major issues inhibiting the effective implementation of occupational health and safety measures in institutions.

Inadequate supports from these important socioeconomic partners raise an important question of when occupational health and safety services would exit in Ghana.

### Conceptual framework

Enhancing employee performance through effective application of Health, Safety and Welfare in an organization improves productivity and in business circles could lead to profitability as well as improving employer-employee relationships (Nuwayhid, 2004). Safety, health and welfare facilities being conditions of service, if effectively utilized to the advantage of the workers or employees could lead to improved industrial relations.

It is thus being conceptualized that if the Safety standards of the working environment are strengthened, the Health aspects given due recognition and the Welfare conditions of the employees and the work environment improved, then the possibility of employees attaching due diligence, carefulness and dedication to their work will be great. This would translate into quality and quantity in productivity thus enhancing performance. The effective application of Health, Safety and Welfare Facilities as described will contribute to job satisfaction thus creating a sense of belongingness and ownership of the job. Figure 1 illustrates of the conceptual framework for the study.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study used the descriptive survey design. The population for the study included all the staff of the medical school. The total population amounted to 188. One hundred and thirty (130) staffs out of the total population of 188 were sampled for

the study. This constituted about 69 per cent. The compositions of the sample were 58 senior members, 24 senior staff and 48 junior staff. This was made possible by the use of Krejcie and Morgan (1970) formula for sample size determination from a given population. The stratified random sampling, systematic sampling and simple random sampling techniques were used to select study participants. Questionnaire administration was the data collection method employed for the study. The specific instrument used was questionnaire. The questionnaire was made of both closed-ended and open-ended questions. The data obtained was analysed using (SPSS) Statistical Package for Social Sciences. Data generated were presented in the form of graphs and cross-tabulations.

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### Factors contributing to enhancement of employee performance

In response to the factors contributing to the enhancement of the performance of employees, 87 (69.6%) stated working conditions as being the main contributory factor whereas 31

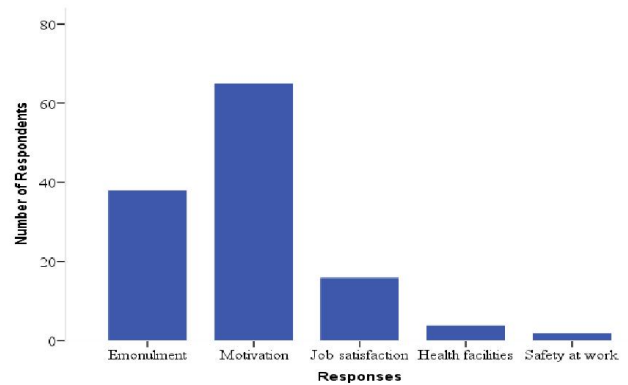
(28.4%) attributed it to the environment, with 17 (13.6%) to the challenges of the job and job satisfaction. Therefore the working condition and the environment appeared to contribute significantly to enhancing employee’s performance. The medical profession no doubt appears to be a noble and prestigious profession and hence the school that trains such doctors may easily boast of better working conditions and a nice environment. In response to factors relating to welfare facilities that enhance employees performance, participants indicated housing, transportation, education subsidies, soft loans and canteen facilities as 107 (85.6%) of the respondents indicated ‘YES’ whereas 18 (14.4%) indicated ‘NO’. The YES responses appeared significant. Usually housing, transportation, educational subsidies and subsidized canteen facilities have the potential of off-loading the worries/problems of workers, hence when these are catered for, this could result in the enhancement in the job performance of employees.

A cross-tabulation of the employment status that is senior members, senior staff and junior staff against enhancement of employees performance by improving welfare facilities revealed that the ‘YES’ respondents were made up of 62 (49.6%) senior members, 34 (27.2%) senior staff and 29 (23.2%) junior staff. The respondents indicating ‘NO’ were made up of 5 (62.5%) senior staff and 3 (37.5%) junior staff. Thus from the cross-tabulation no senior member indicated ‘NO’. However it could be said that certainly the numbers across the employment status indicating ‘YES’ were more than those indicating ‘NO’. Improvement in welfare facilities will result in job enhancement and in job performance. On the rating of the welfare facilities on enhancement on performance, 14 (11.2%) rated it as excellent, 97 (77.6%) as very good, 6 (4.8%) as good, 6 (4.8%) as satisfactory and 2 (1.6%) as fair. Despite the high standard of the welfare facilities 115 (92.0%) of the respondents indicated that there was need for further improvement of the welfare facilities, 5 (4.0%) indicated ‘No’ and 5 (4.0%) not sure. This was however not surprising since there is always the need for improvement.

