



## **OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH AND SAFETY AWARENESS IN TURKISH WOOD, WOOD PRODUCTS AND MUSHROOM PRODUCTION SECTOR**

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Occupational health and safety pursues the goal of improving working conditions as well as the projection of workers from treats like occupational accidents and diseases. In developing countries including Turkey, where occupational accident and disease ratios are high, occupational health and safety issue has been becoming more and more significant. The forest products industry, which is one of the sectoral fields where the most occupational accidents occur, is in the position as one of the areas which must be put under excessive emphasis regarding the magnitude of total workplace and employee number along with difficulty level of works carried. The wood, wood products and mushroom production sector, which is in sub-sectors of Turkish forest products industry, constitutes the second biggest manufacturing group after furniture production in terms of total enterprise number. %98 of the enterprises in aforementioned sector are small and medium sized enterprises. In enterprises with low number of employee, the low sensitivity shown to occupational health and safety precautions increases the significance of this sector in terms of occupational health and safety.

In this study, it is aimed to reveal the differences in opinions of personnel in enterprises, which fall into Turkish wood, wood products and mushroom production group, concerning occupational health and safety. Within this framework, a questionnaire application was conducted based on face to face meeting in a total of 68 enterprises. In the questionnaire, the 5-point Likert rating scale was used in determination of agreement level to scale items containing 9 different opinions concerning occupational health and safety issue underlying demographic characteristics of personnel and features of enterprises. The reliability coefficient of the scale utilized in the study was calculated to be 0.787 as Cronbach Alpha method and it is seen to be within the confidence limits.

As the result of the study, it was observed that training level of personnel in wood, wood products and mushroom production sector is low, and they fall within middle age group. On the other side, it was detected that machinery maintenance frequencies are too far, necessary personal protective equipment is not supplied in time and basic occupational health and safety principle implementation has deficiencies. Besides, statistically significant differences ( $p<0.05$ ) were identified between opinions of employees in relation to variances as age, marital status, department worked, total time of employment in the enterprise, machinery maintenance frequency that is applied, workplace change intervals and exposure to occupational accidents. Achieved findings revealed that occupational health and safety awareness is low in Turkish wood, wood products and mushroom production sub-sector and notable inadequacies exist in application, thereby improvement and development on a significant level is needed.

**Keywords:** Occupational health and safety, Wood products sector, Awareness, Small and medium sized enterprise.