Presenteeism: The Conceptualization of the Internal & External Factors

Mohd Nur Ruzainy Alwi[*1], Siti Norhidayah Toolib[*2]

[1*] *College of Business Management and Accounting, Universiti Tenaga Nasional, Sultan Haji Ahmad Shah Campus, 26700 Muadzam Shah, Pahang, Malaysia*

[1]Ruzainy@uniten.edu

[2*]*College of Graduate Studies, Universiti Tenaga Nasional, Jalan IKRAM_UNITEN, 43000 Kajang, Selangor*

[2]snhtoolib93@gmail.com

Abstract:
Presenteeism is a ground breaking concept in organizational behaviour literature – refers to productivity losses that occur when employees come to work while they are sick. The productivity of workers is a key priority for employers especially in today's highly competitive, technologically advanced, and fast-paced work environment. This study is important as presenteeism seems to be a growing problem that causes damage both to the individual and to the organization. Therefore, this paper aims to discuss the factor that can influence employees to do presenteeism.

Keywords: presenteeism, productivity, factor, organization,

I. INTRODUCTION

As the work environment has changed dramatically, key priority for employers nowadays is the productivity of employees especially in today's highly competitive, fast-paced work environment and advanced in technologically. This has resulted in crucial changes in employee working habits which are more than ever necessary to demonstrate flexibility in how and when they appear at job. One of the many negative effect that arise from this changes is presenteeism, the phenomenon of continuing to come to work despite they are being ill [1].

Over the last fifteen years, presenteeism has emerged as an important organizational phenomenon. One of the challenges for leaders today is presenteeism. According to [2], presenteeism is a phenomenon that decreased productivity, which is an owing events from the employees who got distracted and did not perform well. Meanwhile, according to [3], they conclude that presenteeism is common and is indiscriminately manifested across occupational groups. Decreasing in employees' performance or lack of added value to the product or services provided has make presenteeism very costly for an organization [4-7].

Due to the documented link between presenteeism and productivity loss by [4], also, [2] [5] [6], most of the previous research has predominantly seen presenteeism as a negative

factor in the workplace. Thus, this paper aims to discuss factor that can influence presenteeism.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

This section provides a literature review on presenteeism:

A. *Presenteeism*

Presenteeism as stated in prior studies is the direct opposite of absenteeism. It is when an employee feels that they must come for work, even if they is too ill, stressed or distracted to be productive ; the feeling that they have to work for additional hours, even if they has no additional job to do [2]. Presenteeism also refer to productivity loss because of employee's poor health condition with the assumption that they did not take their job lightly, and most of the employees need and want to continue working if they can. In other case, some people take presenteeism as idling while being on the job (e.g. surfing the internet) or malingering (avoid work duties by pretending to be sick) [3]. Assuming that they have to bear the unfinished workload when they return from medical leave, employees tend to come to work even when their health conditions are poor. This is because of the job demand of their work.

Previous research demonstrates that presenteeism can be split into two distinct worker behaviours based on. First is the behaviour that employee shows when they go to work while they ill or tired. For example - diverse types of medical conditions that include in the presenteeism symptoms is – migraines and other types of episodic or chronic pain, allergies or sinus trouble, asthma, acid reflux disease, dermatitis, anxiety and depression [4] – or other kinds of distractor events [5] [6].

In addition, presenteeism also can happen when employees put in extra working hours in order to show their commitments to the job. In reality, although they are physically present at workplace, they do not actually function at their maximum capability. Such presenteeism hardly leads to any productive results to the organization, and in turn leads in increase of supportive cost involved.

Presentation is a significant issue in the workplace that accounts for major economic losses. It has been shown, in specific, to account for about four times more loss of productivity compared to absenteeism [7].

