

GENDER A DETERMINANT OF EMPLOYEE ABSENTEEISM IN TRANSNZOIA COUNTY

¹Philip Kiprotich Bii, ²Dr M. Iravo

¹Jomo Kenyatta University of Technology and Agriculture,

²School of Entrepreneurship and Human Resources Development, Box 3347 -30200Kitale, Kenya

Abstract: Employee absenteeism is a persistent problem in many countries; it tends to reduce the quality of education and results in poor performance of students. Despite the extensive research on the subject of Gender as personal characteristic and absenteeism, little research has been done in schools in spite of its importance. The purpose of this study was to determine the influence of Gender on employee absenteeism in Transnzoia County. The specific objectives of the study was: to determine the relationship between gender and employee absenteeism. Social exchange theory grounded the study. A survey research design was used for this study. The institutions studied were selected using stratified random sampling technique. The two strata considered were public and private secondary schools with a sample size of 168. A linear regression model was constructed to establish the relationship between employee absenteeism and Gender from each institution that was sampled, the respondents were the employees of the schools that included both teaching and non-teaching. Gender was identified as the independent variable, while absenteeism as the dependent variable. Data was analyzed statistically using SPSS version 19. Both descriptive and inferential statistics were used to test the hypotheses. The study found that gender had no significant effect on absenteeism. The results of the study form the basis for better management of institutions. The finding of this study will help the managers of schools in endorsing the validity of incorporating personal factors in interventions in recruitment, selection, training and staff development processes. The study suggests that future research can make use of longitudinal design to adequately examine the causal status of personal factors on absenteeism.

Keywords: Absenteeism, Recruitment, Gender, Employee.

I. INTRODUCTION

Employee absences are a costly problem for employers (Hackett & Guion 1985; Lyons, 1972; Muchinsky 1977). Because of this, the correlates and personal factors of employee absenteeism have been researched extensively over the past 75 years, Cooper & Payne, 1965; Evans, 1986; Hill & Trist, 1955; Kornhauser & Sharp, 1932; Naylor & Vincent, 1959; Noland, 195; O'Hara, Johnson & Beehr, 1959; Pierce & Newstrom,

1980; Price & Mueller, 1986; Vroom, 1962; Water & Roach, 1973) The focus has generally been on a variety of personal, attitudinal and organizational variables both to predict and to explain absenteeism.

In fact, absenteeism and turnover are the two most frequent outcomes studied in organizational research (Long & Ormsby, 2001). One of the key pillars of Vision 2030 in Kenya is provision of quality education for all. School systems have been engaged in a system of educational reform designed to change school culture and to improve student achievement. That reform is fueled by a level of accountability that includes not only the performance of the students, but also the performance of the employees and the administrators. Schools must meet stricter qualifications for the quality of their

teaching staff and for their performance. Some of the greatest challenges facing the schools include hiring and retaining qualified employees, maintaining excellent curricula, providing the necessary resources, providing continual professional development of the staff, and procuring the necessary financial resources to meet these challenges. As school leaders search for effective methods of meeting the rigorous demands of Vision 2030 in Kenya, it is imperative that they continually examine the issues in their organizations which impact the performance of those accountability measures. One such facet is the subject of employee absenteeism. Why is employee absenteeism important in this age of accountability? Employee absenteeism has the potential to be very costly, not only in terms of finances, but also in terms of student achievement. The financial cost of employee absenteeism is significant. Second, employee absence often means that students have lost opportunities to learn. Studies have shown that employee absence translates to lower student achievement (Miller, Murnane & Willett, 2007; Clotfelter, 2007). Further, employee absences disrupt the routines and relationships which support the learning process (Miller, *et al.*, 2007). Third, student achievement gaps in the less developed countries exist partially because of employee absence (Clotfelter, 2007).

