A Study on Absenteeism among the Employees working in the Manufacturing Unit in Coimbatore

Revathi Arunachalamurthy
Greenkomet Business Solution, India

Abstract - Absenteeism has identified as one of the key problems that affects the production and organizational culture of the organization. Absenteeism is not only harm to the organization but also harm to the individual’s professional career and psychological well-being. So absenteeism is a chronic factor that influences the organization’s profit and culture. The main objectives of the study is to determine the reasons for absenteeism, identify the level of satisfaction of the employees towards various schemes introduced by the company to reduce absenteeism and determine the relationship between absenteeism and the various factors leading to absenteeism. The type of research selected for the study is Stratified Random Sampling. Only the absentees are selected for the study, and so the population of this particular study is 300. From the respondents reply it is identified that the employee level of satisfaction towards the company is low. But the absenteeism rate has been decreased when compared to previous year. Suggestions were proposed to reduce absenteeism by considering the factors that influence absenteeism.

Keywords – Employee Absenteeism, Organization, Psychological well-being

I. INTRODUCTION
Absenteeism is an employee's intentional or habitual absence from work. While employers expect workers to miss a certain number of workdays each year, excessive absences can equate to decreased productivity and can have a major effect on company finances, morale and other factors. This article looks at the causes of absenteeism, the costs of lost productivity and what employers can do to reduce absenteeism rates in the workplace.[1]

The term absenteeism refers to the failure to attend to work. It is one of the major problems faced by companies across the globe today. High rate of absenteeism is neither desirable to employers nor good for the employees. In majority of organizations, high rate of absenteeism has an adverse effect on quality and quantity of production, efficiency of workers and organization, organizational discipline and more importantly on the organization's intention to fulfill the new market demands. Unscheduled absenteeism badly hurts the progress of an organization resulting in loss of productivity, increased costs in hiring additional staff and low morale among the workers. It is high time that employers address this problem on a priority basis.[2]

In this project, I focused on absenteeism among the employees working in the manufacturing units to determine the cause for the absenteeism. I proposed suggestions to the management to reduce the absenteeism.

Absenteeism in the workplace is probably one of the most difficult areas of employee discipline to control. This is usually because the problem is seldom properly monitored - supervisors ignore it on the basis that the employee won't get paid for the day anyway, so it is his own fault. Problems of lost production, other workers getting upset because they have to pick up the workload of the absent employee, and so on are not even thought of by the supervisor. The pay office or wages department don't even notice it - they are only concerned with compiling pay slips for hours worked. Absenteeism or the reasons for it are not their concern.[3]

Absenteeism is one of major human problem of Indian industries it results in dislocation of work, increase in labour cost reduction of productivity. Absenteeism among the laborer of an industry is more dangerous to its economy than any other factor. It affects adversely the employees and employers due to lose of wages and production respectively. Experience has shown that more man days are lost on account absenteeism rather than of industrial dispute and other happenings. [4]

Causes of Absenteeism
People miss work for a variety of reasons, many of which are legitimate and others less so. Some of the common causes of absenteeism include (but are not limited to):

- Bullying and harassment - Employees who are bullied or harassed by coworkers and/or bosses are more likely to call in sick to avoid the situation
- Burnout, stress and low morale - Heavy workloads, stressful meetings/presentations and feelings of being unappreciated can cause employees to avoid going into work. Personal stress (outside of work) can lead to absenteeism.
• Childcare and eldercare - Employees may be forced to miss work in order to stay home and take care of a child/elder when normal arrangements have fallen through (for example, a sick caregiver or a snow day at school) or if a child/elder is sick.
• Depression - According to the National Institute of Mental Health, the leading cause of absenteeism in the United States is depression. Depression can lead to substance abuse if people turn to drugs or alcohol to self-medicate their pain or anxiety.
• Disengagement - Employees who are not committed to their jobs, coworkers and/or the company are more likely to miss work simply because they have no motivation to go.
• Illness - Injuries, illness and medical appointments are the most commonly reported reasons for missing work (though not always the actual reason). Not surprisingly, each year during the cold and flu season, there is a dramatic spike in absenteeism rates for both full-time and part-time employees.
• Injuries - Accidents can occur on the job or outside of work, resulting in absences. In addition to acute injuries, chronic injuries such as back and neck problems are a common cause of absenteeism.
• Job hunting - Employees may call in sick to attend a job interview, visit with a headhunter or work on their resumes/CVs.
• Partial shifts - Arriving late, leaving early and taking longer breaks than allowed are considered forms of absenteeism and can affect productivity and workplace morale.[1]

There are a number of things organizations can do to better address absenteeism in their workplace.

