

Absenteeism due to Stress and Work life Balance in Public & Private Sector Organizations at Rawalpindi/Islamabad

Nadeem Farid Awan, Muhammad Hassan Bangwar

Abstract

This paper seeks to investigate the relationship of occupational stress and work life balance issues with absenteeism. The paper use personal data of 73 employees working in public and private sector organizations at Rawalpindi/Islamabad. Finding s indicate that Absenteeism is negatively correlated with stress and work life balance. Implications of the results also reveals that the results of research reveals that there are various other factors which contribute in employee absenteeism however there is insignificant relation of absenteeism with our independent variables.

Key words-Absenteeism, Stress, Work Life Balance, Public organizations, Private organizations, Employee Motivation, Absenteeism in Pakistan

INTRODUCTION

Organizations have the burning issue of employee's absenteeism from their work place. There are different factors involved in the employee absenteeism in different organizations depending upon the company's working environment and nature of the job they perform.

Absenteeism is a hydra head problem because its out comes are very damaging, it creates bad name to the employee who remain absent from work and also costs organizations pace of work.

Absenteeism is defined in many ways but the most precise definition could be," An individual's lack of physical presence at a given location and time when there is a social expectation for him or her to be there (Martocchio & Harrison, 1993)" Another definition of absenteeism is "Absenteeism is the failure to report for the scheduled work (Schappi,1988).

- Nadeem Farid Awann is currently working in an International development sector organization and did MBA (Management) from Pir Mehr Ali Shah Arid Agriculture University,Rawalpindi,Pakistan, PH-00923145362000. E-mail: nadeemfaridawan@hotmail.com
- Co-Author Muhammad Hassan Bangwar is an Officer in Planning Commission, Government of Pakistan and completed his MBA (Management) from Pir Mehr Ali Shah Arid Agriculture University,Rawalpindi,Pakistan, PH 00923009878162,Email : Hassan_kkot@yahoo.com

Prior researches show that most of the absenteeism cases come into sight due to 32 well-known reasons (Smulder 1984).However there could be a series of others as organization and environment changes swiftly in the 26 years from 1984 to 2010.

Wages are highly associated to employee's absence or presence. Workers /employees are less absent from their jobs if they are rewarded high wages and senior designation in the organization .Where the real wages are splendid even lower level employees remain less absent from their job because of

Intrinsic reward given by organization to remain present although they are in a real compulsion of their private life.(Christian Pfifer ,2010)

Job satisfaction, life satisfaction, health and absenteeism are positively correlated with each other, at the same time absenteeism is also related to ethical behavior of managers. If the workers preserve the manager trustworthy and good in ethics they tend to be less absent from their work. (David J. Prottas 2007).

Public sectors are characterized as slackness which also are lacking in competition mostly health sector as research shows experience higher level of absenteeism than that of other sectors in the Nordic countries. Absenteeism is not only the result of public sector but also there are other personal factors which cause the absenteeism directly or indirectly like management style coworker relations. While it is also established in research that women remain more absent with women subordinates and boss than men. (Kristina,Lokke and Jacob, Eskildsen, 2007)

Supervisor role greatly matters in the employee's behavior of absenteeism. If supervisor is rude and untrustworthy employees tend to remain more absent. There are others reason like jobs satisfaction which includes intrinsic or extrinsic levels of satisfaction. The researches show that there is a significant relationship between absenteeism and coworker relations with each other. When employees are concerned about their job security, competitive environments emerges among the coworkers, resulting in a dis-satisfaction with coworkers. A supervisor can moderate the relationship between coworker and security satisfaction with absenteeism by providing greater job security (Greenidge, Punnett & Ramsey, 2007)

Employee absenteeism is an affective event. The relation between personality and mood with absenteeism is determined in the researches and concluded that neuroticism is positively lined to negative mood and hence develops a positive relationship with absence from work. (Joseph J. Martocchio, Diana I. Jimeno, 2003)

Many managers predict turnover using absenteeism as their tool. We can say that absenteeism is a multidimensional problem because several factors can be the reason for it. Its consequences are always negative. Absenteeism is a major factor or predictor of volunteer turnover. (Paula C. Morrow, James C. Mcelroy, Kathleen B. Fenton, 1999)

The probability of being absent from work also appreciably decreases with age and educational level - although the second is only noteworthy for males. (Primoff, 1997).

