



Faculty of Cognitive Sciences and Human Development

**INDIVIDUAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL FACTORS TOWARDS
EMPLOYEES' ABSENTEEISM IN TRAINING SERVICE**

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PhD

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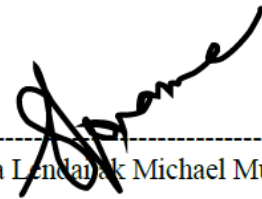
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to investigate the relationship between individual and organizational factors towards employees' absenteeism in all branches Akademi Kastam Diraja Malaysia. The branches are in Sarawak, Sabah, Melaka, Langkawi, East, and West. Data were gathered from 116 employees and 82 respondents participated. A quantitative research methodology is used in this research and the data were collected using questionnaires which is Google Form as the instrument. The data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics were reported, followed by reliability analysis, Pearson correlation and hypothesis testing using stepwise multiple regressions. The findings have shown that there is a strong relationship between job satisfaction and employees' absenteeism. In addition, there is weak relationship between working conditions and employee's absenteeism in all branches Akademi Kastam Diraja Malaysia in Malaysia. Besides, findings from this study also indicated that job satisfaction is the most dominant among independent variables. The study contributes to the existing knowledge to the employees in training services especially in Malaysia. It has enhanced both the organization and human resource practitioners' knowledge and understanding on absenteeism factors of employee's in training services especially among customs. On the other hand, the result of this study could help the organization to improve the quality to ensure the organizations can achieve performance of the employee's.

Keywords individual, organizational, absenteeism, employee, service sector, training

ABSTRAK

Tujuan kajian ini adalah untuk mengkaji hubungan antara faktor individu dan organisasi terhadap ketidakhadiran pekerja di Akademi Kastam Diraja Malaysia di seluruh cawangan yang terdapat di Malaysia. Cawangannya adalah di Sarawak, Sabah, Melaka, Langkawi, Timur, dan Selatan. Data telah diperoleh daripada 116 orang pekerja dan 82 orang responden telah terlibat. Data tersebut dianalisis menggunakan kaedah berdasarkan deskriptif dan inferens. Statistik deskriptif dilaporkan, diikuti dengan analisis kebolehppercayaan, pekali korelasi, pengujian hipotesis menggunakan regresi pelbagai prosedur stepwise. Dapatan kajian menunjukkan terdapat hubungan yang kuat antara kepuasan kerja terhadap ketidakhadiran pekerja. Manakala, terdapat hubungan yang lemah antara persekitaran kerja dengan ketidakhadiran pekerja di Akademi Kastam Diraja Malaysia di seluruh cawangan yang terdapat di Malaysia. Selain itu, dapatan kajian ini mendapati kepuasan kerja adalah faktor yang lebih dominan dalam kalangan pemboleh ubah tidak bersandar. Kajian ini mampu menyumbang kepada pengetahuan yang sedia ada kepada pekerja dalam sektor latihan khususnya di Malaysia. Kajian ini juga, telah meningkatkan pengetahuan dan pemahaman para pengamal organisasi dan sumber manusia berkaitan faktor ketidakhadiran pekerja dalam servis latihan khasnya dalam kalangan pekerja kastam. Dengan erti kata lain, dapatan kajian ini dapat membantu organisasi meningkatkan mutu untuk memastikan organisasi dapat mencapai prestasi pekerja.

Kata kunci *individu, organisasi, ketidakhadiran, pekerja, sektor servis, latih*

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of study

The service sector is essentially derived most of the global economies in the twenty-first century. The sector seemingly protractedly has been regarded as the indicator of economic progress. It is generally varied and societies always depend on the role of service sector workers to ease their businesses whether it is personal or for work. Based on the research by Bhushan and Singh (2018), 47% of economic development in sub-Saharan Africa is contributed by the services sector from 2000 until 2015. Meanwhile, the industry sector only contributed 37% and 16% for the agriculture sector in that same period. According to the “Services sector” (2018), the services sector reports for 55% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) which is predicted to grow 5.9% in 2019 from 6.3% in 2018. It will make the services sector rapidly grow the economy.

