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Identification of Systems Thinking Aspects in ISO 45001:2018 on Occupational Health & Safety Management

چکیده (۲۴۱ کلمه):

Systems thinking has emerged as a necessary approach to effective management, including occupational health and safety. Considering the recent publication of the international standard ISO 45001:2018 on occupational health & safety management systems (OHSMS), this study evaluated the extent to which it incorporates systems thinking aspects derived from the literature. The qualitative assessment of the standard against eight systems thinking tenets, each of them referring to the internal and external organisational context, revealed an adequate degree of their coverage. Overall, the effective implementation of the new standard could encourage organisations to move beyond a focus on individual system components and better understand and manage their socio-technical system by contemplating the multiple interactions amongst its elements. However, our findings also indicated a tendency of ISO 45001:2018 to focus more internally, view external agents mainly as constraints and not opportunities and implicitly promote a highly systematic approach that does not recognise local adjustments to manage variability. Subject to the need for field research to investigate the above in organisations implementing the new standard, the results from this study can raise the awareness of the industry about strengths and possible gaps when implementing their OHSMS and inform international and regional bodies when introducing new standards or revising existing ones that focus heavily on socio-technical systems. Additionally, the inclusive list of systems thinking tenets developed as part of this research can function as an updated reference for studies about systems thinking in any socio-technical environment.