

Missing Workforce: Some Personality Correlates of Absenteeism

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INTRODUCTION

Workplace attendance and absenteeism are of fundamental importance to a progressive society. Absenteeism affects, most directly, all organizations as cost of production increases and productivity decreases, which has a direct bearing on the wealth generation process. It adds to the cost, or may reduce the quality of public and private goods and services. At the workplace, it may place additional burdens on employers and workers, especially at critically important times, or in key processes.

The business environment has changed to the extent that now every area of economic performance is of importance to achieve local and international competitiveness. Employee attendances at work, productivity and organizational commitment have become critical components of human resource performance. This is changing, by necessity, the view that little can be done to influence the costs of absenteeism, and some organizations are already making inroads in improving work attendance rates. The new industrial environment means that opportunities may arise, through restructuring and enterprise bargaining, to alter conditions of employment to better meet the needs of employers and employees. These can, and have included, the management of workplace absence and sick leave. Work attendance and absenteeism are linked to many factors, with the major, though not the sole determinant, being disease-related incapacity. Work attendance is generally considered to reflect the “complex person-work-enterprise-society relationship”. These factors show marked variation between societies, industries, workplaces, work groups and individuals.

Employee attendance should not be viewed in isolation from the workplace or the work environment. Collateral workplace indicators, such as employee turnover, workers compensation claims rate and industrial disputation, can assist in forming a comprehensive picture.

Absenteeism, work delays and productivity decline are often the first signs of something wrong at the workplace, and may precede events such as accidents and injury. These first signs should receive more attention by occupational health and safety professionals and management.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF THE TERMS USED

ABSENTEEISM

For the present study, “**Absenteeism is defined as the failure of a worker to report for work when he is scheduled to work**”. A worker is considered to be scheduled to work when the employer has work available for him and the worker is aware of it. **Authorized absence is also treated as absence, while presence even for a part of the shift is treated as presence for the whole shift. Absence on account of strikes, lockout, layoff, weekly rests or suspension was not taken into account.** National average absenteeism rate is 10.43% and thus this was used as a cut point to divide the absentees in low absentees and high absentees group. Those having absenteeism rate below 10.43% were taken in low absentees group and those who have absenteeism rate higher than 10.43% were regarded as high absentees.

JOB-SATISFACTION

Job-satisfaction is an employee’s attitudinal response to his or her organization. As an attitude, job satisfaction is summarized in evaluative component and comprised of cognitive, affective, behavioral components. As with all attitudes, the relationship between satisfaction and behavior, most specifically job performance and membership, is complex. But for the present study, the level of job-satisfaction was measured in two types of areas—job-intrinsic (factors residing in the job itself) and job-extrinsic (factors lying outside the job). Job-intrinsic area was

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further conceptualized as job-concrete (say: excursions, working conditions etc.) and job-abstract (say: cooperating, democratic functioning etc.); and job-extrinsic areas as consisting of three components, viz., psycho-social aspects, financial aspects and community/nation growth aspect.

NEUROTICISM

For the present study, the definition of neuroticism proposed by H.J.Eysenck was used. According to Eysenck, Negative Emotionality, or Need for Stability refers to the number and strength of stimuli required to elicit negative emotions in a person. More resilient persons are bothered by fewer stimuli in their environment, and the stimuli must be strong in order to bother them. More reactive persons are bothered by a greater variety of stimuli, and the stimuli do not have to be as strong in order to bother them. At one extreme of the N continuum, we have the Reactive, who experience more negative emotions than most people and who report less satisfaction with life than most people. On the other extreme of the N continuum, we have the Resilient, who tend to experience life on a more rational level than most people and who appear rather impervious sometimes to what's going on around them.

EXTRAVERSION

Extraversion refers to the level of sensory stimulation with which one is comfortable. High extraversion is characterized by a larger number of relationships, a larger proportion of one's time spent in enjoying them, and in general, a comfort with loud, bustling social scenes. Low extraversion is characterized by quieter social scenes, a smaller number of relationships and a smaller proportion of one's time spent in pursuing those relationships.

OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

The objectives of the present study are as follows:

1. To study the job-satisfaction and personality traits of male and female absentees.
2. To study the job-satisfaction and personality traits of low absentees and high absentees.
3. To study the interaction effect of gender and level of absenteeism on job-satisfaction and personality traits.
4. To study the relationship between job-satisfaction and personality traits of male, female, high and low absentees.

