

Absenteeism of Supermarket Employees in Dapitan City

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to look into the factors contributing to absenteeism and the absenteeism rate of employees among supermarket stores in Dapitan City during the calendar year of 2023–2024. The respondents of this study are the employees of the two selected supermarket stores in Dapitan City - a total of ten (10) respondents. More specifically, this study focused solely on the prominent supermarket stores in the aforementioned place with a population of not less than twenty (20) employees but not more than 60 employees. Moreover, this study has small number of respondents in compliance to the respondent's right for voluntary participation. This study employed a mixed method approach, combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches, which utilized interviews supplemented by questionnaires with open-ended questions to explore the underlying factors influencing absenteeism. A quantitative approach was used to ascertain the respondents' profile and in computing the absenteeism rates. Furthermore, a qualitative approach was used to gather information and insights into the factors contributing to absenteeism through interview. The study revealed that the majority of the surveyed supermarket employees fell within the age bracket of 23 to 27 years old, where most of them are female, already married, and classified as regular workers. When delving into the realm of absenteeism, it became evident that personal adversities emerged as the pervasive theme among the surveyed employees. These adversities encompassed health-related issues such as fever, tooth extraction, dysmenorrhea, and anxiety; crisis situations that includes childcare responsibilities, important things, emergency matters, personal problem and heavy rain or bad weather condition; and also, significant life events such as birthdays and burials. The study identified the highest absenteeism rate among the ten respondents to be 38.46%. This rate corresponded to an individual who had accumulated thirty absences out of seventy-eight scheduled working days. Additionally, upon categorizing respondents based on their number of scheduled working days, four out of the ten respondents exhibited the highest absenteeism rate of 5.13%. The study concluded that employees with fewer working days are more likely to have a higher absenteeism rate compared to those with more scheduled working days.

Keywords: Absenteeism, Employees, Supermarket

INTRODUCTION

Absenteeism in the workplace is a term that signifies a worker's failure to report for work (Fichman, 1984). This issue of absenteeism is not confined to any specific industry but is a pervasive challenge across various sectors. In the realm of labor and employment, absenteeism represents a significant problem that can impede economic growth and hinder social development (Maheshwari, 2018). As interpreted by Gangai and Agrawal's (2013), absenteeism is the persistent absence of a worker or a group of workers, which can manifest in different forms, including long-term absenteeism, where individuals are absent for extended durations, or intermittent absenteeism, where employees are frequently absent on a random basis. Additionally, as highlighted by Imran, Ali, and Taous (2023), absenteeism is a multifaceted concept with several characteristics. It encompasses various aspects that include absence, nonattendance, nonexistence, inattention,

and preoccupation, reflecting the diverse ways in which employees can be disengaged from their work or fail to report for their scheduled duties. Furthermore, Mat Saruan et al. (2020) describes absenteeism into two, to wit: planned and unplanned. Planned absenteeism occurs when an individual intentionally chooses to be absent from work or other commitments with prior arrangement or notification, such as scheduled vacations or time off, pre-arranged medical appointments, approved leaves of absences, and attendance at special events or personal commitments. On the other hand, unplanned absenteeism refers to situations where an individual is unexpectedly absent without prior arrangement or notification which encompasses sudden illness or injury, family emergencies transportation issues, unforeseen personal problems, bad or unfavorable weather, childcare or eldercare issues, and work-related stress or burnout.

A **supermarket** is a self-service retail establishment that provides a diverse array of food, beverages, and household products, thoroughly organized into distinct sections for ease of direction and accessibility (Wikipedia). **Supermarkets are** essential for meeting a variety of consumer needs since they have a large selection of goods. These retail stores, which are usually divided into sections, offer more than just basic food and drink items; they also carry a variety of domestic needs. Customers can find a wide variety of things, such as apparel, kitchen necessities, pharmaceuticals, and personal care items like shampoo and soap. Supermarkets have many facets that contribute to their significance as one-stop shops for meeting daily needs and giving convenience to households (Villamar and Dionisio, 2023).