**Scale of preference of factors that enhance employee’s performance most**

The results of the scale of preference as to the factors considered most to the enhancement of performance showed that 38 (30.0%) of the respondents indicated emolument, 65 (52.0%) for motivation, 16(12.8%) for job satisfaction, 4 (3.2%) for health facilities and 2 (1.6%) for safety. Motivation ranked the highest followed by emolument and then job satisfaction. Motivation, emolument and job satisfaction are important in work performance. When workers are properly motivated they tend to give their best. Emolument and job satisfaction also appeared to be considered for the enhancement of performance. However when a cross-tabulation of the factors considered most to the enhancement of job performance was done with the marital status, it was realized that with the singles 5 (15.63%) of the respondents were in favour of emolument whereas 20 (62.50%) were for motivation and 5 (15.63%) for job satisfaction and 1 (3.12%) for health facilities and safety at work. Similarly it was realized that with the married 5 (20.83%) were in favour of

emolument 15 (62.50%) for motivation, 3 (12.50%) for job satisfaction and 1 (4.17%) for health. On the other hand in the case of the divorced, the results as indicated showed that 10 (50%) of the respondents were for emolument, 8 (40%) for motivation and 2 (10%) for job satisfaction. A similar trend was noticed for the widow where 9 (69.23%) were for emolument, 3 (23.08%) for motivation and 1 (7.69%) for job satisfaction. It thus appeared that to the singles and the married, motivation was considered as the important factor that contribute to the enhancement of employees performance whereas to the divorced and widows it was emolument. It is possible that the financial needs of the divorced and widows may be a major contributing factor in their decision or choices.

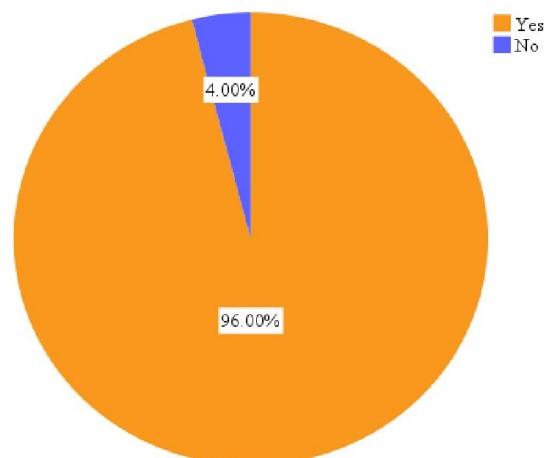


Source: field work, May, 2015

**Figure 2. scale of preference of factors that enhance employee’s performance most**

**Effect of Health, Safety and Welfare facilities on employee performance**

From the response of whether safety, health and welfare facilities have any effect on employee performance, the result in *Figure 3* indicated 120 (96%) of the respondents opting for ‘YES’ and 5 (4%) for ‘NO’. It was therefore indicative that safety, health and welfare facilities have effect on employee performance. This is in agreement with the Department of labour New Zealand (2009) findings of the positive links between health, safety and productivity.



Source: field work, May, 2015

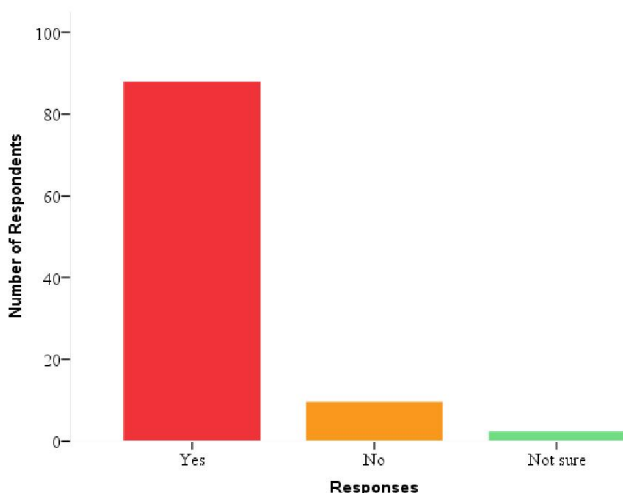
**Figure 3. Effects of Health, Safety and Welfare facilities on employee performance**

