



Sustainable Approach to Occupational Health and Safety Care

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ABSTRACT:

Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) care is not requisitely holistic if it is not sustainable. Hence SOSH is suggested as a novel approach to the management of individuals, with a particular emphasis on the long-term aspects of occupational safety and health, as well as the principles of regeneration and renewal. SOSH improves a company's ability to recruit and keep high-quality employees: companies create attractive and unique employer brands through the incorporation of SOSH practises into their employee value proposition, mission, and vision. SOSH emphasizes the humane treatment of individuals, emphasising their health, safety, and overall well-being. SOSH facilitates the development of a company in a sustainable and sustained manner. Furthermore, it also encompasses other significant aspects, such as the safety, health, and well-being of employees, employability, justice, employee development, and employee participation, among others. Sustainability, social responsibility, dialectical systems theory, and its law of requisite holism all contribute to the creation of SOSH, which is a new knowledge-cum-values management approach to OSH. No similar concept is offered in the existing literature.

1. Introduction

Occupational accidents and work-related diseases have an important impact on individuals and their families, reaching beyond economic ramifications to implications for their health and mental well-being in both the immediate and prolonged periods. Moreover, these factors can have a significant influence on businesses, with effects on productivity (and consequently, individual job performance), potentially causing disruptions in production processes, impeding competitiveness and reputation across supply chains, and ultimately affecting the overall economy and society [1]. Thus, a requisitely holistic approach [5] to occupational health and safety (OHS) is needed for personal and organizational reasons.

Figures on occupational health and safety in the European Union are not optimal; they include [2, 51]:

--In 2022, 27% of EU employees suffer from work-related stress, anxiety, or depression. It has been discovered that unsociable work hours and work intensity are among the psychological risks that have the greatest negative effect on the health of employees.

--In 2022, a range of 15% to 30% of EU workers report being exposed to physical dangers such as noise, vibrations, extreme temperatures, and chemical and biological agents. The extent of exposure varies depending on the specific occupation and sector.

--Between the years 2006 and 2019, there was a slight increase in the number of employees in EU working night shifts, rising from 17% to 18%.

--In 2019 only about 57.5% of work-related accidents resulting in more than three days of absence were reported. Meanwhile, 42.5% of them went unreported.

--In 2019 between 40% and 75% of employees reported ergonomic risks.

--In 2020, 10.3% of EU employees reported experiencing work-related health issues during the previous year.

--At the EU level in 2020, 6.0% of employees were affected by joint, bone or muscle issues, that were either caused or made worse by their job during the year prior.

--In 2020, the number of workers who reported facing risk factors for their mental well-being while at a job stood at 44.6% at the EU level.



On the contrary, some OSH figures in the EU have also improved over the years [51, 52]:

--Between 2006 and 2019, there was a slight reduction in the average weekly working hours for full-time employees in the EU (aged 15-64) from 40.2 to 39.9 hours.

--From 2006 to 2019, there was a slight decrease in the number of workers working during atypical times. Specifically, the percentage of workers working on Saturdays decreased from 28% to 25%, while the percentage of workers working in the evenings decreased from 19% to 15%. The proportion of individuals working on Sundays remained stable at around 13.5%. Additionally, the percentage of workers working at night decreased from 7% to 5%.

--From 1998 to 2019, the rate of nonfatal work accidents in the EU decreased by around 58%, dropping from 4,089 to 1,713.40. The incidence rate decreased by 54% from 1998 to 2008 and by 9% from 2009 to 2019.

--From 1998 to 2019, the number of fatal accidents decreased by almost 57%, with the incidence rate dropping from 5.03 to 2.17.

The importance of sustainability, social responsibility, and sustainable development is growing in the workplace, including in the field of OSH [4]. In particular, OHS can contribute to sustainable development while bearing responsibility to society and a broader set of stakeholders than only its shareholders.

Occupational health and safety (OSH) and sustainable development (SD) are, though not apparent at first sight, highly interrelated. Namely, they both aim to tackle the pressing issues faced by modern society, including but not limited to promoting individual welfare, ensuring a safe and decent job, economic development, and solving the climate crisis. They both strive to create a better future—a more sustainable world [31, 32] that is necessary for humankind's survival; the current alternative is the 3rd World War, according to daily press reports in 2023.

Inside organizations, a safe and healthy working environment is vital for overall sustainability, as it influences opportunities for both economic and social development. Even though, according to the Occupational Health and Safety (OSH) via 2030'

Agenda Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), work-related accidents are still far too common [30]. More corporate social responsibility could help [3; 4].