According to Mabes (1982), the seriousness of the national absenteeism problem should cause alarm in most firms, particularly those in the retail industry. Labor intensity, wages lower than those of most other industries, and a higher percentage of female and part-time employees—in particular, department stores employ females for 67 percent of all positions (research indicates female absentee rates are higher than male rates) are some of the unique features of the retail industry that compound its absentee problems.

The purpose of this study is to look into the factors and absenteeism rates of employees among supermarket stores in Dapitan City, Zamboanga del Norte, Philippines. The researchers embarked on this study upon understanding the implications of absenteeism for both employees and organizations and the lack of research about absenteeism, focusing specifically on supermarket stores located in Dapitan City, Zamboanga del Norte, Philippines.

Objective of the Study

This study aimed to look into the factors and absenteeism rate of employees among supermarket stores in Dapitan City for the calendar year 2023-2024.

1. To present the profile of the respondents that consists of their age, gender, marital status and employment type.
2. To present the factors of absenteeism of employees.
3. To present the absenteeism rate of the respondents in the past three (3) months.

Significance of the Study

- Identify causes of absenteeism that lead to better support and improved working conditions, particularly on the part of the employees.
- Empower employers with valuable insights to reduce absenteeism while enhancing productivity and operational efficiency.
- It serves as a valuable reference for studying absenteeism for future researchers.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Brady et al. (2023) asserted that **age** is widely recognized as a significant predictor of absenteeism and is believed to be one of several factors contributing to higher absence levels. In their study, they further stated

that managers commonly harbor the belief that older workers are more susceptible to absenteeism, primarily attributing this tendency to age-related health issues. In addition, Steers and Rhodes (1978) study found an intriguing concept of a "negative association" between age and absenteeism.

In the context of workplace dynamics, **gender** plays a pivotal role in shaping individual experiences, perceptions, and interactions. It can influence career progression, access to opportunities, and even the nature of challenges or barriers encountered within organizational settings. For instance, traditional gender stereotypes might unknowingly perpetuate biases or inequalities, impacting how individuals are perceived or treated based on their gender identity (Langenhoff, 2011).

The influence of **marital status** on workplace behavior is multifaceted and deeply intertwined with individuals' family commitments and personal lives. Blau's pivotal 1985 study illuminated the intricate ways in which marital dynamics, whether one is married, single, or navigating other familial responsibilities, can significantly mold an individual's conduct within a professional milieu. This impact resonates across various dimensions of work ethics and performance indicators, extending beyond mere punctuality to encompass more complex aspects like absenteeism rates and overall job engagement.

According to Van der Merwe and Miller (2018), **employment type** refers to the classification or categorization of labor agreements between employers and employees includes various factors such as job titles, levels of responsibility, reporting structures, decision-making processes, and authority. Employment type holds substantial sway over employees' perceptions of their organization's reputation.

Absenteeism in the workplace remains a persistent challenge across industries, implying significant hurdles for employers and employees alike. It encompasses the absence of an individual employee or a group of employees from work for extended periods or frequent short duration, stemming from a variety of reasons. This phenomenon presents a substantial drain on resources, with its unpredictability adding to its detrimental impact (Rahman et al., 2017).

The correlation between **absenteeism rate** and employee morale is established (Johns, 2002). When instances of absence become more frequent or prolonged, it signals potential issues within the workplace dynamics, placing employers in a vulnerable position. The concept of the absenteeism rate, as articulated by the Labour Department in India, which was also cited in the Basariya (2015) study, involves a meticulous calculation that centers on quantifying the total man-hours lost due to absences. This calculation is then expressed as a percentage, with the total number of scheduled man-shifts serving as the denominator.

METHODS USED

The study employed a mixed-method approach, with the aid of checklist questionnaire and actual interviews. Drawing on the work of Zozie and Daka (2023), this method enable the researchers to use both quantitative and qualitative approach. In this study, a quantitative approach was used to ascertain the respondents' profile and in computing the absenteeism rates. Furthermore, a qualitative approach was used to gather information and insights into the factors contributing to absenteeism through interview. The study was tailored to investigate absenteeism of supermarket employees in Dapitan City, aiming to provide a comprehensive understanding of this issue within that specific context.