**Cross-tabulation of Yes Responses**

A cross-tabulation of the “YES” response against the sex of the respondents indicated that 97 (77.6%) were males and 28 (22.4%) were females. From the results it could be stated that health, safety and welfare conditions could lead to enhancement in employee performance and it appears that the male responses were more emphatic. Similarly, it is realized that the responses indicated that improvement in safety, health and welfare facilities would bring about a corresponding increase in the job performance of employees as 121 (96.8%) of the respondents were in the affirmative whereas only 4 (3.2%) were in the negative. This is a further confirmation of the response to whether health, safety and welfare facilities lead to enhancement in employee performance. A cross-tabulation of whether safety, health and welfare facilities have effect on employee performance against the employment status of the respondents that is senior members, senior staff and junior staff in ‘YES’, ‘NO’ and ‘NOT SURE’ responses. It was revealed that 92 (73.6%) of the respondents for the ‘YES’ were of the senior member grade, 18 (14.4%) of the senior staff grade and 16 (12.8%) of the junior staff grade. However, with the respondents indicating ‘NO’ and ‘NOT SURE’ all were of the senior and junior staffs respectively. Thus it may be said that from the result senior members of the Medical School were very emphatic that safety, health and welfare facilities have an effect on their performance. This viewpoint is also supported by both the bulk of the senior and junior staff respondents even though a few of them were for ‘NO’ and ‘NOT SURE’. This number may appear not be significant.

**Impact of Health facilities on job performance**

With regard to the impact of health facilities on the job, most of the study participants responded in the affirmative. It was realized that 110 (88%) of the respondents indicated ‘YES’ with 12 (9.6%) indicating ‘NO’ and 3 (2.4%) ‘NOT SURE’. The presence of Health facility has an impact on the job for workers. This makes them confident that in the event of falling sick or injury, they could receive attention. This may lead workers to put in their best and improve performance.



Source: field work, May 2015

**Figure 4. Impact of health facilities on job**

**Scale of importance on the rating of Health in performance of job, ABCDE A being the best and E the worst**

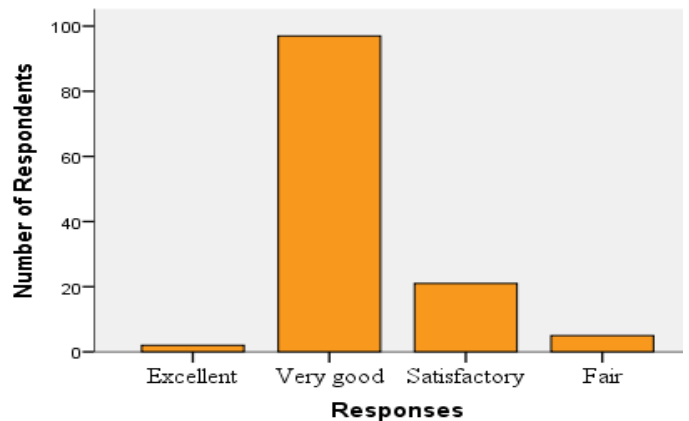
On the scale of ABCDE with ‘A’ being Best or Excellent and ‘E’ being worst or poor, 89 (71.2%) of respondents rated health as ‘B’ or very good in the performance of their job with 20 (16%) rating it as excellent or ‘A’ and 16 (12.8%) as ‘C’ or good. From these results it is considered that health is rated high in the performance of the job of employees.

**The importance of welfare in the execution of job**

To the response to as whether or not welfare was considered a major factor in the execution of job, 111 (88.8%) of the respondents indicated that it was a factor to be considered whereas 14 (11.2%) considered it not being major. The response on how welfare was rated in the performance of work on a scale of importance with ‘A’ being the best/excellent and ‘E’ being poor or worst. The result indicated that 8 (6.4%) of the respondents rated it as best or excellent, 81 (64.8%) as ‘B’ or very good and 36 (28.8%) as ‘C’ or good. As the result indicated, welfare was of relevance in the performance of work. It is thus realized that if the welfare of the workers or employees is taken care of, it leads to the improvement in the quality and quantity of work.

