

# An Empirical Study on Overcoming Absenteeism to Strengthen the Organisational Effectiveness & Productivity: With Special Reference to One of The Private Sector Leather Company in Kanpur City of Uttar Pradesh

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## Abstract

Absenteeism has always been one of the persistent problems in industry. It makes the workflow disrupted and causes important decisions to be delayed. The problem of absenteeism in industry is faced by almost every country in the world. In India, its magnitude is far greater than in the western countries. Absenteeism is generally understood in different ways by different persons. It is commonly understood as an employee or a group of employees remaining absent from work either continuously for a long period or repeatedly for short periods. This is an empirical study on overcoming the absenteeism to strengthen the organization effectiveness and productivity and is concerned with the issues, causal factors and remedial measures related to absenteeism. The research helps to know the current practices regarding absenteeism prevailing in the selected company and it suggests some ways to improve the absenteeism for better prospects and development of the organization.

**Keywords:** Absenteeism, Employee Attitude, Production, Job Satisfaction

### Introduction

In simple language, it is the total number of workers absent expressed as a percentage of the total number of workers employed. In more technical words the same may be said to mean "a ratio of the number of production man-days or shifts lost to the total number of production man-days or shifts scheduled to work (Rao, 1951).

Absenteeism is defined as the lack of presence of an employee for a planned work (Johns, 2002, Kristensen, Juhl, Eskildsen, Nielsen, Frederiksen, Bisgaard, 2006). Absenteeism is a perennial problem in industry. Various studies have revealed that relatively a few workers are responsible for substantial portion of absenteeism in any plant (Bhatia, 1980). One of the factors affecting optimum utilization of human resources is absenteeism. It is an industrial malady affecting productivity, profits, investments, and the absentee workers themselves. Its consequences are alarming, as a day lost is a resource lost, deprived of being invested. As such, an increasing rate of absence adds considerably to the cost of production of an industry and inhibits industrial progress. The economic and social loss occurring from absenteeism cannot be determined accurately (Bhatia, 1984).

Absenteeism is, however, too complex and an elusive concept to permit exact remedial measures. There is no magic formula available to work as panacea for absenteeism in various organizations operating under different circumstances and conditions of work. With so many factors affecting absence rates, it would be unrealistic to expect to find one simple answer to the problem of industrial absenteeism (Bhatia, 1984).

For purposes of calculation, an employee is considered scheduled to work, when there is work available and the employee is aware of it, and when the employer is fully aware that the employee will be available. In calculating absenteeism, public holidays, and other days when the factory is closed are excluded. When an employee takes time off on a scheduled

working day, he is considered to be absent. Also, when the worker remains away from work, without informing the employer, he is treated as willfully absent (Rao, 1951).

Employee absenteeism, being a serious financial burden for businesses which wish to continue their struggle in tough competitive conditions of today, has become a very important issue to be resolved (Senel & Senel, 2012). Absenteeism, low performance level, severance and distrustful behaviours are the behaviours that influence the productivity and efficiency of business enterprises (Orucu and Kaplan, 2001). Such behaviors bring high costs to companies and therefore are the issues that must be monitored and dealt properly.

Rosenblatt and Shriom (2004) have studied to predict absenteeism by personal background factors. Prior absenteeism, age, education and supervisory position were found to be significant predictors of absenteeism frequency, accounting for about 50 percent of the variance in absence frequency.

Age is one of the most studied demographic factors for absenteeism. Most studies report a negative relationship between age and absenteeism among employees in general. Older workers will exhibit a lower absence rate because of a higher job commitment and a better person-organization fit that emerges over time (Martocchio, 1989, Kristensen, 1991, Harrison and Martocchio, 1998)

Hackett (1990), found that the negative relationship between tenure and absenteeism. Lambert (2006) stated that tenured employees may feel secure in their job which may lead to a higher level of absenteeism; while she did not measure the impact of tenure it was observed that employees with a high level of tenure were more comfortable in their work environment. Keller (2008) found that there is a positive co-relation between absenteeism and tenure. Those with greater tenure reported greater levels of absenteeism. In that study, it is implicated that this may be related to fact that tenured employees time off is not recorded or managed very closely, or given informal time off where as newer employees are managed more closely. Jensen and Mcintosh (2007) found that the tenure in the occupation was positively associated with days absent.

Educational attainment may well elevate employee's professionalism, and consequently enhance their level of responsibility and commitment to attendance. Rentsch and steel (1998) found that the higher the education level, the lower absenteeism would be.

Borda and Norman (1997) reported that the number of children and marital status are variables that represent kinship responsibilities and are considered a major contributor to absence. They might lead to higher levels of absenteeism, because of the increased role demands on employees who are married and have more children (Cohen and Golan, 2007). Vanden Heuvel and Wooden (1995) stated that married parents tended to be absent, regardless of their gender.

