

## Absenteeism of Female Workers at Night Shift: A case Study in SQ Sweater & Knitting Industry

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**Abstract:** Absenteeism is a great problem in many organizations. Acute absenteeism involves a considerable loss to the organization because work schedules are upset and delayed and management has to give overtime wages to meet the delivery dates. The main objective of our study is to find out the causes of absenteeism and their significant effects on absenteeism among the female workers at night shift in SQ Sweater & Knitting Industry. We collected data from the 300 female workers of SQ Sweater & Knitting Industry. A sample of 40 female workers was selected by simple random sampling without replacement from a population of size 300. We have selected two types of variables for our research—dependent variable, and independent variables. It was found from multivariate analysis that only 17.3% variation of the dependent variable can be explained by the independent variables. So, there are some other independent variable(s), which may have influence on absenteeism. This study presents the causes of absenteeism and the impact of absenteeism on productivity and some recommendations to bring it under a tolerable limit. Further, it looked into absenteeism of female garment workers at night shift in particular.

### 1.0 Introduction

#### 1.1 Background

One of the most frequently mentioned problems in organization is absenteeism. The cost benefit analyses due to absenteeism encourage management to examine it carefully. In recent years for industry, job absence rates have averaged about 3 percent per month. Absence rates for the United States compare favorably with those in other industrialization countries. Absence rates in manufacturing responsibilities, women have a higher absence rate than men. Younger

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workers tend to have higher absence rates than old in case of hourly paid employees.

The common opinion is that there is non-adjustment and poor commitment to work on the part of the Bangladeshi worker is partly based on high rates of absenteeism. Absenteeism is said to be there when an employee fails to come to work when she/he is scheduled to work. It is an important problem in many enterprise. Excessive absenteeism involves a considerable loss to the enterprise because work schedule s are upset and delayed, and management has to give overtime wages to meet the delivery dates. The rates of overtime wages are double than the normal rates of wages. Therefore, study of causes of absenteeism is essential to deal with the problem.

The reasons for absenteeism from the regular work are hard nature of jobs, monetary in the work and personal problems. This leads to absenteeism. It is a normal and natural tendency among the factory workers. Absenteeism means absence of workers from the regular work without prior permission, notice or sanction. It is unauthorized leave and is different from regular leave or holiday, in brief, absenteeism means absence that is avoidable and willful. Unauthorized absence from regular duty is absenteeism. However, absence on account of strikes, lockouts etc, does not constitute absenteeism.

## 1.2 Objectives of Study

The main objective of our study is to find out the causes of absenteeism and their significance on absenteeism among the female workers at night shift in SQ Sweater & Knitting Industry. Labor absenteeism is harmful to both the employers and the workers. Normal work-flow in the factory is disturbed. Overall production in the factory goes down. Difficulties arise in executing the orders in time. So, the study was carried out in order to find out the reasons for absenteeism and to take necessary actions to solve the problems of absenteeism.

## 2.0 Methodology

### 2.1 Research Design

The main objective of our study is to find of our the causes of absenteeism and their significance on the female workers at night shift. To identify the independent variables that cause absenteeism, first we collected the opinions of some key management personnel and workers about the causes of absenteeism. Further, we also study some books, journals and website relating to absenteeism.

We also identified some variables that influence absenteeism. To measure their relative effect on absenteeism a multivariable analysis is done. SPSS 10.0 was applied to analyze the data.

## 2.2 Identification of the Variables

Two types of variables were selected for this research—dependent variable and independent variables.

### *Dependent Variables:*

- Number of days absented in the last 3 months.

### *Independent Variables:*

- Age
- Marital Status
- Working at night is detrimental to health
- Wages do not compensate for working in the night shift
- Transport facility may reduce absenteeism
- There is insecurity to working during night.

