IJCRT.ORG ISSN : 2320-2882

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

"To Assess the Lifestyle of Employees Working in Food Processing Industries in Tamilnadu"

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Abstract:

In this study, we attempt "To Assess the Lifestyle of Employees working in Food Processing Industries" in selected dairy and water quality testing laboratories in Tamilnadu. The primary objective of the study is to investigate the lifestyle and work place safety environment of employee. The field study was conducted to examine their health conditions, personal habits, physical activity, choice of food patterns, stress level and personal hygiene. The data was collected by face-to-face survey with a standard questionnaire, selected samples were collected from dairy industry and water quality testing laboratories. The findings of the study showed that male workers are in high numbers than female and most of them in normal BMI range. Among the selected employees, 22% are having food allergen, 8% employees are using tobacco and 48% of people are engaged in physical activity. While assessing their mental health condition showed that 68% are having depression and 32% are facing anxiety disorders. Meanwhile findings of the study showed that employees perceive each aspect of job satisfaction along with their own lifestyle habits with the support of family and also enhance the economic level of the companies.

Keywords: Lifestyle, BMI, Physical Activity, Anxiety, Economic level

Introduction

Food manufacturing is the most essential thing in public health beyond consumers. The food manufacturing industry is responsible for producing, processing, cooking, packaging, storing, transporting and selling food. In Tamilnadu, the production of approximately 1.2 million tons of food grains, nearly 1.0 million tons of oilseeds, 6.7 million tons of fruits, and 6.0 million tons of vegetables significantly contributes to India's agricultural output. Furthermore, the state produces about 15.0 million tons of sugarcane, 5.6 million tons of plantation crops, and houses 1200 million poultry and 240 million livestock population. The state has about 24,000 SMEs and 1100 medium and large units in food processing sector and contributes to 7.2% of processed food outputs of India. (https://www.tnapex.tn.gov.in/ords)[1]

The State Government anticipates to substantially increase the processing and value addition levels and to reduce the post-harvest food losses. Therefore, the need for having a separate food processing and Agri export corporation in the State was greatly felt. According to NSSO 73 round, for 14.18% of employment in the unregistered food processing sector employs 51.11 lakh people and accounts for 14.18% of employment in the unregistered manufacturing sector(Ayush, 2022).By 2022, the food processing industry is expected to generate about 44.34 lakh new jobs, primarily entry-level and supervisory profiles. Food Processing evolved in tandem with the expansion of India's huge middle class, an outcome of liberalization. Rapid urbanization, Technical innovation, industrialization, Western

lifestyle influences, more women entering the workforce, and increased disposable income are some of the causes that will contribute to the rise of the food processing business (Dixit and Ravichandran,2022)[1].

The study's main objective is to assess the lifestyle of employees working in food processing industries. Because nowadays, no one is caring for their mental health and stress management, this was one of the attempts to analyse the employee's personal habits, how they manage their work and home, work shift patterns, any health issues are assessed using simple questionnaire method. Management should consider the recommendations that are made in terms of the job satisfaction level of employees, as they can positively influence organisational performance and success.

Review of literature

According to Martell and Dupuis (2006), it is important to investigate the influence that work has on life, as work is a major role player in everyday life. Furthermore, work occupies an employee's thoughts, largely determines an employee's schedule and contributes to his or her social identity. Work is often a vehicle through which an individual establishes his or her identity and place in society or in related peer groups, and the level of economic independence he or she has gained. This fact alone supports the need for organisations (such as those in the food and beverage sector) to take a closer look at how well they provide individuals (employees) with opportunities to achieve satisfaction and success, both on and off the job (Viljoen *et.al.,*2014)[2]

This study assessed occupational safety awareness and safety practice across different socio-demographic groups and calculated the correlation between them. A significant variation in occupational safety awareness is found across different age groups and education levels. Similarly, few socio-demographics like age, experience, and designation have a significant amount of impact on safety practices in the workplace. Furthermore, positive medium correlations were found between occupational safety awareness and safety practices among employees of the food and beverage industries inside Telangana state, India. As the research has demonstrated, to foster a safe working culture and bolster safety practices in the workplace, there should be proper and comprehensive occupational awareness (Kumar *et.al.,*2025)[3].

