Predicting food safety risk based on workforce complexity – overcoming communication and engagement barriers to strengthen food safety culture

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Background

- Communication challenges, especially among food-handlers, can lead to ineffective food safety system, thereby posing food safety risk[1].

- Consequent to this challenge, assessing the food safety culture in food industry has also become challenging.

- The tools required for food safety culture assessment are developed by highly trained and educated individuals and they often overlook the diverse backgrounds, languages, and cultures of food-handlers[1].

Methods

We are now recruiting food manufacturing companies in UK,USA and Australia with no less than 50 food handlers out of which immigrant/foreign employees should not be 20% .

We will assess the English language reading and comprehension level of food handlers using a modified adult literacy resource by ReadForward[2]

We will then develop and translate existing food safety culture survey and statements to accommodate observed reading and comprehension levels

Using the revised statements/survey items, we will assess the food safety culture profile of the organisations using a mixed method approach and review of existing food safety culture profile if available[1]

Determination of food safety performance of the organisations through content analysis of food safety documents[3]

Research aims

- This study aims to highlight and eliminate communication barriers to assessing food safety culture of food manufacturing companies.

- It will also explore the influence of national and regional culture on food safety culture of organizations.

- Finally, with communication barriers eliminated, it will investigate the association between culture and food safety performance.

Significance

- The study will benefit organizations in understanding the challenges of communication and engagement barriers and identify improvement strategies for their food safety culture and food safety performance.
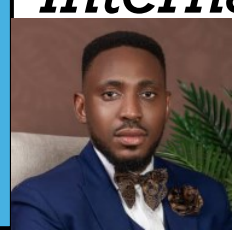
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