**Rating of Health facilities**

The health facilities at the workplace was rated very good by 97 (77.6%) of the respondents as deduced from figure 8 whereas 21 (16.8%) rated it good, 4 (3.2%) considered it excellent and 2 (1.6%) thought it was fair. Certainly, majority of the respondent considered it very good, because a health facility organized and run by the medical school would by all means be of high quality and hence they rated very good.



Source: field work, May 2015

**Figure 5. Rating of Health facilities**

In response to the need for improvement in the health facilities 59 (47.2%) thought there was the need for improvement whereas 55 (44%) felt there was no need for improvement with 11 (8.8%) not being sure. It may therefore appear that the need for improvement even though was ‘yes’ but may be said not to be very significant. However, it was indicated that areas which could be improved were mainly education and safety precautions.



These are vital in organizations since health education can create awareness of disease state and prevention, and make employees knowledgeable of their health status leading to always seeking early treatment. Similarly safety precautions when known and adhered to, minimizes health hazards and injuries in the working environment.

### Rating of performance level

The responses to the rating of member's performance level showed 92 (73.6%) for very good with 13 (10.4%) for excellent with 20 (16%) for satisfactory. Therefore the bulk of the response indicates that all staff responses showed very good performance level. Judging from the 43<sup>rd</sup> Congregation Basic Statistics issued by the Planning Unit (June 2009) KNUST clearly supports the performance level rating by the respondents of the Medical School. At the Human Biology level, 133 students passed out of which 67 of them were females and 66 males whereas at MB CHB Medicine and Surgery 84 graduated as medical doctors out of which 30 of them were females and 54 males (Basic statistics planning Unit June 2009). The results as indicated showed very good work put in by the staff of the Medical School resulting in this high turnout of medical doctors. Thus the very good performance level rated by the respondents to the questionnaire was justifiable.

**Table 1. Rating of performance level**

Reponses	Frequency	Percentage
Excellent	13	10.4
Very good	92	73.6
Satisfactory	20	16.0
Total	125	100

Source: field work, May, 2015

### Frequency of health checks

From figure 9 with regard to how often the Medical School provided for health checks 90 (72%) did not know whilst 16 (12.8%) indicated once, 15 (12%) indicated twice and 4 (3.2%) said the checks were done more than twice. The explanation to this could be that since there are many medical doctors and specialists in the Medical School, many of the workers may be taking advantage of consulting them for their health needs. This could easily make them unaware of the health checks thus 65 (72%) not being aware. There is therefore the need for the Medical School to create the awareness of this facility and make it compulsory for staff. Health checks on the health and physical conditions of employees in an organization will result in tangible gains in terms of time saved as a result of quick detection and treatment, and a thorough diagnosis of illness at an early age, proving beneficial to both the organization and the employees.

### Influence of ventilation, illumination, furniture and the cleaning of the lavatory

As regard ventilation at the workplace 114 (91%) of the respondents indicated that the ventilation was enough with 8 (6.4%) indicating that, it was not enough and 3 (2.4%) not being sure.

With reference to illumination of the place of work 88 (70%) of the respondents indicated that there was sufficient illumination at the place of work whereas 26 (20.8%) indicated NO and 9 (7.2%) of the respondents not being sure.

**Table 2. Frequency of Health checks**

Reponses	Frequency	Percentage
Once	16	12.8
Twice	15	12.0
More than twice	4	3.2
Don't know	90	72.0
Total	125	100

Source: field work, May, 2015

The response on whether the furniture at the workplace was conducive and not leading to strains in the back or causing any other discomfort, 116 (92.8%) of the respondents answered YES with 7 (5.6%) indicating NO and 2 (1.6%) not being sure. Interestingly when it came to how often the lavatory facilities were cleaned in a week, 71 (56.8%) of the respondents confirmed that this was done daily, however 54 (43.2%) appeared not to know how often it was cleaned a week.

