

DIAGNOSTIC ANALYSES ON EMPLOYEE ABSENTEEISM IN INDIAN PUBLIC SECTOR UNITS: A STRINGENT PREVENTIVE ACTION OF MODERN HR MANAGER

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ABSTRACT

The growth of the manufacturing industry is drastically influenced by the vital factor Human Resources, as the availability of skilled and trained talent pool is imperative. Absenteeism prevention practices and strategies followed by the manufacturing companies are designed to attract and retain the professionals and are formulated to meet the current market conditions.

Organisations formulate strong absenteeism prevention practices along with effective strategies to accomplish goals utilising human resources to the optimum extent. There has been a tremendous change in the absenteeism policies and practices to leverage the current workforce. Many absenteeism practices studies have been conducted across a range of industries. There are no known academic study to ascertain the causes of absenteeism and its prevention practices in Government owned manufacturing organisations in India in general nor there is any study in Public Sector Unit (PSU).

The study aims at examining the dimensions of employees' perception of the organizational culture, Performance Assessment System and Career Growth Opportunities and its effectiveness on absenteeism in PSU. Hence this empirical study is directed towards Public sector undertaking companies targeting on the employees perception to trigger thoughts in the minds and find solutions to face the future challenges due to absenteeism.

INTRODUCTION

Human Resource Management is a strategic process and involves attracting, developing, and maintaining a talented and energetic workforce to support the organisation's mission, objectives and strategies. Due to an increased complexity in global business, rapidly changing, and highly competitive environment, an effective human resource management

has become a vital strategic concern for the organisations of today. The human resource function plays an increasingly important role in an organisation's ultimate success or failure. In the new economy, raw materials and capital can be brought from anywhere at any time. But organisational success depends on skills, creativity, and ideas of the employees.

Human Resources Management has to manage many issues right from employee's entry to exit. In between it has to face and tackle the employee's problems also. One of the major problems and challenges is labour absenteeism. Absenteeism is an universal and highly dangerous phenomena.

When an employee fails to report to work as scheduled he is absent. Such failure may be due to employee's inability to come to work (sickness, accidents or other reasons not within the employee's control) or unwillingness to report even though there is no legitimate reason that prevents an employee from coming to work.

Concept of Absenteeism

In the words of Heneman, Schwab, Fossum and Dyer, when employees stay away from work temporarily it is referred to as absenteeism. Absenteeism may be voluntary or involuntary. Voluntary absenteeism refers to unscheduled absence by the employee. Not reporting to work on Friday to lengthen one week end illustrates voluntary absenteeism. Involuntary absenteeism such as health related absence is outside the employee's control.

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The concept of 'organizational culture and absenteeism' has become popular since the early 1980s.

Watson (1994) view on portrays a commonsense view of corporate culture and absenteeism through a few selected statements that throw some light on the essence of organization culture and absenteeism.

1. Gesturing people thinking on the same lines and going in the same direction.
2. It is what ties everything together.
3. It is the underlying value what people do.

Organizational culture and absenteeism suggested by Schein (2003) constitutes "artifacts at the most superficial level, beliefs, values and attitudes and norms of behaviour at a deepest level and its basic assumptions at the deepest level"

Gold's (2011) view of culture and absenteeism "A quality of perceived organizational special - ness that it possess some unusual quality that distinguishes it from others in the field".

Seholz (2008) Organization culture and absenteeism is "Implicit invisible, intrinsic and informal consciousness of the organization which guides the behavior of the individuals and shapes its self out of their behavior.

"Culture and absenteeism is not something an organization has but something organization is (Smircich 2008: 347)"

Culture and absenteeism's current interest that incorporate the world is attributed to the untiring efforts of anthropologist and sociologist when we may rightly call the intellectual progenitors and it was Edward B. Taylor (16) an Anthrolopologist, who introduced the term culture and absenteeism into the English language in 1987.

Harrison (2011) classifies culture and absenteeism in four ways "Power, Role, Task, and Person)

Handy C.B (2010) – reworked Harrison's ideas and describes from culture and absenteeism, making reference to Greek Mythology as Zeus, Apollo, Athena, and Dionysus culture and absenteeism.