While research has clearly demonstrated that employee absence has a negative effect on student achievement (Ehrenberg *et al.*, 1991; Clotfelter, 2007; Miller *et al.*, 2007), the research has not been as demonstrative about the causes or predictors of employee absence. Conflicting evidence exists about the effects of characteristics such as gender, age, experience, time of week and school culture. Studies have shown that female employees are absent more frequently than male employees (Scott, 1990; Clotfelter, 2007), while others have found that men are absent more frequently than women (Chaudhury, Hammer, Kremer, Muralidharan, & Rogers, 2006) or that there will be no association between absenteeism and gender (Rosenblatt & Shirom, 2005). The results of various studies appear to be contextual in nature, and therefore, are conclusive for the environs in which they were conducted. As a result, there was need to do a study of the employee absence behaviors in the Kenyan context. The purpose of this study, therefore, was to examine gender as a factor that predetermine absence behaviors. A worker is considered as scheduled to work when the employer has work available for him/her as he/she is aware of it. Absenteeism of employees is a serious problem to several organizations in all developing countries. The problem is caused by many factors and has undesirable. One reason was that high rates of employee absence may signal weak management and poor labor-management relations. A second reason is that reducing rates of employee absence may be an effective way to improve productivity or performance in examinations in public and private schools.

Education is an industry in which research on the magnitude and consequences of employee absences, in particular those of employees, is both feasible and interesting. The feasibility stems from the ability to use student test scores, and net of prior achievement, as measures of employee productivity. The interest comes from several sources. First, most school systems contain many schools (work sites), and the quality of leadership and informal norms about attendance are likely to vary among schools. Consequently, absence rates, net of differences in the demographic characteristics of employees, are likely to vary among schools. Exploring the reasons for the differences in school-specific employee absence rates may provide insights about strategies to reduce absences. Second, employee compensation accounts for more than half of public sector education budgets. There are few opportunities to substitute capital for the labor of absent employees. Instead, substitutes, often with very little training, are typically hired at considerable expense. Third, the output of the education industry, students' skills and knowledge, are critical to both the equality of opportunity and the economic growth aspiration of most countries as captured in Kenya's Vision 2030 program. The concern with employee absence rests on three premises that, a significant portion of employees' absences is discretionary, employees' absences have a non-trivial impact on productivity, and the feasible policy changes could reduce rates of absence among employee.

II. MEASURES

Gender:

The respondents gave their gender as male or female and was categorized in dichotomous 0 and 1 for male and female

Absenteeism:

Absenteeism was captured using a modified questionnaire. The instrument had 11 items that identified and measured rate of absenteeism.

Reliability and Validity of Absenteeism Reliability: Internal consistency of Absenteeism was tested by computing Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients. The average Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient for the absenteeism instrument was found to be 0.935, which is good as per Sekeran (2000).

Validity: The items in the questionnaire was assessed by factor analysis through principal components extraction with varimax orthogonal rotation. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) measure of sampling adequacy, and Bartlett's test of Sphericity were conducted Field's (2005) recommendations. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) had a measure of 0.748, which is above the threshold of 0.5 (Field, 2005). The Bartlett's test is significant for absenteeism with Chi-Square= 170.023 (p -value < 0.05). The KMO value of 0.748 and significance of Bartlett's statistic confirm the appropriateness of the factor analysis for absenteeism.

Table 4.7: KMO and Bartlett's Test

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.748
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	595.940
	Df	21
	Sig.	.000

III. RESULTS

Response Rates: The sample consisted of 168 respondents and 120 respondents completed and returned the questionnaire, giving a response rate of 72 %.

Gender Distribution:

The gender distribution of the survey respondents was 44.7 per cent female and 49.4 per cent male.

Correlation:

There was a weak negative positive correlation between Gender and absenteeism that was non-significant at 95 % confidence level ($r = -.096$, $p = 0.324$).

Regression Analysis: Was carried out to test the null hypotheses.

H01: From the regression analysis, the hypothesis H01 was tested by constructing the following linear model:

$GD = B + \beta * A$ where: GD Gender is (the independent variable) B is the y-intercept, β is gradient/slope of the regression line and GD denotes Gender (the dependent variable). Thus the linear equation relating GD and absenteeism took the form:

$GD = 3.505 - 0.223 * A$. This model has a weak correlation (adjusted $R^2 = 0.12$) and is non-significant ($F = 28.18$ and $p = 0.210$ which is more the significance level of 0.05) while $\beta \neq 0$. The results of the partial correlation for effects of absenteeism relationship shows (H_{01}) that stated that gender has no significance effect on employee absenteeism. The results of the regression analysis ($\beta = -.223$, $p > 0.05$) suggested that gender had no significant effect on absenteeism. Hence hypothesis H_{01} was supported. The finding suggests that absenteeism is not determined by gender.

