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Implementation of Occupational Safety and Health Standards in Government Offices in the Province of Negros Occidental, Philippines

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Abstract. Occupational Safety and Health Standards (OSHS) are fundamental to worker well-being, a principle highlighted by the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Despite extensive research on OSHS in diverse contexts, its application within the public sector remains underexplored. Although OSHS guidelines exist for government agencies, there is a clear need for further investigation into their implementation and related policy. This descriptive-comparative study evaluated OSHS implementation across national, provincial, and city government offices within a major urban center. Using a survey questionnaire developed from CSC-DOH-DOLE JMC No. 1 s. 2020, the research assessed variations in implementation across governance levels, focusing on workplace safety, emergency preparedness, OSH programs, support facilities, working hours, breaks and leave, and the overall working environment. The study included 340 permanent employees with at least three years of service, selected via stratified random sampling. Employee demographics were analyzed using descriptive statistics, while means, standard deviations, frequency counts, and percentage distributions were used to analyze survey responses. Comparative analysis identified differences in OSHS implementation across the three governance levels. Overall, employees generally rated OSHS implementation as "great" across all levels. However, national government offices showed a significant difference compared to provincial and city government offices. Specifically, national offices had the lowest implementation of occupational safety and health programs but the highest in working hours, breaks, and leave privileges. Provincial and city levels both demonstrated the lowest implementation in support facilities. The provincial level excelled in working hours, breaks, and leave privileges, while the city level led in emergency preparedness and workplace safety. Based on these findings, an action plan was proposed to improve OSHS implementation in government offices.

Keywords. public administration, OSHS, descriptive-comparative, Philippines

1.0 Introduction

The United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development emphasizes the importance of Occupational Safety and Health Standards (OSHS), advocating for improved working conditions [1]. Workplace safety is a significant concern globally, especially with the rise of international trade, economic shifts, and technological progress, as highlighted by the World Health Organization (WHO) [2]. Furthermore, the International Labour Organization

(ILO) has consistently championed occupational safety and health. Over time, the ILO has promoted "Good OSH" practices, asserting that these enhance productivity and competitiveness and reduce insurance costs. They suggest that proactive management of OSH issues can foster better workplace cooperation and dialogue, thereby boosting employee engagement [3].

Since the ASEAN Community was established in 2015, occupational safety and health (OSH) has gained considerable importance within the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), particularly due to its impact on workforce mobility. Although ASEAN member states employ diverse strategies for OSH management, they collectively commit to sharing effective practices. However, a notable gap exists in protecting healthcare workers, as there is currently no ASEAN-wide framework to safeguard their rights in the workplace [4]. Recognizing this and other challenges, ASEAN has identified key areas of cooperation, including strengthening capacities, standards, and best practices related to OSH [5].

In the Philippines, the enactment of RA 11058, entitled an Act Strengthening Compliance with Occupational Safety and Health Standards and Providing Penalties for Violation Thereof, mandated government and the private sector to comply with safety practices for their employees and workers. The Congress of the Republic of the Philippines which anchors on the Philippine Constitution and is further elaborated in the Labor Code, which provides specific regulations and guidelines on workplace health and safety [7]. Responsibility for workplace safety is shared by different government agencies: the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), the Department of Health (DOH), and the Civil Service Commission (CSC), among others [8]. Further, Joint Memorandum Order No. 1 provides standards for the public sector, including state universities and colleges [9].

While local governments like Bacolod City and Negros Occidental have been recognized for their innovative responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, including the implementation of bio-swab mobile sampling units and a GIS-based monitoring system [10], gaps in OSH implementation persist. For instance, despite the issuance of CSC-DOH-DOLE Joint Memorandum Circular No. 1. s. 2020 mandating OSH guidelines for government employees, OSH programs, and designated safety officers. This discrepancy between policy and practice highlights a critical need for further investigation and action [11].