A. Corporate social responsibility (CSR)

As a complex concept that possesses a variety of meanings, corporate social responsibility can be correlated with a variety of values [3]. In addition to financial and legal responsibilities, we can also expose the ethical and philanthropic obligations of an organization [4]. CSR can be defined as a process of continuous development – a non-technological innovation process – in which organizations deliberately and methodically incorporate economic (profit), environmental (planet), and social (people) concerns into every aspect of their business/activity [35].

To connect OSH with CSR the three basic attributes, which have been disclosed globally by the International Standards Organization in its advisory standard ISO 26000, must be mentioned. They are [4]:

--*Responsibility for one's influences on society* (i.e. on humans and their natural environment, including direct and indirect, short-term and long-term, narrower and broader influences and their consequences; N.B. by authors);

--*Interdependence* (meaning that nobody and nothing exists in isolation in natural and economic terms; hence independence and dependence are legal terms only, causing the right of irresponsibility of both the 'independent' – i.e. untouchable bosses – and the 'dependent' – i.e. unheard subordinates; N. B. by authors);

--*Holistic approach* (based on responsibility and interdependence, humans overcome their narrow-minded one-sidedness by creative cooperation of mutually different one-profession/discipline specialists; now, they behave in interdependence and with responsibility for their influences on society to prevent/mitigate mistakes and failures, all way from rather small ones to wars, including world wars and similar socio-economic crises; N.B. authors).

In ISO 26000, humankind supports these three attributes with seven principles of social responsibility. They must be stressed because they are necessary, but too poorly practiced under neoliberalism which abuses the free



market and democracy by business monopolies. These principles are [4]:

--*Accountability* (including the part of responsibility visible in official data; N.B. by authors);

--*Transparency* (including insight in, rather than hiding of, data that must be known for creative cooperation to be possible; N.B. by authors);

--*Ethical behavior* (including honesty, reliability, integrity; ethical humans, organizations, countries, are better partners; N.B. by authors);

--*Respect for the interests of stakeholders* (not owners and bosses only; N.B. by authors);

--*Respect for the rule of law* (but not a monopolistic, one-sided law aimed at and applied for abuse and misuse; N.B. by authors);

--*Respect for the international norms* (again not monopolistic, one-sided ones; N.B. by authors);

--*Respect for human rights* (rather than a monopolistic, one-sided, abusive behavior, e.g. handling people, and peoples, as slaves, feudal subjects, etc.; N.B. by authors).

CSR supports OSH and is connected to sustainability and sustainable development.

B. Sustainability and sustainable development

The concept of 'sustainable development' was introduced by the United Nations Brundtland Report, defining it as development that meets the present needs without compromising the ability of future generations to satisfy their own needs. In addition, it was said that sustainability can be characterized by the interdependence of its stakeholders, the need for collaboration, and the presence of global, long-term, multi-stakeholder characteristics [5]. The main objective of the Brundtland report was to develop a comprehensive plan for global change – a non-technological innovation – and a shared better destiny for humankind, based on a requisitely holistic behavior of humans and their organizations. The concept focused on addressing the challenge of promoting societal and economic progress while preserving the environmental well-being of the majority of the global population [7]. The sustainable development approach emphasizes many ideas related to business responsibilities, such as corporate social responsibility and corporate social performance [6]. The

concept of sustainability has been recognized and traced back to the era of Aristotle, indicating its longstanding presence in human knowledge and values [43]. It may be traced back to its etymological roots in the Latin prefix 'sustainer', which conveys the notion of sustaining or preserving, and the suffix 'able', denoting the capacity to uphold, cultivate, or fortify, such as in the case of a resource, from an internal point of view [37].

Despite being a relatively new concept in modern society, sustainable development is important for everyone. Therefore, via the United Nations humankind came up with 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), supportive of progress until the year 2030. These goals offer a new standard for development everywhere in the world and have been adopted by 193 nations. The purpose of these goals is to ensure that no one will be neglected or left behind anywhere in the world. The SDGs are [6]:

--Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere.

--Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture.

--Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.

--Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.

--Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.

--Goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.

--Goal 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.

--Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment, and decent work for all.

--Goal 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization, and foster innovation.

--Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries.

--Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable.



--Goal 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.

--Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.

--Goal 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas, and marine resources for sustainable development.

--Goal 15. Protect, restore, and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, halt and reverse land degradation, and halt biodiversity loss.

--Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all, and build effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions at all levels.

--Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development.

Occupational safety and health are most directly connected to Goal 3 and it therefore must be sustainable - SOSH. Sustainability supports the survival of humankind.

Sustainability covers three interrelated pillars, or three Ps, including profit, planet, and people. Even though each of these pillars is considered essential for sustainability outcomes to be achieved, in practice, the social dimension of sustainability is an often-overlooked aspect in comparison to the first two aspects, namely environmental (for example, energy consumption, emissions reductions, use of resources, recycling, etc.) and economic (i.e., life cycle cost assessment, cost-benefit analysis, and so forth) [33].

