

## **A RESEARCH ABOUT EMPLOYEES' WORK-LIFE BALANCE AND PRESENTEEISM TENDENCY**

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### **Abstract**

This study is designed in order to deal with the impacts of presenteeism tendency on work-life balance. The work-life balance indicates the consistency between the time spent at work and in private life. Conflicts between these two dimensions have become a major problem for businesses as well as employees. Presenteeism refers to the circumstances in which employees keep on working in spite of the fact that they are unable to work owing to their own unhealthy situations. So, excessive workload and sense of responsibility of the employees, who feel as if they are required to be at work not mentally but physically, cause presenteeism and this tendency is described as a big problem in terms of the work-life balance for the organizations. Organizations, by taking control of work-life balance, contribute to not only employees' health and performance but also organizational productivity and efficiency in general terms. For the purpose of the study, relationship between presenteeism and work-life balance is analyzed and impact of presenteeism is stated. The data have been collected from Aksaray province by using the survey technique and the data are analyzed via SPSS.

**Key Words:** *Work-Life Balance, Presenteeism Tendency, Productivity*

**JEL Classification: D23**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

Presenteeism is a popular research topic in management field. The reason for its popularity is that there is a confrontation possibility for every organization. Any organization can face with this phenomenon because presenteeism actually means that an employee comes to the work physically, but in fact he/she is not at work mentally due to some health problems. Therefore, it is opposite of absenteeism which means almost the same thing. But, the difference between them is that in absenteeism employees are absent but in presenteeism they are at their workplace although they are absent from their workplaces mentally.

Another research topic in this study is the work life balance. It also identifies the productivity issue in organizations. It means that an employee can arrange all of its responsibilities in order to fulfill the requirements prescribed by the organization. An ideal work life balance reduces the productivity loses and increase the sustainability for organizations. Nowadays, every kind of businesses deals with this issue and while they are seeking employees, they indicate this requirement as indispensable criteria. Generally, creating such a balance is seen to be difficult but when it is completed by employees, relations between workplace, family, friends and other special issues are designed accurately. So this prevents increasing pressures at work, eliminates burnout tendencies, reduce presenteeism and of course the productivity losses. Therefore, both employers and employees find out its beneficial effects and job satisfaction is achieved.

In this study, two major terms for organizations have been studied. They are presenteeism and work life balance. Although they mean almost the same things, there is no doubt that they are both important elements for organizations and employees. In order to collect data, participants working in banks located in Aksaray province have been reached. They have been told about the study and data have been collected through surveys and interviews. Collected data have been analyzed via statistical tools.

## **2. PRESENTEEISM TENDENCY**

There are various definitions for presenteeism in literature. For the one of the most used online dictionaries, its meaning is that the practice of coming to work despite illness, injury, anxiety often resulting in reduced productivity (<http://dictionary.reference.com>, 2013). For the Cambridge online dictionary it means that the act of staying at work longer than usual to show that you work hard and are important to your employer (<http://dictionary.cambridge.org>, 2013).

Lastly, one of the most favorite dictionaries expresses its meaning as the practice of persistently working longer hours and taking fewer holidays than the terms of one's employment demand as a result of fear of losing one's job (<http://www.collinsdictionary.com>, 2013). Besides that, as Johns (2010) explains, the term was first used by Mark Twain in his book *The American Claimant*. Then, presenteeism was seen in business-related periodicals. In these early years, it was mentioned as the antonym of absenteeism (Johns, 2010:521). Although various definitions can be found on the net, the meaning given in literature also focuses on the phenomenon that it essentially consists of showing up for work despite feeling unhealthy (Ferreira and Martinez, 2012:4380). Presenteeism is a recent research topic related with organizations' productivity, but this term has not aroused the same interest like absenteeism. One of the reasons for this situation might be the methodological issue. That is, presenteeism is not registered and therefore remains difficult to analyze. Besides that, probably it has not so far been considered by the organizations (Bierla, 2013:1536)

The reasons for the productivity lose and indirect costs for employers and organizations can be absenteeism and presenteeism. Absenteeism can be measured easily because the employee is absent at that time. But, presenteeism is difficult to determine (Schultz et al., 2009:365). Also Baker et al. (2012) mention, the impact of presenteeism is hard to measure and loss of productivity is greater with presenteeism than absenteeism (Baker et al. 2012:326). In literature there can be two types of presenteeism. One of them is due to acute illnesses such as cold and flu. Another one is due to chronic- ongoing conditions one such as arthritis. In the former case, employees have the right to choose whether or not to attend to the workplace. There are certain conditions which influence that choice. For example, availability of medication to treat their illnesses is an important factor. As Schultz et al (2009) identifies nurses and teachers are the ones whose occupational rates are higher for this type of presenteeism (Schultz et al., 2009:366).

