

## Concept of Presenteeism and Models in Presenteeism

**Mr. Harilal A.,**

Research Scholar,  
Bharathiar University, Coimbatore, India.

**Dr. Santhosh V. A.,**

Professor & Associate Dean (Operations),  
TKM Institute of Management (TIM),  
Karuvelil PO, Kollam, Kerala, India.

### ABSTRACT

*The aim of this study is to identify the concept of Presenteeism and models of presenteeism. Presenteeism refers to work while ill. Presenteeism is a subject interested to scholars, industry experts recently. This concept is not widely studied in countries like India. This article tries to introduce concept of presenteeism, history of development of concept, factors influencing presenteeism and main models developed. It is argued that presenteeism has high influence on employee performance and productivity. So this concept has high importance on organizations theoretical and applied research.*

**Keywords:** Presenteeism, Models, Health problems.

### INTRODUCTION:

The concept, presenteeism is fairly recent, but it is gaining significant prominence in both the academic and practitioner literature as an important part of debate on performance in the modern workplace. Presenteeism is the act of attending work while sick. The employee is physically present at work, but they are experiencing health problems, so they are unable to fully perform their work duties and are more likely to make mistakes in the work they perform. A topic that is at times considered its opposite, absenteeism, has historically received extensive attention in the management sciences, but Presenteeism has only recently found a place in the research literature. A lot of definitions are produced for clearing the concepts. According to Gary Johns (2007) absenteeism is a habitual pattern of absence from a duty or obligation. According to Gibson (1990), "Performance is measured in terms of productivity, job satisfaction, turnover and absenteeism. Simpson (1998) defined Presenteeism as "the tendency to stay at work beyond the time needed for effective performance on the job". Most of the researches correlate Presenteeism to employee's health. Here the workers continue to be on the job, but, because of illness or other medical conditions, they are not in a position to work effectively. The significant factors influencing presenteeism are depression/sadness, mental illness, allergy, migraine/headache and diabetes. A research study for identifying the costs and impact of presenteeism on the Australian workforce and economy shows that in 2005–06 the cost of Presenteeism was \$25.7 billion—nearly four times that of absenteeism. In this simultaneously exploring generation or environment the organizations, compete each other for creating brand name. The brand name, efficiency, effectiveness all these concepts are related and determined mainly based on employee performance. A number of companies are making a serious effort to determine the prevalence of illnesses and other medical conditions that undermine job performance, drop in productivity, and find cost-effective ways to combat that loss.

### OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:

1. To explore the concept of Presenteeism
2. To explore models in presenteeism

## **SIGNIFICANCE AND SCOPE OF THE STUDY:**

The environment change, pollution and change in food habit have dramatically changed the health conditions of people. Most of the people in the world are disturbed by one way or another way due to health problems. So there is a high chance for presenteeism among employees. Extensive study on this area was not conducted in India. The cost loss due to presenteeism is very high when compared with absenteeism, based on different research. So this study will explore a way for researcher to get a direction to fill the research gap.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY:**

The nature of topic is theoretical and descriptive. So the type of research suitable for study is descriptive research only. In this research the researcher used secondary source for data collection. The secondary data is collected through books, journals, thesis and websites.

## **CONCEPT OF PRESENTEEISM:**

The term presenteeism is introduced by a professor of organizational and health at Manchester University in UK, named as Cary Cooper (Lowe, 2002). During 1990 researchers focused on linking health with human capital. During this time the term presenteeism began to appear in health and productivity literatures. The term presenteeism is defined as productivity loss due to illness or health conditions (Brand-Rauf et al 2001, Stewart et al 2003). This term is wide-spread in US by R.W. Whitmer, President of health enhancement research organizations (Shamansky 2002).