Within the realm of corporate sustainability literature, the social component of sustainability is frequently used collectively with the notions of corporate social responsibility (CSR) or/via business ethics. In addition to business ethics, sustainability encompasses concerns beyond moral and ethical issues within the business realm. Moreover, sustainability extends beyond the scope of CSR by addressing not only the management of company operations but also their broader effects [38]. It tackles the entire humankind's survival.

The topics most commonly categorized within the social dimension of sustainability (e.g., occupational safety and

health, work organization, equity, human rights, supply chains, labor relations, diversity, benefits and compensation, culture, and community participation) are not as thoroughly understood and therefore have received less attention. This has resulted in and from people's narrow-minded perception of sustainability, utilizing ideas such as "environmental sustainability" and "social sustainability" rather than a requisitely holistic strategy for sustainable results. This limited focus on single particular components of sustainability can have unforeseen negative consequences (e.g., hazards to workers brought about by measures aimed at reducing environmental impacts) or generate tension between aims (e.g., labor and environment) [34].

An alternative definition of sustainability has been put forth, that goes beyond the prevailing discourse, by conceptualizing it as a ratio that aims to reconcile the regeneration of corporate resources with their consumption. The idea is that sustainable business behavior can result when corporations actively participate in the regeneration and development of the resources they currently consume and might need in the future, while simultaneously preserving the systems and relationships from which these resources originate [40]. This can influence OSH by motivation and objectives and lead to SOHS.

2. Motivation and Objectives

A lot has been done in the field of OSH in the EU, but now a new approach is needed, based on sustainability, ISO 26000 social responsibility, integrity/holism, and System Theory.

We aim to develop Sustainable occupational safety and health (SOSH) based on social responsivity, sustainability, employee values systems, and other important factors.

The thesis is: Occupational health and safety (OHS) is part of organizational striving for sustainability and therefore must be also sustainable and match ISO 26000. No similar concept – SOHS – is offered in the available literature.

Researching the theoretical starting points of the mentioned researched concepts (sustainability, social responsibility, safety, and health at work) is the key to quality research. Theoretical foundations are the basis for understanding the connections between the researched



constructs and the development of non-technological innovation named SOSH. The next goal is to design SOSH with the help of requisitely holistic analysis and synthesis, deduction, and induction.

3. Research Methods

Based on a systematic literature search, we reviewed the database dLib.si, ProQuest, and Cobbis.si in 2023. We searched literature with the following keywords: occupational safety and health, well-being, sustainability, social responsibility, and Dialectical Systems Theory. We added a search of the literature on Human Resources Management and Systems Theory (especially the requisite holism by Mulej's dialectical systemic approach). Limitations included the search period: we studied only publications since 2010. We searched sources in the University of Maribor's international databases, covering 7540 hits. We selected 52 sources.

The hypothesis is researched to the greatest extent possible, with qualitative analysis (scientific description, method of analysis and compilation, comparison, deduction, and induction) in desk and field research. The research was based on the Dialectical Systems Theory and its Law of requisite holism [5; and earlier, since 1974].

Mulej's Dialectical Systems Theory [5] is a methodological response to Bertalanffy's important statement that humankind's problems result from the one-sidedness of over-specialized sciences and practices; his 'General Systems Theory' was short in providing methodology. Specialization cannot disappear, but interdependence is a reality; the value and capacity of interdisciplinary creative cooperation can/must be added; due to specialization, humans need each other for differences to come closer to holism together, to prevent oversights, mistakes, and failures, all way to world wars. The ancient word for interdependence is dialectics. Mulej's 'dialectical system' is a synergetic network of all crucial and only crucial viewpoints; this enables the requisite holism. Inside a single discipline and viewpoint, holism is fictitious; real holism requires consideration of all viewpoints, attributes, and synergies; this can neither be attained individually nor in teamwork. The requisite holism lies between the fictitious and the total holism. It requires responsibility for the selection of viewpoints and synergies.

Sustainability is, hence, a use of social responsibility, based on two crucial concepts: interdependence and [requisite] holism [4].

4. Discussions

Interdependence and requisite holism start from seeing individuals and employees as unique beings, each with their own set of attributes, capacities, needs, and desires. Their personal lives hold equal significance to the aims and needs of the company in which they are employed [9]. This is also one of the reasons for developing and implementing SOSH, which recognizes people as humans and emphasizes the importance of their safety, well-being, and health

Given the interconnectedness between occupational safety and health and human resource management, we considered that certain insights from sustainable human resource management and socially responsible human resource management might also be applied to OSH to establish SOSH. By doing so, we utilized the research findings of numerous researchers [9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 29, 35, 36, 39, 40, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49].