## 2.3 Sources of Data

There are 300 female workers in SQ Sweater & Knitting Industry. Our targeted respondents are female workers of SQ Sweater & Knitting Industry. A sample for 40 female workers was selected by simple random sampling without replacement from a population of size 300. They were interviewed successfully to know their opinion regarding absenteeism. Theses response rate was 100 percent. Raw data were being collected by close ended questionnaire o the female workers on five points scale.

## 3.0 Reasons for Absenteeism

Absenteeism problem is common to the industry. It becomes a real problem when it exceeds 10% as it disturbs the production scheduled and creates many problems. The researchers of Human resource department found that generally a small percentage of employees (15% approx) account for a large percentage of absenteeism (70% approx). These employees are likely to have low interest in their work. It is also revealed that the days before and after a holiday is liable to higher rate of absenteeism. Women are absent more often than men. Bad weather increases absenteeism, especially among employees who live at distant places. Employees under the age 25 years and above the age of 55 years



are more often than those in the age group of 26 to 55 years. Operative employees are absent more frequently than the supervisors and managers.

It is almost impossible to find the exact reasons and their percentage. The evaluator of the personal program should classify the data relating to absenteeism and try to analyze the various causes of absenteeism. Generally, the following reasons are accountable for absenteeism at work.

- *Nature of work:* When work is tough and monotonous in nature, the worker gets tired physically and mentally. So, he frequently remains absent without information to the employers.
- *Poor Working Condition:* Poor working conditions affect the workers health adversely. He is tired of work-environment and thus may remain away from work without any notice to the employers.
- *Absence of regular leave arrangement:* Every worker requires at least 15 to 20 days leave in a year for his personal work. The employers should arrange for such leave to all workers. However, in many factories, workers are not given leave as and when required. Naturally, workers remain absent without any intimation to the employer. Thus, absence of regular leave arrangement leads to labor absenteeism.
- *Accident:* Industrial accidents and occupation diseases bring about absenteeism depending upon the nature of the process and machinery used. Accidents make the workers incapable of work for some day. They also create mental problem.
- *Poor Control:* Poor production and control can result in absenteeism. Unless the flow of work between departments is balanced and continuous, workers away stay from their jobs because they lose their interest in the work and also lose the feeling of the importance of being dependable.
- *Absence of transport facilities:* Many factories are located away from the city limits. Naturally, workers have to travel long distances. In case of any disturbance in the transport system, workers are unable to reach their place of work at proper time and they have to remain absent. Thus, transport difficulties lead to labor absenteeism.
- *Lack of interest:* Lack of interest and lack of a feeling of responsibility and worth-whileness are also fundamental causes of absenteeism. Attitude of mind caused by environmental sociological factors may condition some to develop a feeling of irresponsibility about going to work.

- *Attraction to village life:* Majority of Bangladeshi workers come from villages to towns for employment. Physically, they are in town, but mentally they are in villages. Their relatives and family members are in the villages and naturally, they feel like visiting their villages often. This leads to labor absenteeism. In addition, workers have to go their native places due to illness of family members, court matters, religious festivals, agricultural operations, etc. Such causes lead to high labor absenteeism.
- *Alcoholism and gambling habit:* A number of workers in cities are used to drinking, gambling and other bad habits. Such workers are not able to attend duties regularly. This leads to absenteeism particularly among the male workers.
- *Miscellaneous causes:* A miscellaneous causes including such factors as bad weather, another job, personal business, friends visiting from distance location, absence of script discipline, willful disregard to rules, religious and social festival etc.

#### **4.0 Effects of Absenteeism**

Absenteeism of workers is harmful to both the employers and the workers. The problem arises due to absenteeism are as follows:

- o Normal work-flow in the factory is disturbed
- o Overall production in the factory goes down
- o Difficulties arise in executing the orders in time
- o Casual workers may have to be employed to meet production schedules. Such workers are not trained properly.
- o Overtime allowances increase considerably because of higher absenteeism
- o When a number of workers absent themselves, this is extra pressure of work and on their colleagues who are present.
- o Workers lose wages for the unauthorized absence from work.
- o Habitual absenteeism may remove from service causing them great hardship.