Presenteeism is defined as employees not fully using their capacity to do work due to mental/emotional or physical ailments (Burton et al 1999). Presenteeism is the overwork and feeling of job insecurity resulting from downsizing and restructuring (Lowe 2002), decision to go for work during illness and perform below expectation of the company due to health problems (Cooper, Dewe 2007) and way of managers to demonstrate commitment by working longer hours (Cooper 1999). Presenteeism means reduction in the job performance due to personal events like stress, illness, job demands etc (Burton, Schiltz, Chin-yu, Edington, 2008). It is a phenomenon of showing up for work during stress or illness without considering the options of rest or absence from work (Aronsson, Gustafsson, Dallner 2000). It is a measurable concept in which health symptoms, conditions and disease adversely affect the work productivity of individuals who opt to remain at work (Aronsson et al 2000, Bungam et al 2003, Burton et al 1999, Chapman 2005, Hertz et al 2004, Levin-epsten 2005, Ozminowski et al 2003, Pilette 2005). Presenteeism is a health outcome that occurs when employees remain present on job with lowered work productivity caused by illness or personal health condition (Burton, Conti, Chen, Schultz, Edington 1999, Goetzel et al 2004, Stewart et al 2003). All the above mentioned definitions relate Presenteeism to lowering performance of job due to health related problems. Sick absence is the act of staying away from work due to illness (Khan or Rehnberg 2009) and Presenteeism is going to work while one is ill. This is the difference between sickness absence or absenteeism and presenteeism. Presenteeism is opposite of sickness absence a popular phenomenon in today's competitive working environment (Prater, Smith 2011). The researchers, organization and managers who were studying about the consequences of absenteeism have now started focusing on the consequences of presenteeism. Presenteeism demands equal or more attention of that absenteeism in today's competitive business environment (Prater, Smith 2011, Weaver 2010, Aston 2010).

## **FACTORS INFLUENCING PRESENTEEISM:**

### **Presenteeism and Health:**

Number of studies have been done for finding out the relationship between health conditions and absenteeism (Burton et al 2004, Chatterji jilley 2005, Goetz et al 2004, Stewart et al 2003) but less research has been done on employee performance and presenteeism. A large number of health conditions have a greater impact on reduced performance at work (Schwartz et al 1997, Stewart et al 2003). Health problems are the primary cause for productivity loss by presenteeism (Johns, 2010). Various studies are conducted on this area to find out the types of health problems influencing presenteeism. The health problems that influence employee performance according to various studies are arthritis (Goetz 2004), Back or neck pain (Goetz et al 2004), musculoskeletal disorders, migraines, several frequent headaches, allergies, asthma, depression (Goetz et al 2004), chronic pain (Canadian 2006), hypertension (Wang 2003), heart diseases, respiratory or lung problem, diabetes (Collins 2005), High cholesterol, Obesity, sleep problems, chronic fatigue /low energy, Anxiety (Kessler 2002), Allergies,

Asthma, depression (Goetz et al 2004) cancer (Wang 2005) stress (Denelsebeck 2006) drug/alcohol usage (Musich 2004), Sinuses (Burton et al 2001)

### **Presenteeism and organizational factors:**

The organizational factors influencing presenteeism based on different study are explaining below; Job demands and burnout (Demerouti, Le blanc, Bakker, Schaufeli, Hox 2009) Job security (Macgregor, Cunningham and caverley 2008, Paton 2010) Difficulty in taking sick leave or fear of disciplinary action (Athey 2009, Grinyer and singleton 2000) negative perception of a work environment, interpersonal conflict, Job dissatisfaction (Pillette 2005), poor health care plan (Athey 2009) fear of sick leave will put promotion risk (Grinyer and singleton 2000, Mc Kevitt, Morgan, Dundas, Holland 1998) Downsizing/Jobinsecurity, concern about change (Mac gregor, Cunningham and caverley 2008) work load (Hudson 2004) deadline with workload (Athey 2009). The different models are created based on these different studies and importance of organizational factors on presenteeism concept can understand from the number of factors explained here.

### **Presenteeism and Personal factors:**

In different models of presenteeism the influence of personal factors on presenteeism is drawn. The different personal factors influencing presenteeism are Gender (Aronsson and Gustafsson 2005) age (Bellaby 1999, Aronsson and Gustafsson 2005) job satisfaction (Caverley, Cunningham, Macgregor 2007) stress (Elstad and Vabo 2008) family status (Hansen and Andersen 2008) over-commitment (stewart, Ricci, chee Hahn and Morganstein 2003) income and education (sturm and Gresenz 2002) marital status (Flor, Turk, Rudy 1989). Researchers have high scope on this area to study other personal factors and its influence on presenteeism.