SOSH is a novel approach to human resource management, emphasizing renewal, long-term OSH, and regeneration. It helps businesses in both attracting and retaining a high-quality workforce: unique and attractive employer brands are established as businesses incorporate SOSH practices into their employee value proposition. It stresses the challenges posed by the negative effects of digitalization, changes in demographics, and sustainability in the field of OSH for workers. Furthermore, SOHS emphasizes the necessity to reduce these effects while simultaneously working toward the preservation and development of OHS toward SOHS. SOHS is a valuable addition to sustainable organization, development, and society. SOHS is the capability of organizations to generate value in the field of OSH, enabling organizations to regenerate value and renew wealth through the application of human resource policies and practices.

One could say that SOHS is not only a critical requirement for organizations to ensure their access to a pool of highly skilled and motivated individuals in the future but also, in more general terms, to ensure a productive and healthy workforce. This is particularly



significant in situations in which businesses and other organizations are confronted with the challenges posed by the aging workforce or a shortage of young talent as a result of demographic shifts or policy decisions that reduce the number of resources committed to education or training (a better living standard reduces the will to have children, and so does employment of men and women and long working hours, daily press reports in 2023).

The correlation between sustainability and OSH can significantly alter the function of OSH. OSH's overarching mission is to ensure that people are managed in such a manner that the organization can make progress toward its sustainability goals via the use of a collaborative, multi-stakeholder, and multi-layered strategy.

Two main lines of arguments highlight the need to adopt a sustainability perspective when thinking about OSH.

The first line of argument addresses the relationship the organization has to its economic and social contexts. It is primarily connected to the societal and ecological sustainability at the macro level. The main argument posited is that the OSH field must not ignore the ongoing social discourse surrounding sustainability and corporate sustainability. Namely, this discourse is actively addressed in practical settings, and OSH, if SOSH, has the potential to offer significant contributions to the advancement of corporate sustainable development.

The second set of arguments regards the internal components and interconnections inside the OSH system and is associated with the ongoing issues at the individual and OSH levels, specifically at the macro and micro levels. This subject matter is associated with the recognition of limited human resources, an aging workforce, and an increasing number of work-related health issues. The argument posits that promoting the sustainability of the OSH system becomes a crucial "survival strategy" for organizations that rely on a competent and skilled workforce and their social responsibility values.

A. Characteristics of SOSH

The detrimental effects of work on employees are a pressing issue that requires attention. It's crucial to mitigate these effects while safeguarding the productivity and well-being of employees. The key to

doing so lies in implementing sustainable OSH practices. Sustainable OSH (SOSH) is governed by a set of guiding principles that can enhance our understanding of how to make these practices more transparent. Additionally, the development of SOSH practice characteristics is essential for the operationalization of business strategies to attain a competitive advantage. The following principles describe what OSH should look like to be justified by the label "sustainable." They have been proposed as a solution to the lack of knowledge and values regarding how to make the concept more explicit and differentiate it from others. These principles encompass a long-term outlook, employee welfare, environmental responsibility, profitability, adaptability, staff involvement, constructive dialogue, external collaboration, adherence to standards beyond labor regulations, employee cooperation, impartiality, and equal treatment for all.

Long-term orientation:

Long-term orientation is the foundation of sustainability, which can be defined as a tendency to prioritize long-term consequences. Long-term orientation encompasses three dimensions: the first one is futurity, which expresses concern regarding the future, emphasizes the bond between the past and the future, and emphasizes the impact of present actions and choices on the future.

Unfortunately, in many important decisions, the optimal plan of action, in the long run, is not the one that is the most desirable in the short term. The significance of long-term orientation as a feature of SOHS is well acknowledged. Having a future-oriented mindset/values is a fundamental aspect of ensuring sustainable OSH. By assessing the past, present, and future, organizations can ascertain the prospective availability of human resources.

Market analysis and forecasting could improve OSH's sustainability. It is important to integrate the future into the present. At the same time, it is important to achieve a balance between the requirements of today to use SOSH efficiently and effectively, and the requirements of tomorrow to maintain, nourish, satisfy, and develop people. To include a long-term orientation, it is important to recruit individuals who are actively involved in a culture of sustainability and who share the same values regarding sustainability.



Care for employees:

Concerns regarding sustainable development center on human beings. From a sustainability viewpoint, it is the responsibility of every organization to ensure the health and productivity of its employees throughout time. In this context, from SOSH's standpoint "care of/for employees" is considered in terms of workload, health and safety, and work-life balance.

Employee care is expressed in safety and health management. Employee health encompasses a range of topics including stress, mortality rates, ergonomic work conditions, and diseases. Organizations should prioritize the health and well-being of their employees. Furthermore, SOSH demands that workplaces must be designed with the health and safety of employees in mind and requisitely holistically.