Theoretical Consideration

Absenteeism is characterized as the disapproval of the worker to report for the workplace at a scheduled time, and it has been considered a significant issue in the organization for which there is no simple fix (Rao et al., 2022). In addition, absenteeism in the workplace remains a persistent challenge across industries, implying significant hurdles for employers and employees alike. It encompasses the absence of an individual employee or a group of employees from work for extended periods or frequent short durations, stemming from a variety of reasons (Rahman et al., 2017). According to Porter et al. (1972), personal factors have a significant impact

on absenteeism in organizations. These multifaceted factors encompass various dimensions, ranging from demographic attributes to individual dispositions and familial obligations. Age, for instance, often correlates with different life stages and priorities, impacting one's tendency for absenteeism. Similarly, the duration of tenure at a company can influence commitment levels and attachment to the organizational culture, thereby affecting absenteeism.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This chapter presents the researchers' analysis and interpretation of the information gathered through questionnaires and interviews with ten (10) employees from two supermarket stores in Dapitan City. Supposedly, the initial plan involves three supermarket stores and a total of fifteen respondents, however, one of the selected supermarkets refused to participate. The presentation, analysis, and interpretation of the data, which are presented hereto, are arranged in accordance with the order of the problems stated in the first chapter.

Problem 1

Table 2. Profile of the respondent in terms of age.

Age	Respondent
18 – 22	1
23 – 27	4
28 – 32	3
33 – 37	2
Total:	10

Table 2 shows the profile of respondents in terms of age. The table clearly indicates that the highest number of respondents belonged to the age bracket of 23 to 27 years old having a quantity of 4, while those with the age bracket of 28 to 32 years old have 3 respondents. It can be seen further that there are 2 respondents within the age group of 33 to 37 years old, while there is only one respondent within the age bracket of 18 to 22 years old, which marked the lowest number of respondents in the age category.

The table illustrates that the majority of respondents working in supermarket stores belonged to the age bracket of 23 to 27 years old. This implies that supermarkets are great jobs for young adults to work in and start earning money, especially since supermarkets are always so busy and highly in demand. There are always plenty of jobs available, which is great for anyone looking for some working experience and money (Goode and Simon, 1994). However, employees of this age bracket tend to exhibit a high absenteeism rate, which could be because they are still exploring their career options; thus, they're changing jobs or taking time off to look for other opportunities outside of work (Brown et. al, 1999).

Table 3. Profile of the respondent in terms of gender

Gender	Respondent
Female	5
Male	4
Lesbian	1
Total:	10

Table 3 presents the gender-specific profile of the respondents, along with the number of respondents for each gender. With five (5) respondents, the female gender achieved the greatest result. Followed by the male category having four (4) respondents, while there is only one (1) lesbian respondent.

As depicted in the table, a significant majority of the respondents are female. This observation not only emphasizes how hardworking women are but also how committed they are to meeting their basic needs. It is noteworthy that women constitute substantial numbers in various sectors, particularly in supermarkets, where their presence is visible. Research by Sangeetha and Paulraj (2013) affirms that women often exhibit greater dedication and concentration in their work compared to men. However, it is worth noting that absenteeism rates tend to be higher among female workers than their male counterparts because women, on average, take a bit longer to recover from illnesses, particularly when it comes to more severe health issues. This slower recovery is even more evident among women who have children to care for (Ichino and Moretti, 2006; Markussen et al, 2009).

Table 4. Profile of the respondent in terms of marital status.

Marital Status	Respondent
Single	3
Married	4
Single parent	1
Live – in	2
Total:	10

Table 4 presents a clear breakdown of the marital status of the respondents, illustrating their distribution across various categories. The data is organized in descending order, making it simple to interpret and analyze which marital statuses are most common among those interviewed. The standout finding here is the significant number of respondents who are married—four individuals in total, constituting the largest segment of the sample. Following closely behind is the single category, with three respondents indicating the next most prevalent status. Additionally, the data highlights two respondents who are in a live-in relationship.

The significant number of married respondents highlights the idea that married individuals often exhibit heightened levels of seriousness and commitment in their job endeavors compared to their single counterparts. Married people are often driven to prioritize stability, financial security, and career advancement due to the complex obligations that come with being in a marriage. This can lead to a perception of increased seriousness and dedication in one's professional endeavors (Hamadneh, 2017).