B. *Factor of Presenteeism*

In order to decrease the potential loss of productivity because of presenteeism, academics have worked hard to investigate its factors [8-10]. There are various factors that can lead towards presenteeism. However, for this study only consistent factor that has been discussed by past researcher will be explain in details as below:

1) *Workaholism*

Workaholism as described by [11] is a person who tends to work excessively and compulsively and is driven on their own to work excessively. Other definition of workaholism define by [11] is being overly attached to their work, driven by uncontrollable and strong motivation to work, and spending so much energy and effort on work that makes their personal relationships, spare time activities and/or health are impaired. Even though without any reward or recognition from their employee, workaholic people still committed physically through excessive working hours in the workplace and they are willingly to accept additional responsibilities [12]. These descriptions

of workaholism highlight its dual nature of exhibiting both a physical and mental commitment to work. Workaholic who raises their participation or engagement in work has changed the perception of working which is a healthy and rewarding activity to an unhealthy level of working and leading to a reduction of positive benefits, [13] [14]. [15] Found that workaholics also reported to have the highest burnout and lowest rates of happiness compared to other groups that were not described as workaholics. Their extra commitment to work is likely to cause problems with their work-life balance, such as managing personal and family needs with job demands, and may hinder interpersonal relationships. Although the need for workaholics to fulfil their obsession can be anticipated to lead these employees to work even though they are sick — hence displaying high concentrations of presenteeism — the relationship between workaholism and presenteeism has scarcely been studied. (e.g., [16]). Thus, the aim of this study is to investigate the factor associate between workaholism and presenteeism at workplace.

2) *Job satisfaction*

The attitude of the employee towards the job and organisation could also be positive if they recognize that their job makes it easier for them to fulfil their needs and values, either directly (by doing it) or indirectly (by the package they receive). In summary, it is the distinction between the expectations of the employee and the experience that they derive from the job. The broader the gap, the more is the dissatisfaction. Poor quality of productivity from employee is a results of them attending work even when they ill [17] which may contribute to job (dis)satisfaction. Those poor qualities wouldn't be achieved if they are at their

optimal health condition. Therefore, to the extent that presenteeism can be seen as a decision taken under pressure and lowered work capability, it can also results in reduced job satisfaction to employees. Most of the previous studies examined job satisfaction as a determinant of presenteeism and with the inconclusive findings. According to [18], job satisfaction is categorized as one of the factor that have a high motivational and positive presence that lead to higher presenteeism rates. In addition, according to [19], as employee unable to perform to their full capacity, both in mentally and physically, their expected outcomes is unable to achieve because of reduced job satisfaction that caused by presenteeism. As far as we know, only one research, a qualitative study, has demonstrated job satisfaction as a crucial motivator to remain at work despite the illness (i.e. for individuals with chronic non-specific musculoskeletal pain) [20]. Thus, this study is an attempt to investigate the association of job satisfaction with presenteeism.

3) *Supervisor Support*

Definition of supervisor support is the degree in which the manager or leader value the contributions of their employees' and concern for their well-being. Leader or manager who comes with high supervisory support is the person that makes their employees believes that they are heard, appreciated and cared. according to [21] , supervisor is the person who can resolve complaints from employee and assist them to obtain necessary resources in order to achieve organization's goals. [22] Reported that in agreement with the buffering model of social support, employees who had an excellent relationship with their supervisor, is the employees who generally effective and productive in the workplace. Employees would view their supervisor's support as favourable or unfavourable

orientation towards them as an indicative to the organization's support, because of the responsibility of the supervisor for managing and accessing the performance of their subordinate and their act as the agents for the organization [23] [24]. Support from supervisors makes employees feel respected in their organisation and it could enhance distributive justice, as support from supervisors is view as an organizational reward and a buffer against perceptions of inequity.

According to [25, 26], employee's behaviour and moral is significantly influenced by their supervisor. Study by [27, 28] has found that employees who had poor relationship with their supervisor results in high stress condition. In addition, previous study by [29, 30] also shows supervisory support is associated with employee's perceived level of well-being. Therefore, this study is an attempt to investigate the effect of supervisor support on presenteeism.

4) Job Demand

Author, [31] define "…job demands as those physical, psychological, social, or organizational aspects of the job that require sustained physical and/or psychological (i.e., cognitive or emotional) effort and are therefore associated with certain physiological and/or psychological costs". Managing administrator task and students, or making any decisions while under pressure or stressing over the effect of a particular decision to colleagues is one of the examples of job demands. Some previous researcher has put under the spotlight the study of relationship between job demand and presenteeism. A research by [32] in Netherlands on the causes and effects of presenteeism in a public hospital showed that job demand does contribute to presenteeism. Work-related demands, such as employee replacement