Previous studies have different outcomes in terms of presenteeism. For example Bierla et al. in their studies express that presenteeism appears as a way of showing the loyalty. So it means that employees express their loyalties by presenteeism (Bierla, 2013:1548) Another one that Ferreira and Martinez indicates that psychological conditions such as high levels of stress and lack of emotional fulfillment are crucial to understand presenteeism (Ferreira and Martinez, 2012:4381). As Schultz et al (2009) identifies "presenteeism is often measured as the costs associated with reduced work output, errors on the job and failure to meet company production standards" (Schultz et al., 2009:367).

Furthermore, Baker et al. (2012) in their studies explain that presenteeism is a threat to employee efficiency and workplace safety. Group and individuals' perception about presenteeism is different. Therefore, while individuals take this issue more seriously, the groups in workplaces are often reluctant to address problems of presenteeism (Baker et al. 2012:312). Presenteeism is becoming a significant challenge for a productive workforce. This turns into the more increased awareness of presenteeism and demand for health promotion programs in organizations (Cancelliere, 2011:2). In Table 1, influences on presenteeism can be seen:

**Table 1. Influences on Presenteeism**

<b>Presenteeism</b>	
<b>Personal motivations</b>	<b>Workplace pressures</b>
Belief that no one else can do the job	Management style and management of absence, e.g. where managers act as role models and attend work when sick
Loyalty to own professional image	Return to work interviews, sickness absence and trigger policies (fear of negative consequences if off, e.g. disciplinary action)
Obligation and commitment to colleagues, clients and organization	Loss of bonus or performance-related incentives, or risk to promotion prospects because of sick days taken
Inability to work to capacity to fulfill role	
Low commitment level to organization	Workplace culture, e.g. belief that attending work sets a good example, provides strong social network
Fear of passing on illness to clients and colleagues	
Concerns about own health deteriorating	

*Source:* Baker-McCleam, D., Greasley, K., Dale, J. and Griffith, F. (2010) 'Absence management and presenteeism: the pressures on employees to attend work and the impact of attendance on performance'. *Human Resource Management Journal* 20: 3, 311–328.

### 3. WORK LIFE BALANCE

Work life balance term was used for the first time in 1986 in order to provide unhealthy life choices. It was used so that people started to prefer

professional success while neglecting their special lives and choices such as their families, friends and hobbies. It has also been a need for organizations. While moving a service oriented economy, employees have started feeling pressure on workforce. Competitiveness and globalization have made organizations consider work life balance (Ghalawat and Sukhija, 2012:35).

Work life policies have been taken into considerations by the organizations. Also, it has become one of the major areas in terms of the workers' conditions. Organizations want to satisfy their workers with environment and workplace conditions and they concentrate on these issues. Shortly, work life balance of an employee is the control of workplace, family, friend and self. Thanks to a successful work life balance, employees can control their lives, reduce their work stress, and raise job satisfaction. Also health care costs are the bonus of them. Through effective work life balances, organizations can support sustainability, reduce turnovers and burnout rates. Therefore, taking necessary steps for maintenance of healthy balance between work and special life gives the opportunity for long term benefits (Karthik, 2013:26).

In literature, many authors have dealt with this issue. For example, Eaton (2003) figures out that some family supported practices help turnovers reduce and increase commitment. Hogarth et al. (2001) indicate that employees are less concerned than employees about any potential unfairness arising from work-life balances (Ghalawat and Sukhija, 2012:35). In the study of McShane and Glinov (2010) it has been identified that work life balance can affect the conflicts between workplace and non work issues of employees. Also, in that study work life balance have been analyzed in five dimensions: First of all, there is a need for flexible and limited work time, secondly sharing is really important. Thirdly telecommuting has a great effect on productivity. Then, personal leaves and child care support have gained importance in the reduction of negative effects of work life imbalances (McShane and Glinov, 2010:22-23).