In industry, absenteeism affects the morale and discipline of the whole group of workers. It affects the production schedule and leads to dislocation at

various levels. The waste of time, energy and money is considerable. It has been generally observed that, when a worker absents himself once, may be due to some genuine reasons, he develops a temptation to be absent more frequently, sometimes even on flimsy grounds and becomes ultimately a chronic absentee. The absentee suffers the loss of his wages and puts his concern to a loss of its production. Losing his wages, he affects the economic status of his family; and if he indulges in chronic absenteeism, he endangers the standard of living of his own and his family members. Thus, absenteeism is a serious problem, affecting industry and the individuals indulging in it (Murthy, 1954).

#### **Reasons for employees to remain absent from work**

##### **A. Lack of Satisfaction from Present Work**

Employees in the company are almost tired of their repeated work. But it depends on the organization and the type of motivation they are giving to the employees to remain satisfied in their work. Industries are provided with heavy machineries and it needs lot of masculine effort from the employee to carry on his daily activities. Repetitive work makes employee feel unsatisfied and he needs a transition from his present work to the next level. But it is of minimal rate and companies prefer employee to carry on the same work whole time to secure the current status of the organization. It leads employee to search for other jobs and makes him absent to the organization. Also a type of dissatisfaction will exist among the employee regarding his status of work in the organization.

##### **B. Dominating Boss and Seniors**

Industries are provided with different types of manufacturing units inside their organization. Each unit is headed by corresponding managers. It's the role of the managers to play or act as a HR in dealing with the employees daily work process and gets the report to be submitted to the senior manager. The report might have to be an effective one for the organization leading to a successful path. Here managers might have to play a role of dominance in order to bring glory to the organization. Manager might extract work from his subordinate to proceed to the next level of activity. In order to achieve the success managers may foul play with his subordinates and make him acting like the most dominant person. More work pressure will be given to the subordinates and makes him not to perform his work daily leading to absenteeism.

##### **C. Non Cooperating Peers**

Employees in the organization might have been providing with a group of peers working for the objective of the organization. Non cooperation might exist among the peers because of age, gender, authority and personality and other work values leading to a state of confusion and anger among the peers. This may lead to violence and dispute among the peers. Non cooperation leads to the downfall of the company and makes the organization losing its standard. This makes the employee automatically absent from his work and makes him deviated from the organization.

#### D. Higher Expectation

Every organization is having higher expectation from employees to perform well for the organization. This higher expectation reveals the ability of the employee whether to prolong in the organization or not. It leads to the absenteeism of the employee from his work since s/he fails to fulfill the expectations of the organization. Such expectations are above the level of employee's ability which might be difficult for everyone to perform the work.

#### E. Work Stress

Another reason for employee to be dissatisfied and absent from his work is because of the work stress created by his superiors. Work stress is a kind of mental torture given to the employee to do the job well or leave the job. Work stress makes the employee losing his physical health and makes him unable to continue his future activities. Work stress is also a type of methodology followed by some organizations to eliminate the workers.

#### Objectives of the Study

1. To understand and examine the factors causing absenteeism.
2. To examine the attitude of worker towards the organization.
3. To inquire into the commitment of employees towards the organization.
4. To understand the level of satisfaction of the employees.
5. To know whether absenteeism and productivity are related.
6. To suggest any measures to reduce the rate of absenteeism

#### Research Methodology

##### Sample

##### Sample Size

The population for the study comprised of absentees for current year. The total sample was 50 workers.

##### Type of Sampling

Convenience sampling was used in the study and sampling units are chosen on the basis of convenience.

##### Data Collection

The sources of data for the purpose of study were both primary and secondary. Primary data was collected through questionnaire which was comprised of mainly close -ended questions and discussions with workers whereas secondary data was collected from records maintained by personal department and time office.

##### Primary Data

Primary data is collected by conducting the interview of the factory managers and staff who are responsible for each production process. The information gathered relates to daily production rate, production capacity of each department, number of workers in each production stage, the methods applied to transport or handle the materials, work in process and finished goods, inventory levels. Further, the related problems occurred in the factory were also recorded.

##### Secondary Data

Secondary data is the document that the company gave - as the production process chart and responsibility in each department, the size of the

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plant, the details of machine that were used in the production lines, organization information and product description in each type.

#### Research Design

The nature of the research design was descriptive and diagnostic in nature.

#### Tools and Instrument

Questionnaire and interviews.