While prior research has explored occupational health and safety (OHS) in various contexts, such as educational institutions [12], the business process outsourcing sector [13], and the construction industry [14, 15], there remains a noticeable scarcity of studies specifically investigating OHS within government offices. Local Philippine studies, like those by Lagrana and Bayoneta [16] on job satisfaction and work-life balance and Morante and Arnibal [17] on the work environment of public hospital nurses, further highlight this gap. Consequently, the limited exploration of occupational health and safety in public sector workplaces represents a significant void in the existing literature.

This study aimed to assess the extent of implementation of Occupational Safety and Health Standards (OSHS) in the areas of workplace safety, emergency preparedness, occupational safety, health programs, support facilities, working hours, break and leave privileges, and working environment in selected national, provincial and city government offices as assessed by employees. Ultimately, this sought to develop an action plan for government offices to have an enhanced OSHS implementation.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Research design. This study employed a descriptive-comparative research design to assess the implementation of OSHS across different levels of government offices (national,

provincial, and city) within a highly urbanized city. The comparative approach analyzed how the extent of OSHS implementation varies across these levels, focusing on key areas such as workplace safety, emergency preparedness, occupational safety and health programs, support facilities, working hours, breaks and leave privileges, and the work environment.

2.2 Locale of the Study and Participants. This study was conducted at selected government offices in Bacolod City, Philippines. The respondents of this study included 340 permanent employees who had been employed for three (3) or more years in various government offices within a local government unit. The sample size was determined using the Raosoft sample calculator with a 95% confidence interval and a 5% margin of error, drawn from a population of 2,884 employees. To ensure representation across different levels of governance, stratified random sampling was used to select 100 national government employees, 117 provincial government employees, and 123 city government employees.

Table 1. Distribution of Respondents

Respondents	N	n	%
National GOs	847	100	29.4
Provincial GOs	1003	117	34.4
City GOs	1034	123	36.2
Total	2884	340	100.0

2.3 Instrument and data collection process. This study utilized a researcher-made survey questionnaire based on CSC-DOH-DOLE Joint Memorandum Circular No. 1 to assess the implementation of OSHS in government offices. The questionnaire was divided into two parts: Part I was the respondent's classification (national, provincial, or city government employee), while Part II used Likert-type statements to assess the extent of OSHS implementation across various areas. These areas include workplace safety, emergency preparedness, occupational safety and health programs, support facilities, working hours, break and leave privileges, and working environment. Responses were measured using the 4-point Likert Scale with verbal interpretations of very great extent, great extent, poor extent, and very poor extent.

The survey instrument, developed by the researchers, underwent thorough validation and reliability testing. Content validity was established using Lawshe's [18] Content Validity Ratio (CVR). This involved administering the instrument to ten experts from the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) and the Civil Service Commission (CSC). For reliability, a pilot test was conducted with 30 participants not included in the main study's sample. The data collected from this pilot test was then analyzed using Cronbach's Alpha to determine the internal consistency of the instrument. The results showed a reliability index 0.971, confirming the instrument's strong reliability.

2.4 Data Analysis. Data analysis involved descriptive and comparative approaches, utilizing appropriate statistical tools to address the research questions. Descriptive analysis was employed to examine employee profiles. At the same time, data related to the implementation of reasonable working conditions were analyzed using mean and standard deviation, frequency count, and percentage distribution to understand the typical responses and their variability.

Comparative analyses were conducted to examine differences in OSHS implementation across the different levels of government offices. Prior to the comparative analyses, normality tests were performed to determine the appropriate statistical tests for

comparing groups. This approach ensured that the chosen statistical methods were suitable for the data and provided robust findings.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Extent of Implementation of Occupational Safety and Health Standards (OSHS)

Table 2A presents the extent of implementation of Occupational Safety and Health Standards (OSHS). As a whole (M=3.05, SD=0.52), implementing OSHS across all governance levels was interpreted as great. The findings show that respondents from the city level (M=3.21, SD=0.51) reported the highest extent of implementation, followed by those from the provincial (M=3.04, SD=0.46) and national (M=2.87, SD=0.53) levels.