**Have a clearly defined attendance policy**—Ensure that employees have a clear understanding of the expectation of attendance and understand what is expected from them when they have to be away from work.

**Identify roles and responsibilities**—Absence management strategies work best when there are designated champions who own the process. When an employee is away, who’s responsible for letting human resources or payroll know, and at what point do they need to be informed? If an employee is absent several days in a row, who is responsible for contacting them? If the absence progresses to a short-term disability claim, what’s the process?

**Track absences and look for trends**—Take a look at absence data for your organization in aggregate and in subsets, for example, by location, or by business unit or department. Examine whether there are specific days of the week like Mondays or Fridays or during particular times of the year where absences are a particular issue.

**Have a plan**—If and when the times comes that you must take steps to address excessive absenteeism, have a plan and a process for doing so that is applied consistently at a predetermined threshold. Make sure that the employee is aware of resources available to them to assist them in improving their attendance, like counselling or work-life services through your organization’s EAP, or the availability of a flextime program. Make a plan of action and a time frame for improvement, and follow up on the employee’s progress.

**Integrate your absence management with disability management**—Review your sick leave and absence policies against your short-term disability contract and your organization’s disability management policy to ensure that there are no gaps or duplication.

**Use your data to build a strategy**—If trends have been identified in your absenteeism data, like spikes on specific days or in specific departments for example, dig deeper for the drivers behind these absences and develop a strategy for improvement. Collaborate with your insurance carrier, EAP provider and/or advisor for solutions and support.

Your organization should also consider having strategies in place to support employees that require accommodation or flexibility while they are in treatment for a chronic or acute health condition through which they are trying to continue to work as best they can. Absences in situations like these may meet the thresholds for action set out in your absence policy, but are explainable, medically supportable, and may stop a progression to disability.[6]

Absenteism is the term generally used to refer to unscheduled employee absences from the workplace. Absenteeism occurs when employees who were scheduled for work do not attend. Absenteeism involves nonattendance from scheduled work in terms of hours and days rather than minutes. Steers and Rhodes (1978) model of employee attendance and absenteeism reported personal characteristics (e.g., education, tenure, age, sex, and family size), job satisfaction, organizational commitment, ability to attend circumstances (e.g., illness, accidents, family responsibilities, transportation problems, etc.), and pressures to attend (e.g., reward and incentive systems, work group norms, etc.) influenced employee absenteeism.[7]

Absenteism is the failure of employees to report for work when they are scheduled to work. Employees who are away from work on recognized holidays, vacations, approved leaves of absence, or approved leaves of absence would not be included. Absenteeism is becoming a serious practice in labor oriented industries—especially in those large industries where laborers are working in mass. It is a matter of prime concern for the supervisors and managers. They have to find the ways to overcome absenteeism.[8]

Employee absenteeism is one of the most common workplace problems facing employers in today’s workplace. Legitimate illnesses still account for the majority of employee absences,
but some studies have shown that less than one-third of absences from the workplace are related to poor health. Most employers offer their workers vacation, sick leave, paid time off, or other kinds of paid and unpaid leave.[9]

II. OBJECTIVE & LIMITATION

A. Primary Objective
The predominant objective of the project is to study the rate of absenteeism prevailing in the manufacturing industry. The study comprises the attitude of the workers towards the company which has chronic absentees.

B. Secondary Objective
- Study the reasons for absenteeism
- Identify the factors causes’ absenteeism
- Determine whether the workers are inspired by the introduction of new schemes by the company.
- Identify measures to control absenteeism.
- Identify the relationship between absenteeism and the various factors leading to absenteeism.
- Receive suggestions from the workers for reducing absenteeism.