Absenteeism is not only a major problem faced by the organization where it is practiced by the employees, but also is a common phenomenon in the school going students. Where this is mostly linked with the lower level of achievements, personal characteristics that includes the inability to cope with the educational system (Scott & Wimbush, 1991).

Nature of work is a major determinant of absenteeism. Earlier researches shows that industrial sectors where shifts are practiced observe high rate of absenteeism. The same sectors aged employees above 60's are more habitual absentees as compared to below 60 years old employees. This absenteeism was attributed to different states of health. (E.P.Luongo, 1959)

Absenteeism can be reduced by informal relation between the employees and department's. This can be done by changing the composition of working teams, job enlargement, job enrichment and job rotation. Organizatrion can influence the

absenteeism rate by paying attention to the informal structure of their organization. By arranging informal activities such as lunches, farewell parties, sports events will give employees a chance to restore the balance between own investment and return. For such a conducive environment organizations need to make and pursue their policies. These are good practices which can be applicable to private sector to get the fruit full results.

(Sanders, Hoekstra, 1998).

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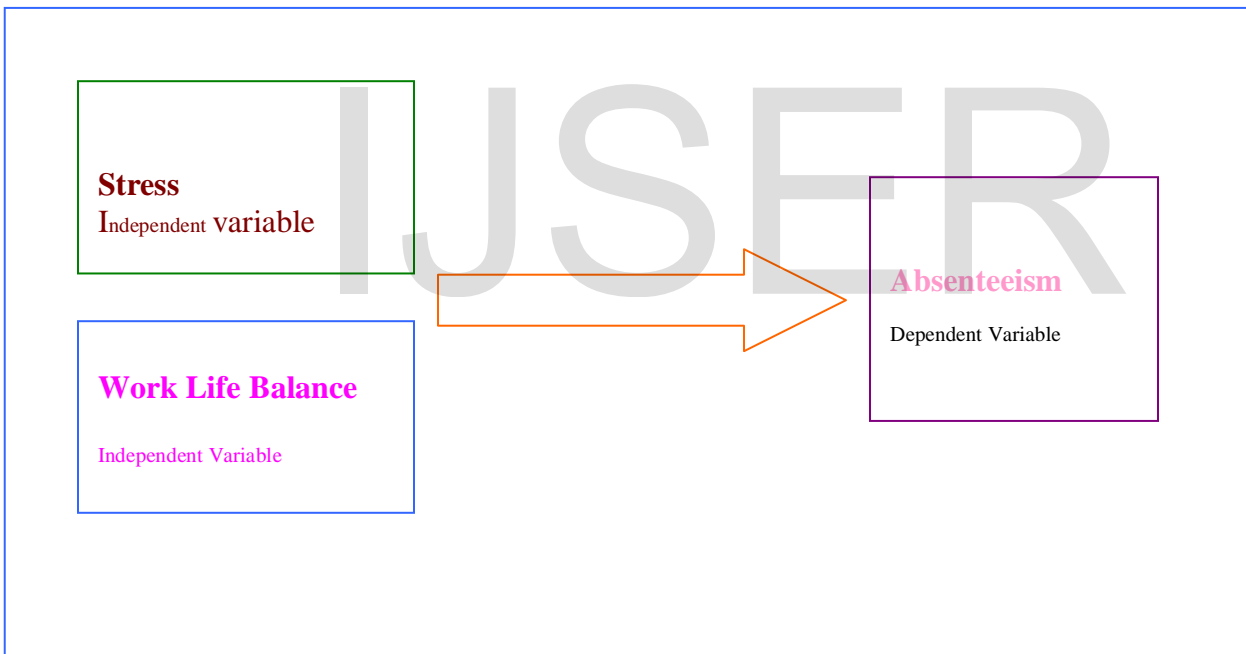
PROBLEM STATEMENT

This research's aim is to determine whether role stress (role conflict and role ambiguity) and work life balance affect the employee's behavior towards absenteeism or not .If they contribute then how much they direct the employee to decide to keep away form work place .These three variables our interest of arena and will be focused

THEORETICAL ELABORATION

Schematic Diagram of the Research Model

Fig. 1



ABSENTEEISM

Numerous studies hold up the conclusion that association between work related stress and absenteeism could be linked to work-related demands. Yet, this was illustrious in the earlier research that non work related stress contributed more to absenteeism in comparison with work related stress. This inspection carries the same opinion and analysis that absenteeism may also be subjective by non work behavior. (Schabracq, 2003).