The work-life balance serves as an additional example of employee care in an era where dual-career households, extended work hours, and high work demands have become the norm. Effectively balancing work and personal life presents numerous challenges, including childcare responsibilities, disabilities, and even employee age. One of the primary goals of SOHS is for employees to achieve a harmonious work-life balance. This aligns with the overarching principle that organizations ought to prioritize the well-being of the individuals they impact and the significance of personal autonomy.

Undoubtedly, balancing professional and personal obligations is a formidable task, complicated by a multitude of factors including values, age, disabilities, and childcare responsibilities. Nevertheless, empirical evidence indicates that organizations that effectively navigate such obstacles have the potential to obtain a certification as a family-friendly company, reaping twofold advantages: it helps with employee retention and is a part of the organization's overall employer value offering. These family-friendly practices address the requirements of employees while also fulfilling the demands of the organizations. To achieve and maintain a healthy and productive workforce, their fair pay and workload should also be taken into account. Generally, organizations should offer their personnel remuneration that not only meets their basic requirements but also safeguards the financial and market sustainability of the company.

Profitability:

For a very long time, profit-seeking has been the primary/only objective of organizational activities. However, traditional economic indicators like profits or return on investments are no longer the only criteria for assessing success, as organizations are increasingly involving themselves in sustainability. A business's financial strength and its competitiveness in the environment are important factors in determining its long-term survival; however, these factors are not the only ones. Economic effectiveness is associated with the majority of business decisions. That indicates that the economic aspect of sustainability has the power to generate the financial resources needed to carry out various functions related to human resource management. Furthermore, SOSH can contribute to the organization's business performance. When businesses operate efficiently, organizations can invest in SOSH and therefore reduce healthcare expenses, absenteeism, and presentism.

Care of environment:

This is an essential element of SOHS, as OHS must also be founded on accountability for healthy working conditions. Environmentally responsible behavior in daily activities may also include the following actions: switching paper-based work to digital platforms, minimizing printing, garbage sorting and minimizing, rational use of electricity, and using eco-friendly modes of transportation. Strong emphasis is placed on environmental consciousness during the hiring and selection process, with a specific focus on attracting highly qualified personnel or a younger generation that is becoming more environmentally conscious. Environmental responsibility in employer branding functions as a competitive advantage in the pursuit of these employees. By the signaling theory, candidates conclude the future intentions of the given organization based on its environmental image.

Employee participation and social dialogue:

Important in the context of sustainable OSH are participation's type, form, and intensity. Intensity of participation pertains to the varied degrees of influence, indicating the extent to which the appropriate interests can be protected. The form of participation indicates whether employees perform either individually or



collectively. Promoting employee participation is a prerequisite in any organization. Simply having a boss is not enough. It is important for employees to actively participate in SOSH actively, ensuring that their forms of participation align with the different types of participation. This participation should be focused on solving both long-term and present problems. Additionally, it is important to recognize that employee participation in the field of SOSH may apply to decisions concerning distinct matters. These matters can be categorized as either work-related ("proximal issues") or organizational ("distant issues"). "Proximal issues" refer to the immediate circumstances that impact employees' conditions to carry out their job tasks.

Examples of such issues include the organization of job tasks and the allocation of working time. Meanwhile, the concept of "distal issues" refers to the employees' distal corporate environment, encompassing matters such as organizational strategy decisions or financial choices. Participation can be seen as a fundamental goal and tool of SOSH management since it enables the shift from perceiving employees as mere objects/tools to recognizing them as thinking subjects/humans. However, it is important to note that participation is dependent upon the presence of decision-making autonomy that comes with responsibility rather than fictitious democracy.

Employee development:

When considering the employee's development in the context of sustainability, it is important to note that the attention should not only be focused on the development of any current skills and capacities related to SOSH, but also on the development of skill sets and capacities that employees might need in the future. With employees considered both as main assets and agents of change, employee development is linked to a long-term perspective. Additionally, investment in future skills presents a challenge to the whole corporate sustainability discussion. This is because the business environment is continually evolving and requires an immediate and concerted effort for adjustment in terms of employees' and bosses skills.

Overall, the development of employee skills in SOSH has advantages for both employers and employees. Employees benefit in terms of future career opportunities and employability, while employers benefit in terms of

profitability and success, resulting in a win-win scenario. In light of SOHS, job training is an effective strategy for reducing costs inside an organization. Organizations must cultivate such employee competencies and abilities that contribute to the sustainability of occupational safety and health.

