

# Work Stress as a Predictor of Employee Absenteeism

(A case study of J&K tyres and Industries Limited, Mysore)

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## Abstract

*Employee absenteeism is an organizational phenomenon which tends to have a detrimental effect on the productivity of the organization. The present study aims at determining the relationship and impact of work stress on employee absenteeism. To accomplish the purpose of the study, the researcher has collected the data from 70 respondents working at J&K tyres and industries limited, Mysore. In the initial stage, based on the information obtained from the officials of J&K tyres and industries limited, the functional units which had the highest number of absenteeism rate were considered. The respondents thereafter were selected on a simple random basis. A well structured questionnaire was prepared and was distributed among the respondents and was collected back for analysis. Results indicate that even though there exists no relationship between Employee absenteeism and work stress, one of the latent variables of work stress that is role ambiguity holds and positive relationship with employee absenteeism. This gives a clear indication that one of the major reason for employee absenteeism at J&K tyres and industries limited was that the employees were unclear about the roles to be played by them.*

**Keywords:** Employee absenteeism, Work stress, Role Ambiguity

## Introduction

Employee Absenteeism is the term generally used to refer to unscheduled employee absences from the workplace. Employees may remain absent in organization due to various causes. These causes may be either personal or professional in nature. Some of the personal reasons for employee absence include sickness, accidents, substance abuse, means of transport and emergency family requirements. Professional reasons include work overload, dissatisfaction over the job, compensation, unclear goals and roles and likewise. However, whether the causes for employees' absence are personal or professional, it is likely to have detrimental effect on the efficiency and effectiveness of the overall performance of the organization.

Employee absenteeism still remains one of the significant challenges which organizations have failed to decipher. The reason behind this is the inability of the organization to detect whether employee absenteeism is due to personal or professional reasons. The competitive global environment demands organization to strategically align with the requirements of the market. This in turn expects the employees to be competitive and contribute their best to the organization. These expectations from the organization are putting the employees under severe stress. Hence work stress also adds on as one of the reasons for employee absenteeism.

Work related stress generally occurs when there exists discrepancy between the organizational expectations and the actual performance of employees. When employees fail to match the organizational expectations, it tends to pent up their psychological pressure ultimately resulting in stress. The primary causes for work stress can include work overload, changes in organization, inequity of salary, annoying co-workers, interpersonal conflicts, unit targets, individual targets and likewise.

Along with the above mentioned causes for work stress, yet another important reason for work stress in organization is when an individual is unclear about the goals and roles to be played. In organizations, an individual will play multiple roles and each role demands different behavior. When individuals in organization face difficulties in understanding the role to be played and the expectations organizations are having from them then it is called as role ambiguity.

In such circumstances, it becomes the responsibility of the managers as well as the organization to clarify the expectations they are having from individuals and the roles to be played. Organizations make use of many intervention techniques to solve such role ambiguities that prevails in organization. The present study focuses on determining the causes for employee absenteeism.

### **Statement of the Problem**

A lot of literatures that were reviewed in the light of assessing the research gap revealed that employee absenteeism in organizations posit a real time challenge for the attainment of organizational goals. In the present study, an attempt is made by the researcher to unveil the various reasons for employee absenteeism in organizations. The study further tries to assess and evaluate whether work stress also contributes to employee absenteeism or not. Hence, the study is conducted to determine the relationship and impact of work stress on employee absenteeism.

### **Research objectives**

1. To assess the relationship between work stress and employee absenteeism.
2. To assess the impact of work stress on Employee Absenteeism.

### **Scope of the study**

The primary focus of the study was to determine the impact of work stress on employee absenteeism. To carry out the study, one of the leading manufacturing firms in Mysore i.e., J&K tyres and industries limited were considered. Since the absenteeism rate in the production, purchase, technological and tube section were high, the researcher has considered employees belonging to lower level of the hierarchy in the above sections.

## Research Methodology

### Research design

To accomplish the purpose of the study, the research has made use of descriptive research design where the author has described the sample size and the sampling technique that has been administered. The data hence collected was subjected to analysis and the tabulated results were also described.

### Sampling technique

To carry out the research study, it was obligatory to collect the primary data through the responses from the employees. To do so, the researcher has employed simple random sampling technique where the respondents were selected on the random basis from production, purchase, Technological and Tube section.

### Sample size

The study was carried out by collecting responses from 70 respondents belonging to lower level of the hierarchy working at J&K tyres and industries limited, Mysore.

### Hypothesis

H1: There was no correlation between absenteeism and work stress of the employees.

H2: There was no impact of work stress on employee absenteeism.

### Data collection

The research study cannot be accomplished without the requisite data. Hence the researcher has collected the necessary and required data through both primary and secondary sources.

The primary source of data was collected through a well structured questionnaire which was prepared in conjunction with the academicians and subject matter experts. The data was also collected from the employees through conducting informal interviews about the absenteeism rate prevailing in the organization.

The secondary source of data was collected initially through various journals, research articles and book publications to identify the research gap on employee absenteeism and work stress. Subsequently, data was also collected through organizational performance data sheet to identify those functional units where the absenteeism rate was high. Eventually all these data were collected and compiled for further tabulation.