Deal T. E. and Kennedy (2011) after examining hundred of corporations identify four generic culture and absenteeism. They are the Tough Guy – Macho culture and absenteeism, the work hard/play Hard culture and absenteeism, and Act –your company culture and absenteeism

Goffee and Gareth Jones (2009) identified four types of culture and absenteeism from a sociological perspective along two-dimensional (Sociability and solidarity).

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To study the employees absenteeism in PSU.
2. To observe the individual factors influencing absenteeism in the organization.
3. To know the organizational factors leading to absenteeism.
4. To suggest the remedial measures to the management in control and supervise the absenteeism.

METHODOLOGY

This study is conducted using both analytical and descriptive type of methodology. The study primarily depends on primary and secondary data. The primary data are collected through survey method. Survey is conducted using well formulated questionnaire. The Secondary data are collected from Journals, Magazines, Publications, Reports, Books, Dailies, Periodicals, Articles, Research Papers, Websites, Company Publications, Manuals and Booklets

Sampling Size and Selection

Samples for the purpose of this study are selected systematically. Totally 750 questionnaires are distributed and 650 collected out of which 600 completed questionnaires are found usable. The simple random sampling method is applied to collect the primary data. A pilot study is conducted to validate the questionnaire and to confirm the feasibility of the study. and Cronbach's Alpha Criterion is applied to test the reliability. The value determined is 0.914 proving the reliability of the instrument. The quality of the questionnaire is ascertained and the test showed high reliability.

Data Analysis

The Primary data collected are analysed using the SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) computer packages. The Statistical tools used for obtaining results are as follows:

1. Z test and Paired Z test are applied to ascertain the nature of responses of employees about the absenteeism factors and significant difference among the various factors of absenteeism.
2. Factor Analysis by Principal Component Method is used to identify the factors of Absenteeism, Causes, Core Competencies and Managerial Capabilities.
3. K-means Cluster Analysis is exploited to classify the employees of PSU based on their perception of causes of absenteeism.
4. Karl Pearson's Co-efficient of Correlation is brought into the context to explore the parametric relationship among the various factors of absenteeism and consequences.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Management policies play a conscious and effective role in employees of PSU and their absenteeism. To be successful in today's business environment, companies need the knowledge, ideas, energy, and creativity of every employee, from front line workers to the top-level managers in the executive suit. absenteeism practices are implemented with the hopes of building employee commitment, overcoming worker dissatisfaction, and reducing absenteeism, turnover, poor quality work, and sabotage. Reservations are given more priorities in case of public sector. Whereas in the policies of the private and MNC the main concern is the improvement of employees in the organization. Accordingly, management policy in all the sectors place a prominent role on the employees in the organization.

1. It is observed that three factors namely **social contacts and non co-operation, cordial relationships and openness and leisure time and sharing of views of inter-personal relationships** create absenteeism among the employees of PSU. In the case of other factors like "openness and cordial relationships" and "leisure time and sharing view" the employees are not able to decide absenteeism due to inter-personal relationship. So, it is concluded that in PSU absenteeism due to inter-personal relationships is not significant among the employees.
2. It is found that in PSU the work environment emerges in the form of Management policy, Work performance, Promotion and facilities, Benefits and Exclusiveness and workload to have direct link with employee's absenteeism. The employees in PSU agree with effects of management policies, work performance and promotional facilities in absenteeism. They are not able to express any opinion about absenteeism due to "benefits and exclusiveness" and "Work load".
3. It is observed that the employees in PSU are also affected by personal health and family problems. The employees in PSU are not able to express their opinion about physiological and psychological changes leading to absenteeism in their organization significantly. The employees in the age group 18-30 are in an undecided mood about absenteeism due to social contact and non-co- operation, followed by the age group 40-50 and 31-40.