Training services workers are one of the important keys to the country’s sustainable development. A finding on training and development has found that people are the most crucial assets within organizations in gaining sustainable competitive advantage (Krishna, Potnuru, & Sahoo, 2018). It therefore helps to enhance employee’s abilities in performing tasks. Human resource advantage can be traced to better-employed people in organizations with better processes. Competitive advantage from training efforts could remove deficiencies of performance, retaining employees, and meeting future learning needs. Ramayah, 2011 (as cited in Zumrah, 2016) has found employees feel satisfied with their work when they provide good service to the organization’s customers. This evidences showed how training services relevant and indirectly have contributed to the individual, organizational, and country’s development.

Thus, since services are a part of the sector that contributes to GDP and employment, it has become a necessity to control employees' attendance as part of maintaining service quality. This is because frequent absences of employees in the service sector especially training services can bring serious problem and give an immediate impact on an organization. Furthermore, according to Pavithra, Barani, & Lingaraja (2017), absenteeism has an impact on employees' and organization's productivity, morale, performance, and bad impression on the organization's name and its financial.

Employees' absences have long been a measure of performance since those can have a negative financial impact on an organization. When organizations try to solve this absenteeism issue, they probably take the initiatives of disciplinary actions, and some offer incentives such as flexible working hours, childcare benefits, and other suitable benefits. Thus, some employees gain the freedom to work from home due to the changing working environment, and measuring the absence percentage will turn to incessantly more complicated.

This study reports the findings to establish the factors that have led to the employees' absenteeism of the training service sector. It emphasized the establishment upon the main cause of absenteeism, the impacts, and possible initiatives to solve the issues effectively.

1.2 Problem statement

Malaysian Employers Federation (MEF) survey in 2016 has found that companies in Malaysia suffered RM6 billion surpluses in yearly costs for man-days lost due to the health issues absence among workers (MEF, 2016). Besides, there is no database to monitor the issue of absenteeism and how serious it is in Malaysia. If the Central Repository Database (CRD) proposal gets approval from all quarters including from relevant government ministries, it may be the first of its kind not only in the region but probably in the world (MEF, 2015).

According to the Malaysia Healthiest Workplace Survey by AIA Vitality (2018), Malaysia organizations reported have lost 73.1 days of work time per employee in a year on average due to absenteeism. The findings demonstrate that Malaysia continues to be affected by productivity loss in the workplace that is attributed to a significant absence in its workforce. The results also highlighted 50.2% of employees reported at least having one facet of work-related stress and it increasing the commonness of mental health problems in the workplace. Nevertheless, health issues are not merely factors that make employees absent. There are various uncertain reasons used by employees for remaining absent (Randhawa, 2017). If the absence of a worker is not being paid attention and still ignored by the employer, it can send out the wrong signals to other workers. As a result, this absence culture will be accepted by other workers and become a norm in an organization.

Previous studies on work-life balance on sickness absence have been criticized to be merely cross-sectional (Antai, Oke, Braithwaite & Anthony, 2015) and thus the underlying mechanism remains unclear. Meanwhile, a broad range of job conditions has been proposed to affect absenteeism, most indirectly through their effect on job-related attitudes (Erickson & Ritter, 2000). Absenteeism is still a poorly understood topic in various ways even though the substantial awareness of theories and organizations determine to reduce it (Mohd, Shah, Anwar & Mahzumi, 2016). Still, why the absenteeism issue remains occurring even scholars manage to identify the main factors and came up with the interventions plan? Indeed, it is because different sectors would have different factors of absenteeism due to working environment and policies (Nyathi, Jooste, 2008; Al-Sharif, Kassem, & Shokry, 2017; Isah, Omorogbe, Orji, & Oyovwe, 2008; Evans, 2011; Benson, 2016).

Simon (2015) has identified that the concept of absenteeism in reviewing the literature is defined in a conflicting and contradictory manner. Theories of absenteeism are merely underlying within Steer and Rhodes 1978 theory ever since (Darr & Johns, 2008; Evans,

2011; Bermingham, 2013; Hendrix & Spencer, 2016; Randhawa, 2017; Augustino, 2017; Keyser & Jaarsveld, 2018). Over the past 10 to 20 years, researchers have attempted to uncover the complexity and variation of absence behaviour. There are never-ending lists of factors that lead to employee absenteeism in a range of different eras.

