

## **SUITABILITY OF WORKER CHARACTERISTICS AND JOB ON WORK ENVIRONMENT IN THE FURNITURE INDUSTRY OF WEST JAVA, INDONESIA**

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### **KEYWORDS**

Suitability, Worker Characteristics, Work Environment, Occupational Health Risks, Behavior

### **ABSTRACT**

This research aims to describe the work environment in the furniture industry based on the suitability of workers and job characteristics. This research uses descriptive qualitative methods and is conducted on cases in the furniture industry in West Java, Indonesia. Data collection techniques are performed using interviews, observation, and documentation and analyzed inductively. The research results show that the work environment in the carved furniture industry can be identified based on the suitability of job characteristics. They are work risks faced by establishing safe work environment boundaries, worker characteristics regarding their role by work procedures and work experience, and the value of the agreement norms that form safe environmental behavior and interactions. Furthermore, the results can be used as recommendation material for further research related to work environment issues that dig deeper into other phenomena based on cultural characteristics, safety behavior, and wage mechanisms so that the utility value of wages and risks received can be known.

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Most industries based on wood (furniture) have work environments that can pose risks to occupational safety and health. Industrial activities are never free from potential dangers and hazards that can cause work accidents. A minor accident can significantly impact a company. The woodworking industry with the highest accident rate is in the manufacturing sector, with risks to occupational health (Arimbi, Puspasari, & Syaifullah, 2019). One of them is the presence of wood dust as a potential hazard in the furniture workplace that can harm workers' health (Massoudi & Hamdi, 2017). Wood dust is formed from some wood from the sawing and sanding process, which will cause acute respiratory infections. Workers can inhale wood dust continuously and hurt workers' health (Arini, 2020). It can be said that the working environment in the woodworking (furniture) industry has risks of accidents, occupational health and safety.

Occupational risks related to the nature of work, individual work practices, and work pressure. Risks also exist in the physical, social, and psychological work environment (Agbozo, Owusu, Hoedoafia, & Atakorah, 2017). The work environment in the woodworking industry is formed by the workplace situation, which is indicated by machine

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noise, ventilation, light, and air. In contrast, the work environment is related to internal management, namely the motivation of workers through adequate wages and incentives (Putra, 2003). It can be believed that the wood working industry has risks associated with the work environment. A good work environment is associated with high work engagement and reduced turnover. The diversity of worker characteristics is essential to managing the work environment. Like wise, other forms are based on job and worker characteristics. Risk assessment is essential to create a safe working environment for the company and its people.

Technical control and work equipment (Indrawati, Prabaswari, & Fitriyanto, 2018). This control depends on the worker as well (Idowu & Iyabo, 2017). Workers spend most of their time in the work environment. It is essential to ensure worker safety, while business/industry owners are responsible for policies, rules enforcement, and worker compliance. Creating an environment depends on the organizational climate formed by internal actors directly involved in it, both owners and workers. The work environment climate created by the company/industry represents the symbolic meaning of the ideas and rules of the game towards "safe" work. Basic information about the six informants is provided in the table below.

**Table 1.**  
**Profile of Informants**

<b>Number</b>	<b>Respondents</b>	<b>Gender</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>Job</b>	<b>Education</b>	<b>Work Experience</b>
1	Respondent 1	Male	35	Supervisor	Senior high School	Ten years of work
2	Respondent 2	Male	28	Marketing	Senior high School	Ten years of work
3	Respondent 3	Male	25	Sales	Senior high School	Fifth years of work
4	Respondent 4	Female	27	Cashier	Senior high School	Fifth years of work
5	Respondent 5	Female	40	Operational	Senior high School	Ten years of work
6	Respondent 6	Female	45	Operational	Senior high School	Ten years of work

**Source: Procced Data, 2023**

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This research uses a descriptive qualitative approach. The type of data used is primary data with informants. Data were collected using observation and in-depth interviews with several informants: business owners, carved furniture workers, and the Employment Service in West Java, Indonesia. The characteristics of business owners include having a business for more than five years, producing varied products, and having a workforce of less than 20 people. The characteristics of carved furniture workers are that they have worked for more than five years, play an active role/participation in the production process, and are of working age (15-64 years).