The employees in PSU differ significantly in their opinion about absenteeism due to health factor based on their age. The employees in the age group 30-40 are affected by absenteeism due to health whereas others are not affected by the health. It is found that there is no significant difference between male and female employees in

PSU in the opinion of absenteeism due to health. It is concluded that both of them are equally affected by the health causing absenteeism

It is ascertained that the employees of PSU differ in their opinion about health causing absenteeism with respect to their status. The mean analysis revealed that the top-level executives are very much affected by health whereas others are not at all affected by health causing absenteeism. The employees in PSU differ in their opinion about health causing absenteeism. Especially the employees of PSU with less than 3 lakhs salary are very much affected by health causing absenteeism and others are not significantly affected by health problems. The employees in PSU differ in their opinion about health causing absenteeism with respect to experience of the employees. It is also found that the employees of PSU with experience of 10-15 years are very much affected by health followed by employees with less than 5 years.

The PSU employees agree with the effects of headache and stomach ache. They get these aches due to heavy work load and absenteeism climate. They often get backache and stiffness in the shoulder, high blood pressure. The PSU executives rarely get palpitations and rapid breath. The employees sometimes encounter with problem of diabetes and dizziness.

4. It is concluded that both male and female employees of PSU are the same in their opinion about the inter-personal relationship causing absenteeism. The employees in the job status of lower level and middle level are in an undecided mood about the reasons "social contact and non-cooperation" and "leisure time and sharing of views", for absenteeism followed by the job status of employees who are at a higher level.
5. The employees whose salary less than 3 lakhs are not able to comment about to "social contacts and non-co-operation" in creating absenteeism among the employees, followed by employees whose salaries are between 3-5 lakhs and above 5 lakhs. The employees in the experience group of 5-7 years are not able to observe about absenteeism due to "social contacts and non co-operation", "leisure time and sharing of views". The employees whose experience is 5-10 & 10 above years are less affected by inter-personal relationship.
6. The employees in different age groups of PSU expressed the same opinion about work environment and its inducement of absenteeism. The female employees of PSU are very much affected by workload than male employees.
7. The PSU executives agree with the compulsive food and smoking for relaxation. They also strongly agree with alcohol consumption to create a situation free from absenteeism. They often grind their teeth; clench their fist to remove absenteeism from their mind. Over work load for PSU executives often create the sleepless nights and forces to show resentment on others and colleagues.
8. It is found that employees of PSU strongly feel the depressed situations in their mind and sense of accomplishment creates absenteeism. The PSU executives sometimes share their feelings about the work environment with friends and relatives. They often brood over incidents as the indication of emotional response to absenteeism.

Thus it can be said that the organisation policies helps the PSU executives in achieving their absenteeism domain.

9. The PSU executives are advised often to practice yoga to remove absenteeism from their minds and they regularly attend parties to cheer up. The employees of PSU sometimes play their favorite sport to create an absenteeism free atmosphere and they also agree that their company screens the movies to create an optimistic mood. The PSU organization arranges absenteeism management work shops and periodically arrange tours and picnics for the employee's welfare. Further the PSU employees have different opinion about the absenteeism management techniques followed in their organisation.
10. The employees in PSU agree with wages, allowances and promotion transfer as absenteeism making factors. The employees are affected by absenteeism due to the organizational climate variables recruitment and selection, training and development, career advancement, wages and allowances, promotion, welfare and social security, working condition, level of workers participation, collective bargaining, standard of safety, performance appraisal, style of leadership, work load, communication facilities, recognition of merit, authority and responsibilities, human relations, and grievances handling.
11. It is found that the organizational climate influencing absenteeism of employees in PSU depends upon the major factors like organizational culture, work environment, safety and negotiation. The employees expect a conducive climate to offer refined culture, with pleasant work atmosphere. They demand safety and negotiable settlements to their problems for the absenteeism-free atmosphere.
12. It is inferred that the recognition and facilities are the primary concern of absenteeism atmosphere and the employees are highly conducive to absenteeism due to work place, recognition, and encouragement, sharing of opinions, organizational objectives, interpersonal relationship opportunities and team spirit in the organization. It is concluded that, the main objectives of organizational climate influencing the absenteeism of PSU are encouraging developments, facilities and relationships.
13. It is found that on the whole the employees realized a conducive organizational climate influencing absenteeism in PSU. The awareness of initiatives of the organization is an indispensable factor to measure their organizational climate influencing absenteeism. It helps the employees to realize the main objectives of the organization and its culture for their benefits.
14. It is found that the respondents are not willing to express their opinion, a maximum of 63 percent do not give any comments about their VRS. It is also inferred that 18 percent are ready to VRS and 19 percent do not have any intention of VRS because of health. It is inferred that male and female employees differ in their opinion about organizational culture. The arithmetic mean analysis revealed that male employees are more affected by the organizational culture causing absenteeism than female employees.