#### Results and Discussion

1. It was found that 32%, 28% & 24% of the employees came under the age group of 30-40,40-50 & below 30 respectively.
2. It is worth mentioning that 44% of respondents were strongly agree and 16% of respondents are agree to be getting fatigued, whereas 12% and 28% of respondents were strongly disagree and disagree respectively This may compel them to remain absent from the work whereas 4% of the respondents were having neutral decision.
3. It was observed that large number of the employees i.e. 1/3<sup>rd</sup> were not satisfied with their salary, which may cause the workers to search for another job or search for alternative source of income.
4. The data shows that 28% of respondents strongly agreed and 32% of respondents agreed that working condition in the organization is good where as 32 % of respondents feel that the working condition in the organization is not good which may lead to high rate of absenteeism and remaining have the neutral decision.
5. The analysis shows that 34 % of respondents strongly agreed that work is dull and monotonous and 28% of respondents agreed that work is dull and monotonous whereas 18% of the respondents were disagreed.
6. The data shows that 44 % of respondents were strongly satisfied and 32 % of respondents were satisfied with the relationship with superiors and workers. Whereas 8% and 12% of respondents are strongly disagree and disagree respectively with the interpersonal relationships and 4% were neutral.
7. The research shows that 32 % of respondents were strongly satisfied and 28 % of respondents were satisfied with the welfare measures provided by the organization whereas 36% of respondents were not satisfied.
8. The data analysis shows that 76% of respondents were strongly agreed and 12 % of respondents were agreed with the fact that absenteeism affects the productivity whereas 12% of respondents were not agreed.

#### Conclusion

This study has undertaken different analysis to identify the opinion of employees towards absenteeism. The analysis has interpreted; findings and suggestions explaining the factors that influence absenteeism .The study revealed that the employees feel fatigued in the organization. Interpersonal relations among workers and workers relationship with superior is seen to be good but there is dissatisfaction among number of employees. The heavy workload could also be one of the major reasons for absenteeism. Most of the employees feel absenteeism will affect the productivity. However, the

absenteeism can be controlled and minimized by implementing good working condition, etc. Hence, it can be concluded that people are the assets in any organization and absenteeism is the practice or habit of being absent therefore the organization has to overcome such habitual stays. The company needs to give training to the employees about the reason and the effects of absenteeism to its employees.

#### **Suggestion and Recommendations**

1. Literacy programs and various trainings should be given more importance to make people aware about the situation of the company in the absenteeism on work place.
2. Circulars /documents of the company should be circulated in local language so that people may be aware of the rule and regulations of the company.
3. Job enrichment and job enlargement should be undertaken to make the job more interesting.
4. Suitable welfare measure should be established to motivate the employees in more effective way.
5. Findings have shown that there is discontentment about salary among few employees. A new salary structure may be introduced after negotiation.
6. F) Enough freedom and empowerment should be given to the employees on the job.
7. Fatigues in employees can be reduced by giving proper rest periods.

#### **Limitation**

There are some limitations for research as following-

1. As it was not possible to visit each department the true picture of working condition could not be judged.
2. The workers were busy with their work therefore they could not give enough time for the interview.
3. The personal biases of the respondents might have entered into their response.
4. Some of the respondents give no answer to the questions which may affect the analysis.
5. Respondents were reluctant to disclose complete and correct information.
6. Because of a small period only small sample had to be considered which doesn't actually reflect and accurate and entire picture.

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11. I am satisfied with the welfare measures provided.  
 (a) Strongly Agree (b) Agree  
 (c) Neutral (d) Disagree  
 (e) Strongly disagree

12. I feel absenteeism will affect productivity.  
 (a) Strongly Agree (b) Agree  
 (c) Neutral (d) Disagree  
 (e) Strongly disagree

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**Annexure**

**Questionnaire**

Personal Information

Name (Optional) -

Age.....

Gender : Male [ ] Female [ ]

1. For how many years you are working with the company?  
 (a) 0-1 yr (b) 1-2 yr (c) 2-5 yr (d) < 5 yr
2. How often you remain absent in a month?  
 (a) Nil (b) Once (c) Twice (d) > Twice
3. According to you what is the main reason for employees absent?  
 (a) Personal problem (b) Stress  
 (c) Work dissatisfaction (d) Working environment  
 (e) Others (Please Specify).....
4. Your views regarding the present absenteeism policy of the company.  
 (a) Excellent (b) Good (c) Fair (d) poor
5. Are you clear about your work / job responsibilities?  
 (a) Well clear (b) Good  
 (c) Fairly clear (d) Don't know
6. Are you satisfied with working conditions prevailing in the organization?  
 (a) Strongly Agree (b) Agree  
 (c) Neutral (d) Disagree  
 (e) Strongly disagree
7. Constantly feel fatigue?  
 (a) Strongly Agree (b) Agree  
 (c) Neutral (d) Disagree  
 (e) Strongly disagree
8. I feel my work dull and monotonous.  
 (a) Strongly Agree (b) Agree  
 (c) Neutral (d) Disagree  
 (e) Strongly disagree
9. I am satisfied with the relationship with superiors / co-workers.  
 (a) Strongly Agree (b) Agree  
 (c) Neutral (d) Disagree  
 (e) Strongly disagree
10. I feel that I am a part of the organization.  
 (a) Strongly Agree (b) Agree  
 (c) Neutral (d) Disagree  
 (e) Strongly disagree