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Business owners, carved furniture workers, and representatives of the Employment Service represented the informants used in this research (Malik & Kristina, 2020). The collected data was analyzed using the inductive analysis method, and the validity of the data was tested through a source triangulation test between informants, namely to test the credibility of the data by checking the data obtained from the sources involved in the research. Next, the author presents this study in an exploratory manner by discussing several theories, namely theories or concepts of the work environment, wages, occupational safety and health, and labor.

Descriptive survey design, cross-sectional as many as 778 experienced nurses from seven hospitals were surveyed. The research showed that 35.9% of experienced nurses had high turnover intentions. This research will contribute to forming new rules regarding providing a work environment that focuses on occupational safety and health and a wage mechanism appropriate to job risks.

## **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

The furniture industry is one of the wood processing industries developing increasingly rapidly. The development of an industry cannot be separated from the conditions of its working environment. Environmental conditions are essential in health and work productivity in every sector (Yazgan, 2018). This is the case with the work environment in the carved furniture industry in Desa Sindangmekar, Kecamatan Depok, Kabupaten Cirebon, West Java. The work environment in the carved furniture industry is adapted to the characteristics of workers and work to establish a safe and comfortable work environment. A safe and comfortable work environment can raise enthusiasm and increase performance at work. Conversely, if the work environment is unsafe and uncomfortable, it can reduce enthusiasm and performance at work. The work environment is everything around the worker that can influence him in carrying out the assigned tasks. The following is a statement provided by the informant regarding working environmental conditions. "The work environment is like this, sir; there is no cover, so production activities can be seen outside (pointing to the road). If the workplace is like this, it is cramped and small, unlike in a company, because it is a home industry and noisy from tools such as saws. Diesel engines are noisy, sir."

The information above shows that the work environment in the carved furniture industry is still simple, with buildings without coverings and the sound of work tools causing noise. The work environment significantly influences worker satisfaction and emphasizes the need for management to improve the employee environment to increase productivity (Agbozo et al., 2017). Situational constraints, such as noise, office furniture, ventilation, and light, are the main work environment conditions that hurt job performance and should receive more attention. It is recommended that employers take the initiative to motivate employees by improving their work environment. When employees are motivated, their job performance will improve, and they will achieve desired job outcomes and goals. A good work environment is a work environment that meets occupational health requirements as follows. "A good working environment is an environment that meets occupational health requirements, whether it is lighting, ergonomics, seating; that is the supervisor's job. The lighting must be like this: the seating, the room, and the ventilation all arranged".

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The informant's answer shows that a good work environment is a work environment that meets occupational health requirements, including lighting, seating, space, ventilation, and so on, which must be well-regulated. The efficiency of the working environment will be conducive to breaking down the resource and environmental constraints of industrial development and further coordinated economic and environmental development. Environmental regulations can promote coordinated economic and environmental development in the industry depending on a reasonable level of environmental regulation. However, the current environmental regulation level does not encourage increased environmental efficiency. Defines the work environment as shaping a person's way of working. The safety climate in the organization is carried out through policies, procedures, and practices related to workplace safety. However, it is tough to maintain the normal limits of an ideal environment containing safety and health principles. However, if the environment is uncomfortable, disrupts health, and organizational motivation is low, this condition will make it vulnerable to a decrease in work productivity (Massoudi & Hamdi, 2017).