Additionally, when employees are assigned a variety of duties, they get a deeper and more, even requisitely, holistic, understanding of organizational processes, operations, and goals. This enhanced understanding may result in increased job motivation and the generation of innovative ideas. It is crucial to consider employees as investments rather than mere costs. If the available resources permit, it is of equal or greater significance for the organization to allocate investments towards the continual training and education of its employees, as opposed to only focusing on facilities and equipment.

External partnership:

The external partnership enables organizations to recognize and choose partners in promoting health, including safety and health at work. Inter-organizational relations play an essential role in establishing partnerships with the external environment. In fact, from the SOSH – sustainability viewpoint, organizations must encourage one another in the development of SOSH human resources. Collaboration with "sources of resources" is also considered beneficial in the pursuit of SOHS. This includes relationships with the labour market, educational institutions, non-governmental organizations, and even the families of employees.

Flexibility:

SOHS strategy encompasses two distinct forms of flexibility, namely functional flexibility and numerical flexibility. These two concepts are commonly regarded as alternative forms of flexibility, each offering unique approaches to human resource management.

Functional flexibility is dependent on long-term mutual investment in requisitely holistic employment relationships. It is typically viewed as the organization's capacity to respond to changes in business needs by having employees who are mentally and physically healthy, adaptable, internally mobile, and multi-skilled. In other words, functional flexibility refers to the capacity to carry out diverse and disparate jobs, as well



as the practice of reallocating personnel from one activity to another to sustain their productivity.

On the other hand, numerical flexibility refers to a company's ability to adjust the number of employees in response to changes in its needs, while reducing costs to a minimum. One could assume that numerical flexibility is barely in line with the sustainability viewpoint, as it presents a cost-cutting method and it is mainly related to the short-term viewpoint. It is safe to say that numerical flexibility is justified from a sustainability viewpoint, since it includes temporary employment of individuals, such as people with disabilities and students, and assisting them in integrating into the labor market and improving their chances of future employability.

SOSH flexibility is especially important since digitalization changes the nature, form, and content of work. Furthermore, it is vital for the SOSH to be flexible and to ensure the implementation of safety and health measures in the context of platform work. Nevertheless, flexibility should be approached with caution.

Compliance beyond labor regulations:

To be sustainable in OSH, i.e., SOHS, an organization must go beyond merely adhering to and obeying the regulations and laws. In addition, to include sustainability in Occupational Safety and Health, and enjoy its many benefits, it is imperative to adopt a requisitely holistic approach that surpasses just adherence to work regulations. Namely, adherence to institutional requirements alone does not necessarily guarantee that an organization is sustainable. An organization might, for instance, incorporate employee representatives into numerous decision-making procedures, in addition to those in which worker participation is required by law. Organizations should recognize the benefits of doing so in several areas, including accident prevention and improved work-life balance.

Employee cooperation:

As stated by the tournament theory, competing employees are motivated to sabotage the efforts of other employees. This may enhance their performance for them to be awarded for their clever and hard work. Nonetheless, it is generally agreed that collaboration is far more advantageous than rivalry when it comes to SOSH. It encourages enhanced collaboration, improves

general job satisfaction, minimizes absenteeism, and reduces the likelihood of labour conflicts. Open and proactive communication about OSH, as well as the exchange of information, trust, and respect within an organization, may be applied to create and enhance employee cooperation for sustainable OSH.

Fairness and equality:

To this day, the practice of diversity continues to be regarded as a problematic alternative to equality. There are two categories of diversity: surface diversity and deep diversity. Surface-level diversity refers to the visible biological characteristics of individuals, such as age or gender, which are often expressed in physical features and are therefore easily noticeable and simple to recognize. On the contrary, deep diversity relies upon subtle characteristics that may not be easily apparent or even directly observable. These traits refer to the values, beliefs, and attitudes of employees. Ensuring sustainable occupational safety and health involves not just preventing discrimination but also actively encouraging workforce diversity: it complements.

Others:

Important is also important that SOHS is prepared and implemented in a requisitely holistic way and based on social responsibility: not independence, but interdependence is a reality.

B. Application of De Prins model of four approaches to OSH, potentially supportive of the transition to SOSH

SOSH emphasizes the respectful and optimal use of humans as workforces within the organization, establishing an explicit connection between an organization's surroundings and its strategic policies. In light of this, CSR policy, HRM strategy, long-term orientation, and integration with an organization's strategy are crucial.

--"Socialising" OSH practices is the objective of the sociological approach. Furthermore, this particular form of OSH is long-term oriented. It covers significant themes such as health policies, as well as social themes such as family-friendly personnel policies, diversity, and age-consciousness, all of which lead to sustainable OSH.

--The psychological approach focuses on the topics that employees themselves consider significant. As



individuals are the main focus of sustainable competitive advantage, autonomy, dialogue, self-development, and work-life balance are the key elements of this approach. When compared to financial or technological capital, people are very different because they seek purpose, have a soul, and function in time.

