



# ABSENTEEISM IN IT INDUSTRY AND ITS DETERMINANTS: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY IN BANGALORE CITY

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## ABSTRACT

*Absenteeism in work is one of the major problems of human resource management in most organizations. It is the lack of physical presence at a behaviour setting when and where one is expected to be (Harrison and Price, 2003)<sup>1</sup>. To these costs, the difficulties of replacement of employees will incur huge indirect costs to the organizations (Gaudine and Saks, 2001)<sup>2</sup>. Absenteeism is influenced by dozens of interrelated factors which make it even more difficult to “quantity, qualify, or rectify” Tylezak (1990)<sup>3</sup>. Steers, et al (1996)<sup>4</sup>. Rhodes and Steers (1990)<sup>5</sup> propose that employee attendance is based on an employee’s motivation to attend as well as their ability to attend. According to George and Jones (2002)<sup>6</sup> job satisfaction is one of the factors affecting an employee’s motivation to attend. Out of a total of 63 industry groups, 34 industry groups recorded higher absenteeism rate as compared to absenteeism rate at all India level. A total of 18 industry groups recorded absenteeism rates of more than 10 percent. It is observed that amongst sectors, the highest rate of absenteeism was observed in Public Sector (9.69 percent) followed by Private Sector (9.14 percent) and Joint Sector (9.08 percent). In Public Sector, the highest and the lowest rates of absenteeism were observed in Kerala (15.16 percent) and Bihar (3.75 percent), respectively. In Joint Sector, the highest rate of absenteeism was observed in Madhya Pradesh (16.80 percent), whereas, the lowest rate of absenteeism was observed in Chhattisgarh (1.90 percent). In Private Sector, the highest absenteeism rate was observed in Delhi (13.37 percent) and the lowest rate was reported in Chhattisgarh (4.25 percent).*

**KEYWORDS:** Absenteeism, work, employee attendance, employee’s motivation, absenteeism rate

## INTRODUCTION

Absenteeism in work is one of the major problems of human resource management in most organizations. It is the lack of physical presence at a behaviour setting when and where one is expected to be (Harrison and Price, 2003)<sup>7</sup>. To these costs, the difficulties of replacement of employees will incur huge indirect costs to the organizations (Gaudine and Saks, 2001)<sup>8</sup>. Absenteeism is influenced by dozens of interrelated factors which make it even more difficult to “quantity, qualify, or rectify” Tylezak (1990)<sup>9</sup>. Steers, et al (1996)<sup>10</sup>. Rhodes and Steers (1990)<sup>11</sup> propose that employee attendance is based on an employee’s motivation to attend as well as their ability to attend. According to George and Jones (2002)<sup>12</sup> job satisfaction is one of the factors affecting an employee’s motivation to attend. Out of a total of 63 industry groups, 34 industry groups recorded higher absenteeism rate as compared to absenteeism rate at all India level. A total of 18 industry groups recorded absenteeism rates of more than 10 percent. It is observed that amongst sectors, the highest rate of absenteeism was observed in Public Sector (9.69 percent) followed by Private Sector (9.14 percent) and Joint Sector (9.08 percent). In Public Sector, the highest and the lowest rates of absenteeism were observed in Kerala (15.16

percent) and Bihar (3.75 percent), respectively. In Joint Sector, the highest rate of absenteeism was observed in Madhya Pradesh (16.80 percent), whereas, the lowest rate of absenteeism was observed in Chhattisgarh (1.90 percent). In Private Sector, the highest absenteeism rate was observed in Delhi (13.37 percent) and the lowest rate was reported in Chhattisgarh (4.25 percent).

## MOTIVATION OF THE STUDY

The IT companies have experienced repeated negative marks with respect to their performance and productivity. Since the human resources is essential in IT industries, it is subjected with a continuous human resource development. If it is not available in the industry, it may affect the company through absenteeism among their employee. The absenteeism lead to huge cost to IT companies through investment on hiring, training and management of human resources. Control of absenteeism can be exercised by the manager through the human resources section regarding the duration and terms of absence pertaining to salary and other aspects. Because of the mismanagement of human resources, there is a loss of productivity and performance among the employees and also the organisations. This situation has motivated the researcher to focus on the absenteeism, causes of absenteeism,

consequences of absenteeism and control measures on absenteeism in the IT companies at Bangalore, India.

## RELATED REVIEWS

According to Luthans (2015)<sup>13</sup> research has generally revealed a consistent inverse relationship between job satisfaction and absenteeism. The effects of job satisfaction will be more evident from the frequency of absences rather than from the total number of days absent Johns, (2016)<sup>14</sup> absenteeism is a complex variable and is influenced by multiple factors Robbins (2008)<sup>15</sup>; Robbins, et al., (2013)<sup>16</sup>; Spector, (2017)<sup>17</sup>.