Environmental conditions are essential in health and work productivity in every sector. However, constant efforts to evaluate environmental conditions, establish preventive measures, and relate consequences are essential to increase the productivity of workers working under inappropriate conditions under time pressure. If a job or task is assigned, the worker must complete it well, regardless of the conditions. In carrying out work, various factors can support work success, including the workplace. The workplace is vital for a worker and influences him in carrying out his duties and work. Therefore, an entrepreneur in an industry or company must pay close attention to the workplace conditions; he employs workers to produce the desired goods and services. The workplace must be adapted to the characteristics of the job, namely related to the work risks workers face so that they can carry out their duties well and avoid work accidents. The workplace for the carved furniture industry is still straightforward; this can be seen from the condition of the building where the workplace is located in the house's yard. No walls cover the workplace so the public can see the carved furniture production process. In the workplace, various materials and work tools are used in production. The following are workplace conditions in the carved furniture industry in Desa Sindangmekar, Kecamatan Depok, Kabupaten Cirebon, West Java, according to the informant's answers. "My work area for carving furniture is like this; you could say it is narrow. However, the tools also fit, but in this condition, there are no covers (Adang adage), so the production activities can be seen by people, and on average, it is like this in West Java, Indonesia. It is noisy because the sound of work equipment and tools can be dangerous for workers".

The information above shows that workplace conditions in the carved furniture industry are still simple. This can be seen from the cramped condition of the building, being in the yard of the house, and the noise from the work tools used in the industrial production process. Work environment investments are essential to create a healthy and safe workplace. Employees and managers highly value work environment investments, but at the same time, investments can be optimized by reducing worker exposure levels. Factors such as follow-up of investments, education and training on equipment use, worker involvement in the process, and leadership involvement are essential to optimize work environment investment. Meanwhile, workplace design also significantly impacts employee health and has a negative

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relationship with the level of employee discomfort. Color, light, air quality, environmental conditions, and noise significantly influence employee health and performance (Riaz, Shoaib, & Sarfraz, 2017). Workplace accidents are unexpected and unwanted events that can cause loss of time, property, and casualties in the industrial work process. Minor injuries such as pinched hands, injuries due to materials, and work accidents involving the eyes due to dust, which cause minor injuries such as cuts/lacerations, are included in the high category. Occupational diseases are one of the leading health problems related to workplace hazards; these workers are vulnerable to occupational health problems due to a lack of knowledge and implementation of health and safety in the workplace.

Poor workplace conditions (physical effort, environmental conditions, and dangers) decrease employee performance, including following organizational rules, quality, collaborating with colleagues to solve problems, focusing on tasks, creativity, and absenteeism. Workplace accidents are unexpected and unwanted events that can cause loss of time, property, and casualties in the industrial work process. Minor injuries such as pinched hands, injuries due to materials, and work accidents involving the eyes due to dust, which cause minor injuries such as cuts/lacerations, are included in the high category. Occupational diseases are one of the leading health problems related to workplace hazards; these workers are vulnerable to occupational health problems due to a lack of knowledge and implementation of health and safety in the workplace. Poor workplace conditions (physical effort, environmental conditions, and dangers) decrease employee performance, including following organizational rules, quality, collaborating with colleagues to solve problems, focusing on tasks, creativity, and absenteeism."Teak wood, sir, glue, sandpaper, nail gun, and so on."

The informant's answer above shows that teak wood is the primary raw material in industrial production activities. A production process using quality raw materials will impact sales by increasing prices, and production will stop if raw materials are unavailable. The use of wood raw materials that are produced using machine tools, it is believed that the production process contains occupational risks. Work safety risks occur due to the use of modern technology in production. Work safety risks faced are based on suitability to the characteristics of the work carried out by workers. This is because workers interact directly with work tools during the production process, which can pose safety risks, especially saws. The following is the informant's answer. "Usually, you get hit by a chainsaw, bro. If you get hit by propyl, it is a game person. If you get hit like that here, you can do it. Some are serious, some are not, sometimes yes, some come off, yes, some do".