The results suggest that, on average, respondents perceive a relatively high level of OSHS adherence in their respective workplaces. The deviations show moderate variability in responses, suggesting some inconsistencies in perceptions or practices within each governance level. Respondents from the city level reported the highest perceived implementation, implying that OSHS practices are more actively and effectively enforced or monitored at the city level. This is attributed to more direct oversight, faster responsiveness to safety concerns, or closer proximity to employees and the workplace. The provincial level followed with a slightly lower mean, still within the "great" range but showing room for improvement in standardization and enforcement. In contrast, the national level reported the lowest mean score, indicating a weak OSHS implementation. This could reflect challenges such as bureaucratic layers, broader scope of responsibility, or inconsistent enforcement across regions, relying on field offices' decisions to the regional level management, especially on the budgetary aspects.

While the implementation is rated positively, the disparity across levels signals a need for better coordination, policy alignment, and resource distribution to ensure uniform adherence to OSHS standards nationwide. Analysis confirms that a "one-size-fits-all" approach to OSHS implementation is often ineffective due to existing disparities across workplaces. Instead, implementation strategies should be contextualized, considering varying environmental factors [19].

Significant barriers to effective OSH management system (OSHMS) implementation include high costs associated with setup and maintenance, employees' difficulty in recognizing OSH's importance, and the complexity of integrating diverse standards [20]. This underscores the critical need for mandatory OSH training to build robust OSH management systems [21]. There is considerable room to enhance our understanding of OSH intervention effectiveness, and more specific guidance is still needed. Future efforts could explore promoting human-centered technological development and cultivating a more deliberate stakeholder network characterized by improved coordination, shared knowledge, and open communication [22].

Table 2A. Extent of Implementation of Occupational Safety and Health Standards

Variable	Occupational Safety and Health Standards		
	M	SD	Int
National	2.87	0.53	Great
Provincial	3.04	0.46	Great
City	3.21	0.51	Great
Whole	3.05	0.52	Great

3.1.1 Workplace safety. In terms of workplace safety, the implementation of Occupational Safety and Health Standards (OSHS) was generally rated as great across all governance levels ($M=3.13$, $SD=0.58$). Among the three levels, respondents from the city level ($M=3.33$, $SD=0.56$) perceived the highest extent of implementation, which was interpreted as very great, followed by those from the provincial ($M=3.09$, $SD=0.59$) and national ($M=2.94$, $SD=0.51$) levels, both of which were rated as great.

The findings suggest that government offices across different governance levels often implement OSHS by providing safety instructions and warnings, ensuring the adequacy and visibility of warning signs, providing facilities for persons with disabilities, installing CCTV, practicing good housekeeping, providing medical clinics or treatment rooms, practicing solid waste management, and providing adequate comfort rooms and lavatories, among other things. This indicates that offices adhere to workplace safety as outlined by OSHS regulations.

However, the data indicate that the city level has a more robust implementation of workplace safety. This is attributed to better resource allocation, more focused local governance, and immediate enforcement of safety regulations. Although slightly lower than the city level, the result at the provincial level reflects a positive implementation of workplace safety practices, suggesting decent compliance and awareness. **National-level** respondents gave the lowest mean score, which was still interpreted as **great**. This points to the complexities of enforcing safety regulations across a broader and more diverse range of workplaces or challenges in oversight and uniform policy enforcement. The relatively low standard deviations across all levels indicate that the perceptions within each group were consistent. While OSHS implementation is positively perceived at all governance levels, city-level governance appears more effective in translating policy into practice. This reflects the importance of localized enforcement and contextual adaptation in ensuring workplace safety.

Government offices frequently encounter distinct hurdles when implementing safety measures, often attributed to their scale, varied workforce, and budgetary limitations. This aligns with recent findings emphasizing the urgent need to strengthen regulatory agencies, boost public awareness, offer incentives for compliance, and enforce stricter legal penalties to bridge the gap between OHS legislation and its practical application [23]. At the city level, local government employees strongly agree that a safe workplace is implemented in their offices. This suggests that their perspectives on workplace safety are indeed a crucial indicator of safety performance, proving to be a valuable proactive management tool [24].