Hoque and Islam (2013)<sup>18</sup> describe absenteeism as a “subject to be studied, matter to be thought over and a problem to be solved”. Besides the direct costs associated with absenteeism, there are also indirect such as hiring of casual staff, reduced productivity, turnover and potential loss in revenue Cole (2012)<sup>19</sup>; Mason & Griffin (2013)<sup>20</sup>. Robinson (2015)<sup>21</sup> further noted that the indirect costs of absenteeism can be up to three times higher than the direct costs of absenteeism.

Absenteeism is higher among women than men Fried et al., (2012)<sup>22</sup> and Mathieu & Kohler, (2016)<sup>23</sup>. Hardy, et al., (2013)<sup>24</sup> support this theory as their research also reports that women are generally more absent than men due to domestic problems as well as general health issues. Kim and Campagna (2012)<sup>25</sup> found that differences in absenteeism among women and men hold even if both are doing the same job.

Christian (2017)<sup>26</sup> found that absenteeism is negatively correlated with absolute wages, relative wages and hierarchical levels. The positive relative wage has a stringer impact than a negative relative wage which gives rise to the issue of unequal wage structures. Brown and Sessions (2016)<sup>27</sup> revealed that there is a negative correlation between wages and absenteeism as a proxy for work effort. Dohmen et al., (2016)<sup>28</sup> noted that workers react with negative reciprocity and more absenteeism to low wages. Ose (2015)<sup>29</sup> predicted that the non-shirking efficiency wage models have absenteeism. It shows that the increase in workers efficiency lead to higher wages will result in lesser absenteeism.

## RESEARCH GAP

Even though, there are so many studies related to absenteeism among the employees in various fields, there is no exclusive study on absenteeism among the employees in IT companies an Bangalore, India. Hence, the present study has made an attempt to fill up the research gap with the proposed research objectives.

To measure the absenteeism rate among the employees and the demographic discriminator of absenteeism rate; and To examine the various antecedents of absenteeism among the employees;

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study has its own objectives and pre-planned methodologies. The present study also examines the impact of determinants on absenteeism. Hence, the applied research design of the study is descriptive and diagnostic research.

### Population of the Study

The population of the study is the number of employees working in 163 IT companies at Bangalore. The researcher has got permission to conduct the research work only at 56 IT companies out of 163 in Bangalore.

For the determination of sample size, the formula of

$$n = \frac{N}{Ne^2 + 1}, \text{ has been used since the population is known.}$$

This formula has been applied among male and female employees separately.

The determined sample size for male and female came to 386 and 371 respectively. The total sample size came to 757. The sampled employees are identified with the help of the HR managers. The researcher has utilised the assistance of HR manager to identify the sampled employees. Hence, the applied sampling procedure of the study is ‘snow ball sampling’.

### Data Collection

The structured questionnaire was prepared to collect the data. The response rate among the questionnaire among the male and female employees in total came to 74.87 and 63.07 per cent to its total of 386 and 371 employees respectively. All the 289 male and 234 female employees have been included for the present study.

## FRAMEWORK OF ANALYSIS

The statistical analysis has been selected and used to process the collected data according to the requirements of the study.

### Measurement of Absenteeism

The most frequently used measures of absenteeism are frequency and time lost Rhodes and Steers (1990)<sup>30</sup>. Scott and Taylor (1985)<sup>31</sup> used absence frequency to measure the absenteeism. Johns (1978)<sup>32</sup> measured the absenteeism by the frequency of absence for employees in the present study, the absenteeism among the employees with the help of the formula used by Burke and Price, (1989)<sup>33</sup>; Nicholson et al., (1977)<sup>34</sup>.

$$\text{Absenteeism Rate Per Employees} = \frac{\text{No. of lost working days due to absence per annum}}{\text{Total No. of working days per annum}} \times 100$$

$$\text{Absenteeism Rate in a unit} = \frac{\text{No. of lost working days due to absence}}{\text{No. of employees} \times \text{No. of work days}} \times 100$$

In the present study, the absenteeism rate per employees has been used.

### Antecedents of Absenteeism

The antecedents of absenteeism are the causes of absenteeism Andrews, (1997)<sup>35</sup>. The important antecedents of absenteeism are related to physical, mental or emotional problems which prevent the employee to attend

work Cortese, (2003)<sup>36</sup>. The important antecedents are working conditions, job nature, mismatch of person and jobs, and organizational culture Cronje (1995)<sup>37</sup>. The important antecedents of absenteeism included by Deery, et al., (1995)<sup>38</sup>, and Cole (2002)<sup>39</sup> are technical environment, management, single, personal factors and external factors.