There is now ample study on absenteeism mainly in education among teachers or the students at schools and universities (Callen, Gulzar, & Khan, 2016) and few researches reported absence issues among employees who provide training services in Malaysia. Nevertheless, most of the absenteeism issues being studied based on demographic factors (Akgeyik, 2014; Holt, 2017; Holyfield, 2019).

Additionally, Harrison et al., 2000; Nicholson, 1993 (as cited in Mohd et al., 2016) said scholars considered that there has been an increasing acknowledgment whereby absenteeism is not only occurred from individual behaviour but also the changes of a social phenomenon which depend on the content and context of its occurrence. Furthermore, Overall Labor Effectiveness (OLE) can be calculated as a way to measure Key Performance Indicator (KPI) by measuring employees' absenteeism that ensures the quality of the workforce and improve productivity in an organization (Anuri & Nandiweera, 2016).

1.3 Research objectives

This study's main objective is to examine the relationship of individual and organizational factors towards employees' absenteeism in Akademi Kastam Diraja Malaysia all Malaysia branches.

1.3.1 Specific objectives

The specific objectives for this study are:

1. To determine the relationship between health and employees' absenteeism.
2. To determine the relationship between attitude and employees' absenteeism.

3. To determine the relationship between family responsibilities and employees' absenteeism.
4. To determine the relationship between workload and employees' absenteeism.
5. To determine the relationship between working conditions and employees' absenteeism.
6. To determine the relationship between job satisfaction and employees' absenteeism.
7. To identify the dominant variables in individual and organizational factors on employees' absenteeism.

1.4 Research hypothesis

H₀1: There is no significance relationship between health and employees' absenteeism.

H₀2: There is no significance relationship between attitude and employees' absenteeism.

H₀3: There is no significance relationship between family responsibilities and employees' absenteeism.

H₀4: There is no significance relationship between working conditions and employees' absenteeism.

H₀5: There is no significance relationship between workload and employees' absenteeism.

H₀6: There is no significance relationship between job satisfaction and employees' absenteeism.

1.5 Conceptual framework

Figure 1 shows the conceptual framework of the study.

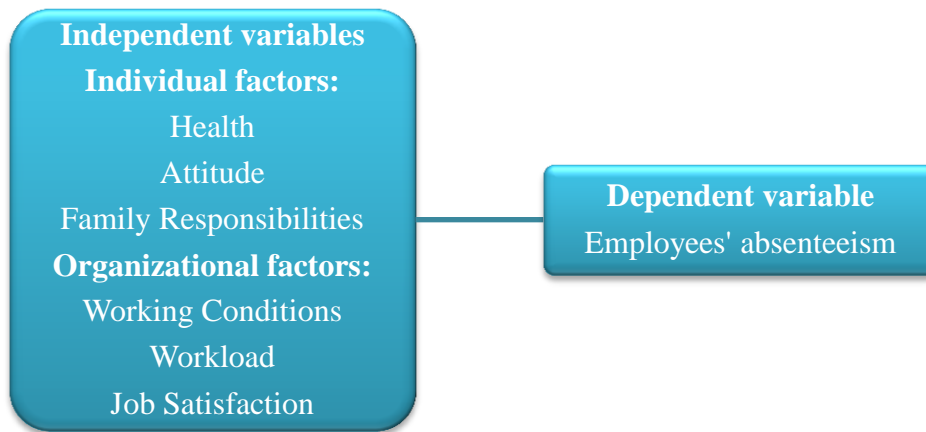


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

The aim of this study is to discover the relationship between individual and organizational towards absenteeism. Figure 1 showed the independent and dependent variables that have been developed for this study. The independent variables are individual factors (*health, attitude, family responsibilities*) and organizational factors (*workload, job satisfaction, and working conditions*). The dependent variable for this study is the employees' absenteeism.

1.6 Significance of study

The primary objective of this study is to re-evaluate the factors of absenteeism from a training industry perspective as few researchers discuss it. So far, most of the study on absenteeism focused on the respondents among health sector employees (Evans, 2011; Tambekar & Shirsat, 2012; Dreibelbis et al., 2013; Maina, 2015; Al-Sharif, Kassem & Shokry, 2017; Omarova et al., 2019). Thus, it contributes to the contents of research to students or academicians for a further in-depth study on absenteeism in the training service sector. Moreover, this study uses Herzberg's theory of motivation-hygiene due to the context familiarization with the independent variables for this study. The findings of this study are useful for human resource practitioners to recognize the key factors of absenteeism, especially in the training service sector. They will be able to plan better incentives for managing

employees' absenteeism. Therefore, it can give advantages directly to organizations to cope with this issue more effectively as they can look closely at the prominent factors.