### **Presenteeism and Socio –demographic factors:**

Socio demographic factor is an important area of researchers for finding out its influence employee's related problems. The socio demographic factors like gender (Aronsson & Gustafsson, 2005) also included in the personal factors category in Johns model of presenteeism, age (Bellaby, 1999; Aronsson & Gustafsson, 2005), job satisfaction (Caverley, Cunningham, & MacGregor, 2007; Dew, Keefe, & Small, 2005), stress (Elstad & Vabo, 2008; MacGregor, Cunningham, & Caverley, 2008) and family status (Hansen & Andersen, 2008) are influencing presenteeism behavior. This area also has high scope for further research.

### **Theories/Models:**

A model is a theoretical frame work by a set of variables for showing the relationship between them. Theory is the collection of variables and models are organizing it into a scientific way to get a structure that explains focusable areas. Here three major models of presenteeism are explaining.

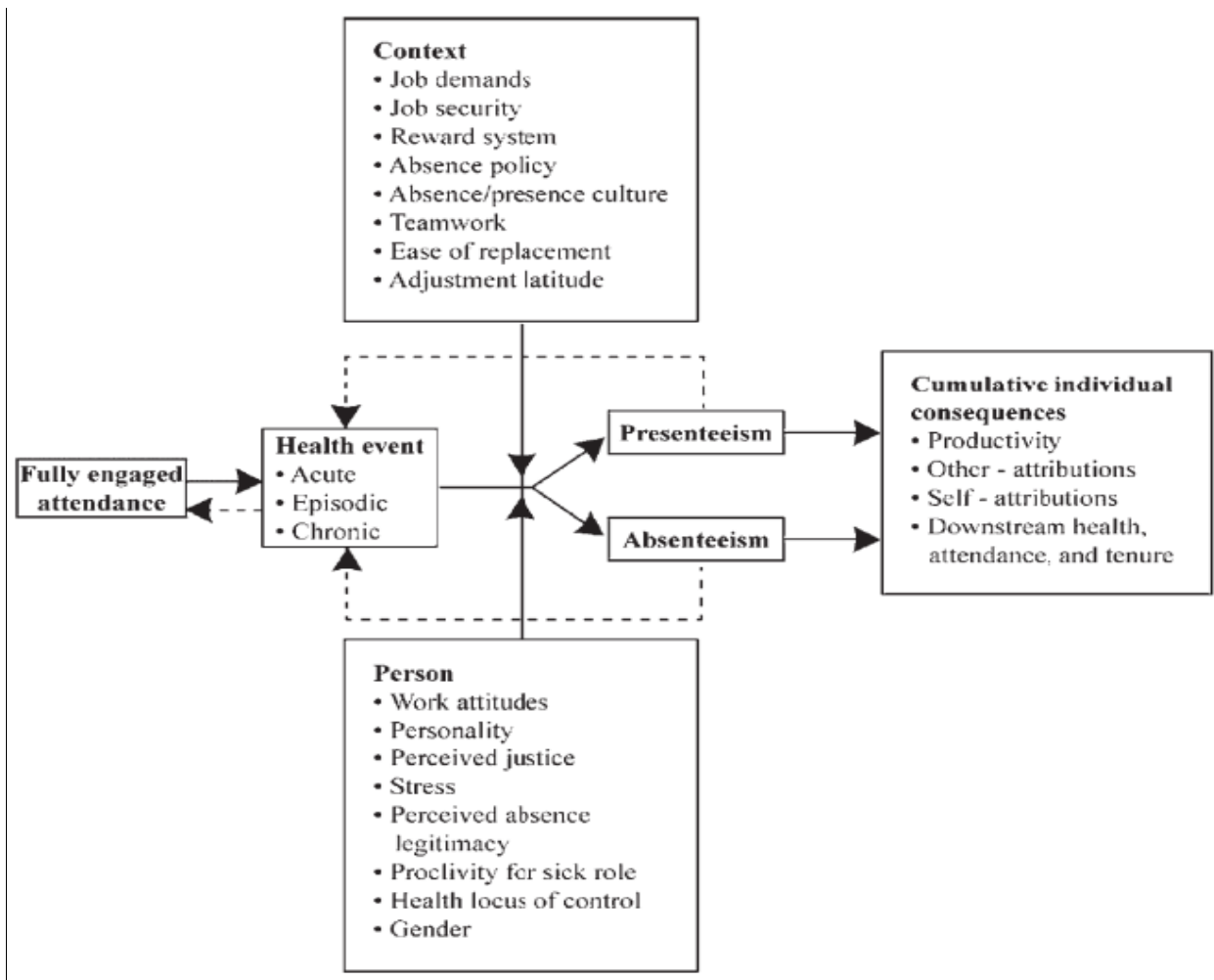
