
PRESENTEEISM IN WORK PLACES AND ITS IMPLICATIONS ON EMPLOYEES' HEALTH: EXPERIENCES OF BANKERS IN THE NIGERIAN BANKING SECTOR

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Abstract

Presenteeism occurs when employees in an organization come to work even though they are ill. Usually such illness justifies an absence from work and as such, employees tend to carry out their roles under sub-optimal conditions. This study examines the factors blameable for presenteeism among bankers in the Nigerian banking sector. The cross-sectional study was conducted in Ilorin, the capital of Kwara State in North central Nigeria. A total of 248 participants selected through multi-stage sampling method from eight commercial banks, was included in the study while primary data was collated through self-administered questionnaire administration. Of those that participated in the study, (39.1%) fall within the age category of 18-30 years of age while (44.2%) fall in grade level of associate and support staff. Further result also acknowledged that (43.5%) of the participants were present at work when they were ill out of which, (34.8%) was due to enormous work load (28.0%) was due to participants' passion for work (19.6%) was as a result of work pressure while, (17.3%) was due to the mild nature of participants' illness. The study strongly recommends that government and other policy makers in Nigeria should legislate laws protecting bankers from coming to work when they are ill having been examined so by qualified physician-

Keywords: *Presenteeism, Employees, Work Load, Work Pressure, Bankers, Job Demands, Sector, DepositTarget.*

Introduction

Presenteeism is a relatively new concept in the global business world which emerged as a new business concern in the 1990's (National Business Group on Health, 2010). Despite this, its prevalence in the present day Nigerian banking sector cannot be undermined. According to Akingbola and Adigun and Uzonwanne and Uzonwanne (2014) the Nigerian banking sector is noted for its growing job demands and extreme work schedule. Regrettably, sector is one of

the key employers of labour in Nigeria, Alo (2010) and National Bureau of Statistics (2010) as well as a foremost contributor of Gross National Product to the Nigerian economy.

In 2011 only for instance, the sector contributed an estimated 4.04% to the GDP of the country in the first quarter of the year which was ahead of the manufacturing sector that contributed 3.91%, building and construction sector which contributed 2.09% and real estate with 1.94% (Nigeria Bureau of Statistics, 2011). However, despite this massive contribution to the Nigerian economy, research on presenteeism especially in the Nigeria banking sector has been relatively scanty. Particularly of concern are the negative consequences this might have on the health of the employees in their quest to maintain a balance between their work and health conditions.

Ever since the consolidation exercise in the Nigerian banking sector took place in 2004 through mergers and acquisition, banking operation in has become a tug of war for bankers in trying to meet up with job demands. Several banks have continued to mount pressure on their employees for deposit targets and other deliverables which they are expected to meet up with in order to keep their job going (Chuma, Ken & Labaran, 2012). But unfortunately, the costs and extent of presenteeism to an organization has been found to be more damaging, outweighing that of absenteeism (Gosselin & Lauzier, 2011).

Studies have also shown that presenteesm in work places can cause exhaustion and burn out in workers Bergström, Bodin, Hagberg, Aronnson and Josephson (2009) as well as a range of emotional and physical health problems (Boles Pelletier & Lynch, 2004) . Further research has also shown that, when sick employees come to work possibilities are that they can infect others at work with their illness and as such increasing sick cost of presenteeism by causing more damage to colleagues and the organization as a whole (Shaefer, 2015).

Some other studies conducted by Oseremem (2012) and Anene and Anene (2013) on some Nigerian banks have also resonated this fact by affirming that presenteeism in work places can

further deteriorate the health of employees. It is against this background that this study investigates the determinants of presenteeism among bankers in the Nigerian banking sector.

Theoretical Framework

The study employed the Sick Role Theory (SRT) which was developed by Talcott Parson. SRT allows for two explicit behavioural exceptions for the sick person and also two explicit behavioural requirements (Parson, 1951). These include:

Exceptions of the Sick

- (i) A sick person must be temporarily excused from work having been certified sick by a doctor. This depends on the severity of the sickness.
- (ii) The sick must not be held responsible for the illness.

Obligations of the Sick

- (i) The sick person must be ready to get well.
- (ii) The sick must seek medical attention and cooperate with medical professionals experts in order to get well.

Drawing from the following aforementioned propositions, the sick role theory can be employed to explain the study based on the premise that bankers once bankers have been certified ill by a recognised physician, they should be excused from duties so that they can cooperate with medical professionals to get well.

SRT has been criticised for assuming that individuals would willingly accept the sick role

Methodology

The study was conducted in Ilorin capital city out Kwara State, North-Central region of Nigeria among bankers in eight commercial banks. The banks involved in the study include: Union Bank Plc, United bank for Africa Plc, First Bank of Nigeria Plc, Diamond Bank, Fidelity Bank Plc, First City Monument Bank, Wema Bank Plc, and Stanbic IBTC bank. Multi-stage

sampling method was employed in selecting participants from these banks. This include purposive selection of a mixture of old and new generation banks in the town as at the time the survey was conducted representing the twenty five commercial banks in Nigeria (Central Bank of Nigeria, 2015). The second stage includes the hierarchal selection of the main branches of the selected banks while the third stage included the random selection of participants from the main branches of the selected banks.