HYPOTHESES

1. **There will be significant difference in job-satisfaction and personality traits of male and female absentees.**
2. **There will be significant difference between job-satisfaction and personality traits of low absentees and high absentees.**
3. **There will be significant interaction of gender and level of absenteeism on job-satisfaction and personality traits.**
4. **There will be significant relationship between job-satisfaction and personality traits of male, female, high and low absentees.**

JUSTIFICATION OF THE STUDY

Workplace attendance and its converse absenteeism are complex multi dimensional issues involving the interaction and subtle interplay between worker, employer, workplace, social, societal and economic factors. Until recently, research focus has been on a variety of demographic, attitudinal, and organizational variables in predicting and explaining absenteeism. If personality traits predict absenteeism, then it may be possible to use measures of these traits to identify and select job applicants and thereby reduce absenteeism rates.

This type of study has many theoretical as well as practical implications like **(1)** conceptualization of absenteeism in Indian context in general and organizational context in specific **(2)** Issues relating to objective measurement of absenteeism is also crucial **(3)** Understanding how job-satisfaction and personality variables are related to absenteeism. It will also provide knowledge about the relationship of job-satisfaction and absenteeism rate and how they vary together. This helps to understand the details of the personality traits that predict absenteeism in an organization. This will give knowledge about what are the personality characteristics that generally are more

vulnerable to absenteeism and turnover. Accordingly, the managers can be advised to identify those traits while recruiting a person and thus avoid or reduce absenteeism rate. Moreover, this knowledge can be used to formulate training programs, placing for creating best person-job fit model in the organization. This will guide to build competent and successful attendance management policy for a particular organization.

SELECTION OF SAMPLE

The sample for the study consists of 80 employees (non-teaching) of the University of Jammu with a mean age of 30 years. Purposive sampling method was used to collect the data. Two types of samples were selected, one of low absentees group and one of high absentees group.

The absenteeism rate of total 165 employees was calculated and was arranged in descending order and top 40 employees were considered as high absentees and bottom 40 were considered as low absentees. 40 employees will be selected from low absentees group i.e. 20 male and 20 female. 40 employees will be selected from high absentee's group i.e. 20 male and 20 female. These two groups were compared on factors such as age, years of experience and socio-economic status.

VARIABLES

Predictor Variable: Gender and Level of absenteeism.

Criterion Variables: Personality traits and Job-satisfaction.

TOOLS USED

Job-satisfaction Scale: This scale is developed by Dr. Amar Singh and Dr. T.R.Sharma.

Eysenck's MPI: Maudsley Personality Inventory (MPI) was developed by H.J.Eysenck. It is designed to give a ready measure of two important personality dimensions: neuroticism or emotionality, and extraversion.

STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES

➤ **Descriptive statistics :** Mean, Standard Deviation & t-test.

➤ **Inferential statistics:** ANOVA & Correlation.

TABLE-1 : SUMMARY TABLE OF MEAN AND STANDARD DEVIATION OF HIGH AND LOW ABSENTEES ON JOB-SATISFACTION AND DIFFERENT PERSONALITY TRAITS

Variables	Job-satisfaction(JS)		Neuroticism(N)		Extraversion(E)	
High Absentees (20)	M	F	M	F	M	F
	N= 20	20	N= 20	20	N= 20	20
	M= 58.7	61.6	M= 33.4	35.3	M= 22.4	29.7
	S.D.= 6.42	5.58	S.D.= 6.11	4.76	S.D.= 7.46	6.52
Low Absentees (20)	M	F	M	F	M	F
	N= 20	20	N= 20	20	N= 20	20
	M= 73.4	78.3	M= 23.2	25.4	M= 21.3	20.4
	S.D.= 4.88	5.61	S.D.= 4.69	5.13	S.D.= 3.56	4.01

TABLE-2: ANOVA TABLE (INDEPENDENT VARIABLE: GENDER)

	Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Job Satisfaction	Between Groups	152.100	1	152.100	1.594	.214
	Within Groups	3625.900	78	95.418		
	Total	3778.000	79	42.025		
Neuroticism	Between Groups	42.025	1	52.23	.805	.375
	Within Groups	1984.750	78			
	Total	2026.775	79			
Extraversion	Between Groups	102.400	1	102.400	2.464	.125
	Within Groups	1579.5	78	41.566		
	Total	1681.90	79			