### **Johns Model of Presenteeism:**

Johns through his review of literature developed a model for presenteeism shown in figure no: Model of presenteeism assumes that initially workers are fully engaged and then interrupted by health problems. The nature of health problems decide whether go for work or absence. Furthermore organizational norms and personal factors influence in this choice. (Johns, 2010)

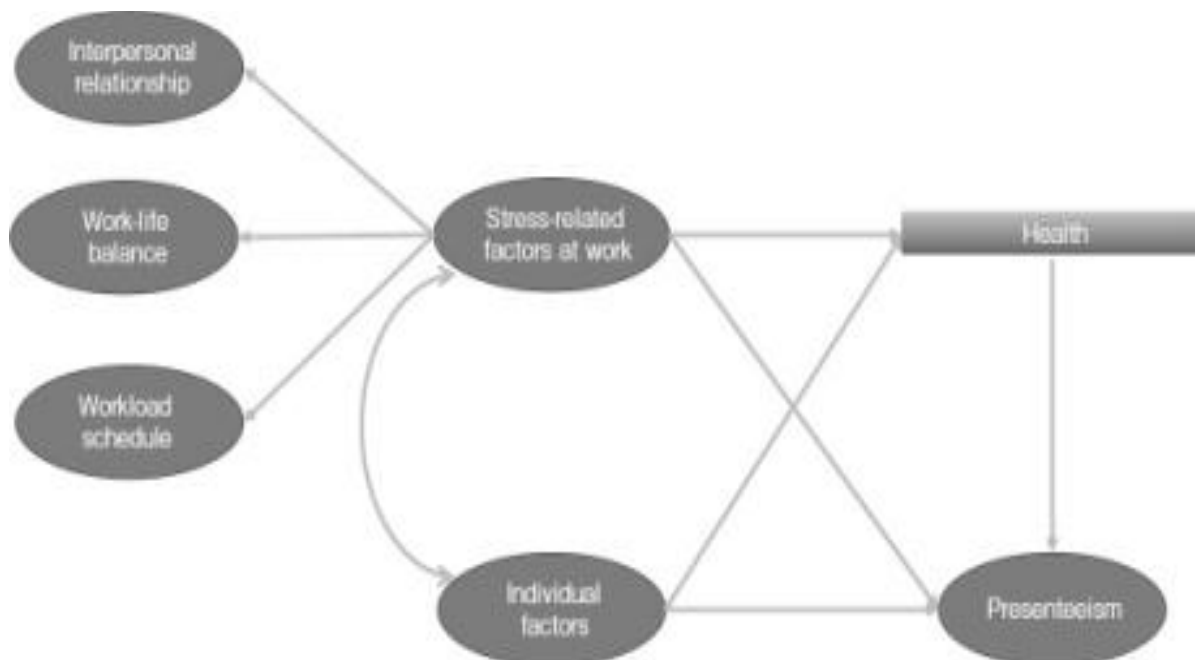
### **JD-R Model:**

The JD-R model reveals the relationship among presenteeism and its determinants, such as job stressors, health, and individual factors, theoretically. The empirical evidence is still lacking to support such a comprehensive model because previous studies have only examined part of the model. On the other hand, the global workforce is aging because of the development of science and technology. This leads to the concerns of employers about the productivity of their organizations because the physical and cognitive capabilities of the aging workforce might decrease with age. Investigation of this issue in the aging workforce could provide empirical evidence to respond to their concerns. The JD-R model is an explanatory model for a negative relationship between stress-related factors at work and presenteeism and between individual factors and health. JD-R model is presented in Fig No 2.