3.1.2 Emergency preparedness. Overall, respondents reported a great extent of implementation of Occupational Safety and Health Standards (OSHS) in the area of emergency preparedness across all governance levels ($M=3.05$, $SD=0.65$). However, the level of implementation varied among the three levels as respondents from the city level ($M=3.33$, $SD=0.54$) perceived the highest extent of implementation, which was interpreted as very great, followed by those from the provincial level ($M=3.04$, $SD=0.51$) and national level ($M=2.72$, $SD=0.74$), both of which were rated as great.

The results indicate that emergency preparedness, as a component of OSHS, is often implemented across all levels of governance. This suggests that emergency protocols in government workplaces are executed by conducting earthquake drills, fire safety seminars, evacuation drills, crisis management, availability of contingency and management plans, first aid training, and training on fire safety and monitoring, among others.

Respondents from the city level reported the highest level of emergency preparedness, interpreted as "very great". This reflects strong local initiatives and possibly more immediate enforcement and monitoring of emergency plans. The city level often benefits from proximity

to emergency services, better infrastructure, and more frequent safety drills. Emergency preparedness at the provincial level was also rated as "great", though slightly lower than at the city level. Provincial governance may face logistical and geographic challenges that can affect the delivery and monitoring of emergency response systems. The lowest mean score was reported at the national level, though still interpreted as "great". This is due to the broader scope of responsibility, making it more difficult to uniformly enforce preparedness policies across diverse regions. The variation suggests greater variability in responses—indicating an inconsistency in perceptions or actual implementation across national governments. City-level governance exhibits the highest perceived implementation of emergency preparedness in workplaces, attributed to more accessible resources, responsive governance, and regular enforcement. While the provincial level maintains solid performance, the national level faces challenges in uniform application and monitoring, highlighting the importance of local capacity-building and decentralization for effective OSHS implementation in emergency contexts.

Challenges persist in government agencies despite efforts to draft and enact policies, including overlapping organizational structures, insufficient capacity-building initiatives, and a lack of clear command chains and task delegation. Gundran et al. [25] further highlighted the absence of communication, collaboration, and the application of an incident command system (ICS) during numerous incidents, underscoring the urgent need to evaluate agencies' current capacity-building efforts. Moreover, legislative support for crisis-related policies has been inadequate, even with existing ordinances on Disaster Risk Reduction and Management. Consequently, respondents reported difficulties with crisis prediction, situation analysis, budget constraints, insufficient crisis training, and under-resourced crisis recovery efforts [26]. The finding that emergency preparedness was rated highly aligns with the International Labour Organization's [3] recommendation for establishing protocols in collaboration with other emergency services. Indeed, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) advocates for continuous monitoring and risk assessments to ensure appropriate measures are in place, especially during events like pandemics.

- To strengthen Occupational Safety and Health Standards (OSHS), Descatha et al. [28] and Ajmal et al. [29] recommend incorporating OSHS into employee orientation programs. This involves fostering robust teamwork and encouraging active employee participation. In addition, current policies need re-evaluation, institutional structures require review and issues concerning resource mobilization must be addressed. Even strong existing legislation, such as RA10121, requires enhancement and support from functional departmental policies for effective implementation. Domingo et al. [30] further emphasize the need to improve policy and planning alignment vertically from national to subnational levels and horizontally among local government institutions and national government agencies.

3.1.3 Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) programs. Overall, there was a great extent of implementation of OSHS in the area of Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) programs across all governance levels as assessed by respondents ($M=2.92$, $SD=0.71$). Among the three levels, respondents from the provincial level ($M=3.11$, $SD=0.68$) perceived the highest extent of implementation, followed by those from the city level ($M=2.96$, $SD=0.71$) and national level ($M=2.64$, $SD=0.65$), all of which were rated as great.

The findings reveal a generally positive perception of OSH program implementation among respondents, suggesting that standards are being applied consistently to a considerable degree within every government office. This means that OSH programs are often implemented,

such as medical services assistance and rehabilitation, accident prevention, training on stress management, and a demonstration of cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).