#### **4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study is designed to determine whether a relationship between work life balance and presenteeism exist or not. In order to collect data, employees working in banks in Aksaray province have been included to the research process. 70 employees have joined and shared their ideas about presenteeism and work life balance. In order to determine these variables, Stanford presenteeism scale has been used. For the work life balance, scale of Netemeyer et al. (1996) has been preferred. Presenteeism scale consists of 6 questions and work life balance scale

has ten questions. All of the questions in both of the scales have a system of Likert 5 ranging from 1, “not all characteristics” to 5 “very characteristics” Besides that, employees have been informed for the reasons of data collection. Except from these two scales, socio-demographical features of participants have also been collected. These questions have been about gender, marital status, and age, position in organization, education level, experience, the number of children, if there is anyone except for the nuclear family and the number of previous workplaces. 136 participants have been included to the research. Some of the forms have been eliminated due to the missing or uncompleted fields.

## 5. FINDINGS

Socio-demographical features of the participants are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2. Socio-Demographical Features of Participants**

<b>Demographical Features</b>	<b>Freq.</b>	<b>%</b>		<b>Freq.</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>Age</b>			<b>Level of Education</b>		
• 18-25	15	21,4	• High School	2	2,9
• 26-35	41	58,6	• Short Cycle	7	10,0
• 36-45	11	15,7	• First Cycle	42	60,0
• 46-55	3	4,3	• Second-Third	19	27,1
<b>Gender</b>			<b>Position</b>		
• Female	34	48,6	• Manager	22	31,4
• Male	36	51,4	• Service Staff	19	27,1
<b>Marital Status</b>			• Specialist	3	4,3
• Single	22	31,4	• Consumer	8	11,4
• Married	37	52,9	• Other	18	25,7
• Divorced	11	15,7	<b>Experience Level</b>		
<b>Children</b>			• <1 years	5	7,1
• Yes	27	38,6	• 1-5 years	36	51,4
• No	43	61,4	• 6-10 years	21	30
<b>If Yes, How Many Children?</b>			• 11-15 years	6	8,6
• One	15	21,4	• 16 < years	2	2,9
• Two	4	5,7	<b>Number of Previous Workplaces</b>		
• Three and more	8	11,4	• None	44	62,9
<b>If Yes, anyone except your nuclear family?</b>			• Two	23	32,9
• Parents	19	27,1	• Three	1	1,4
• Grand Parents	4	5,7	• Four and more	2	2,9
• Other	26	37,1			

When the table 2. is analyzed, it can be seen that most of the participants are managers (22). Level of education is mostly first cycle, so they graduated from 4-year schools/faculties. Also, second and third cycle that is master and

doctorate degrees are 27,1% of the participants. There are 36 men and 34 women in the research. 27 of the participants have children. Besides that, 44 of the participants have not changed their employment status before thus this is their first job. Except for demographical features reliability of the scales are important. Reliability is the prerequisite of measurements so first of all reliability scores of the scales used in the research process is given in Table 2. Presenteeism has a ,645 and work life balance scale has a ,887 Cronbach's Alpha scores. This means that work life balance scale is highly reliable. Also presenteeism scale is good enough to measure the features of participants.

**Table 3. Reliability Scores of the Scales**

Scale	Measurement	Items	Cronbach's Alpha	n
Presenteeism	1-5	6	,645	70
Work Life Balance	1-5	10	,887	70

In Table 4. factor analysis of the presenteeism can be seen. According to the results there are two components and these two components explain the total variance as 74,905. KMO scores of the components (,682) indicate that the result is highly appropriate.

**Table 4. Presenteeism Scale Factor Analysis Results**

Items	Component	
	Completing work	Avoiding Distraction
Despite having my (health, problem)*, I was able to finish hard tasks in my work.	,912	
At work, I was able to focus on achieving my goals despite my (health problem)*	,885	
Despite having my (health problem)*, I felt energetic enough to complete all my work	,811	
Because of my (health problem)*the stresses of my job were much harder to handle.		,827
My (health problem)* distracted me from taking pleasure in my work.		,896
I felt hopeless about finishing certain work tasks, due to my (health problem)*.		,797
Total Variance Explained		74,905
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		,682
Approx. Chi-Square		168,043
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	df	15
	Sig.	,000

In presenteeism scale there are two components as it is in the most of the studies in literature and they are named as completing work and avoiding distraction. Also it should be noted that when a scale is appropriate for factor

analysis with its high KMO scores, it can be said that the scale has also validity. In Table 5, there can be seen the factor analysis results of work life balance scale. Like in presenteeism, the scale has ,838 KMO score and it is appropriate for analyses. Moreover, this scale explains 68,775 of the total variance.