TABLE-3: ANOVA TABLE (INDEPENDENT VARIABLE: ABSENTEEISM RATE)

	Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Job Satisfaction	Between Groups	2464.900	1	2464.900	71.32	.00
	Within Group	1313.100	78	34.555		
	Total	3778.000	79			
Neuroticism	Between Groups	1010.025	1	1010.025	37.749	.00
	Within Groups	1016.750	78	26.757		
	Total	2026.775	79			
Extraversion	Between Groups	270.400	1	270.400	7.280	.01
	Within Groups	1411.500	78	37.145		
	Total	1681.900	79			

TABLE-4 : CORRELATION TABLE OF DIFFERENT PERSONALITY TRAITS

Correlation	Job-Satisfaction/Neuroticism	Job-Satisfaction/Extraversion
Total sample	-0.550*	-0.282
Male	-0.494*	-0.027
Female	-0.701*	-0.590*
High Absentees : Male	0.345	0.141
High Absentees : Female	-0.814*	-0.382*
Low Absentees : Male	- 0.135	-0.052
Low Absentees : Female	0.284	0.453*

DISCUSSION

The ANOVA table revealed the following analysis and findings:

The main effect of gender on job-satisfaction, neuroticism and extraversion of male and female absentees do not differ significantly. Hence, the hypothesis 1 which states that there will be significant difference in job-satisfaction, neuroticism and extraversion among male and female absentees, was not accepted.

Table-1 shows that females have higher job-satisfaction (Mean=69.95, SD=10.15), higher neuroticism (Mean=30.35, SD=6.99) and higher extraversion (Mean=25.05, SD=7.10) as compared to male job-satisfaction (Mean=66.05, SD=9.36), neuroticism (Mean=28.3, SD=7.44), and extraversion (Mean=21.85, SD=5.71). Females are higher on job-satisfaction and neuroticism as well as extraversion level, but the difference is not statistically significant at 0.05 level of significance.

The main effect of absenteeism rate on job-satisfaction and personality traits was found to be significant. Hence, the hypothesis 2, which states that there will be significant difference in job-satisfaction and personality traits of low and high absentees, was accepted.

Difference in job-satisfaction and personality traits of low and high absentees group was found out to be statistically significant at 0.05 level of significance. The mean score showed that high absentees have low level of job-satisfaction (Mean=60.15, SD=6.04), as compared to job-satisfaction level of low absentees group (Mean=75.85, SD=5.70). High absentees group and low absentees group also differ significantly on personality traits. Low absentees were found lower on neuroticism (Mean=24.3, SD=4.91), extraversion (Mean=20.85, SD=3.71) as compared to neuroticism (Mean=34.3, SD=5.42) and extraversion (Mean=26.05, SD=7.77) of high absentees group.

The interaction effect between gender and level of absenteeism was found to be insignificant. So, hypothesis 3 that states that there will be significant interaction effect of gender and level of absenteeism on job-satisfaction and personality traits was rejected.

High absentees female showed higher job-satisfaction (Mean=61.6, SD=5.58), as compared to job-satisfaction (Mean=58.7, SD=6.42) but the difference was not statistically significant at 0.05 level of significance. High absentees' male and high absentees' female do not differ significantly on personality traits. These results are in

line with the study conducted by Sinha and Nair (1965) in a light engineering plant in South India. They noted a close relationship between the index of job satisfaction and absenteeism. The study revealed that low absentee workers are significantly more satisfied with their job. This investigation brings out sufficient evidence to show that job satisfaction is an important factor governing absenteeism.

Table-2 shows the relationship between job-satisfaction and personality traits of male/female and high/low absentees group. For the total sample (N=80), there is a statistically significant correlation between job-satisfaction and neuroticism level of males ($r = -0.550$), revealing that job-satisfaction and neuroticism vary in opposite direction. There is a statistically significant correlation between job-satisfaction and neuroticism level of females ($r = -0.494$), revealing that job-satisfaction and neuroticism vary in opposite direction. There is a negative correlation between job-satisfaction and extraversion level ($r = -0.027$) but it is not statistically significant.