## 5.0 Measures to Control Absenteeism

Suitable measures has to be introduced to reduce labor absenteeism, it is not possible to remove it completely. Such measures should be related to the important causes responsible for high labor absenteeism. The possible measures which can be adopted are as follows:

- i. Proper selection: Right person should be placed at the right place.
- ii. Proper Orientation: the new employees should be inducted in such a way that their critical attitude is reduced as quickly as possible to avoid absenteeism.
- iii. Better working conditions: workers remain absent due to hard nature of jobs and bad working conditions. An employer can provide proper working conditions so that workers may not have industrial fatigue. Similarly, it is possible to make a hard job a little lighter by introducing suitable measures. For example, mechanical devices should be used to reduce manual labor of workers. It is possible to reduce labor absenteeism to a considerable extent by providing proper working conditions.
- iv. Provisions of transport and housing facilities: Workers remain absent due to housing faculties: Workers remain absent due to housing, transport and other difficulties. It is possible for the employer to provide free or concessional transport facility to workers from their residence to the factory gate. This will reduce absenteeism of workers.
- v. Incentive bonus to regular employees: Cash prizes may be given to those who are regular through the year. Workers who are regular may be given special bonus for their regularity. Regularity in attendance should be taken into consideration while giving promotions. Such positive measures encourage workers to be regular in their attendance.
- vi. Disciplinary action: Proper actions should be taken against those who have the habit of taking leave without proper sanction. Before taking any disciplinary action against the chronic offenders, their names should be adequately published in the organization if the need arises, the chronic offenders may be disciplined by layoffs, discharges and loss of promotion and other privileges.
- vii. Prevention of accidents: Industrial accidents or even fear of industrial accidents increase absenteeism. The management should take adequate safety measures to minimize industrial accidents in the workshop.



- viii. Effective supervision: Absenteeism can be reduced to a great extent by effective supervision. Supervisors and foreman should be given adequate training to deal with various problems of workers. Absenteeism will be at a low level if the supervisors are able to win the confidence of the workers.
- ix. Employee counseling: Absenteeism is essential related to individual behavior and can be better tackled through guidance and counseling. Workers should be give proper education and orientation as regards absenteeism and their ill effects on them. They should be encouraged to be regular through proper information, education, and guidance. Habitual absentees should be called be the personnel counselors to increase upon the seriousness of their absence and the need to be regular.

## 6.0 Analysis

### 6.1 Multivariate Analysis

Most business problems are inherently multidimensional. When problems are multidimensional and three or more variables are involved, we utilize multivariate analysis. Multivariate statistical analysis allows the effects of more than one variable to be considered at one time.

### 6.2 Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple Regression Analysis is an extension is bivariate regression analysis, which allows for the simultaneous investigation of the effects of two or more independent variables on a single interval scaled dependent variable.

In this study the multiple regression models are:

$$y = \alpha + \beta_1 x_1 + \beta_2 x_2 + \beta_3 x_3 + \beta_4 x_4 + \beta_5 x_5 + \beta_6 x_6$$

$$= \alpha + \sum_{i=1}^6 \beta_i x_i$$

Where,

$Y$  = Number of days absented in the last 3 months

$X_1$  = Age

$X_2$  = Marital Status

$X_3$  = Working at night is detrimental health

$X_4$  = Wages do not compensate for working in the night shift.

$X_5$  = Transport facility may reduce absenteeism

$X_6$  = There is insecurity to working during night

### 6.3 Statistical Analysis

The study is based on the data collected from a sample of 40 female of Paramount knitting industry. The aim of the study is to examine the causes of absenteeism of female workers during night shift, and their significance.