Primary data from the field was retrieved through administration of structured questionnaires which included open and closed ended questions. 300 questionnaires were administered in the survey while 248 was retrieved back from participants representing 82.7% run rate. Data was analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS 17.0). The researcher made use of tables, chats, simple percentage and frequency distribution to organise the data collected. The researcher recruited three research assistants who assisted the researcher in administering the questionnaire and explain the content of the questionnaire to the participants for clarity.

The researcher sought verbal permission from the management of the banks and verbal permission was given to the researcher to conduct the survey in the banks. Participants were duly briefed on the purpose of the study and its significance to them.

Results

Table 1: Socio-Demographic Characteristics of Participants

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
Sex		
Male	123	(49.5)
Female	125	(50.5)
Total	248	(100.0)
Age Group		
18-30 years	97	(39.1)
31-40 years	112	(45.1)
41-50 years	22	(8.8)
51 and Above	17	(7.0)
Total	248	(100.0)
Marital Status		
In a Union	154	(65.0)
Not in a Union	94	(35.0)
Total	248	(100.0)
Grade/ Level		
Associate/ Support Staff	110	(44.2)
Executive Trainee	51	(20.5)
Assistant Banking Officer	35	(14.2)
Banking Officer	23	(9.0)
Senior Banking Officer	8	(3.1)
Assistant Manager	7	(3.0)
Deputy Manager	2	(1.0)
Manager	2	(1.0)
Senior Manager and above	10	(4.0)
Total	248	(100.0)
Years of Experience		
< 1	77	(31.2)
1-5	99	(40.0)
6-10	59	(23.8)
11-15	8	(3.0)
15 and above	5	(2.0)
Total	248	(100.0)
Salary Per anum		
< 1M	124	(50.1)
1-5M	92	(37.0)
5-10M	23	(9.5)
10M and above	9	(3.4)
Total	248	(100.0)

Researcher's survey, 2014

Table 2: Questions on Presenteeism

Variables	Frequency	Percentage
Have you been ill on this Job before?		
Yes	211	(85.0)
No	37	(15.0)
Total	248	(100.0)
Nature of Illness		
Severe	42	(20.0)
Mild	168	(80.0)
Total	211	(100.0)
Were you able to Consult Medical Professionals		
Yes	161	(76.5)
No	50	(23.5)
Total	211	(100.0)
Were you present at work when you were ill?		
Yes	92	(43.5)
No	119	(56.5)
Total	211	(100.0)
Reasons for Coming to Work when you were ill		
Work Load	32	(34.8)
Passion for Work	26	(28.0)
Work Pressure	18	(19.6)
Sickness was Mild	16	(17.3)
Total	92	(100.0)

Researcher’s survey, 2014

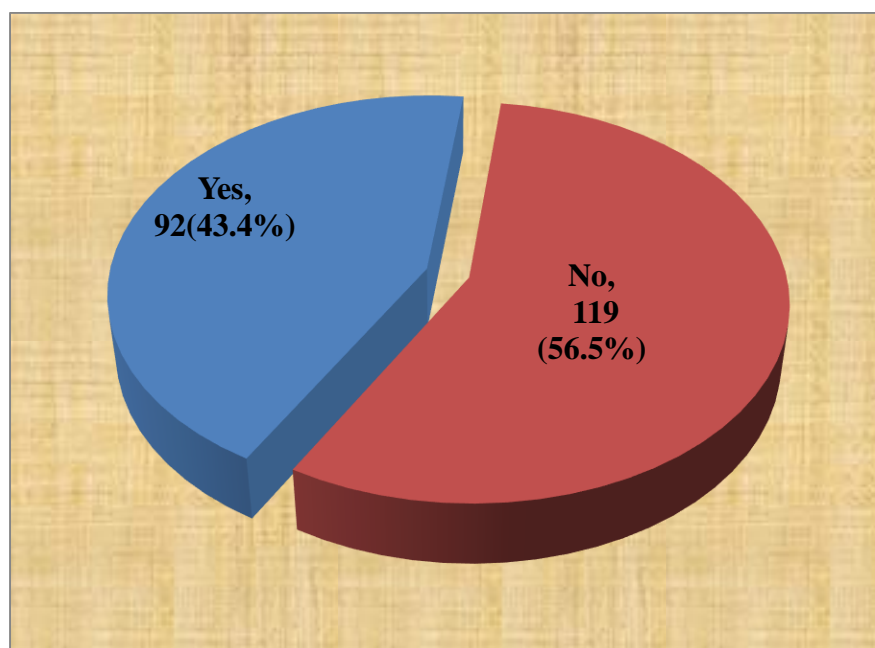


Figure 1: Pie Chart showing Percentage of Participants that come to work when ill