The forms of absenteeism as discussed in researches are two i) Culpable Absenteeism which refers to unpunctuality or nonattendance problems for which the worker should be held accountable because the issues are from the employees side they should correct it. ii) Non culpable (Innocent) Absenteeism it deals with the absence of employees because of poor health or any other reason which is not in the hands of employee's control. (The University of Western Ontario, HR, 2004)

Country, sector, gender, age are also held accountable for absenteeism (Eskildsen and Jensen, 2007). Similarly ethical climate factors like caring, rules, laws and code, independence contribute in absenteeism. (Rosenblatt and Shapira, 2010).

Low wage rate, less task significance or skill variety also are the additional factors for absenteeism. (Hirschfeld, Schmitt and Bededian, 2002)

It has been indicated that an amazing number of great public organizations have no proposal as to the expenditure or grounds of absenteeism in their organizations. Institutes possibly having an absence rate averaging 25%, which depicts that in a single shift round about 50 % of the employees does not get there at work. Absenteeism price leftovers uncalculated, even though a very few managers are acquainted with the fact that the every absenteeism rate more than 5 % tends to point out displeasure in the staff, underprivileged labor relations and be deficient in administration headship. (Plimmer, 2003).

The United Kingdom calculates approximately that absenteeism of unscheduled worker typically ranges from roughly 2-4 percent. Though, it is more frequently argued that the choice to be absent from work chiefly reflects an individuals selection over labor supply and that this pick may be influenced by workforce personal characteristics. (Bridges and Manford, 2001)

ROLE STRESS (ROLE AMBIGUITY AND ROLE CONFLICT)

Role stress due to role ambiguity and role conflict can be said when there is no certainty about duties, authority, works to be done, whom to report and what importance one role carries. Whenever there is such a situation that creates a chaos in the innermost of the employee sometime overtly and other time covertly. When an employee is caught by a role stress that results are different for the organization and individual. The existing literature is numerous on role stress covering almost every type of work environment. The stress affects the organization and individual performance, creativity and productivity and employees attitude for work.

Basically role stress is the theory of Katz and Kahn (1966) that emerges due to employees' role ambiguity and role conflict. The role ambiguity has a negative relationship with the employees presence and direct relationship with employees creativity. Role ambiguity and role conflict can result in absenteeism but varying degree or nominal way. (Yun Tai Tang and Chen -Huachang 2010). Although there are different perceptions of role conflict and role ambiguity between the male and female employees of an organization. Hence they experience a different level of role stress. This is because of physic-biological difference between the two sexes. Earlier researches show the relationship of Role ambiguity and Role conflict with the job dis-satisfaction and that ultimately resulted in the absenteeism without any discrimination of sex but now it is different for both male and female. Role stress also varies from job to job and situation to situation. It is clear that when employees are dissatisfied with their job they become reluctant to attend the office or work but only role stress has a little impact on employees such habit (Wood, Andy, 2003). This is again a different picture of absenteeism which can be a short term absenteeism or long term absenteeism. The short term absence is not significance among the female employees who even experience stress related factors including role ambiguity and role conflict. But male employees having more than two stressors tend to be absent more than the fellow man who have less factors of stress for a long term.. In other words short term absence due to stress related factors is nominal between male and female employees (Cunradi, Greiner, Ragand, June Fisher-2005).

The absenteeism of employees in the organization is one the major problem in the world with a varying degree and cause different consequences like financial etc. The employees absenteeism mostly occurs where there is stressful condition in the organization and employees feel better to remain away.

Such a situation can easily be managed by the management by facilitating the employees. (PEARL MONICA YENDE-2005). However inter role conflict which is a mixture of different factors has no such a significance importance in the employees work life in the organization and that rarely interfere with work life. (Rogers-2001).

Stress or role stress whatever it may be arises due to different stressors. Some time such stress leads to overall occupational stress which includes external environmental agents. Recent study shows that it is the job dissatisfaction which compel the employee to leave the organization and remain absent. This means that job satisfaction has great affect on the presence of the employees. However occupational stress doesn't affect the employee's absenteeism. So job satisfaction greatly matter in the employees decision of being absent rather than occupational stress. (Azizi, Noordin, Arshad, Ismail, Jaalam and Zakariya-2009).