The information above shows that work safety risks are caused by using work tools in production, especially saws. This is because production machines are primarily a source of risk in companies with the highest severity level (Arimbi et al., 2019). This accident can occur because a lack of safety awareness has caused many losses, including accidents, insurance, and indirect costs. Most work accidents occur due to low perceptions of work safety. The potential dangers posed in the wood processing (furniture) production process can be categorized as high-risk, namely hand cuts and fingers being cut by machines. Three types of risk control activities are determined to minimize risks: administration, engineering control, and personal protective equipment (Indrawati et al., 2018). The furniture industry is one of the industries that uses wood as raw materials in its production process. Wood raw materials are

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adapted to the characteristics of work involved in processing wood into various types of products such as tables, chairs, and others. The process of processing wood into various finished products in the furniture industry consists of several stages, where the process produces pollutants, namely wood dust. Flying wood dust can be inhaled by workers' respiratory tract and can cause health problems such as coughing, shortness of breath, and lung problems. Flying dust can also stick to workers' skin and get into their eyes, causing itching, skin irritation, and red eyes. The following is information from the informant as follows. "Maybe it is the wood dust affecting your health, maybe itching, coughing, or shortness of breath, just like that."

Occupational health risks are caused by wood dust produced during production and can affect workers' health, such as coughing, shortness of breath, and, most seriously, lungs. It can be said that the furniture industry (wood processing) can potentially cause health problems for workers because the furniture production process produces wood dust that becomes airborne. Then, the wood dust is inhaled into the respiratory tract and settles, which can cause health problems such as coughing, shortness of breath, and other problems. Wood dust is formed from some wood from the sawing and sanding process, which will cause acute respiratory infections. Excessive and continuous dust levels for a long time can cause various health problems for workers. Under certain conditions, dust is a danger that can cause reduced work comfort, impaired vision, impaired lung function, and even cause poisoning. Dust can also cause lung damage and fibrosis if inhaled continuously during work. If the alveoli harden, the result is reduced elasticity in accommodating the air volume so that its ability to bind oxygen decreases (Kabir, Watson, & Somaratna, 2018). Apart from that, dust that comes into contact with the eyes can cause scratches on the cornea or even more. This can cause pain in the eyes (Ramadanti, 2023). Workers' characteristics regarding their role in their work can be adjusted to work procedures and work experience. The work experience of carved furniture workers shows the suitability of worker characteristics. This is important for workers because it will help them complete the assigned tasks. Workers have work experience from various regions but are still in the same field, namely carved furniture.

Work experience will help workers complete all the work assigned. Workers with extensive work experience will find it easier to complete similar work. The following is the informant's description of his work experience. "His work experience has been in Interior Brebes, in Brebes furniture, and the Jepara company itself; all his dealings were with furniture." The information provided by the informant shows that the work experience the worker has had is working in various regions but still in the furniture sector. Work experience is workers' knowledge, skills, and abilities to carry out their previous job responsibilities. A person's work experience will show the types of work they have done and provide great opportunities to do their job better. The wider a person's work experience, the more skilled they are at carrying out their work and the more perfect their mindset and attitude in acting to achieve the goals they have set (Foster & Karen, 2001). The more work experience a person has, the greater the impact on the breadth of knowledge in their field of work and will improve their skills. Meanwhile, the suitability of worker characteristics can also be seen in the work procedures implemented in the carved furniture industry. Ways of working that are appropriate to the work to be done assist workers in completing assigned tasks and avoiding work risks. One of the causes of occupational risks is the way of working, the use of

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machines, tools, and materials, and human and environmental factors. Therefore, business owners are also committed to maintaining a safe work environment through protection while working. As expressed by the following informant. "Yes, machines cannot be compromised, bro; you have to be focused and careful; if the workforce is not focused and their minds wander elsewhere, that will cause accidents, bro, and use masks or glasses."