#### Descriptive

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Number of days absent in the last three months	40	1.00	3.0	2.6000	.59
Age	40	1.00	3.0	1.7000	.8829
Marital Status	40	1.00	2.0	1.1750	.3848
Detrimental to health	40	1.00	4.0	1.9000	1.0813
Wages do not compensate to work at night	40	1.00	5.0	1.9250	1.1851
Transport facility may reduce absenteeism	40	1.00	5.0	2.1000	1.2362
there is insecurity to work at night	40	1.00	5.0	3.9250	1.2066
Valid N(list wise)	40	1.00			

#### Frequencies Statistics

		Number of days absent in the last three months	Age	Marital status	Wages do not compensate to work at night	Transport facility may reduce absenteeism	there is insecurity to work at night
N	Valid	40	40	40	40	40	40
	Missing	2	2	2	2	2	

#### Frequency table

##### Number of days absent in the last three months

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	low	2	4.8	5.0	5.0
	medium	12	28.6	30.0	35.0
	high	26	61.9	65.0	100.0
	Total	40	95.2	100.0	
Missing	System	2	4.8		
	Total	42	100.0		

#### Age

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	married	33	78.6	82.5	82.5
	unmarried	7	16.7	17.5	100.0
	Total	40	95.2	100.0	
Missing	System	2	4.8		
	Total	42	100.0		



### 6.3.1 Findings of Statistical Analysis

The findings of the statistical analysis are as follows:

- i) In the last three months per female worker was absent in 2.6 days in average. So it is said that absenteeism rate is high.
- ii) 61.9% female workers are at the high absenteeism level.
- iii) 82.5% of the total respondents are married.
- iv) 47.5% of the total respondents strongly agreed, 30% agreed and 15% disagreed with the statement "Working at night is detrimental to health"
- v) 50% of the total respondent strongly agreed, 25% agreed and 7.5% disagreed with the statement "wages do not compensate for working in the night shift"
- vi) 37.5% of the total respondents strongly disagreed and 40% disagreed with the statement, "there is insecurity to working during night"
- vii) 42.5% of the total respondents' strongly agreed and 27.5% agreed with the statement, "Transport facility may reduce absenteeism."
- viii) Multivariate analysis shows that only 17.3% variation of the dependent variable can be explained by the independent variables, so, there are some other independent variable(s), which may have influence on absenteeism.
- ix) The variable, "working at night is detrimental to health", "wages do not compensate for working in the night shift", and "Transport facility may reduce absenteeism" have positive impact on absenteeism which the variable "marital status" and "there is insecurity to working during night" have negative effect. The variable "age" has very negligible effect on absenteeism.

## 7.0 Recommendations

Working at night is detrimental to health; wages do not compensate work in the night shift, Transport facility may reduce absenteeism etc have positive impact on absenteeism. Since the independent variables selected in this study are liable to explain only 17.3% of total variation in the no. of days absent since last three months. So, there are some other important reasons which have impact on the dependent variable. We have to find out

those reasons. However, this study suggests the following recommendations to reduce absenteeism:

- i) Increasing wages to compensate to work in the night shift;
- ii) Ensuring transport facility for working in the night shift;
- iii) Increasing the medical allowances to the night shift workers.

## **8.0 Conclusion**

Absenteeism in industrial life is one of the alarming issues resulting greater cost than the direct payment of wages or salaries and other benefits paid to the absentee. The success of an enterprise largely depends on a group of employees who work regularly and sincerely. Absenteeism is the failure of employees to report for work when they are scheduled to work. Our garment sector dominated by female workers is still now the pioneer exporting earning sector. This study presents the causes of absenteeism and the impact of absenteeism on productivity and some recommendations to bring it under a tolerable limit. This study looked into absenteeism of female garment workers at night shift in particular. It was found that the garments managements in some cases were helpful in solving the social problems faced by the female workers. But they were responsible for both economic and health causes- such as irregularity in payment of salaries and wages, long working hour, strict and insufficient leave policy, unhealthy working environment etc. So, authority should take necessary steps to minimize it and ensure the productivity of our female workers.

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