The attitude of employees is the most significant Barrier to working with a health problem rather than the health condition itself. Health is influenced by several other external factors, including lifestyle, exercise, and Nutrition, in which age is not the only factor determining the level of health. Consideration of the workability of the immediate manager and supervisor is the most appropriate way to determine whether or not any change in the health or capacity of the worker puts them at an increased risk and risk from their work. Each Individual's resources shall be considered in deciding the requirements of the employer's job. Older and Experienced workers need to be identified as valuable assets to the company. Generally, this organizational Group tends to be more resourceful in completing their work and with a high degree of determination to ensure that their tasks are well managed, regardless of age or work experience (Roslan *et.al.,*2021)[4].

Occupational safety and health management is everything planned by leaders or managers to improve the Welfare of workers to obtain all guarantees within the company that there are human elements, materials, and equipment and a management system that is met to prevent work accidents.

It is hoped that occupational safety and health management that is implemented as well as possible will provide a climate of work safety and calm that will be very helpful in increasing workforce productivity (Apriyanti *et al.,* 2023)[5].

The study also revealed that the respondents have a poor knowledge of occupational safety and health, and a majority of them were frequently exposed to a high-risk environment at work. Despite this, there was a low level of practice of occupational safety. Based on these findings, we recommend that employers of food handlers should provide safer working environment by instituting and enforcing safety policies in the workplaces as well as encouraging employees to practice occupational safety. Intensive and obligatory occupational safety training for all employees and employers should be provided by well-trained occupational health and safety consultants (Taguram *et.al.,*2017)[6].

Table 1: Highly Demanded Skills in Food Processing Sector

Segment of Food processing	Skills needed in the segment
Innovation and recipe Formation	Food Fortification Experts, value-added Nutritional product Experts
	Plant based Protein Developer, Meat, Alternative Foods, Vegan Foods
	Flavourists
Laboratory	Food Analyst
Auditing	Internal Auditor – Food safety system and quality assurance Internal Auditor – lab Export Requirement
Start-ups and Entrepreneurship	Experts to Facilitates Food start-ups Entrepreneurship Skills in Food Processing Artisanal and Home-based Entrepreneurs in Various food processing sector
Sales and Marketing	Marketing and sales personnel Food sales promoters Experts to automate the manual processes in food industry
Industry 4.0 and Automation	Food Packaging Developer, Smart Packaging Robotic engineers

Source: (Dixit and Ravichandran,2022)[1]

METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research design

Research is the arrangement of collection and data analysis from food industry in manner that aims to understand the "**To Assess the Lifestyle of Employees Working in Food Processing Industries".** The population of the food processing units is large and scattered all over the district. Therefore sample has been confined to only two categories of food processing units and 50 number of the samples are collected in the present study by simple random sampling method.

To collect primary data, a detailed Questionnaire was prepared based on our study. This study was quantitative in nature and the questionnaire was distributed among employees working in food processing industries located in Thiruvannamalai and Dindigul districts of Tamilnadu.

3.2 Study sample

The researcher using simple random sampling method for taking the sample size from the whole population. It is called probability sampling technique. This consisted the following industries of Dairy and Water Testing Laboratory; hence the researcher selected almost 50 sample randomly in the particular study period.

3.3 Source of data

The study is based on both primary and secondary sources of information.

3.3.1 Primary data

Primary data directly collected from the respondent through various methods such as personnel interview based on a set of well-structured and predetermined questions and interaction with respondents.

3.3.2 Secondary data

The secondary data is sources of information collected through books, journals, report, research articles. It is second hand information.

3.4 Data collection

Data collection is the important aspects in the research design. The collection of data for the purpose of the research study was in the form of primary data for two months. The owners or managers of the respective establishments were contacted to seek permission, and to determine whether or not employees would be allowed to complete the questionnaire during working hours. The sample size included 50 employees in the Thiruvannamalai and Dindigul districts of Tamilnadu. The target population was chosen based on the availability of the employees at the selected establishments. The interview schedule was used to collect the self-designed questionnaire, which was distributed among employees from the industries at the time of data collection.