Interestingly, the provincial level scored the highest, indicating that provincial government employees perceive stronger OSH program implementation. This may be due to the proximity of provincial governance structures to national policy directives and local operational units, allowing them to effectively bridge implementation gaps. The city level followed closely, which suggests that local governance typically benefits from better funding, infrastructure, and safety training capabilities. The national level, although rated as "great," scored the lowest due to the broader scope of responsibilities and challenges in localized compliance from a central level. These findings support that decentralized governance structures enhance OSH implementation by enabling more responsive and context-specific safety measures. The relatively higher scores at the provincial and city levels affirm that localized governance units may offer more efficient oversight and enforcement of OSHS, consistent with earlier research.

The inconsistent implementation of Occupational Safety and Health Standards (OSHS) highlights the need for clear policy frameworks to govern OSHS programs [12]. Challenges in enforcing these standards, such as resource limitations, issues with worker compliance, and frequent regulatory changes, underscore the necessity for greater consistency in enforcement efforts and resource allocation. Therefore, this research offers valuable insights into existing gaps in health and safety standards, paving the way for policy recommendations to enhance worker protection [31].

Organizations should also consider implementing security and safety policies and developing health and wellness programs for their employees [32].

Table 2B. Extent of Implementation of Occupational Safety and Health Standards

Variable	Workplace Safety			Emergency Preparedness			Occupational Safety and Health Programs		
	M	SD	Int	M	SD	Int	M	SD	Int
National	2.94	0.51	Great	2.72	0.74	Great	2.64	0.65	Great
Provincial	3.09	0.59	Great	3.04	0.51	Great	3.11	0.68	Great
City	3.33	0.56	Very Great	3.33	0.54	Very Great	2.96	0.71	Great
Whole	3.13	0.58	Great	3.05	0.65	Great	2.92	0.71	Great

3.1.4 Support facilities. In terms of support facilities, the implementation of Occupational Safety and Health Standards (OSHS) was generally rated as great across all governance levels (M=2.75, SD=0.72). Among the three levels, respondents from the city level (M=2.92, SD=0.75) perceived the highest extent of implementation, followed by those from the national (M=2.75, SD=0.62) and provincial (M=2.58, SD=0.73) levels, all of which were rated as great.

The findings suggest a generally positive outlook on the availability and functionality of support facilities within workplaces across different levels of governance. This includes training/seminar rooms, lactation stations, wellness facilities, and accommodations for pregnant women, older employees, and differently abled personnel, which are integral to ensuring a safe, inclusive, and productive work environment.

The city level exhibits the highest extent of implementation, followed by the national and then provincial levels, with all three receiving favorable ratings for their efforts. This shows that city government offices are seen as frontrunners in implementing support facilities in the

workplace. These findings suggest that infrastructure and logistical resources play a critical role in the effective implementation of OSH support facilities. The relatively lower scores at the provincial level highlight the need for greater investment and coordination in regional/central safety infrastructure to ensure uniform compliance with OSH standards.

Although national policies are in place, enacting localized policies is also crucial for driving progress. It is important to recognize that the accessibility and scope of health services can fluctuate significantly, influenced by the specific local government, the level of government support, and the resources dedicated to health programs [33].

3.1.5 Working hours, breaks, and leave privileges. In terms of working hours, breaks, and leave privileges, the implementation of Occupational Safety and Health Standards (OSHS) was generally rated as great across all governance levels ($M=3.21$, $SD=0.56$). Among the three levels, respondents from the city level ($M=3.25$, $SD=0.54$) perceived the highest extent of implementation, followed by those from the provincial ($M=3.21$, $SD=0.52$) and national ($M=3.18$, $SD=0.63$) levels, all of which were rated as great.

The findings indicate that implementers in all levels of governance believe that proper implementation of working hours, break periods, and leave privileges is pivotal in promoting employee well-being, productivity, and institutional efficiency in public service. Results show city governments are often at the forefront of implementing labor-related administrative policies, including working hours and leave management. In terms of overtime budgeting, city governments typically operate under tighter fiscal scrutiny at the local level, encouraging strict compliance with the rule limiting overtime expenses to 5% of the total PS budget. The Omnibus Rules on Leaves, which provide guidelines on sick, vacation, maternity, and other leave privileges, are also more rigorously applied at the city level. Automated HR systems in urban centers allow better tracking of leave usage and prevent abuse or neglect of benefits. City governments lead the implementation of employee-centered labor policies, primarily due to their scale, operational flexibility, and direct accountability to local constituents.