--The third approach examines the correlation between Sustainable OSH and Strategic HRM. It specifically focuses on how Sustainable HRM impacts key HR domains, including absenteeism, presentism, employee turnover, and employability within an organization. This means: SOSH focuses on achieving organizational goals that go beyond mere financial gains. Common themes include social accomplishments, the belief in humans as a sustainable competitive advantage, as well as an emphasis on the sustainable management of HR and their safety and health.

--The fourth approach is the "green OSH" approach, which relates OSH and employees to the planet component of the triple bottom line. Which aspects of OSH can contribute to the organization's "green" image, and how does a green character impact the organization's attractiveness to potential employees and its branding? In the context of performing safety and health, relevant themes include green praxis. In addition, SOSH can stimulate environmentally conscious behaviours and promote green employer branding.

C. Types of SOSH

It is important to identify the different SOSH types and their purposes to create and implement SOSH systems effectively and to contribute to solving current sustainability and social responsibility issues.

First is Socially responsible OSH: it consists of HRM techniques that influence the conduct and attitudes of employees while promoting the implementation of CSR policies and implementing employee policies. Such SOSH highlights that companies are accountable not just to the individuals they directly employ, but also to the communities within which they function and to those who work in their supply chains indirectly.

Second is Green OSH: in the context of environmental consciousness, Green OSH refers to the procedures involved in the creation, implementation, and continuous upkeep of systems. Such OSH contributes significantly to environmental sustainability and makes employees

environmentally conscious to meet the environmental goals of the organization. The organization, society, individuals, and the environment - all benefit from the implementation of environmentally friendly procedures, processes, and policies, making all green. Green OSH initiatives also rely on shifts in corporate culture, as companies possess ingrained values that promote long-term sustainability.

Triple Bottom OSH: it focuses on the presumed economic, environmental, and social goals of the OSH all at the same time. Such SOSH is based on the widely accepted belief that all three of its components are inseparably linked, resulting in win-win-win situations.

Common Good OSH is a significant shift in the way that people think about the purpose of business and the contributions that SOSH has made. All three abovementioned types of Occupational Safety and Health have slightly altered the traditional business goal of financial gain to conform to external demands for greater social and ecological responsibility. A common good SOSH states that businesses have a fundamental responsibility to make meaningful contributions to sustainability issues and that their long-term self-interest resides in the preservation of the way of life of the humans involved, thus reversing the business perspective from inside-out to outside-in. This would necessitate the OSH Administration to take on a new role in the development of an organizational culture of common good values and the introduction of practices based on values such as dignity, solidarity, and reciprocity – to become SOSH.

D. Implementation of SOSH

As a non-technological invention supposed to be innovation, SOSH must be implemented in the organization. Of course, the implementation of the plan must be managed as a project. In addition, it is necessary to create appropriate organizational culture, which is based on sustainability. The next important fact is that all employees have a high level of SOSH skills and knowledge. Employees and managers must have regular two-way dialog. Managers must ensure sustainable safety and healthy working conditions. For more information see Figure 1.