3.5 Statistical analysis

The collected data were evaluated for accuracy and completeness to address the research objectives. Subsequently, the data were entered into the Statistical Package for Social Science Version 26.0 tool based on the questionnaire for further assessment. Frequency distribution, contingency table, and various charts were employed to visually represent the analysis's findings, including descriptive and inferential statistics.

Result and discussion

The following will discuss about the results of the interpretation of data to compare the lifestyle of various employees working in food processing industries.

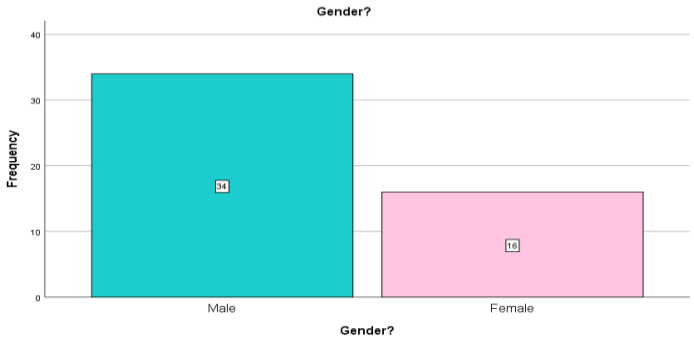


Figure – 1- Gender

Figure 1 shows that male workers are higher in numbers than female due to long working hours and handling of heavy equipment while working.

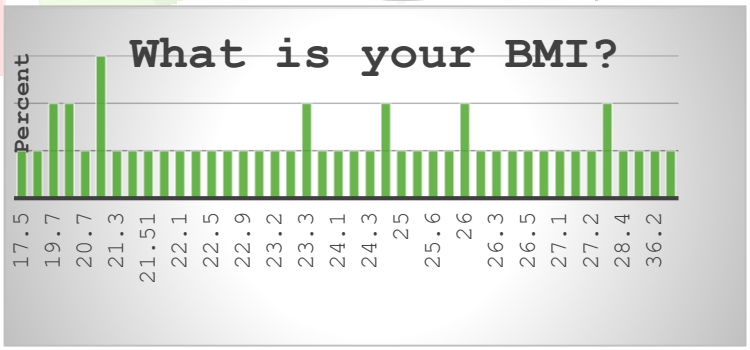


Figure – 2-BMI of Samples

Body mass index (BMI) is a screening tool that measures the ratio of your height to your weight to estimate the amount of body fat. Figure-2 shows that most of them are in the normal BMI range, calculated based on their height and weight. Only a few samples are overweight compared to others.

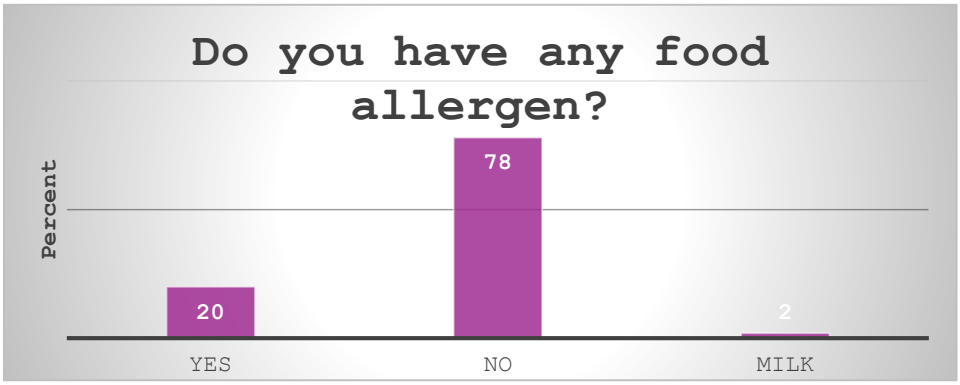


Figure – 3- Food allergens among the employees

Food allergens are proteins found in certain foods that, when ingested, can cause an allergic reaction in some people. While many different foods can cause allergic reactions, the Food Allergen Labelling and Consumer Protection Act of 2004 (FALCPA) identified eight foods as major food allergens: milk, eggs, fish, Crustacean shellfish, tree nuts, peanuts, wheat, and soybeans. Figure- 3 showed that 20% of the workers have food allergies like egg, fish, and so on. 78% of workers did not have any food allergen and 2% of workers had milk allergen.