In the present study, the included variables in the various antecedents of absenteeism are given in Table 1.

**Table 1**

**Antecedents of Absenteeism**

S.No.	Variables	S.No.	Variables in Antecedents
<b>I</b>	<b>Technical Environment</b>	<b>V</b>	<b>Relative wages</b>
1	Conditions of Work	1.	Wages with reference to co-workers
2	Hours of Work	2	Wages with reference to other workers
3	Accidents	3	Financial incentives with others
4	Occupational Disease	4	Status of symbol
5	Medical Care	5	Equality of work and pay
6	Work Group	<b>VI</b>	<b>Organisational Factor</b>
<b>II</b>	<b>Management Style</b>	1	Lack of Motivation
1	Quality and Style of Supervision	2	Lack of Discipline
2	Wages and Salary	3	Lack of Communication
3	Leave Rules and Procedures	4	High Staff Turnover
4	Poor Employee Participation in Decision Making	5	No Specialized Training
<b>III</b>	<b>Personal Factor</b>	<b>VII</b>	<b>Ethical Climate</b>
1	Marital Harmony	1	Caring
2	Family Size and Responsibilities	2	Instrumental
3	Bad Habits	3	Rules
4	Emotional Health	4	Law and Code
5	Transport	5	Independence
6	Indebtedness	6	Egoism
7	Housing	7	Belevolence
<b>IV</b>	<b>Absolute wages</b>	8	Organisational structure and process
1	Wages and salary		
2	Incentives		
3	Bonus		
4	Other allowances		
5	Medical allowances		
6	Travelling allowances		

**Absenteeism Rate among the Employees**

The absenteeism rate among the employees is computed by  

$$AR = \frac{\text{Number of days absent per year}}{\text{Number of working days per year}} \times 100$$

The absenteeism rate (AR) in the present study is confined to less than 20; 20 to 30; 31 to 40; 41 to 50 and above 50 per cent. The distribution of employees on the basis of their absenteeism rate is given in Table 2.

**Table 2**

**Absenteeism Rate (AR) among the Employees**

Sl.No.	AR in Per cent	Number of Employees		Total
		Male	Female	
1	Less than 20	83	80	163
2	20.01 – 30.00	85	86	171
3	30.01 – 40.00	56	48	104
4	40.01 – 50.00	35	11	46
5	Above 50.00	30	9	39
Total		289	234	523

The important absenteeism rates among the employees are 20.01 to 30.00 and less than 20 per cent which constitute 32.69 and 31.17 per cent to the total respectively. The employees with the absenteeism rate of above 50 per cent constitute 7.46 per cent to the total. The important absenteeism rate among the employees in IT companies are 20.01 to 30.00 and less than 20 per cent which constitute 29.41 and 28.72 per cent to the total respectively. Among the female employees, these two are less than 20 per cent and 20.01 to 30 per cent which constitute 34.19 and 36.75 per cent to the total respectively. The analysis reveals that absenteeism among the male employees in IT companies is higher than absenteeism rate among the female employees.

**Employees' Views on Various Antecedents of Absenteeism**

The employees' views on various antecedents of absenteeism have been computed by the mean scores of the variables in each antecedents of absenteeism. The mean scores of each antecedent of absenteeism among the male and female employees in IT companies have been computed separately. The 't' test has been applied to findout the significant difference among the two group of employees regarding their views on antecedents of absenteeism. The results are shown in Table 3.

**Table 3**  
**Employees' Views on Antecedents of Absenteeism**

Sl.No.	Antecedents	Mean score among employees in		't' statistics
		Male	Female	
1.	Technical Environment	3.2474	3.6496	-1.8234
2.	Management Style	3.7959	3.1409	2.5431*
3.	Personal Factor	3.6979	3.3127	1.4646
4.	Absolute wages	3.6334	3.0728	1.8096
5.	Relative wages	3.2897	3.8579	-2.1085*
6.	Organisational Factor	3.1647	3.8340	-2.5865*
7.	Ethical climate factor	3.8887	3.1100	2.9969*

\*Significant at five per cent level.

The highly viewed antecedents of absenteeism among the male employees in IT companies are ethical climate factor and management style since their mean scores are 3.8887 and 3.7959 respectively. Among the female employees, these are relative wages and organizational factor since the mean scores are 3.8579 and 3.8340 respectively. Regarding the perception on the antecedents of absenteeism, significant differences among the male and female employees in IT companies have been noticed in the case of management style, relative wages, organizational factor and ethical climate factor since their respective 't' statistics are significant at five per cent level.