IV. DISCUSSION

The result of the study indicated that gender does not have a significant effect on employee absenteeism. The hypothesis was therefore rejected. This finding is contrary to prior researches which appear to accept a view that female employees are absent more frequently than male employees (Scott, 1990; Clotfelter, 2007).

The finding was consistent with previous studies showing that Gender affects the level of employee absenteeism. Scott's (2010) study of junior and senior high school employees found that age was a significant factor in predicting the absence of men and women during the child bearing years. On the other hand, Unicomb *et al* (1999), found that the number of absences claimed by female employees increased with age and that male employees claimed more days in their thirties than at any other age (Sivanathan and Fekken 2002; Modissor & Singh, 2008; Mwangi *et al.*, 2011).

REFERENCES

- [1] Aamodt, M.G. (2004). *Applied Industrial/Organizational Psychology* (4th ed). USA:Thomson/Wadsworth.
- [2] Albright, S. (2003). Employees in developing countries. Improving effectiveness and management costs. Economic Development Institute, World Bank, Washington D.C.
- [3] Alcazar, L., Rogers, F. H., Chaudhury, N., Hammer, J., Kremer, M., &Muralidharan, K. (2006). Why are employees absent? Probing service delivery in Peruvian primary schools. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 45(3), 117-136. Retrieved October 17,2008,from <http://search.ebscohost.com.proxy.library.vcu.edu>.
- [4] Allen, T. (1981). Lessons from a comprehensive performance appraisal project. *Educational Leadership*, 44(7; 7), 8-14. Retrieved October 17, 2008, from <http://search.ebscohost.com.proxy.library.vcu.edu>
- [5] Antonakis, J., Avolio, B.J., &Sivasubramaniam, N. (2003). Context and leadership: An examination of the full-range leadership. *Leadership Q.*, 14: 261- 295.
- [6] Atchison, M. (1999). Employer's perspectives on the Family & Medical Leave Act (FMLA): 2007-2008. Arlington, VA: The Bureau of National Affairs, Inc. School Division (name redacted to protect confidentiality) At-A-Glance: 2008-09. Retrieved November 30, 2008, from [http://www.\(school division\).k12.va.us/info/demographic.htm](http://www.(school division).k12.va.us/info/demographic.htm)
- [7] Erickson, L. (2001). *Human Resource Management - A strategic approach* (3rd ed.). Publishers: Harcourt Brace College.
- [8] Byrkit, D.R. (1987). *Statistics Today: A Comprehensive Introduction*. New York: Cummings Publishing Company.
- [9] Borg, M. G., & Riding, R. J. (1991). Occupational stress and satisfaction in teaching. *British Educational Research Journal*, 17(3; 3), 263-282. Retrieved October 17,2008, from <http://web.ebscohost.com.proxy.library.vcu.edu>
- [10] Brayfield, S. andCrockett, E. (1955). PRSP Education sector review in Sierra Leone. Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, Freetown.
- [11] Ballou, A. (1996). Predictors of absenteeism among primary school employees. *Social Psychology of Education*, 7, 421-434. Retrieved October 17, 2008, from
- [12] Booth, W.C. (1995). *The Craft of Research*. Chicago: University of Chicago Publishers.
- [13] Bridges, E. (1980). Reform, standards and employee identity: challenges of sustaining commitment. *Teaching and Employee Education*, 21, 563-577. Retrieved October 17, 2008 from <http://search.ebscohost.com.proxy.library.vcu.edu>
- [14] Cohen, D., Imants, J., &Zoelen, A. V. (2000). Employees' sickness absence in primary schools, school climate and employees' sense of efficacy. *School Organization*, 15(1;1),77-86.RetrievedOctober 17, 2008, from <http://web.ebscohost.com.proxy.library.vcu.edu>.
- [15] Cooper, R., & Schindler, G. (2003). Determining the negative effect of employee attendance on student achievement. *Education*, 118, 307. Retrieved March 27, 2008, from <http://find.galegroup.com.proxy.library.vcu.edu>.
- [16] Chadwick-Jones H., Nicholson F. & Brown, K. (1982). Gender differences in absenteeism. *Public Personnel Management*, 19(2; 2), 229. Retrieved October 17, 2008, from <http://web.ebscohost.com.proxy.library.vcu.edu>
- [17] Chaudhury, N., Hammer, J., Kremer, M., Muralidharan, K., & Rogers, F. H. (2006). Missing in action: employee and health worker absence in developing countries. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 20(1; 1), 91-A4.
- [18] Clotfelter, K (2007). Secondary data analysis. In J. H. McMillan & S. Schumacher, *Research in education: Evidence-based inquiry* (pp. 406-414). Boston, MA:Pearson Education, Inc.
- [19] Druss, B. G., Schlesinger, M., & Allen, H.M., Jr. (2001). Depressive symptoms, satisfaction with health care, and 2-year work outcomes in an employed population. *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 158(5), 731-734.