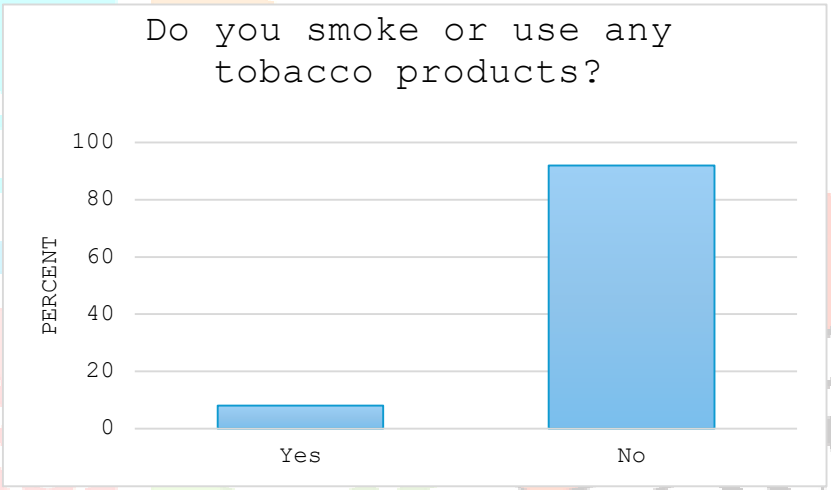


Figure- 4-Employees using tobacco

Figure-4 showed that 8% of people are using tobacco like cigarettes, beedi, khaini and gutkha and most of them are not taking any kind of tobacco/smoking. However, inside the industries, the use of tobacco/ smoking is strictly prohibited, so they did it after their working hours.

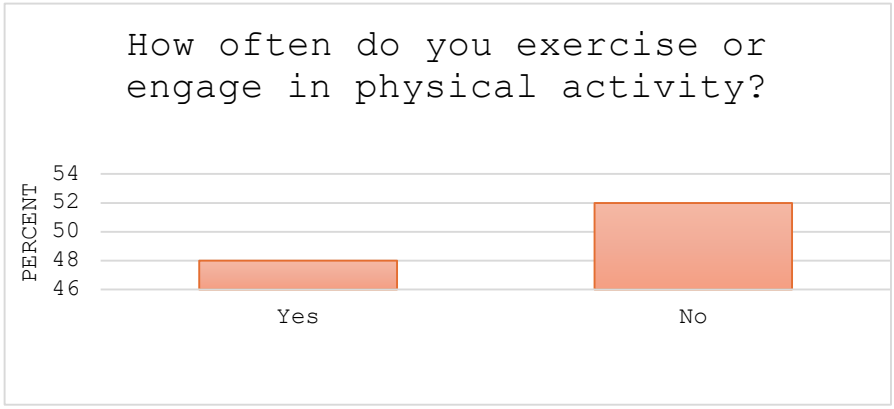


Figure- 5- Physical activity among Samples

WHO defines physical activity as any bodily movement produced by skeletal muscles that requires energy expenditure. Physical activity refers to all movement, including during leisure time, for transport to get to and from places, or as part of a person's work or domestic activities. Figure 5 showed that 48% of the samples do exercise and other physical activities like walking, gardening, and structured exercises like running, swimming, or yoga.