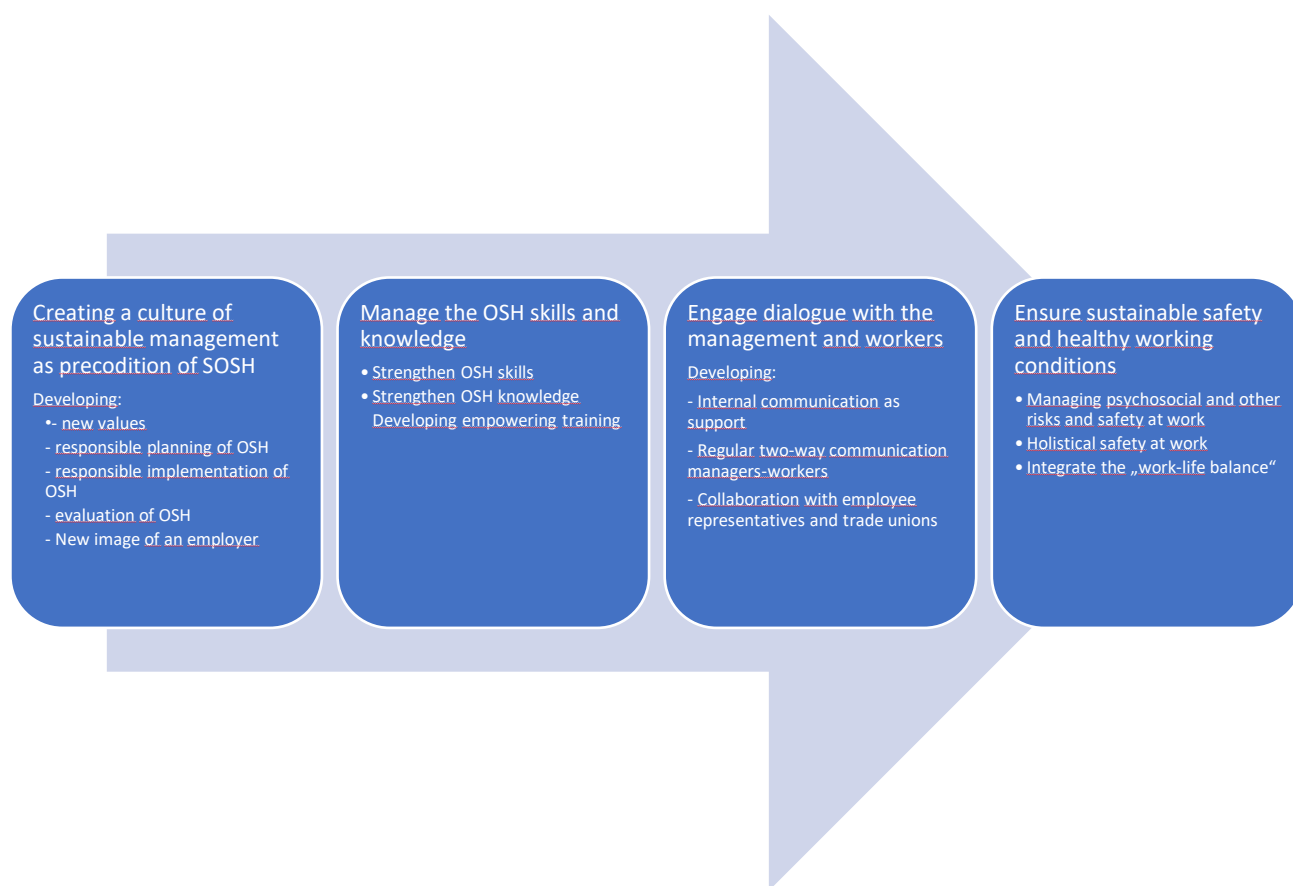


Figure 1: Factor important for the implementation of SOSH

Source: 50.

5. Conclusions

The SOSH could be the most holistic and complex challenge ever attempted in the field of occupational safety and health; it requires the consideration of social responsibility and requisite holism grounded on interconnectedness through the implementation of the seven principles defined in ISO 26.000. The implementation of SOSH is essential for enhancing an organization's performance and effectiveness since it can only be achieved by guaranteeing employees' health and safety. SOSH is essential when the business is developing its future course of action. Nevertheless, when it comes to planning and performing SOHS with the goal of sustainability, it must go beyond compliance with local or national regulations and laws. In light of this, SOSH should serve as a bridge between employees and managers, too.

The SOHS of an organization serves as a link between all its departments and is located at the center of all of them, to meet the organization's objectives and demands. Thus, it is perfectly situated to initiate and promote sustainable management in the organization.

Several strategies can be implemented to establish sustainable and responsible OSH policies inside an organization. Initially, it is imperative to establish a culture that promotes sustainable management between all internal stakeholders and incorporates it into the decision-making process. In light of this, the development of new values, responsible planning, implementation, and evaluation of SOHS is extremely important.

Then, it is important to enhance SOHS knowledge and skills to realize SOHS values. Important is Empowering training: training is one of the most effective methods of increasing one's awareness and understanding of shared



and collective values. Furthermore, it is also very effective in handling long-term difficulties such as psycho-social risks. On top of that, the inclusion of employees with disabilities can be very interesting. By actively providing opportunities for personal growth, and involving and retaining employees, training programs create a sense of belonging to the organization. In addition, one may positively develop the employability of employees by deploying these training courses to all of employees and verifying their efficiency in the field. Important is engagement in dialogue with the management and workers through internal communication. Trade unions and employee representatives are essential stakeholders that should be involved in a greater number of SOSH activities.

The SOSH is responsible for making sure that the organization implements not only responsible but also sustainable working conditions. If the current matter of employee health is already satisfactory, it could be even further enhanced by acknowledging additional occupational psychological risks and safety at work. Moreover, it is important to expand this attention to encompass the organization's indirect employees, such as subcontractors and suppliers. It is also important to ensure their sustainable safety and healthy working conditions. It is about managing psychosocial and other risks and safety at work and requires requisitely holistic safety at work. It is now SOSH's responsibility to incorporate the concept of "work-life balance" into the company's overall culture and to make certain that the personal lives and work patterns of each of its workers are respected. Otherwise, it may be an empty concept, not reality.

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