15. The employees with UG qualification are less affected by absenteeism and the employees with school education are highly affected by the absenteeism of organizational culture, work environment, encouraging development. The employees with PG qualification are more affected by absenteeism of safety and negotiation than any other employees. In the case of family and relationships, the employees with school education possess the same opinion of strongly agreeing with organizational absenteeism than any other employees.
16. The employees with < 5 years and above 15 years of experience possess the same opinion about organizational culture and they are moderately affected by absenteeism. The employees with 10-15 years of experience separately form a group of more satisfaction in organizational culture. The junior level employees are moderately affected by the absenteeism of work environment and the other employees with more than 5 years of experience are more affected by absenteeism of the work environment.
17. It is identified that the income does not discriminate the employee's opinion about organizational climate influencing absenteeism and organizational objectives. Hence it is concluded that all the employees with different income are highly affected by absenteeism and objectives of organization. The married employees are more comfortable with organizational culture and strongly agree with encouraging developments in the organization than single employees.
18. The Top level staffs are least affected by the organizational culture than executives and supervisors. The executives and staff are highly affected by the absenteeism of work environment more than supervisors. There is a significant difference among staff, supervisor and executives in safety and negotiation. It is observed that the lower level staff is more affected by absenteeism of safety and negotiation. The executives and staff strongly agree about encouraging developments and facilities more than supervisors.
19. It is ascertained that 12.92% of PSU employees profoundly believe that their absenteeism causes can be measured through their knowledge and skills in performing their jobs and 42.02% of PSU employees have the opinion that their performance appraisal system and assessment modules in their organisation must exactly determine their performance in their work.
20. There is no association between causes of absenteeism of PSU employees and its direct impact on employees. This shows that organisations are practicing absenteeism management only for the benefit of their organisation and not focus on the absenteeism of the individual PSU employees.

SUGGESTIONS

1. Attendance records should be reviewed regularly to be sure that an employee's sick-leave days are excessive compared to other employees. If a supervisor suspects that an employee is excessively absent, this can be confirmed through reviewing the attendance records. If all indications show that an employee is excessively absent, the next step is to gather as much information as possible in order to get a clearer

picture of the situation. The employees' files should be reviewed and the employee's immediate supervisor should document all available information on the particular employee's history.

2. After all available information has been gathered, the administrator or supervisor should individually meet with each employee whom has been identified as having higher than average or questionable (or pattern) absences. This first meeting should be used to bring concerns regarding attendance to the employee's attention. It is also an opportunity to discuss with the employee, in some depth, the causes of his or her attendance problem and possible steps he or she can take to remedy or control the absences. Listen carefully to the employee's responses.
3. The tone of the meeting should not be adversarial, but a major purpose of the interview is to let the employee know that management treats attendance as a very important component of overall work performance. Keep your comments non-threatening and work-oriented. Stick to the facts (i.e. patters, profiles, rates etc.). The employee should be given a copy of there attendance report with absences highlighted for discussion.
4. This interview will give the opportunity to explore in depth with the employee the reasons for his or her absence. Gather facts - do not make any assumptions. Provide support and counseling and offer guidance as the occasion demands to assist the employee to deal with the specific cause of the absence. Often, after the initial meeting employees reduce their absenteeism. The meeting shows that you are concerned and that absenteeism is taken seriously. The employee's attendance should be closely monitored until it has been reduced to acceptable levels. Appropriate counseling should take place as is thought necessary. If a marked improvement has been shown, commend the employee. The meeting should be documented and a copy placed in the employee's file.
5. The HRD department in PSU can arrange various absenteeism management programs like recreation, exercise, Yoga and other mind relaxation programs to ventilate absenteeism factors due to workload and interpersonal relationship.
6. Female employees and their opinion about overwork can be considered. The ideas of job rotation and job analysis can be applied to reduce the workload of female employees.
7. Lower level executives and their grievances can be taken into account and Suitable training programs and increase in emoluments can be given to lower level executives. The HRD department must periodically evaluate the performance of the employees and Suitable increments may be given to avoid absenteeism environment.
8. The emergence of the HRD needs accelerates the innovative capabilities of the employees in the form of new products and services, which could increase the competitive space providing for policies to augment career through training practices to reduce the number of reasons of absenteeism.
9. Since the objectives of HRD and absenteeism management in PSU aim at weakening employee's absenteeism, separate programs may be conducted among the employees

to motivate them to develop their potentiality more by realising their strength and responsibility.