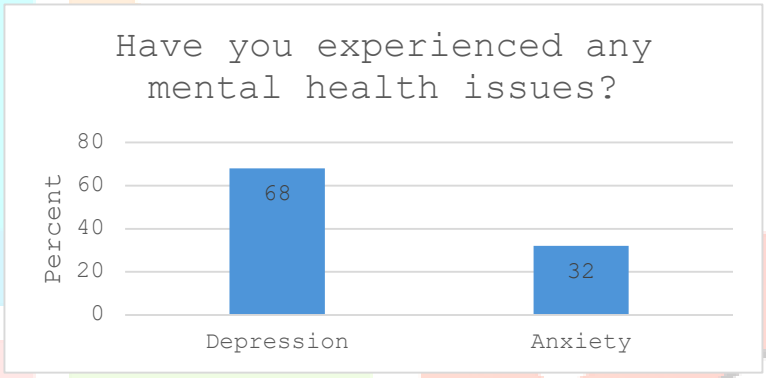
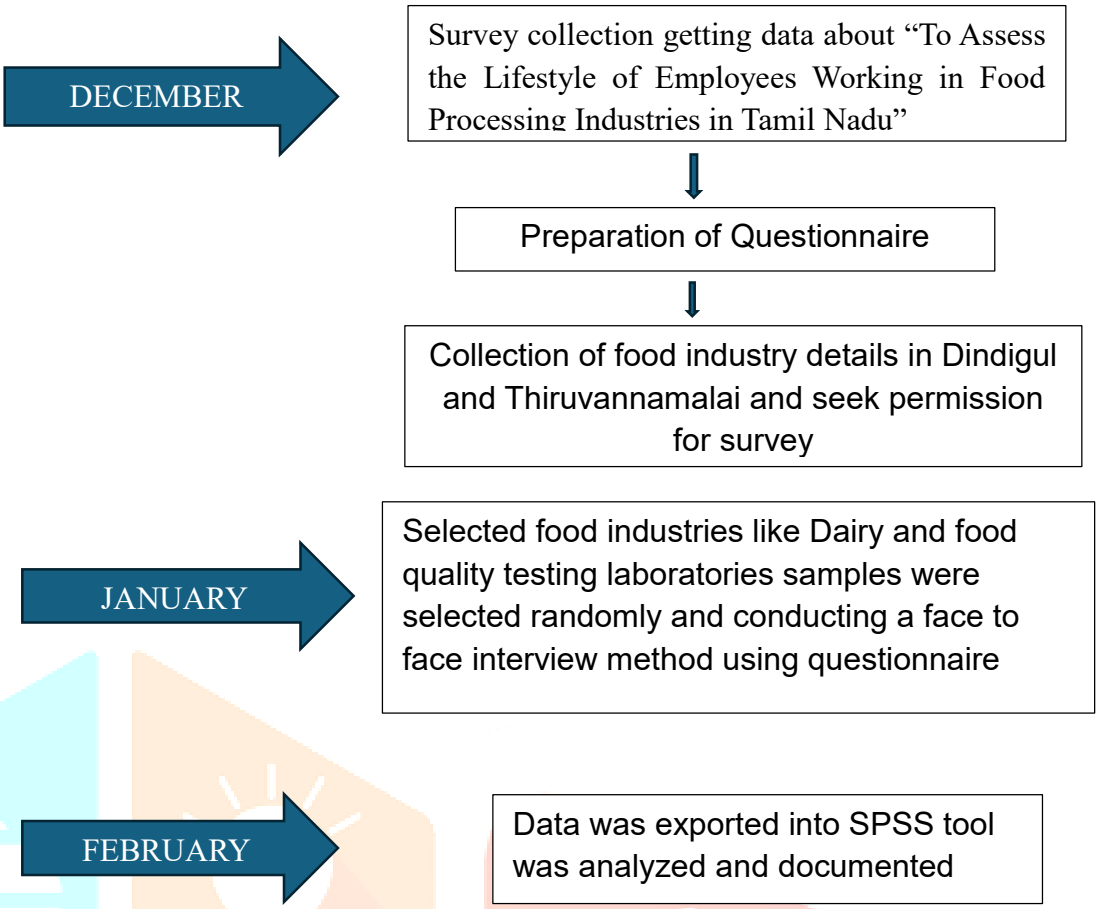


Figure- 6-Health issues among the employees

Anxiety and depression are types of mood disorders. Among other things, depression causes feelings of sadness, hopelessness, and reduced energy. Anxiety creates feelings of nervousness, worry, or dread. 68% of those affected by Depression and 32% of workers affected by Anxiety. Most of them feel depressed due to restlessness and lack of sleep.

Study Period:



Conclusion

The food industry is now considered a growing industry because of its growth and demand. It is not only created for making money but also add value in the diet, reduce food waste, and also improve manufacturer competition. The main aim of this study is to assess the lifestyle of employees working in the food processing industry. The results indicated that the job doesn't affect the lifestyle of working employees, is a major contributor to quality of work life. Meanwhile findings of the study showed that employees perceive each aspect of job satisfaction along with their own lifestyle habits with the support of family and also enhance the economic level of the companies.

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