A negative correlation ($r = -0.701$) revealed the job-satisfaction and neuroticism level of female absentees and this was found to be statistically significant at 0.05 level of significance. The correlation coefficient for job-satisfaction and neuroticism level was found out to be 0.345 and -0.814 respectively and is statistically significant at 0.05 level of significance. There is a negative correlation ($r = -0.135$) but the correlation was not statistically significant. This finding supports the result of Fraser, Bashford, Beaumont and Jackson and lends supports to the contention of Wyatt and others who found neuroticism and fatigue as significant causes of absenteeism. The Judge et al. (1997) study is interesting considering the research on job satisfaction and the five-factor model. The results of the latter research suggests that extraverted individuals are more satisfied at the workplace, because work gives them an opportunity to experience an optimal level of arousal, whereas introverted individuals are less satisfied at the workplace due to too much stimulation.

Perhaps another factor in absenteeism is that, although introverts may be less satisfied in the workplace, they go to work anyway. This behavior might imply either that introverts are more conscientious or simply that introverts have no compelling reason not to go to work (whereas extraverts may have friends who urge them to skip work and go see a movie). This conclusion is debatable, however, because introverts might be tempted to skip work to avoid the extra stimulation and might perhaps stay at home and read a book.

For low absentees (females), statistically significant positive correlation ($r = 0.453$) between job-satisfaction and extraversion level was found. These findings confirm the findings of the earlier studies on job-satisfaction and extraversion level. For example, Judge et al. (2002) research on job satisfaction and the five-factor model suggests that extraverted individuals are more satisfied at the workplace, because work gives them an opportunity to experience an optimal level of arousal, whereas introverted individuals are less satisfied at the workplace due to too much stimulation.

CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY

1. There was no significant difference in job-satisfaction, neuroticism and extraversion level of male and female absentees.
2. There was significant difference in job-satisfaction and personality traits of low and high absentees group.
3. No significant interaction has been found between gender and level of absenteeism.
4. Negative correlation has been found between job-satisfaction and neuroticism

IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

GENDER SPECIFIC

The findings revealed that there were no difference in male and female employees on job-satisfaction, neuroticism and extraversion. However, the mean value for female employees on job-satisfaction, neuroticism and extraversion were higher than their male counterparts. This result highlights gender equity and social changes. Women are equally satisfied with their jobs, given chance they can be extravert or outgoing to prove their potential and face challenges.

ABSENTEEISM SPECIFIC

The result revealed high and low absentees differ in their job-satisfaction, neuroticism and extraversion. High absentees are not satisfied with their job, are neurotic and show high extraversion. It is interesting to note that high absentees are neurotic as well, and show extravert tendencies. Studies in the past have also reported that high absentees' show extravert tendencies. The probable reason may be that they are deficient in job-related skills and better in social skills and other life skills. So employee counseling, psychological testing during selection process, training and other cafeteria benefits can help them to overcome the problem of absenteeism.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The following limitations of the study should be noted.

1. The present study was confined to the employees of the University of Jammu.
2. The study was limited to a sample of 80 in which there were 40 males and 40 females.
3. The study was restricted to the non-teaching staff only.
4. The present study relied on quantitative data, making it difficult to comment on the process of social and cognitive functioning.
5. The results of the study are sample specific and may not be applicable to other groups like teaching staff and employees belonging to other professions.

AVENUES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

Future research should incorporate both qualitative and quantitative data, with emphasis on understanding of various psychological factors that affect absenteeism rate. More work is required to identify and assess the relative impact of demographic traits, job attributes, recent organizational changes and personality traits, and practice characteristics on employee's job satisfaction, absenteeism rate and intentions to quit. There is also a need to examine longitudinal changes in job satisfaction, absenteeism rate and intentions to quit. Other areas of future work are to investigate how job satisfaction affects performance in the university employees and to predict recruitment and retention patterns for particular groups of employees. Additional research is required on how new organization programs such as EAP and EHP influence employee's job satisfaction, absenteeism rate and intentions to quit.

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Foreign direct investment in the SSI sector could be a wholly new operation or acquisition/take over/ merger with an existing business. Through horizontal FDI, the investment could be made in the same industry, the firm operates at home or in an industry that provides inputs for the firm's domestic operation or sells the outputs of the