difficulties, time constraints and adequate resources to function well, also contribute to presenteeism behaviour, according to [18]. In a particular circumstance, job requirements may require employees to put additional amount of time and effort into the new tasks while the current or ' on-hand ' tasks are yet to be completed. This will therefore boost employees' willingness to work even on the day they were not feeling well. Since the job demand have to be met to perform properly, employees will do all they can in order to satisfy these job demand so that their performance and output meets the expectations of the employer [32]. [33] Also suggested that the greater the job demands, the greater the effort that employees will put in order achieving them and the greater the possibility that they will work while sick to prevent decreasing in their performance. In extreme jobs, excessive requirements and requirements of work, often self-imposed, only allow presenteeism behaviour to occur [34].

III. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Based on previous research, there are many factors that can lead to presenteeism. Most of the previous study has divided the factor of presenteeism based on organizational-related, work–related and personal related factor. However, this factor can be re-categorized based on internal and external influences of presenteeism. It allows better comprehension on the causes of presenteeism and provides clear distinction of factor on presenteeism. Through this categorization, we can see the locus of control employee has on the act of presenteeism. Consistent with theory of planned behaviour, internal and external categorization provide distinction on causes of behaviour attitude, and intention [35] . According to (Nyambe et al., 2016), the internal factors consist of physical health,

leisure time availability, hobby or passion, self-maturity, and intelligence meanwhile the external factors consist of family and friends' support, faculty facilities, problems encountered, peer relationships, and the influence of parents and friends. The distinction between internal and external causes of behaviour can have important implications in determine the internal and external factor of presenteeism. Therefore, following the distinction of internal and external factor by (Nyambe et al., 2016), it can be conclude that the workaholism and job satisfaction can be categorized under internal factor meanwhile the supervisor support and job demand can be categorized under external factor of presenteeism. Thus, a conceptual framework has been generated by categorizing the internal and external factor of presenteeism. The conceptual framework is depicted in Figure 1.
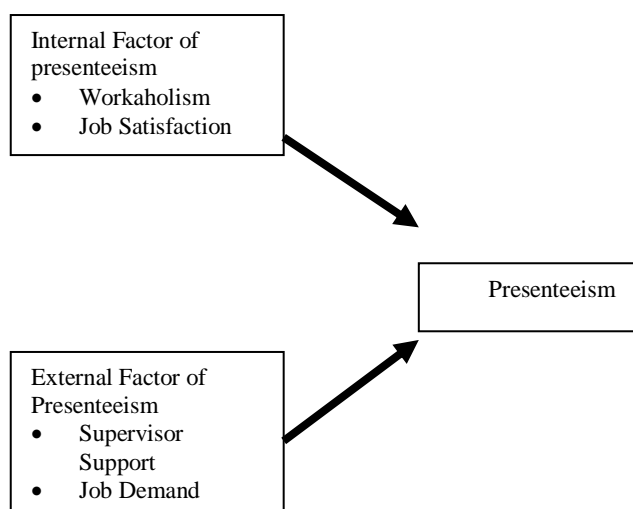

Fig. 1. Conceptual Framework of Presenteeism.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

This paper attempt to discuss the factor of presenteeism. This is also an emerge study of presenteeism that divided the factor of presenteeism into internal and external instead of personal and work-related factor. This study is important as presenteeism seems to be a growing problem that causes damage both to the individual and to the organization, and is therefore a phenomenon that deserves to be treated with considerable care. Thus, with a better understanding, employers can come out with prevention plan in order for them to be able to embrace the presenteeism phenomenon, as eeliminating its negative effects (both in terms of reduced productivity and its impact on health) is an essential step.

REFERENCES

1. G. Aronsson, K. Gustafsson, and M. Dallner, "Sick but yet at work. An empirical study of sickness presenteeism," *Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health,* vol. 54, no. 7, pp. 502-509, 2000.

2. T. Prater and K. Smith, "Underlying factors contributing to presenteeism and absenteeism," *Journal of Business & Economics Research (JBER),* vol. 9, no. 6, pp. 1-14, 2011.

3. P. Hemp, "Presenteeism: at work-but out of it," *Harvard business review,* vol. 82, no. 10, pp. 49-58, 2004.

4. C. Koopman *et al.*, "Stanford presenteeism scale: health status and employee productivity," *Journal of occupational and environmental medicine,* vol. 44, no. 1, pp. 14-20, 2002.

