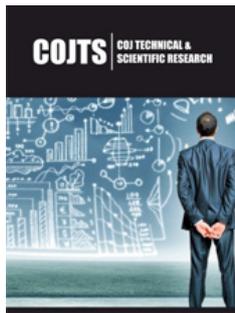


Uncertainty in Occupational Safety and Health Education

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Opinion

Nearly 200 years passed after the industrial revolution to reach the Occupational Safety and Health Law in the United Kingdom. Other countries followed the UK. Nowadays OHS training is required by law in most countries. In the beginning, the training of employees had been provided by trained people. They used to be called "Trainers of trainees". Different countries had different institutions. For example, OSHA requires employers to provide training to workers who face hazards on the job. OSHA create training materials, distribute training grants to nonprofit organizations, and provide training through authorized education centers.

There are different types of education centers.

- a) Governmental Institutions
- b) Private education centers
- c) Organizations of standards (OHSAS 18001, ISO 45001 etc)
- d) International organizations
- e) ILO

In the last 15 years, universities provided OSH programs and started to educate people to be OSH professionals. In the middle ages, there were occupational guilds. When an employee worked enough to be his own master, he should take some exams. After he proves that he had learned enough, he was authorized to establish his own business. The examiners were his master and other experts of the sector. After training institutions and universities started to educate professionals, the guild system was left. The occupational safety and health education and training are similar to the occupational guild system. There are experts approved by institutions, organizations, private education centers. Some of these are local organizations while there are international institutions. These institutions certificate the participants, while some of them provide diplomas. In the beginning, these certificates and diplomas were helpful to distinguish the professionals. Now universities educating people as a technician, engineer (bachelor), master and even Ph.D. degree on occupational safety and health. A Ph.D. degree means 8-10 years of education. In some countries, there are short courses of about 200 hours. After completing the course and taking a successful exam, a participant is accepted as an OSH expert or OSH Professional. It is very important to improve human resources on different topics, but if it is human life, we have to think very carefully. We need to compare a short course with 2 or 4 years of education.

A. The short courses allow the participants to get a diploma in a very short time, with spending a small amount of money and effort. This means, most people may prefer this kind of opportunity.

B. People living in developing or undeveloped countries, which can not afford long term and expensive education will prefer this kind of education

C. OSH aims are to protect the workers, manage hazards, minimize workplace accidents and occupational diseases.

D. To protect human life, we need to prefer the best-educated people.

Table 1: Comparison of the education programme provided by a university and small course.

Subject	University	Small Course
PPE-Personal Protective Equipment	40 hours	3 hours
Electrical hazards	40 hours	2 hours
Risk assessment	40 hours	8 hours
Legislation	80 hours	12 hours

Which one is better educated? A university student or a short course participant? The table below, will help us to compare the options (Table 1). Since there are a lot of organizations giving certificates or diplomas, it is necessary to improve hierarchies for

occupational safety and health education and training. Regarding OSH education and training, there are 4 different categories:

- A. Employees training
- B. Training of trainers
- C. Academic education
- D. Expertise courses

Employee's training can be provided by licensed OSH professionals while universities may be authorized for the training of trainers and academic education (technician, safety engineer-bachelor, MS and Ph.D.). The small courses (eg: asbestos, offshore exploration/production, fire safety, process safety, etc) may be provided by private education centers or governmental institutions. ILO may organize occupational safety and health courses or workshops, but it is a shame of the whole world that ILO collects money from the participants. ILO must try to improve the OSH applications. These activities must be free and globally. The conclusion, universities should be the dominant element of OSH education and others should be auxiliary institutions for training. You can find the details in the chart below (Figure 1).



Figure 1: OSH training and education.

Governmental institutions

May organize free seminars, workshops, and similar activities. No need for any exam for a person who has completed university education. Governmental Institutions may license the experts for special situations (Erection of scaffolds, tower winch, asbestos, process engineer, etc).

Private education centers

May organize small courses and certificate the experts for critical jobs such as Erection of scaffolds, tower winch, asbestos, process engineer, etc.

Organizations of standards

May organize employee training and certificate the people who participated in auditing/ inspecting training.

International organizations

May organize small courses and certificate the successful participants. They should not be allowed to give the diploma.

ILO

This is a sub-organization of the United Nations. How can we allow ILO to organize courses and collect money? There are millions of people who cannot access satisfactory OSH courses and we lose more than 2.5 million people every year due to workplace accidents and occupational diseases?

Universities

Universities should be the dominant institutions in occupational education. They should be the only organizations that can give diplomas on OSH.

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