At the provincial level, there is a wider scope of jurisdiction, often overseeing geographically dispersed offices. This makes uniform implementation of labor policies more difficult. Overtime budget limits are sometimes breached in remote or under-resourced provincial offices due to staffing shortages or lack of planning. The "No Noon Break" policy is inconsistently followed, especially in offices that lack adequate personnel for staggered breaks. In many cases, provincial governments still struggle to align their practices with the civil service standards practiced in well-resourced cities. While policies such as the prohibition on excessive night overtime and compliance with the 5% overtime cap are mandated across national offices, implementation often depends on internal monitoring bodies, which may not uniformly enforce rules. Despite these challenges, the national government has made strides in digitizing leave and attendance systems, and agencies like the CSC and DOLE frequently release circulars and conduct audits to push compliance. However, day-to-day policy enforcement is often delegated to internal HR units, leading to disparities between compliant and non-compliant departments.

Recent findings indicate that a particular policy while improving efficiency and ensuring continuous service delivery, has received mixed feedback regarding its influence on work-life balance. Some employees perceive it as a beneficial adjustment to their daily routines, while others view it merely as an alteration in work dynamics. A prominent theme emerging from responses is the policy's crucial role in upholding the principles of public service. Most employees support its continuation, though they suggest minor adjustments. Recommendations to optimize benefits and address concerns include establishing regular feedback mechanisms, introducing training modules, exploring flexible scheduling options, and consistently assessing

the policy's impact on employee morale and service quality. The prevailing sentiment highlights the policy's potential to enhance efficiency and work-life balance, underscoring the need for adaptability and a steadfast commitment to public service [34].

3.1.6 Working environment. In terms of the working environment, the implementation of Occupational Safety and Health Standards (OSHS) was generally rated as great across all governance levels (M=3.11, SD=0.67). Respondents from the city level (M=3.24, SD=0.66) perceived the highest extent of implementation, followed by those from the provincial (M=3.13, SD=0.57) and national (M=2.92, SD=0.74) levels, all of which were rated as great.

The overall result suggests a favorable perception among employees of all levels of governance regarding the implementation of working environment policies, including smoking prohibition, drug-free workplace enforcement, disease control programs, health information campaigns, and policies on safety, harassment prevention, and emergencies, with emphasis on city level showing the highest extent of implementation, followed by provincial and national levels.

The findings reflect that the city government has demonstrated a strong commitment to implementing comprehensive workplace health and safety policies. Their proximity to employees allows for more responsive governance and targeted health interventions. Moreover, local ordinances often mandate drug-free workplace programs, with cities integrating mandatory drug testing, counseling, and disciplinary measures. Disease control and health information campaigns are more consistently rolled out at the city level due to access to barangay health units and partnerships with local clinics and NGOs. Further, many cities have localized harassment prevention policies and emergency preparedness drills, integrating them into annual HR training programs and workplace safety assessments. This comprehensive approach ensures higher policy penetration and employee awareness. Provincial governments also implement workplace health and safety policies with less consistency than city governments. The breadth of jurisdiction often makes policy enforcement uneven. Health campaigns and disease control measures usually depend on funding from national agencies or partnerships with local city/municipal governments.

At the national level, the government's role is primarily in policy-making, regulatory oversight, and provision of technical assistance. Enforcement of policies largely relies on LGUs and individual agencies. These imply that the effectiveness of working environment initiatives under OSHS depends on the administrative level. City governments stand out for their holistic and actionable implementations, making them key drivers of workplace safety and wellness in the public sector. Future efforts must emphasize inter-level collaboration, with national agencies providing sustained support and provinces improving monitoring and compliance capacities.

The working environment significantly moderates how government bureaucracy directly affects service delivery [35]. The COVID-19 pandemic, in particular, highlighted the importance of localized impacts and how intergovernmental coordination, policy capacity, and local autonomy influence the effectiveness of governmental responses [36]. Furthermore, research indicates that occupational health and safety (OHS) measures within the public sector are insufficient, with the country lacking a comprehensive and harmonized legal framework for OHS. Consequently, it is recommended that the government implement adequate preventative and protective measures to ensure a safe working environment for all public sector employees [37].