**Figure no 1: John's model of presenteeism**



**Figure No 2: Schematic representation of JD-R model**



The factors that affect presenteeism in this model were identified by the WHO, European Agency for Safety and Health at Work and from Literatures.

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**Stress-related factors at work:**

Stress-related factors at work, such as inappropriate work design and work discrimination are the stressors that can cause psychosocial or physical harm according to WHO. Based on consistent report from WHO the variables included in model are workload and schedule, work-life balance, and interpersonal relationship at work.

**Work load and Schedule:**

Workload is the amount of work that each employee has to achieve during a fixed period.

**Work-life balance:**

Work life balance indicates the prioritization between work and lifestyle, which was constructed with the interactions between work and one's personal life, job stressors, and effort-reward balance. The positive and negative effects between work and one's personal life were estimated.

**Interpersonal relationships at work:**

Interpersonal relationship at work refers to the psycho-social environment that each employee experiences, such as discrimination at work, psycho-social working environment and support from colleagues and supervisors.

**Individual factors:**

The personality traits could be considered as individual factors, personality traits are extroversion, and agreeableness, conscientiousness, openness and neuroticism were considered.

**Health:**

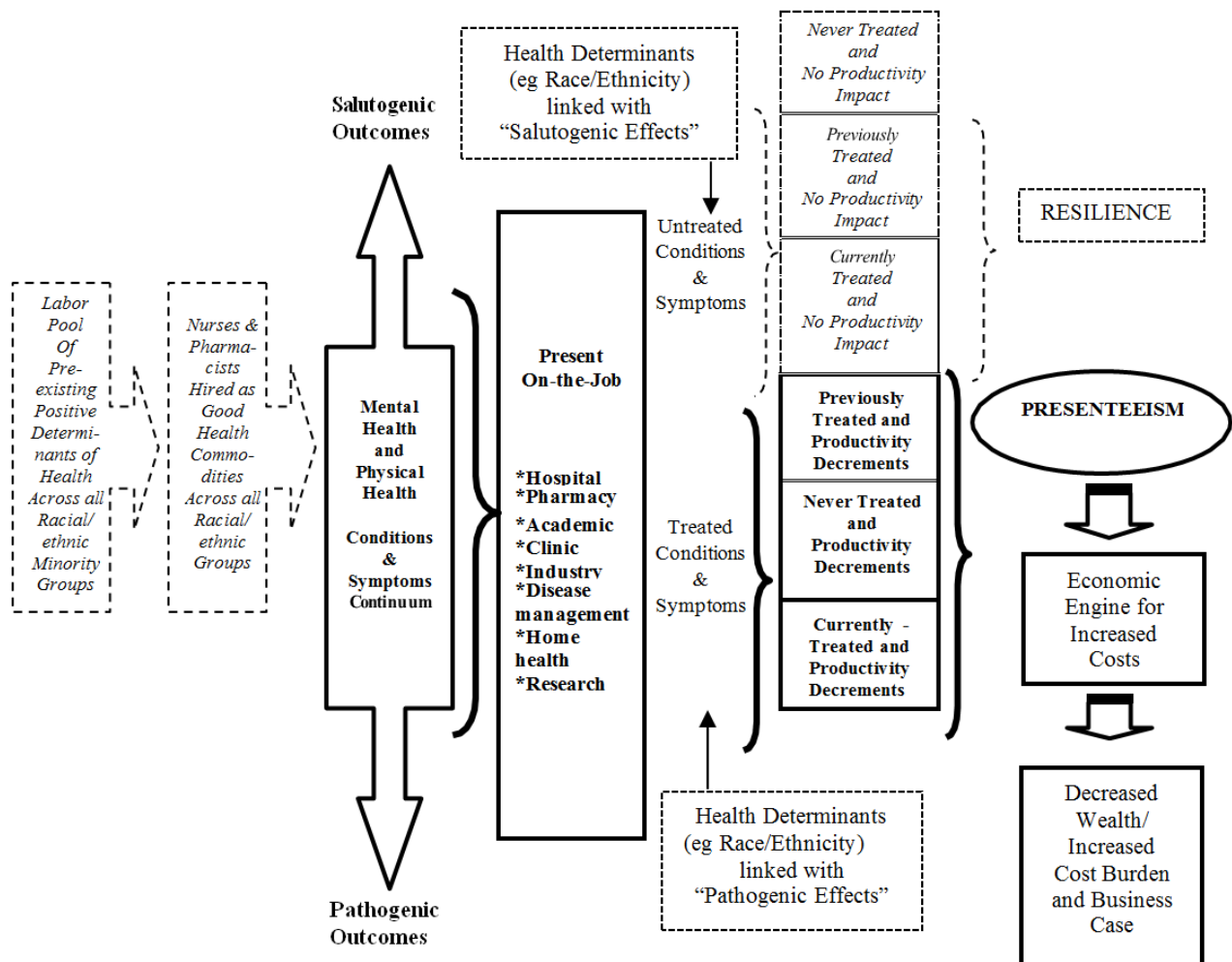
WHO defines health as a state of complete physical, mental, and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity. Metric of health is calculated through grip strength, lung function, balance, cognitive function, impairments in bodily and mental functions, and difficulties in activities of daily life of each respondent were taken into account.

