A CASE OF FACTORS AFFECTING ON EMPLOYEES' AWARENESS OF FOOD SAFETY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS FOR BLACK TEA MANUFACTURING PROCESS

A dissertation submitted to the

Faculty of Animal Science and Export Agriculture

Uva Wellassa University

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of

Bachelor of Science in Tea Technology and Value Addition

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Tea Technology and Value Addition Degree Programme

Faculty of Animal Science and Export Agriculture

Uva Wellassa University of Sri Lanka

2019

ABSTRACT

The food and beverage sector is one of the fastest-growing industries among other sectors in the world. Recently, this industry seems to be moving towards to food safety concerns; health-conscious etc. in buying foods including processed and value-added products such as sugar-free, eco-friendly and organic foods. Thus, most of Sri Lankan food manufacturers and suppliers tend to provide an assurance of safe quality food by conforming with standards. As a result, there is a growing number of quality assuring schemes on foods which are emerged to ensure about providing safe and quality requirements remained among consumer. In the present context, consumers are more focus on their health and nutrition considering their accessibility to consume reliable safe foods for their well-being. With respect to tea industry as well, most of Sri Lankan tea manufacturers tend to provide an assurance of safe quality food by conforming with standards. Among the Sri Lankan teas,the Up Country teas as well among others is unique and dominant in nature which lies with the symbol of quality encouraging the global market as "Pure Ceylon Tea''. Thus, managing of food safety management systems become more crucial in the industry including Up Country tea to maintain the recognition of quality of Ceylon Tea with the cooperation of employees. Thus, assuring of employee' awareness on food safety practices becomes the most decisive factor. The aim of this study is to investigate factors influencing employees' awareness of food safety management systems for the black tea manufacturing process with reference to the Up country tea plantations belong to a recognized Regional Plantation Company. Data was collected from thirty respondents (30) in the tea estates belong to the respective plantation company through a self-administrated questionnaire. Collected data were analyzed using descriptive analysis to summarize collected data while ordinal logistic regression model applied to identify the factors affect for employees' awareness on food safety management systems. Education, age, number of food safety session attended, knowledge on FSMS, motivation to follow safety practices were significant at the 99% confidence level while influence from other parties, experience in tea plantations factors were significant at 95% significance level. The study suggested that sufficient training combined with practical sessions, well arranged communication flow, proper inter relation among the personnel and specific time for food safety practices were the most important to improve the food safety awareness level among the employees.

Keywords – Tea, Food safety management systems, Employees' awareness