On the contrary, Kocakulah's (2016) study suggests a different perspective, indicating that being married might actually lead to more frequent absences from the workplace. This is attributed to the numerous responsibilities associated with married life, including family obligations, personal matters, and other related issues, which can significantly affect employees' morale and result in unplanned absences.

Table 5. Profile of the respondent in terms of employment type.

Employment Type	Respondent
Regular	6
Contractual	4
Total:	10

Table 5 shows a detailed breakdown of the respondents' employment types along with the corresponding total number of individuals employed within each category. The table reveals that a substantial portion of the respondents, comprising six (6) individuals, are engaged as regular workers, denoting a commitment to longer-term employment within their respective roles. Conversely, an additional four (4) respondents are identified as being employed on a contractual basis, implying a temporary nature to their employment arrangements.

Compared to a contractual basis, regular employment offers numerous advantages, including stability, as employees can rely on a consistent source of income, often receive employee benefits such as health insurance,

and paid time off, enhancing their overall compensation package. However, there are drawbacks to regular employment in a supermarket as well which propel high absenteeism level. According to Kim and Rhee (2011), the high absence rate of regular employees is often due to the abuse of the benefits and leave entitlements provided to the regular employees by the company.

Problem 2

Table 6. Factors of absenteeism among supermarket store employees.

Open code	Category	Theme	Respondent											
			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Total	
Child care	Crisis Situations	Personal Adversities	✓		✓							✓		3
Important things			✓											1
Emergency matter				✓			✓							2
Heavy rain													✓	1
Dysmenorrhea	Health Issues					✓	✓							2
Tooth extraction									✓			✓	2	
Fever			✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	8	
Stress			✓			✓								2
Burial	Life Events							✓						1
Birthday								✓						1
Total:			4	2	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	

Table 6 presents the factors of absenteeism among supermarket employees. As shown above, the factors were themed as personal adversities. This personal adversities has three categories such as crisis situations, health issues, and life events. Crisis situations encompasses factors such as childcare, important things, emergency matters, and heavy rain. Moreover, health related issues includes dysmenorrhea, tooth extraction, fever, and stress. Life events, the third category, includes attending a burial or celebrating a birthday.

To give further justification, here are some of the remarkable excerpts from the interview and responses of the respondents regarding the factors that contribute to their absenteeism:

“Health-related issues, emergencies, and stress (personal stress and stress caused by the mistreatment of my supervisor towards me) can really affect my motivation to report to work. There were also instances that I need to take care of my child personally.” (Respondent 1)

“Fever and emergencies were the reasons of my absences, especially in the past three months.” (Respondent 2)

“My absences were due to fever and taking care of my children.” (Respondent 3)

“Aside from emergency matters, I always struggles with severe menstrual cramps especially on the first day of my period. The pain is indeed unbearable I just want to stay on bed. (Respondent 5)

“My absences for the past 3 months were due to my birthday, and also due to my uncle’s burial.” (Respondent 6)

“I was absent from work because of dental appointment for tooth extraction and also because of fever.” (Respondent 7)

“To be honest, working in supermarket is indeed exhausting that can really affect health. There are times when I feel the need to take a day or even just a few hours off to rest and recover. Unfortunately, obtaining permission from management can be challenging, leaving me with no choice but to push through even when I'm not feeling well. Forcing and overdoing myself often result in prolonged illness, forcing me to miss work for days at a time.” (Respondent 9)

“Bad weather, specifically heavy rain hindered me to come to work. Also, tooth extraction and fever.” (Respondent 10)

It is evident in the table that personal adversities emerged as the prevalent factor that contributes to absenteeism. According to Singh and Sharma (2017), personal adversities refers to significant challenges that an individual encounters such as health issues, crisis situations, and some inevitable life events. Individuals facing adversities may find it challenging to maintain consistent attendance at work due to the additional burdens and stressors they are dealing with.

Problem 3

Table 7. Absenteeism rate of employees in the past three months (November - December 2023 - January 2024).