**Presenteeism as Health-Driven Economic Burden," shortened to the 'presenteeism model:**

Carol L. Warren created a conceptual framework in order to provide a clear view of the relationships and structure for the concepts of interest (Polit & Beck, 2004). This framework is from the employer's perspective and is a synthesis of concepts from the disciplines of economics, business, health, behavioral health, and social science. The conceptual model for this research is called "Presenteeism as Health- Driven Economic Burden," shortened to the 'presenteeism model'. It includes concepts from the Determinants of Health (McGinnis, Williams-Russo, & Knickman, 2002), Health Capital Theory (Grossman & Banaji, 1992), Salutogenesis Model (Antonovsky, 1990) and the Human Capital Theory (Santerre & Neun, 2004). The presenteeism model is illustrated in Figure No: 3.

The presenteeism model of health framework of McGinnis et al. (2002) emphasizes on the five domains or determinants of health that individuals possess like genetic predispositions, social circumstances, environmental conditions, behavioral patterns, and medical care. In the presenteeism model, the investigator propose that, individuals who possessed overall 'positive' determinants of health were recognized and hired by employers as 'good health commodities' (Berger, Howell, Nicholson, & Shandra, 2003b; Grossman & Banaji, 1992). These acquisitions of employees as 'good health commodities' across all racial ethnic groups were consistent with the Health Capital Theory in economics that indicated that good health was an attractive value that employers actively sought in employees (Berger, et al., 2003b; Grossman & Banaji, 1992). Based on biologically functioning, humans, employees would inevitably experience both naturally (e.g. aging) and non-naturally occurring (e.g. disease, disorders, and injuries) personal mental or physical health conditions. Understanding this, employers sought to maintain or recapture the value of their 'good health commodities' by investing in their employees (Berger, et al., 2003b). Such investments in employees are part of Human Capital economic theories that suggest that employers 'invest' in employees to maintain them as good health commodities (Berger, et al., 2003b; Santerre & Neun, 2004). Consistent with Antonovsky's (1990) Salutogenic model, this researcher's conceptualization recognized that employees may not always experience negative health outcomes as a consequence of pathogenic health conditions.

Figure No 3: Presenteeism Model



## CONCLUSION:

The research tried to explore the concept of presenteeism and factors leading to presenteeism. The researcher also explored different main models available in presenteeism. The analysis shows that there is a high research gap in India related to the concept of presenteeism. The study offers insight to researchers to understand the determinants of presenteeism and would help organizations in the effective management of work. This research becomes the base for further studies to be conducted by researchers, academicians and organizations for further understanding of presenteeism.

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