**Table 5. Work Life Balance Factor Analysis Results**

	Component	
	Work-Life Conflicts	Life-Work Conflicts
The demands of my work interfere with my home and family life.	,792	
The amount of time my job takes up makes it difficult to fulfill family responsibilities.	,846	
Things I want to do at home do not get done because of demands my job puts on me.	,882	
My job produces strain that makes it difficult to fulfill family duties.	,740	
Due to work-related duties, I have to make changes to my plans for family activities.	,721	
The demands of my family or spouse/partner interfere with work-related activities		,754
I have to put off doing things at work because of demands on my time at home.		,789
Things I want to do at work do not get done because of the demands of my family or spouse/partner.		,740
My home life interferes with my responsibilities at work such as getting to work on time, accomplishing daily tasks, and working overtime.		,834
Family-related strain interferes with my ability to perform job-related duties		,804
Total Variance Explained		68,775
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		,838
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	410,924
	df	45
	Sig.	,000

In work life balance factor analysis, the components are named ad work-life conflicts and life-work conflicts as they were in the work of Netemeyer (2010). Factor analyses in Table 4 and Table 5. were carried out in order to prove the validity of the data. Other statistical tests were carried out by using all of the variables not only in factor components. In order to determine whether there is a difference and relation between work life balance and presenteeism firstly t-test and then correlation test have been carried out and the results are shown below. In Table 6, significance is given as ,184 and this makes us think that there is no significant difference between these two scales. Thus, there is no significant

difference in the scores of presenteeism tendency ( $X=3,2548$ ,  $SD= ,73158$ ) and Work Life Balance ( $X=3,0843$ ,  $SD=,91567$ ) scale;  $t(69)= -1,341$ ,  $p=,184$ .

**Table 6. t-test Results of WLF and Presenteeism**

		Mean	Std. Deviation	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pair 1	IYD - Present	-,17048	1,06382	-1,341	69	,184

Also in Table 7, correlation matrix is seen and the results show that these two scales are not related so that the correlation coefficient is ,181. Also, the mean of Work Life Balance variable is 3,084286 and the mean of Presenteeism variable is 3,254762. The standard deviation of work life balance is ,91567 and presenteeism is ,73157. There are 70 observations for each of these two variables.

**Table 7. Work Life Balance and Presenteeism Correlation Matrix**

		WLB	Presenteeism
WLB	Pearson Correlation	1	,181
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,135
Presenteeism	Pearson Correlation	,181	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,135	

Some of the socio-demographical features are analyzed in terms of both presenteeism and work life balances in Table 8. It is seen that there is no significance between any of them, but experience level of participants and work life balance are related and there is a significant difference at the level of 0,05.

**Table 8. Demographical Features and WLF/Presenteeism Anova Test Results**

Gender		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
WLF	Between Groups	,023	1	,023	,027	,870
	Within Groups	57,830	68	,850		
	Total	57,853	69			
Present	Between Groups	,039	1	,039	,072	,789
	Within Groups	36,890	68	,542		
	Total	36,929	69			
Experience Level		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
WLF	Between Groups	11,700	4	2,925	4,120	,005
	Within Groups	46,152	65	,710		
	Total	57,853	69			
Present	Between Groups	,183	4	,046	,081	,988
	Within Groups	36,746	65	,565		
	Total	36,929	69			

## 6. CONCLUSION

Presenteeism and work life balance were the main research areas of this study. The main aim of the study is to determine if there is a relationship between presenteeism and work life balance. In order to collect data, employees working in private or public banks in Aksaray were chosen as the participants of the study. After some elimination process on data collection tool, 136 employees were included to the research. Data were collected through survey forms and face to face interviews. During the data analysis process, some statistical tests were applied. These are factor analysis, correlation, Anova and other demographical frequencies. First of all, reliability of the scales was determined and the results showed that survey form is highly reliable and statistical tests can be applied successfully. Then, demographical results were given. Accordingly, information about participants' gender, age, education, experience and their positions in their organizations were shared. Also, factor analyses of the two scales were given and it was found that components were appropriate for the literature. That factor analyses were applied and KMO scores were found to be adequate enough, it was thought that the scales were validated. Thus, reliability and validity of the scales were provided. Besides that, Correlation test results showed that there was no meaningful relationship between presenteeism and work life balance. Also, Anova test was applied and these two scales were analyzed in terms of the demographical variables. When the results were analyzed, it was seen that experience level was only related variable with work life balance. Consequently, this study was carried out only in Aksaray province and this made the first limitation of the study. Also the data were collected through survey forms and this was the second limitation. If the scales are applied in different population, the results might be different.

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