Table 2C. Extent of Implementation of Occupational Safety and Health Standards

Variable	Support Facilities			Working Hours, Break and Leave Privileges			Working Environment		
	M	SD	Int	M	SD	Int	M	SD	Int
National	2.75	0.62	Great	3.18	0.63	Great	2.92	0.74	Great
Provincial	2.58	0.73	Great	3.21	0.52	Great	3.13	0.57	Great
City	2.92	0.75	Great	3.25	0.54	Great	3.24	0.66	Great
Whole	2.75	0.72	Great	3.21	0.56	Great	3.11	0.67	Great

3.2 Difference in the Extent of Implementation of Occupational Safety and Health Standards (OSHS)

The Kruskal-Wallis H test was used to determine whether there were significant differences in the extent of implementation of Occupational Safety and Health Standards (OSHS) across different levels of governance. The results showed a significant difference in the means, [$\chi^2 (2) = 22.648, p = 0.000$]. Post hoc comparisons revealed that the national level differed significantly from the provincial and city levels. Additionally, there was a significant difference between the provincial and city levels. These results suggest that the implementation of OSHS is perceived to be highest at the city level, followed by the provincial level, and lowest at the national level.

The results indicate that the level of government plays a crucial role in how the implementation of OSHS is perceived. The post hoc analysis further clarifies these differences. The national level significantly differed from the provincial and city levels, implying a notably lower perception of OSHS implementation at the national level. Likewise, a significant difference was also observed between the provincial and city levels. Among the three, the city level exhibited the highest mean perception of OSHS implementation, followed by the provincial level, with the national level perceived as the least effective. These findings suggest that localized governance, such as city-level administration, is more proactive or effective in implementing and enforcing OSHS guidelines. City-level units may be more responsive to the needs and challenges of employees, allowing for more visible or tangible implementation efforts. In contrast, the national level may be perceived as more removed from direct implementation activities, leading to lower perception scores.

This trend underscores the importance of decentralization in policy implementation, particularly for standards that require close monitoring and immediate application, such as OSHS. Strengthening intergovernmental coordination and support across all levels may be essential to ensure uniformity and effectiveness in OSHS implementation nationwide.

A study by Khassim and Costapius [38] identified several factors influencing adherence to Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) standards, including individual, institutional, economic, and leadership elements, which impact employees' decisions to comply with OSH regulations. The research also highlighted a lack of adequate support for the OHS committee, hindering their ability to effectively promote employee well-being. This was evidenced by limited resources for employee training and a shortage of OSH equipment within the organization. Furthermore, the study revealed that OSH training and education are ineffective for all employees. Specifically, respondents noted that OSH training is often received only by department heads, who then fail to disseminate this critical information to the front-line staff directly engaged in fieldwork.

The effectiveness of implementing the Occupational Health and Safety Management System (OHSMS) is shaped by internal and external factors. Internal factors include strong

management commitment, effective OHS leadership and policies, active employee participation, a positive OHS culture, high employee morale, and sufficient resources (including financial performance and OHS cost allocation). Other significant internal elements are company size, internal incentives, worker safety behavior, robust OHS communication and consultation, clear OHS rules and procedures, effective OHS promotion, integration, continuous improvement processes, and the systematic identification of hazards, risk reduction, and development of control strategies [39].

On the other hand, external factors playing a role involve the enforcement of OHS regulations, OHS support, and authority from external bodies, external audit certification, external incentives, pressure from customers, market competition, company image, and prevailing international trends [39]. However, challenges exist. Afiah et al. [6] highlight that the management of OHS data and information and enforcing relevant laws can significantly inhibit OHSMS implementation. Furthermore, issues arise from system decentralization, particularly the inconsistent operationalization of national health priorities at the local level. Addressing this requires building capacity within local governments, which can significantly improve their ability to connect community health needs with the broader public health system [27].