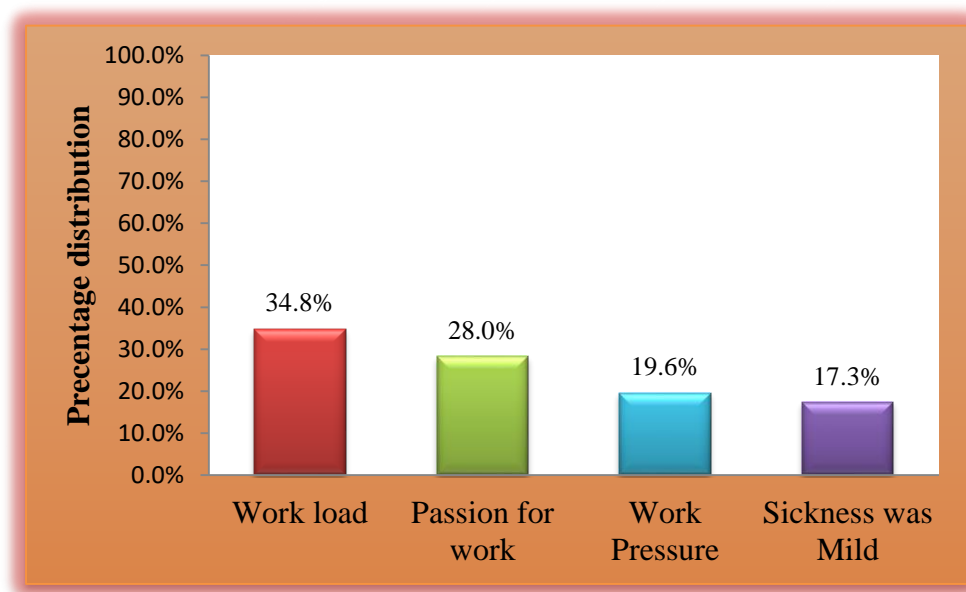


Figure 2: Bar Chart showing Determinants of Presenteeism among Participants

Table 1: The study population was almost evenly distributed with female participants accounting for (50.5%) while male participants were (49.5%). Almost half (45.1%) of the participants into the age bracket of 31-40 years, while age bracket 18-30 years accounted for (39.1%) while (8.8%) of the participants in the study were in the age bracket of 41-50 years. Among the participants in the study (65.0%) are married while (35.0%). A high proportion of the participants fell into the associate or support staff category, accounting for (44.0%) while (14.0%) belong to the entry level (Executive trainee) and (20.5%) belong to the second level (Assistant banking officer). However, (31.2%) of the participants in the study have been in employment with their banks for less than a year while (40.0%) have been in employment between 1-5 years. Also, (50.1%) of the participants earn between 100,000 and 1,000,000 Naira annually while (37.0%) earn between 1,100,000 and 5,000,000 Naira.

In Table 2: (85.0%) of the participants in the study have taken ill since they took up the job, out of which (80.0%) was mild while (20.0%) was severe. However, (76.5%) of the participants that have taken ill were able to seek medical attention while (43.5%) was at work when they were ill out of which, (34.8%) came to work while ill because of work load, (28.0%) came to

work while ill because of passion for work, and (19.6%) because of work load while (17.3%) came to work while because their sickness was mild.

Discussion

The study was able to assess the factors responsible for presenteeism in Nigerian Banks. Two third of the participants in the study came to work when they were ill as a result of work load. This result however confirms the opinions of Akingbola and Adigun (2010) and Uzonwanne and Uzonwanne (2014) who argued that the Nigerian banking sector is characterised by increasing work demands and excessive work schedule. Also, result from the study showed that, about one quarter of the participants come to work when they are ill because of their passion for the job which corroborates the opinion of Bakare (2012) who opined that, when an employee has job satisfaction, he or she will always want to be present at work in spite of the conditions he or she finds himself or herself.

Further result from the study also revealed that few of the participants come to work when they are ill because of work pressure they receive at work. This result validates previous studies conducted by Rahim and Malik (2010) and Akanbi (2015) who argued that, several banks in Nigeria give their employees unrealistic targets to run with due to the growing competition on-going among banks in the sector. Additionally the study also showed that a few participants came to work when they were sick because their sickness was mild. This result rests on the sick role theory propounded by Parsons (1951) employed in the study, which proposed that a sick person must be excused from work if he or she has been certified sick by a medical professional depending on the severity of the sickness.

Conclusion and Recommendation

This study essentially focused on investigating the factors that determines presenteeism among bankers in the Nigerian banking sector. The study was conducted in eight commercial banks in

Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria out of seventeen commercial banks located in the city. Survey design was employed in carrying out the research in which multi-stage sampling method was used to select participants for the study. Result showed that participants in the study practice presenteeism because of work load, passion for work, work pressure and because their sickness was mild in that order. The study therefore strongly recommends that policy makers and the Nigerian government should enact a laws protecting bankers by ensuring that bankers in the sector are excused from their duties until they get well, having been properly certified so by medical professionals.

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