- [20] Ehrenberg, R., Farrell, D., & Stamm, C. L. (1981). Meta-analysis of the correlates of employee absence. *Human Relations*, 41(3; 3), 211-227.
- [21] Foldes, G. & Foster, L (1989). *The Impact, Causes, and Prevention of Excessive Employee Absenteeism*, Clearing House. New York
- [22] Gowler, R. (1969). Occupational stress: perceptions of employees in Catholic schools. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 7, 55-68.
- [23] Gupta, S. (2003). *Research in education: Evidence-based inquiry*. Boston, MA: Pearson Education, Inc.
- [24] Hair, J.F., Black, C.W., Babin, B.J., & Anderson, R.E. (2010). *Multivariate data analysis*. Seventh Edition upper saddle River, NJ Prentice Hall.
- [25] Hoque, J. & Islam F. (2003). The importance of posting in becoming an employee in Ghana. MUSTER Discussion Paper Series No. 13. Centre for International Education, Sussex University, Brighton.
- [26] Hill, D., & Trist, G. (1953). Missed work and lost hours, may 1985. *Monthly Labor Review*, 109(11; 11), 26.
- [27] Imants, J., & Van Zoelen, A. (1995). Employees' sickness absence in primary schools, school climate and employees' sense of efficacy. *School Organization*, 15(1), 77-86.
- [28] John, M. C., & Taylor J. W., V. (1999). Leadership style, school climate, and the institutional commitment of employees. *InFo*, 2(1), 22-57.
- [29] Johnson, M. (1995). *Managing in the next Millennium*, Oxford: Butterworth – Heinemann.
- [30] Long, J., & Ormsby, J. G. (2001). Stamp out absenteeism. *Personnel Journal*, 66(11), 94-96.
- [31] Keller, G. (1995). *Statistics for management and economics*. 4th edition. Pacific Grove: Brooks-Cole Publishing Company
- [32] Krejcie, Robert V., Morgan, V., & Daryle W., (1998). "Determining Sample Size for Research Activities", *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 2 (3) 112
- [33] Kremer, R. (2005). *A Comparative Institutional Analysis of Government, NGO and Private rural Primary Schooling in Pakistan*. Department of Economic Working Paper Series No 2003-11, University of Utah, Salt Lake City.
- [34] Malhotra N.K. (2007). *Marketing Research: An Applied Orientation*. 5th edition. New Delhi, Prentice Hall of India private limited.
- [35] McGregor, D. (1967). *The professional manager*. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- [36] Michaelowa, M. (2002). Employee job satisfaction, student achievement, and the cost of Primary Education in Franco phone sub-Saharan Africa. Hamburg Institute of International Economics HWWA Discussion Paper 188.
- [37] Miller, A., Murnane J., & Willett, F. (2007). Occupational stress and satisfaction in teaching. *British Educational Research Journal*, 17(3; 3), 263-282. Retrieved October 17, 2008, from <http://web.ebscohost.com.proxy.library.vcu.edu>.
- [38] Ministry of Education (2007). Missed work and lost hours, may 1985. *Monthly Labor Review*, 109(11; 11), 26.
- [39] Money, H., and Samouel, C. (2003). The effects of sick-leave policy on employee absenteeism. *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, 33(2), 232-240. Retrieved on October 5, 2008, from <http://www.jstor.org>.
- [40] Martocchio, J. J. (1994). The effects of absence culture on individual absence. *Human Relations*, 47(3;3), 243-262. Retrieved May 10, 2008, from <http://proquest.102umi.com.proxy.library.vcu.edu>.
- [41] Mislav, T. (2004) *Research in education: Evidence-based inquiry*. Boston, MA: Pearson Education, Inc.
- [42] Mugambi, M. (2001). *Community partnerships in education: dimensions, variations and implications*. Thematic study for the World Education Forum, Nairobi.
- [43] Mullins, L (1999). *Management and Organization Behavior*, London, Pitman Publishing.