#### Impact of Antecedents of Absenteeism on Absenteeism Rate

The antecedents of absenteeism may have their own influence on the absenteeism rate among the employees. The present study has made an attempt to examine the degree impact of the various antecedents of absenteeism on the absenteeism rate among the employees for some policy implications. The Multiple Regression Analysis is used for this purpose. The fitted regression model is

$$Y = a + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + \dots + b_7X_7 + e$$

Whereas

- Y – Absenteeism rate among the employees
- X<sub>1</sub> – Score on the view on technical environment among the employees
- X<sub>2</sub> – Score on the view on management style among the employees
- X<sub>3</sub> – Score on the view on personal factor among the employees
- X<sub>4</sub> – Score on the view on absolute wages among the employees
- X<sub>5</sub> – Score on the view on relative wages among the employees
- X<sub>6</sub> – Score on the view on organizational factor among the employees
- X<sub>7</sub> – Score on the view on ethical climate factor among the employees
- b<sub>1</sub>, . . . b<sub>7</sub> – respective co-efficient of independent variables
- a – Intercept and
- e – Error term

The impact has been measured among the male and female employees and also for the pooled data separately. The results are given in Table 4.

**Table 4**  
**Impact of Antecedents of Absenteeism on Absenteeism Rate**

Sl.No.	Antecedents	Regression Co-efficient among employees in		
		Male	Female	Pooled Data
1.	Technical environment	0.1339*	0.1086	0.1011
2.	Management style	0.1644*	0.0887	0.1126
3.	Personal factor	0.1985*	0.1534*	0.1709*
4.	Absolute wages	0.1804*	0.0449	0.0965
5.	Relative wages	0.0996	0.1441*	0.1025
6.	Organisational Factor	0.1088	0.1776*	0.1648*
7.	Ethical climate	0.2265*	0.0965	0.1871*
	Constant	0.8589	0.4311	0.5916
	R <sup>2</sup>	0.7986	0.7347	0.8149
	F statistics	8.4389*	8.2143*	8.6089*

\*Significant at five per cent level.

The significantly and positively influencing antecedents of absenteeism on the absenteeism rate among the male employees are technical environment, management style, personal factor, absolute wages and ethical climate factor since their regression co-efficients are significant at five per cent level. A unit increase on the above said antecedents results in an increase in absenteeism rate among the male employees by 0.1339, 0.1644, 0.1985, 0.1804 and 0.2165 units respectively. The changes in the view on antecedents of absenteeism explain the changes in absenteeism rate to the extent of 79.86 per cent among the employees in MSEs.

Among the female employees, the significantly and positively influencing antecedents of absenteeism are personal

factor, relative wages and organizational factor since their respective regression co-efficients are significant at five per cent level. A unit increase in the view on abovesaid antecedents result in an increase in absenteeism rate by 0.1534, 0.1441 and 0.1776 units respectively. The changes in the view on antecedents of absenteeism explain the changes in absenteeism rate among the female employees to an extent of 73.47 per cent. The analysis of pooled data reveals the importance of personal factor, organizational and ethical climate factor in the determination of absenteeism rate among the employees. The changes in the perception on antecedents of absenteeism explain the changes in the absenteeism rate to an extent of 81.49 per cent since its R<sup>2</sup> is 0.8149.

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

The present study concludes that the level of absenteeism among the employees in IT companies is at a moderate level. The profile of the employees play an important role in the level absenteeism among the employees. The important antecedents of absenteeism among the male employees is ethical climate and the management style whereas among the female employees, these are relative wages and organisational factor. The significantly influencing antecedents on the absenteeism rate among the employees are personal factor, organizational factor and ethical climate. The higher impact of antecedents is noticed among the male compared to female respondents.

## POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The views of male and female employees in IT companies on absenteeism and its contents are different. Hence, the strategies to manage their absenteeism is also differing. It is important that workplace initiatives directed at the reduction of absenteeism related to ill health go beyond a piecemeal response to health problems as they arise, so that they address problems before they become serious through a systematic and comprehensive approach to improve the health of the work force. By creating a good organizational culture, the development of disciplined employees is possible. The top management should be free to provide both monetary and non-monetary supports regarding their aspect. The staffs participation in the committee to solve the absenteeism problems should be promoted. A balanced package of measures also appears to be related to the successful reduction of workplace absenteeism. A balanced approach involves procedural measures to raise the absenteeism barrier and to make it less simple to report oneself sick, but also preventive measures focused on both the person and the work, through which health problems can be prevented. Since one of the important antecedents of absenteeism among the employees is absolute and relative wages, it is essential to focus on the aspect of provision of fair wage. It is highly essential to provide on job or off-job training programmes to their employees continuously in order to create self confidence among their employees.

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## END NOTES

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