Work systems can be formed by interacting with technology in an organizational system characterized by a physical and cultural environment. A practical and optimal system can increase productivity, worker safety and health, psychological comfort, motivation, and quality of life. Thus, the design of the work system created in the carved furniture business must be adapted to the needs of workers and the company to create a safe, comfortable work system that can increase work productivity. So, the work system for furniture workers aims to maintain a safe environment by using work safety equipment. Behavior and interactions in the carved furniture work environment are based on wage agreements and guaranteed protection through work protective equipment. Some descriptions of these findings are explained as follows: Behavior regarding work protection in the furniture business work environment is bound by informal rules only. In establishing a working relationship in the furniture industry, there is no written work contract between the worker and the business owner; no work contract binds the entrepreneur's obligation to provide a safe work environment. The employment relationship is based solely on an agreement that is not written but can be accepted by the worker. For example, wages are given only when the product is completed, as the informant states. "This is how craftsmen and bosses usually do not have a work contract, where the goods made according to the order are paid for so there is no debt. If the boss owes money, the workers will run away and do not want to. So the work completed according to the size of the orderer will be paid immediately".

The information above shows an employment relationship between furniture workers and business owners without an employment contract. According to Law No. 13 of 2003, article 1, paragraph 14 concerning Employment states that a work agreement (work contract) is an agreement between a worker/laborer and an entrepreneur or employer that contains the terms, rights, and obligations of the parties (Undang-Undang No. 13 Tentang Ketenagakerjaan, 2003). Employment contracts are usually made in writing according to the agreement of both parties, namely the employee and the entrepreneur. However, the furniture business sector and workers, classified as the informal sector, contribute to the absence of work contracts. Informal sector workers work in informal employment relationships and receive wages and rewards. An informal sector business is the activity of an individual, family, or several people who carry out a joint business to carry out economic activities based on trust and agreement and are not a legal entity. The working relationship between informal sector businesses and their workers is based on mutual trust and agreement on receiving wages and rewards or profit sharing (Undang-Undang No. 25 Tentang Ketenagakerjaan., 1997). Traditional employment relations institutions still play a role and function well in several rural areas that were formed autonomously. Likewise, in the working relationship in this small furniture industry, no work contract agreement regulates the need for a safe work environment. Wages are the basis of agreement between business owners and workers in employment relations. Before doing work, wages must be determined first so that problems do not occur in the future (Putra, 2003).

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The following is the informant's statement. "Wages are very determining; before one set of goods is processed, the results are usually determined first. "If it is suitable, then do it, because the boss already knows the expenses, how much income, how much, there are details, sir, even if it is just wishful thinking, there are details, but if a work accident occurs, it is discussed later, who will bear it. "Workers' wages are based on orders and piece rates, determining the wage amount by mutual agreement between the employer and the work recipient. This system is almost the same as a wage system based on output units. However, the difference is that several people usually carry out piecework, and the contractor holds the work contribution. The wages received by workers are very accessible. This means that wages are given without agreement. Wage agreement negotiations can be carried out in determining wages. Moreover, this has been done, even though it does not include the need for protection at work. Wages are the rights of workers/laborers, which are received and expressed in the form of money as compensation from entrepreneurs or employers to workers, which are determined and paid according to work agreements, agreements, or statutory regulations, including allowances for workers/laborers and their families for work, and services that have been performed (Undang-Undang No. 13 Tentang Ketenagakerjaan, 2003).

The wages received should not be commensurate with the risk. So far, wages received are based on ordered products only, namely around 25% of the selling price. The owner provides materials and tools. If it is assumed that 25% of the selling price of a cupboard is IDR 1,000,000, then he receives a wage of IDR 250,000 for every cupboard the customer orders. IDR 250,000 is less than the risk if the risk of the worst illness is lung problems. This means that the wages provided by an industry should be commensurate with the risk of injury faced while working. However, the risk is not considered in providing this wage because the wages are small. The higher the wages given, the higher the risk of injury (Soete, n.d.). Among them are related to the use of the equipment and the involvement of workers and owners in discussing work agreements that not only discuss wages but also safety protection. Workers should have the decision to choose a risky job or not. This choice will also affect workers' knowledge and concern for the wages they receive. The level of utility for risky work will shape wages, and it is assumed that workers will choose jobs with high wages but also pay attention to the protection factors offered by the owner/industry (Soete, n.d.). Findings on behavior and other interactions are shown by personal protective equipment at work. In overcoming occupational safety and health risks, business owners responsible for the industry provide personal protective equipment to workers. The personal protective equipment provided by the owner is a mask and glasses. Production produces potential dangers from wood dust and work tools such as saws. The following is information from the business owner informant. "We have provided a mask, bro; you can use it so the dust does not enter the respiratory tract."