WORK LIFE BALANCE

"Working practices that acknowledge and aim to support the needs of staff in achieving a balance between their home and working lives". HEBS 2002

Retention and staffing matter are also related to work-life balance because every employer is familiar with the fact that his staff is the mainly precious resource and the means of business achievement. A review by the CIPD (UK) in 2001 give us an idea about that two thirds of respondents had difficulty in recruiting the right talent of staff. This had also a contact with yield, these complexities have monetary costs as well and it is expected that the cost of hiring one employee is minimum £5000. Another survey claims that this would be four times the yearly salary of the position. It is comprised of productivity losses, staffing, promotion and training.

Absenteeism can be categorized in to two clauses i) Long Term Absence II) Short Term Absence. Short term absence is attributed to economic variable while long term absence is attributed to ill health or high nervous tension. The high work strain and noisy work environment leads to short term absence whereas increased rate of unemployment reduces the short term absenteeism. The researches further holds that augmented used of over time increases the short term absenteeism among the workers; such incidents are common in private sector. On the other hand long term absence rate is higher if firm is disturbed with many accidents. (Ose, 2004)

Work life balance consists different factors like work hour, earnings, location of a job etc. so those companies who have no

programs for work life balance witness a significant low work life balance as compared to those companies who offer programs to balance the work life . due to low work life balance employees becomes dissatisfied at work place and this dissatisfaction keep them away.(Schonfeld ,2005)

Another study was conducted by using 211 samples of married employed parents. Twelve variables of work were taken against the one family variable to measure work life balance in the employees. It was noticed that various job conditions have impact on work attitudes and then absenteeism. Seven different variables were studied (Work overload, job complexity, job autonomy, opportunities for advancement, Flexibility of work hours, co-worker support, and pay) as their impact on work attitude and absenteeism. Absenteeism was used as a dependent variable and data of three months of respondents were taken for measuring absenteeism. Multiple regressions were used as a tool to analyze the impact of family related variables on absenteeism. It is concluded in the research that the work life balance has a negative relation with absenteeism. (Erickson, Nichols, Ritter, 2000).

METHODOLOGY

Study Design

We conducted our cross-sectional and correlational field study by using convenience sampling technique.

Population and Sample

The population was heterogeneous consisted of both private and public sector employees in twin cities .i.e. Rawalpindi and Islamabad.

Variables and Measures

The instruments used for measuring our variables were as follows. We used 11 questions relating to **stress** developed by Jkancevichh and Metteson (1980). The scale for the instrument was 7 point likert scale where 1 represents the condition which is never a source of stress, 2 rarely source of stress, 3 occasionally source of stress, 4 sometimes source of stress, 5 often source of stress, 6 usually source of stress, 7 Always a source of stress. The reliability of the construct was .882.

Reliability Statistics Stress

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.882	11

For measuring **Work Life Balance** we used four questions having responses on 7 point likert scale from 1 Strongly Disagree to 7 Strongly Agree having a chronbach alpha value of **.870**. Disagree. This scale was developed by Stephens and Sommer (1996).

Reliability Statistics Work life balance

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.870	4

We measured our dependent variable **Absenteeism** by using the most widely used question for absenteeism i.e. Absence Frequency or No of days the employee remain absent from his work in the last 6 months.(Breaugh,1981;Rosenblatt And Shapira ,2010)

DATA COLLECTION METHOD

100 questionnaires were distributed to the public and private sector employees in Rawalpindi/Islamabad organizations out of which 80 were received back but 7 questionnaires were discarded due to technical errors in them.

Results

Table 1 Correlations Results

****Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).**

		Stress	Work life Balance	Absenteeism
Stress	Pearson Correlation	1	.582**	-.053
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.659
	N	73	73	73
Work life Balance	Pearson Correlation	.582**	1	-.152
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.198
	N	73	73	73
Absenteeism	Pearson Correlation	-.053	-.152	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.659	.198	
	N	73	73	73

We analyzed our variables of interest by using Pearson's Correlation. Table 1 shows the relationship between Stress and Absenteeism which depicts the negative correlation **-.053** between the two variables at alpha =0.01(2-tailed).Since P (.659)>1, it shows there is no significant relationship between stress and absenteeism.

Hence our results are similar to the findings of Azizi, Noordin, Ismail, Jaalam & Zakariya, 2009.

Table1 also tells us the results of correlation between Work life balance and Absenteeism showing the same negative relationship with each other i.e. **-.152** at alpha =0.01 thus we can say that there is no association of work life balance with absenteeism like the research conducted by Erickson, Nichols& Ritter(2000).

However Table 1 visibly tells us about the significant correlation between the Work life balance and Stress at work place. **.582**** means there is a reasonable correlation among the two independent variables.