- [44] Ng'ang'a, K.W. (2004). Statistical methods for social sciences, McMillan press, Nairobi.
- [45] Nicholson (1977) School district leave policies, employee absenteeism, and student achievement. *The Journal of Human Resources*, 26, 72-105. Retrieved March 27, 2008, from <http://www.jstor.org>.
- [46] Punch, K. (2006). *Developing Effective research proposals*. 2nd edition. London: Sage Publishers
- [47] Rhodes, R. & Steers, R. (1990). *Managing employee absenteeism*. Addison: Wesley Publishing Company.
- [48] Rhodes, R. & Steers, R. (1978). *Major Influences on Employee Attendance: A Process Model*. Addison Wesley publishing Company.
- [49] Robbins, G. and F. Teal (2003). Does performance related pay for employees improve student performance? Department of Economics, Oxford University, mimeo.
- [50] Robinson D., (2002). Why are employees and doctors absent? Probing service delivery in Peruvian primary schools and health facilities. World Bank, Mimeo.
- [51] Rosenblatt, M. & Shirom, G. (2005). The effects of pay incentives on employee absenteeism. *The Journal of Human Resources*, 24, 280-286. Retrieved March 27, 2008, from <http://www.jstor.org>
- [52] Roquemore, B.C. (1987). Relationships among employee absenteeism, principals' leadership styles, and employees' frustration levels. Doctoral dissertation, The University of Georgia, 1987.
- [53] Sekeran, N.U. (2000). *Research methods for business*. 3rd edition. New York: Hermitage Publishing services.
- [54] Scott, D (1990). Employees' sickness absence in primary schools, school climate and employees' sense of efficacy. *School Organization*, 15(1; 1), 77-86. Retrieved October 17, 2008, from <http://web.ebscohost.com.proxy.library.vcu.edu>.
- [55] Shellard, E. (2003). Defining the principalship. *Principal*, 82(4), 56-59.
- [56] Shriberg, A., Lloyd, C., Shriberg, D.L., & Williamson, M.L. (1997). *Practicing Leadership: Principles and Applications*, New York: John Wiley and sons.
- [57] Swanepoel, B., Erasmus, B., Van Wyk, M., & Schenk, H. (2000). *South African Human Resource Management: Theory and Practice*, Kenwyn, Juta and Co. LTD, 131 –134.
- [58] Vaida, P. (2005). Employee education, employees' conditions and motivation. Department of Democracy and Social Development, SIDA, Stockholm.
- [59] Van der Merwe and Miller, A. (1988). School ethnicity and governance influences on work absence of employees and school administrators. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 42(3), 361-384. Retrieved on October 17, 2008, from <http://eaq.sagepub.com>
- [60] Yukl, G. (1998). *Leadership in Organizations*, Englewood cliffs prentice Hall.
- [61] Whitelaw, P.A (2001). Reliability and Validity: The terrible twins of good research. Available: <http://www.mlq.com.au/research/articles/reliability-validity-article-paul-whitelaw.pdf>. (Accessed: 24/12/2010).
- [62] Wolmarans Andrew. (1994). *Employee development and incentives in Brazil*. London School of Economics, London
- [63] World Bank (2002) Tales of employee absence: New research yields patterns that speak to policymakers. Will behing ton, D.C., Center for American Progress. Retrieved November 3, 2008, from http://www.americanprogress.org/issues/2008/10/employee_absence.html