As a business owner, the informant has tried to overcome occupational health and safety risks, namely providing essential protective equipment in the form of masks and glasses. Personal protective equipment is equipment used to protect workers so they can protect themselves. This control is the last alternative that can be carried out if the two previous controls have not been able to reduce the dangers and impacts that may arise. Personal protective equipment includes all clothing and other work accessories designed to create a barrier against workplace hazards. The party concerned must control Personal protective

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equipment, especially in the workplace. Potential dangers that can arise from the sawing process include back pain, cut hands, pollution from diesel engines, wood dust, and electric shock when starting the machine. A form of technical control can be carried out by providing wood push and pull limits on bandsaw machines, sparkles, and joiners so that your hands do not come into contact with the saw blade. Administrative control can be carried out using personal protective equipment such as masks, glasses, shoes, and gloves. However, up to now, some still think that using personal protective equipment interferes with their work and that the protective effect is lacking. This behavior is influenced by workers' knowledge and attitudes, which are reflected in their actions. Their knowledge is minimal, and their awareness is too. Likewise, business owners have low awareness of business licensing issues. Most carved furniture businesses in Cirebon, West Java, do not have a business permit to establish them. The following is the information from the business owner informant. "In Cirebon, West Java, I do not think there is a business permit because I do not know about it. The problem is that it has been passed down from generation to generation because in the past, the father was a businessman, and his son, perhaps when he was an adult, bought some wood and learned how to make a profit and make a business. "So village people like me do not understand business permits and legal entities."

The information provided by the informant above shows that the carved furniture business in Desa Sindang mekar, Kecamatan Depok, Kabupaten Cirebon, West Java, does not have a business permit for its establishment. Business owners do not know and understand the manufacturing process, even though the relevant agencies have held outreach (Wright et al., 2015). The carved furniture industry in Petekeyan is hereditary, so matters related to business establishment permits are not yet well understood. The carved furniture industry in Cirebon, West Java, is included in the home industry category; it can fulfill the industry's needs completely, from available raw materials, work equipment, payments to workers, and the products that can be sold are considered good.

## **CONCLUSION**

The work environment in the carved furniture industry can be identified based on the suitability of worker characteristics and work requiring adjustments toward a safe work environment. This is adjusted to work procedures, work experience, and the value of agreed norms that shape safe environmental behavior and its interactions. The suitability of job characteristics can be reviewed from occupational safety and health risks during the production process. Work safety risks arise from using work tools that can cause injuries such as cuts to the hand, pinched hands, and so on. Occupational health risks arise from using raw materials in the production process, which produces pollutants in the form of wood dust, which harms health, such as shortness of breath, coughing, itching, and lung problems. The suitability of worker characteristics can be seen from the worker's experience and work procedures; agreed norm values shape safe environmental behavior and the interactions contained therein, including work contracts, wage agreements, wage systems in employment relations, and the provision of personal protective equipment.

Suggestions to business owners to better manage the work environment to support the maintenance and improvement of worker safety and health. Suggestions for workers can increase awareness about the importance of a safe and comfortable work environment so that they can carry out their work more optimally and avoid the risk of work accidents. The

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limitation lies in the research object and analysis method, which only focuses on the work environment which is adapted to the characteristics of work and workers, so suggestions for further research related to work environment issues are to explore in more depth from the perspective of other phenomena, namely based on cultural characteristics and safety behavior and also on the wage mechanism so that the utility value of the wages and risks received can be known.

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