Regression Results with Stress

Table 2

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.053 ^a	.003	-.011	.93504

a. Predictors: (constant), Stress

Table 3

ANOVA^b

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	.172	1	.172	.196	.659 ^a
	Residual	62.075	71	.874		
	Total	62.247	72			

a. Predictors: (constant), Stress

b. Dependent Variable ; Absenteeism

Table 4

Coefficients^a

Model		Un standardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	2.632	.302		8.712	.000
	Stress	-.43	.097	-.053	-.443	.659

a. Dependent Variable; Absenteeism

Regression with Work Life Balance

Table 5

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted square	R	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.152 ^a	-.023	.009		.93102

a. Predictors: (constant), Work Life Balance

Table 6

ANOVA^b

Model		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1.447	1	1.447	1.690	.198 ^a
	Residual	60.7999	71	.856		
	Total	62.247	72			

c. Predictors ; (Constant), Work Life Balance

d. Dependent Variable ; Absenteeism

Table 7

Coefficients^a

Model		Un standardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	2.878	.305		9.426	.000
	Work Life Balance	-.102	.078	-.184	-1.300	.198

a. Dependent Variable; Absenteeism

REGRESSION WITH STRESS

Table 2 shows $R^2 = .003$ which is the square of .053 and Standard error of estimate value **.93504** clearly tells us that our model is insignificant to measure the required variables.

Table 3 ANOVA show the F value of **.196** is insignificant at .659 levels. The first digit 1 in df column represents no of independent variables considered during the regression test. Hence we can say that our model does not have goodness of fit to measure.

Regression test also tells us that there is 3% negative relationship with the stress and absenteeism.

Table 4 give the Beta Value insignificant i.e. -.053. Our research support the research conducted by Azizi, Noordin, Arshad, Ismail, Jaalam & Zakariya, (2009).

Regression with Work Life Balance

Table 5 shows $R^2 = .23$ which is the square of .152 and Standard error of estimate value .92538 evidently shows that our model is irrelevant to determine the relationship between work life balance and absenteeism.

Table 6 ANOVA demonstrate the F value of 1.690 is insignificant at -.198 levels. The first digit 1 in df column stand for no of independent variables measured for the period of the test. Consequently we can declare that our model do not have the capacity to measure the essential variables.

Table 7 Coefficients provide the Beta Value not worth mentioning i.e. -.184. So results suggest that work life balance is negatively influenced by absenteeism.

Our Research Results are in lined with the study done by Erickson, Nichols and Ritter 2000.

Demographics Data Analysis

1.1 Educational Level

Table 8

Educational level	Frequency	Percentage
High school or Intermediate	3	04
Bachelors	24	33
Masters	41	57
M.Phil/Doctorate	4	05
Others	1	01
Total	73	100%

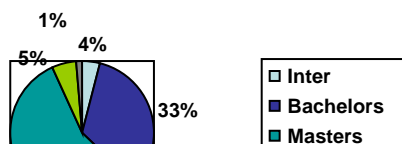


Fig.2

Education Level Of Employees

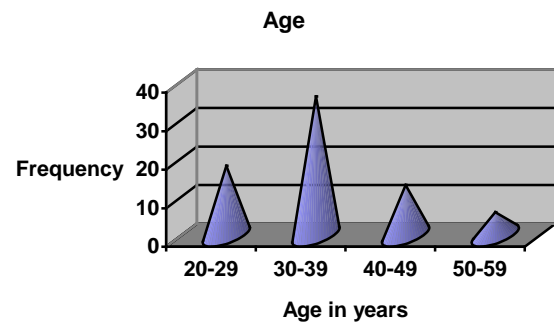
1.2 Age

N=73

Table 9

Age	Frequency	Percentage
20-29	18	24.6
30-39	36	49.3
40-49	13	17.8
50-59	06	8.3
60-Above	--	0.0
Total	73	100%