10. The absenteeism management practices encompass the various developmental activities like performance assessment, potential appraisal, training and development, job rotation, and career planning. They should also incorporate the new mechanisms like absenteeism management, fun at work, touch points, competency mapping and retention strategies
11. The absenteeism management needs in PSU emerged in the form of Innovative Competition and Organisational Dynamics. Hence, It must adopt technological developments and up gradation of analytical abilities to meet the wide competition and to increase organisational efficiency and absenteeism free climate.
12. The PSU employees should be educated to the Transformational Practices and equip themselves for the present organisational absenteeism environment. They must be ready to imbibe the qualities to materialise the policy enforcement of their organisations.
13. The learning programs in PSU is an indispensable tool to upgrade the employees to meet the challenges of absenteeism. So, the PSU may invest more funds on arranging the learning programs both theoretically and practically.
14. Unions can also play a major role in educating the employees to reduce the absenteeism.

SCOPE FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The absenteeism dynamics can be evaluated and studied in detail individually in all the organizational climate like Training and Development, Performance Management and change management. The retention policies and absenteeism management techniques followed by software companies can be researched to arrive at models and techniques.

The role of effective HR department managing the various absenteeism management practices is to be studied in detail separately. The performance appraisal process has to be analysed step by step by critically examining the stages such as pre, during and post evaluation. The factors contributing to the organisation to remain as employer of choice can be analysed. The study can be extended to the related business ITES and BPO industry.

A comparative absenteeism dynamical study between manufacturing and IT companies can be done. The crucial absenteeism management practices differentiating manufacturing and service sector can be examined. The creation of unions in IT companies can be predicted and its role can be projected to reduce absenteeism. The application of Buddy system and Mentoring can be studied with respect to IT companies. A separate study relating to absenteeism caused due to 360-degree appraisal can be carried out. Absenteeism management and work life balance are gaining importance with increased pressure on workforce and time management. Introduction of Assessment centres to identify the competencies can be evaluated. Knowledge management and KPO are also identified as areas of interest. Leadership and administration styles are to be studied as the employees are lagging behind in these qualities in India and have to improve upon them.

CONCLUSION

1. Most of the employees in a public sector organization get absenteeism due to work performance, dictatorial management policies, irrational promotional policies, and workload disproportionate to salary and favoritism.
2. Inter-personal relationship is a vital HRD sub-system which creates a conducive HRD climate. The flaws in this relationship lead to more absenteeism among the employees.
3. Employee's personal health and family circumstances are crucial factors for the quality of work life and absenteeism free environment. The maximum percentage of the poor performance of employees is due to physiological and psychological problems.
4. The organizational climate influencing absenteeism in the PSU companies is predominant. It is found that the demographic variables like education, age, salary and experience for all level executives in the PSU are creating absenteeism among the employees and especially the experience of the employees force them to practice absenteeism management to avoid unnecessary impediments to developmental activities. The top-level executives are very much enthusiastic in implementing the absenteeism management elements. The management policies in favour of absenteeism management, performance appraisal and organizational development are useful for the smooth conduct of the organization without absenteeism..
5. Organizational climate influencing absenteeism in the PSU forces the Top-level executives to implement absenteeism management techniques in the organization to accrue the benefits in the form of individual efficiency, organizational efficiency, productivity and environmental change. Optimistic organizational climatic conditions are yet to be implemented in its true sense, it is introduced simultaneously with organizational development, and so new innovative methods must be used to add more weightage to organizational climate influencing absenteeism. As far as career planning is concerned the executives and staff are not adequately affected by absenteeism, but the degree of measure of satisfaction in career planning is found in the organization.

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