Under the Factories Offices and Shops Act 1970 (Act 328), the summary of the main provisions for the Factories, Offices and Shops Act, 1970 includes ventilation, lighting and sanitary accommodation. It is therefore expected that such workplaces need to be adequately ventilated and illuminated and the sanitary areas or places of convenience that is the toilets must be maintained and kept clean. The responses for ventilation, illumination and for the cleaning of the toilet facilities were therefore in agreement with the requirements of the Labour law and on the Factories, Shops and Offices Act 1970. All these have implications on health if not properly adhered to. Illumination affects vision or sight. Poor ventilation can lead to some chest problems and surely poor sanitary conditions can lead to many types of infections. The use of uncomfortable furniture leading to strains of the back and other forms of discomfort could result in backbone or spinal problems over a long period thus causing some form of health hazards. It was therefore appropriate that there was overwhelming indication that the furniture in the work place was conducive and did not cause any strains or discomfort. This situation should help enhance the performance of their work.

### Summary

The study sought to investigate the use of health, safety and welfare facilities for the enhancement of employee's job performance. The study employed the survey design. Questionnaires were used to collect information from study participants. It was realized that even though motivation and emolument played a role in employee job enhancement yet the use of health, safety and welfare facilities were found to enhance employee job performance.

### Key Findings

From the research findings, it was realised that the School of Medical Sciences exhibited very good performance.

The study found that majority of the respondents was emphatic that health, safety and welfare facilities could lead to enhancement of employee performance. It was generally accepted that the working conditions of the School of Medical Sciences was contributing to the performance level. However, since it could be said that working conditions also take into account the health, safety and welfare conditions, therefore Health, Safety and Welfare conditions of the institution was instrumental in the staff working so hard to achieve the performance. The study revealed that the majority of the respondents were in agreement that improvement in Safety, Health and Welfare facilities could bring about a corresponding increase in job performance.

The study found that the majority of the respondents were of the view that if Welfare facilities such as housing, transportation and educations subsidies were provided coupled with the improvement in canteen subsidies, soft loans and other Welfare facilities such as assistance in times of bereavement, could bring about enhancement of job performance. It was found out from the studies that the majority of the respondents rated the Welfare facilities as very good. Though, it was very good, most study participants felt there was the need for further improvement. The study also found that most of the staffs were aware of a facility responsible for First Aid as required by Health and Safety and Welfare conditions / regulations. The study found that the majority of the respondents were of the view that Health, Safety and Welfare facilities had an effect on employee job performance. Hence improvement of these factors would reflect in enhancement of performance. The study found that most of the staffs were aware of a facility responsible for First Aid as required by Health and Safety and Welfare conditions / regulations but rather unfortunately the majority of the staff appeared ignorant about the frequency of Health checks which is very necessary for employees. The study also revealed that there are adequate ventilation, illumination, furniture and lavatory facilities and this has a substantial influence on the work activities of employees.

## Conclusion

Based on the findings from the study, the following conclusions have been drawn:

Working condition, motivation, emoluments, housing, transportation, education subsidies, soft loans and canteen facilities and provision of first aid were the health, safety and welfare factors that contribute to the performance of employees. The study indicated that the performance level of the School of Medical Sciences was very good and that among factors contributing to performance included working conditions, environment and challenges of the job. Additionally, health, safety and welfare facilities had an impact on their job performance of employees. Similarly, improvement in safety, health and welfare facilities could bring about a corresponding increase in enhancement of job performance. Most of the staffs were aware of the existence of facility within the College that took care of health but many were ignorant about the frequency of health checks.

The health facility was rated high even though a few thought there was the need for further improvement.

## Recommendation

Considering the findings from the study the following recommendations were made:

It is also recommended that management adequately resourced the school by way of finance, materials, logistics and policy wise to enable it improve upon the working conditions and working environment since it impact more on the job performance of employees. In addition, it is recommended that management considers it as a matter of urgency to device means by which the effective application of health, safety and welfare facilities could be factored into management employee negotiations. This could motivate the employees and help them bring their best in order to improve their performance. Since regular health checks has the potential of diagnosing or identifying health conditions or disease states of the staff, it is recommended that education on health checks be intensified at the School and staff advised to seek frequent checks on their health status.

## Suggestions for further studies

A future work could also look at how employee's performance could be measured or appraised through safety, health and welfare.

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