No. of Working Days	No. of Absences	Absenteeism Rate
80	3	3.85
84	6	7.14
80	5	6.25
84	3	3.57
80	5	6.25
78	3	3.85
78	3	3.85
78	30	38.46
80	25	31.25
78	5	6.41

Table 7 provides overview of individual respondents' absenteeism rate based on their number of working days and their absences over the past three months. The rates are calculated by dividing the number of absences by the scheduled working days for each respondent and then multiplying by 100. Notably, the data reveals that the highest percentage of absences stands at 38.46%, indicating a significant portion of the respondents faced challenges in maintaining regular attendance. Following closely is an absenteeism rate of 31.25% by a respondent who had twenty-five absences during the specified period.

Furthermore, the table highlights a distinct pattern where three respondents exhibited a low absenteeism rate of 3.85%, marking the lowest percentage of absences recorded among the surveyed individuals. However, this absence rate still implies that absenteeism is really a problem in the supermarket because according to Vulpen (2023), an absenteeism rate higher than 1.5% is already unhealthy.

The study by Greenburg & Baron (1995) suggests a potential correlation between the number of working days and absenteeism rates, hinting that fewer working days could be linked to higher absenteeism. However, establishing a definitive causal relationship or identifying other factors influencing employee absenteeism would require further investigation. High rates of absenteeism and labor turnover often serve as indicators of discontent within a company. Dissatisfied employees may demonstrate their dissatisfaction with management through increased absenteeism.

Table 8. Absenteeism rate of the respondents when group according to their number of working days.

No. Respondents	No. Of Working Days	Absenteeism Rate
2	84	2.38%
4	80	3.75%
4	78	5.13%

Table 8 offers a detailed breakdown of absenteeism rates along with the corresponding number of respondents associated with each rate. The rates are calculated by dividing the number of respondents to the number of working days, and then multiplied by 100. Of particular note is the observation that two respondents have an absenteeism rate of 2.38%. Conversely, there are four respondents with an absenteeism rate of 3.75%, hinting at a notable prevalence of absenteeism within this group. However, the most striking finding emerges from the highest reported rate of 5.13%, identified among four respondents. This figure suggests a substantial increase in absenteeism, particularly to the respondents with the fewest scheduled working days within the sample. According to Vulpen (2023), as a rule of thumb, a 1.5% absence rate is a *healthy* rate, more than that is considered as high absenteeism rate.

To give additional justification regarding absenteeism rate, here is the statement from our key informants in the managerial positions:

“Yes, absenteeism is indeed a problem in our company. Maybe, if I were to rate, I would say 9/10.”

“On the scale of one to ten (1-10), 10 being the highest, I will give a rate of 7/10 because absenteeism is really a problem in our workplace.”

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Conclusions

Absenteeism is a serious problem that has a negative impact on every organization, and the supermarket stores in Dapitan City are not exempt from this widespread phenomenon. The study concluded that majority of the respondents are females, married, and within the age bracket of 23 to 27 years old. Regarding employment status, the majority of respondents were identified as regular employees. The analysis of absence factors reveals that personal adversities are the most prevalent cause of absenteeism, which correlates to the research work of Zozie and Daka (2023), particularly the Personal Factor independent variable. Additionally, variations in absenteeism rates indicate that the majority of respondents with smaller number of scheduled working days tend to exhibit more absences than those employees having greater number of scheduled working days.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions, the following recommendations are hereby offered:

1. Employers might want to consider establishing an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) to provide counseling and support services for employees experiencing personal challenges or crisis situations. This could involve offering counseling services, support groups, and health wellness program to assist employees facing challenging life circumstances, specially female and married individuals.
2. Employers are encourage considering reviewing benefits and leave entitlement policies for regular workers, and if needed, implement stricter attendance policy.
3. Employees are also encourage to communicate their concerns to their respective employers or higher ups especially when it comes to their schedules to address possible miscommunication that might lead to employees' discouragement to attend work.
4. For the future researchers who might be interested conducting a study about absenteeism, especially in this particular setting, it is highly recommended for them to utilize greater number of respondents

and employ additional statistical tools aside from percentage analysis such as ANOVA, t-Test, and Chi-Square Test.

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