Fig.3

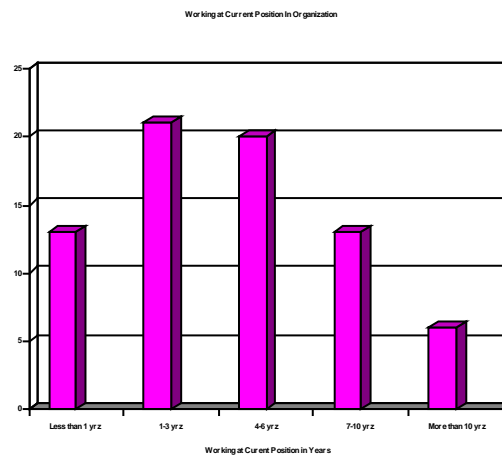


1.3 Professional Experience in the Same Organization

Table 10

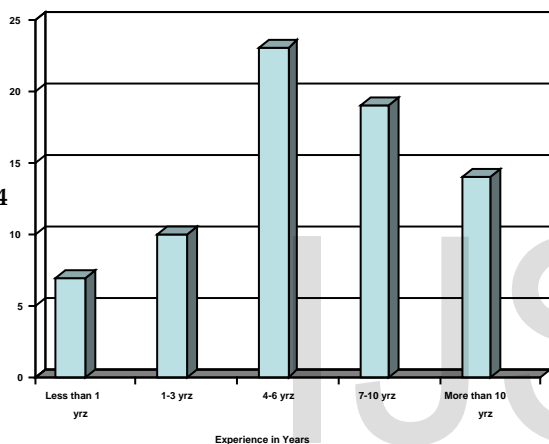
Years of working	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 1 year	07	9.5
1-3 years	10	13.6
4-6 years	23	31.5
7-10 years	19	26.0
More then 10 years	14	19.4
Total	73	100%

Fig 5



Experience in Organization

Fig 4



1.5 Region/Province

Table 12

Province /Region	Frequency	Percentage
Punjab	40	55
Sindh	11	15
Khyber Pakhtunkhawa	15	21
Balauchistan	04	5
AJ&K	03	4
Total	73	100%

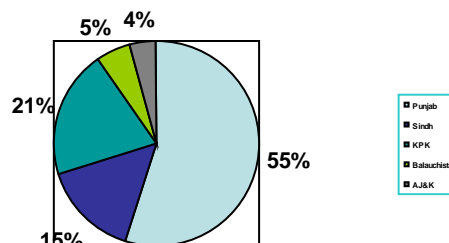
1.4 Working at current position

Table 11

Years of working	Frequency	Percentage
Less than 1 year	13	17.8
1-3 years	21	28.7
4-6 years	20	27.3
7-10 years	13	17.8
More then 10 years	06	8.4
Total	73	100%

Region/Province

Fig 6



1.6 Gender

Table 13

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	68	93
Female	5	7
Total	73	100%

FINDINGS

The over all findings of our research put in the picture us that there is no relationship among Absenteeism (our dependent variable) with stress and work life balance (our independent variables) rather a negative relation is present between them which means both are inversely proportional to each other .

DISCUSSION

Stress and work life balance does not play vital role in absenteeism of employees in Rawalpindi/Islamabad because of several reasons.

i) Inflation and unemployment

As inflation rate and unemployment is high in Pakistan so employees have to make sure their presence in their offices besides having a stress due to any reason. This phenomenon is more common in the private sector employees in comparison to the public sector workers.

ii) Collectivist society

Work life problems are more common in individualistic societies as compared to collectivist societies like Pakistan that is why there is no relation found during our research. According to Hofstede's cultural individualism is opposite to collectivism that is the degree to which individuals are incorporated into groups. In individualist societies every one lives his own life and take care of his family himself. On the collectivist side, we find societies in which people since birth live in joint family system. Thus Pakistan having a collectivist society faces less work life balance problems in comparison to the Europeans and Americans countries (individualistic societies).

We must borne thing in our mind that keeping out one or more dimensions of Hofstede's (1980) cultural model is analogous to the frequently used cultural related researches for instance studies done by Earley (1989), Allen (1994) only considered individualism/collectivism during their studies.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we can say that the reasons of absenteeism are various and external environment contributes more than the other grounds instead of internal organization rationale & when the psychological and emotional comfort of the employee is encouraged, there is a universal raise in efficiency, excellence of job, teamwork and originality and lessen absenteeism in organization. This payback mutually to the person in his job satisfaction at the same time to the manager since all these behaviors is indispensable to a winning and flourishing workplace.

By the critical analysis of literature review and the findings of our study the researchers recommend that there could be other factors like job satisfaction, organization culture, personality traits, and moods etc which determine absenteeism but not the work life balance and stress in Pakistani organizations.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We would like to thank the great guidance and devoted cooperation of our Supervisors respected Sir Shuja Ilyas, Dr Rabia & Sir Aamir Khatak of our prestigious institute Pir Mehr Ali Shah Arid Agriculture University, Rawalpindi without their support we would not have been able to complete this research.

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