C. Limitations
The sample size is limited to 150. Only the absentees who were absent for more than 20 days in the year were considered as the population

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY
Descriptive Research Design was selected to conduct the research study. Stratified Random Sampling was selected for the study. According to the project constraints, 300 employees were selected for the study and among that 150 employees responded to the questionnaire. Data was collected as face to face interview and survey methods. The statistical methods are used, for the research are Percentage analysis and Chi – square analysis.

IV. FINDINGS
- The key reasons for absenteeism are job dissatisfaction and employee workload. Despite of above mentioned problems, health problems of the aged workers also causes high rate of absenteeism. The other causes of the absenteeism include the low rate of satisfaction towards motivation and low rate of satisfaction towards wages.
- There is a significant relationship with the factors leading to absenteeism.
- Absenteeism is more among the employees in the low level who involve in difficult tasks. Working condition and excessive workload may cause absenteeism in this group.
- According to the percentage analysis with reference to age, absenteeism among 31 – 40 aged workers are more which might be due to family related responsibilities and problems.
- It was found that most of the absentees are married and hence family commitments might have high influence in absenteeism.
- A group of the absentees travel from the nearby vicinities that are less than 4 kms so the travelling distance is not the problem. This shows employees low morale towards the company.
- The major groups of absentees are experienced persons which might be because of the experience, high rate of job security or age related health problems.
- Other income sources not a reason for absenteeism as most of the absentees depend only on the company salary for survival.
- Unawareness about leave rules and leave facilities are not the reason for absenteeism since most of the employees are aware about the leave policies.
- Employees in the age group below 40 years are absenting because of workload and employees in the age group above 40 years are absenting because of their repetitive job tasks for years together.
- More than half of the population is dissatisfied with their wages.
- Most of the workers feel that there is no appropriate reward or appreciation for their performance which generated a negative attitude towards the company.
- Unawareness of the schemes introduced by the company also causes absenteeism.
- The employees are not satisfied with the motivation obtained in the work environment hence the company needs to introduce useful schemes to improve their motivation.
• Another key factor is the lack of good relationship with the superiors.

• Relationship with the colleagues is not a reason for absenteeism as most of the employees are satisfied with the peer relationship.

• The suggestion provided by majority of employees is to re-arrange the existing shift schedule.

V. SUGGESTIONS

• To reduce absenteeism a normal rate of shift exchange should be provided among the different shift workers. This allows the employees to do overtime and the absence of other workers will not affect the organization.

• Social gathering of employees working in different shifts should be organised periodically to increase the peer relationship and understanding among the different shift workers.

• The breaks are pause or rest time for the employees which motivate them for the next session. During breaks, entertainment like Television, music etc can be provided to relieve the strain of the workers.

• Increased job security rate is also a reason for absenteeism. So the management should make an agreement with the employee union such as who absents without any truthful reason for more than the certain days will be suspended from work. The warning letter given to him will be black mark to switch jobs in the future.

• An officer should be appointed to monitor and handle the employee absenteeism and arrange counseling programmes for the depressed employees to reduce their psychological problems as they have any.

• Affordable accommodation can be provided to the employees and their which inspires them to secure the job and hence absenteeism can be reduced.

• Alcoholic relief programmes shall be organised for the employees who absents due to alcoholism.

• Employee incentives should be given in the middle of every month which helps the employee to handle the financial needs and further motivated to do more work and earn more money.

• Programmes should be conducted regarding, how to save money from even from less wages. Once they start saving, the workers will not feel that they are not getting enough wages.

• Since the supervisor is the immediate leader to the workers, they should deal with the employees in a psychological manner to influence the workers.

• In addition to above mentioned points, improving the working condition and health, safety and welfare measures are also important.

• Counseling shall be organised to the employees, who have personal problems or work related issues.

VI. CONCLUSION

Since manpower is key factor for the operations of the company, the problem of absenteeism has major effect on the company in many ways. Employee’s morale towards the organization is closely associated with the absenteeism. I suggest that the companies should take necessary steps immediately to increase the morale and satisfaction of the employees for high productivity. The proposed study helped to identify the reasons for absenteeism and the employees’ satisfaction level towards the various factors that causes absenteeism. I recommend that the management can take necessary steps to reduce absenteeism by implementing the suggestions and execute these schemes by considering the causes of absenteeism.

REFERENCE