Table 3. Difference in the Extent of Implementation of Occupational Safety and Health Standards

Variable	χ^2	df	p
Levels of Governance	22.648*	2	0.000

Note: *the difference in the means is significant when $p \leq 0.05$

The study's findings indicate that all the areas of OSHS are often implemented, although not always, in all levels of governance, validating the theoretical framework drawn from the systems theory and the theory of good governance.

The systems theory provides a valuable lens for understanding how implementing OSHS can contribute to a safe and healthy work environment in government offices. By viewing the workplace as an interconnected system, where various elements, such as employees, management, policies, and physical conditions, interact and influence each other, it becomes clear how improvements in one area of OSHS can positively impact the entire system. Strict adherence to OSHS can strengthen the overall system, increasing employee empowerment, motivation, and productivity, ultimately contributing to a more positive and productive work environment.

The national level shows a significant difference, being the lowest, followed by the provincial and city levels, being the highest. Further, the comparison shows that occupational safety and health programs have the lowest implementation rates at the national level. At the same time, the working hours break and leave privileges are the top priority. As for the provincial level, support facilities are the last on their list while giving importance to the working hours break and leave privileges. The support facilities at the city level are the lowest, while emergency preparedness and workplace safety are the highest. The findings align with the theory of good governance. Good governance ensures that OSH standards are clearly communicated, implemented consistently, and monitored effectively by emphasizing principles such as transparency and accountability. The principle of responsiveness highlights the need for organizations to adapt to the evolving needs of employees and address any safety concerns promptly. Furthermore, the focus on participation and collaboration within good governance

aligns with empowering employees to contribute to workplace safety, fostering a sense of ownership and shared responsibility. Ultimately, by adhering to the principles of good governance in the implementation of OSHS, government offices can create a work environment that prioritizes employee well-being, leading to increased motivation, productivity, and overall organizational effectiveness.

4.0 Conclusion

This study revealed the unexplored face of OSHS in the public sector. While its areas are often implemented at all levels, which acknowledges the government's effort in ensuring the well-being of employees, it should be emphasized that there is still a need to push for a stronger implementation as all areas are not fully implemented. A significant difference emerged as the national level showed the lowest in their implementation. This confirms that city and provincial governments can quickly respond to policy issues involving employees' working conditions due to their absence of large bureaucratic systems. They can allocate resources quickly and adjust OSHS policies as needed due to their small size and focus.

5.0 Limitations of the Findings

This study has a few limitations that warrant consideration. Since the research was conducted only in **selected government offices**, its findings may not be generalizable to all government offices across different levels. Additionally, because respondents were chosen using **stratified random sampling**, the perspectives and concerns of all government employees could not be fully captured. While the study's reliability was addressed through detailed documentation of the entire research process, from data collection to analysis and categorization, the **replicability of its results is not as robust** as that of a systematic literature review, where the process is entirely verifiable.

6.0 Practical Value of the Paper

Improving the implementation of OSHS in the public sector lies in interventions that leverage more structured processes. This study encourages a holistic approach to protecting workers in the government. This identifies and delineates the roles of lead agencies, heads of offices, safety committees, and stakeholders, particularly in the implementation. The findings will be beneficial not only to the DOLE but also to all government HRM offices on how to implement the OSHS.

7.0 Directions for Future Research

Future research should investigate the specific challenges government offices encounter when implementing Occupational Safety and Health Standards (OSHS). We hope that researchers will explore avenues that support OSH improvement through more structured processes and encourage proactive daily OSH management. Potential research directions could include examining the effectiveness of safety incentivization programs and rewards, investigating how to increase the use of information technology tools in OSH management, exploring the impact of production process automation on OSH, focusing on the implementation of proactive rather than reactive OSH measures, analyzing the benefits of integrating quality, environmental, and OSH management system standards, and assessing the utility of technological tools for worker training in OSH. By pursuing these directions, researchers can contribute valuable insights from various perspectives, ultimately aiding in the continuous improvement of OSH within government settings.

8.0 Declaration of Conflict of Interest

The authors wish to confirm that this study has no known conflicts of interest and that significant financial support for it could not have influenced its outcome. All the data-gathering procedures were conducted with the participant's consent.

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