1.7 Limitations of study

The limitation of this study is to focus on employees from Akademi Kastam Diraja Malaysia all branches in Malaysia. A total of 116 employees as respondents are the sample size for this study. The selection of respondents is built upon their status as an employee and age range between 20 until 59 years old to answer the questionnaire that has at least more than six months of working service in the organization. Thus, the subjects of study are not considered as a representative for the whole population of services that provide training and the results require cannot be generalized. Besides, there is only one method that is used in this study which is a closed-ended questionnaire.

1.8 Definition of terms

Table 1 summarizes the definition related to the study which is expressed in conceptual and operational forms.

Table 1

Conceptual & Operational Definition of Terms

Term	Conceptual Definition	Operational Definition
Absenteeism	Simon (2015) defined absenteeism as not being on a duty at work when individuals are scheduled to be on duty.	Absenteeism is the habitual non-presence of employees at their work due to health, attitude, family responsibilities, working conditions, workload, and job satisfaction.
Health	World Health Organization (WHO) (1948) defined health as a state of	Health seen as a condition or quality of human organism in terms of

	complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.	physical and mentally to be functioning adequately in given conditions, genetic, and environment.
Attitude	Attitude is anything hold in mind, ranging from the mundane to the abstract, including things, people, groups, and ideas (Bohner & Dickel, 2011).	Attitude means how an individual behave in mental and physical state to respond in a characteristic way to a stimulus such as an object, people or situation.
Family responsibilities	Functions and roles that individuals play in a family as an ideological social construct interpret as family responsibilities (Masipa, 2015).	Family responsibilities can include obligations to take care of spouse, child, spouse who being pregnant, caring for a disabled child, or sibling or caring for an aging parent in terms of providing physical needs or psychological needs.
Working conditions	Working condition includes the physical elements at work area and all things as part of the organization's culture and employee's involvement with the work (Markowitsch, 2018).	Working conditions contain a wide-range of elements, from working time, rest periods, and work schedules, as well as the physical state and mental demands that exist in the workplace.

Workload	Smith & Smith (2017) defined workload as a multi-dimensional concept with consideration for time, mental tasks, physical tasks and stressors.	Workload is the amount of work or the difficulty of work an individual has to do.
Job satisfaction	Job satisfaction is where an individual is content with their job hence willing to perform work at an optimum level (Hoffman, 2013).	Job satisfaction includes the indicators such as attitude toward present job, pleasure with co-workers, pleasure with supervisor.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Absenteeism at workplace

According to Employment Act 1955 under Part II, Section 15(2) stated employees will be deemed a breach of a contract if they are continuously absent from work which exceeds two days unless they have notified their employer. However, if an employee has a rational excuse for such absence and has gained permission from an employer within 48 hours it is not considered a breach of contract (Employment Act 1955, 2012).

Brook and Price (1989) (as cited in Mohd, Shah, Anwar, and Mahzumi, 2016) have stated in their research over the years that absence was defined as the truancy of a worker for scheduled work. Thus, absenteeism is managed in various ways in many different organizations. It can be argued that the effects of absenteeism happen in organizations are similar. Tasks are simply doesn't get finished and potentially can lead to low production or insufficiency towards services (Augustino, 2017).

The outcomes of high absenteeism levels can be possibly high-cost and troublesome, even though organizations become affected by absence rates for several of reasons. Business managers could be unsuccessful to plan strategies to curtail the problem. Attracting, selecting, recruiting, and training the stakeholders require a considerable timeframe, effort, and expenses to manage the reduction on absenteeism (Augustino, 2017).

Based on research by Hardiki and Rashmi (2019), absenteeism is divided into three types. There are planned and approved absent, unplanned and approved, unplanned and unapproved. Absenteeism is planned and approved when an employee has planned to take a leave and it was approved by an employer such as applying for holiday leave, maternity and paternity leave, and permission to work from home. Unplanned and approved absent are always happen when employees or employers are having their sick leave, involve in