## Questionnaire

A well structured questionnaire was prepared in joint consultation with academicians and subject matter experts. The questionnaire comprised of 2 sections: Section A comprised on demographic details of the respondents and section B comprised of questions pertaining to absenteeism and work stress. The questionnaire comprised of 26 questions with 2 variables – Employee absenteeism and work stress. The latent parameters considered for employee absenteeism are welfare conditions, present working conditions, leave policies, supervisor's behavior, and transportation facilities. Similarly the latent parameters considered for work stress are role ambiguity, work overload and inequity of salary. Likert's 5 point scales ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree is used as the rating scale.

## Statistical tools used

To assess and interpret the data collected through questionnaire, one way ANOVA, correlation and regression analysis are used.

## Data analysis and interpretation

To test hypothesis 1, correlation analysis was used and the computation made were tabulated in table below

**Table 1**

Correlations						
		Absenteeism total	Work stress total	Work Overload	Role Ambiguity	Inequity Salary
Absenteeism total	Pearson Correlation	1	.174	-.108	.366**	-.015
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.150	.375	.002	.905
	N	70	70	70	70	70
Work stress total	Pearson Correlation	.174	1	.535**	.536**	.626**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.150		.000	.000	.000
	N	70	70	70	70	70
Work Overload	Pearson Correlation	-.108	.535**	1	-.136	.166
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.375	.000		.263	.169
	N	70	70	70	70	70
Role	Pearson Correlation	.366**	.536**	-.136	1	-.077

Ambiguity	Sig. (2-tailed)	.002	.000	.263		.524
	N	70	70	70	70	70
Inequity of Salary	Pearson Correlation	-.015	.626**	.166	-.077	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.905	.000	.169	.524	
	N	70	70	70	70	70

From the above table following inferences are drawn.

- The correlation between absenteeism and work stress was positive with  $r = 0.174$  but since the p value  $0.150 > 0.05$  the test was found to be statistically not significant at 5% levels.
- The correlation between absenteeism and work overload was negative with  $r = -0.108$  but since the p value  $0.375 > 0.05$  the test was found to be statistically not significant at 5% levels.
- **The correlation between absenteeism and role ambiguity was positive with  $r = 0.366$  and since the p value  $0.002 < 0.05$  the test was found to be statistically significant at 5% levels.**
- The correlation between absenteeism and inequity of salary was negative with  $r = -0.015$  but since the p value  $0.905 > 0.05$  the test was found to be statistically not significant at 5% levels.
- **The table also shows that role ambiguity and inequity of salary among employees is one of the reasons for work stress. The correlation between role ambiguity and work stress was positive with  $r = 0.536$  and since the p value  $0.000 < 0.05$ , the test was found to be statistically significant at 5% levels. Also, the correlation between inequity of salary and work stress was positive with  $r = 0.626$  and the since the p value  $0.000 < 0.05$ , the test was found to be statistically significant at 5% levels.**

To test H2, regression analysis was used and the computations made were tabulated in table below.

**Table 2**

Variables Entered/Removed <sup>a</sup>			
Model	Variables Entered	Variables Removed	Method
1	RA <sup>b</sup>	.	Enter

a. Dependent Variable: Absenteeism total
b. All requested variables entered.

**Table 3**

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.366 <sup>a</sup>	.134	.121	7.231
a. Predictors: (Constant), RA				

**Table 4**

ANOVA <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	550.801	1	550.801	10.533	.002 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	3555.770	68	52.291		
	Total	4106.571	69			

a. Dependent Variable: Absenteeism total

b. Predictors: (Constant), RA

**Table 5**

Coefficients <sup>a</sup>						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	41.044	2.850		14.403	.000
	Role Ambiguity	1.001	.309	.366	3.246	.002

Dependent Variable: Absenteeism total

The estimated regression equation of absenteeism on role ambiguity was given by

$$\text{ABSENTEEISM} = 41.044 + 1.001 * \text{ROLE AMBIGUITY}$$

## Findings

1. The correlation between absenteeism and role ambiguity was positive with  $r = 0.366$  and since the  $p$  value  $0.002 < 0.05$  the test was found to be statistically significant at 5% levels.
2. The correlation between role ambiguity and work stress was positive with  $r = 0.536$  and since the  $p$  value  $0.000 < 0.05$ , the test was found to be statistically significant at 5% levels. Also, the correlation between inequity of salary and work stress was positive with  $r = 0.626$  and the since the  $p$  value  $0.000 < 0.05$ , the test was found to be statistically significant at 5% levels.
3. The estimated regression equation of absenteeism on role ambiguity was given by

$$\text{ABSENTEEISM} = 41.044 + 1.001 * \text{ROLE AMBIGUITY}$$

## Conclusion

As evidenced by the data presented, it can be concluded that there exists a positive correlation between employee absenteeism and one of the latent parameter of work stress i.e., role ambiguity. In other words, it can be stated that employee absenteeism is holding a positive relationship with role ambiguity. It means to say that one of the reasons for employee absenteeism in the organization is because of unclear goal. Also, it is seen that the primary source of reason for work stress among employees are role ambiguity and inequity of salary among employees.

The impact role ambiguity is having on employee absenteeism is given by the regression equation  $\text{Absenteeism} = 41.044 + 1.001 * \text{Role ambiguity}$ . This means to state that for every single unit of change in role ambiguity will have equal impact on employee absenteeism. Hence, care must be taken by the organization to clarify the roles to be played by the employees so that the absenteeism rate can be reduced.

## References

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