5. J. Hummer, B. Sherman, and N. Quinn, "Present and unaccounted for," *Occupational Health & Safety,* vol. 71, no. 4, pp. 40-40, 2002.

6. D. Whitehouse, "Workplace presenteeism: How behavioral professionals can make a difference," *Behavioral healthcare tomorrow,* vol. 14, no. 1, pp. 32-36, 2005.

7. D. Iverson, K. L. Lewis, P. Caputi, and S. Knospe, "The cumulative impact and associated costs of multiple health conditions on employee

productivity," *Journal of occupational and environmental medicine,* vol. 52, no. 12, pp. 1206-1211, 2010.

8. G. Johns, "Presenteeism in the workplace: A review and research agenda," *Journal of Organizational Behavior,* vol. 31, no. 4, pp. 519-542, 2010.

9. M. L. Karlsson, C. Björklund, and I. Jensen, "The effects of psychosocial work factors on production loss, and the mediating effect of employee health," *Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine,* vol. 52, no. 3, pp. 310-317, 2010.

10. J. Vahtera, M. Kivimäki, J. Pentti, and T. Theorell, "Effect of change in the psychosocial work environment on sickness absence: a seven year follow up of initially healthy employees," *Journal of Epidemiology & Community Health,* vol. 54, no. 7, pp. 484-493, 2000.

11. C. S. Andreassen, M. D. Griffiths, J. Hetland, L. Kravina, F. Jensen, and S. Pallesen, "The prevalence of workaholism: A survey study in a nationally representative sample of Norwegian employees," *PloS one,* vol. 9, no. 8, p. e102446, 2014.

12. W. B. Schaufeli, T. W. Taris, and W. Van Rhenen, "Workaholism, burnout, and work engagement: three of a kind or three different kinds of employee well‐being?," *Applied psychology,* vol. 57, no. 2, pp. 173-203, 2008.

13. A. B. Bakker, S. L. Albrecht, and M. P. Leiter, "Key questions regarding work engagement," *European journal of work and organizational psychology,* vol. 20, no. 1, pp. 4-28, 2011.

14. L. Kravina, A. Falco, N. A. De Carlo, C. S. Andreassen, and S. Pallesen, "Workaholism and work engagement in the family: The relationship between parents and children as a risk factor," *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology,* vol. 23, no. 6, pp. 875-883, 2014.

15. W. B. Schaufeli, A. B. Bakker, and W. Van Rhenen, "How changes in job demands and resources predict burnout, work engagement, and sickness absenteeism," *Journal of Organizational Behavior: The International Journal of Industrial, Occupational and Organizational Psychology and Behavior,* vol. 30, no. 7, pp. 893-917, 2009.

16. W. B. Schaufeli, A. B. Bakker, F. M. Van der Heijden, and J. T. Prins, "Workaholism, burnout and well-being among junior doctors: The mediating role of role conflict," *Work & Stress,* vol. 23, no. 2, pp. 155-172, 2009.

17. B. Gifford and K. Jinnett, "Employees' work responses to episodes of illness: evidence from the American time use survey," *Journal of occupational and environmental medicine,* vol. 56, no. 2, pp. 224-229, 2014.

18. G. Aronsson and K. Gustafsson, "Sickness presenteeism: prevalence, attendance-pressure factors, and an outline of a model for research," *Journal of occupational and environmental medicine,* vol. 47, no. 9, pp. 958-966, 2005.

19. M. Karanika-Murray, H. M. Pontes, M. D. Griffiths, and C. Biron, "Sickness presenteeism determines job satisfaction via affective-motivational states," *Social Science & Medicine,* vol. 139, pp. 100-106, 2015.

20. H. J. de Vries, M. F. Reneman, J. W. Groothoff, J. H. Geertzen, and S. Brouwer, "Factors promoting staying at work in people with chronic nonspecific musculoskeletal pain: a systematic review," *Disability and rehabilitation,* vol. 34, no. 6, pp. 443-458, 2012.

21. M. Boz, I. Martínez, and L. Munduate, "Breaking negative consequences of relationship conflicts at work: The moderating role of work family enrichment and supervisor support," *Revista de Psicología del Trabajo y de las Organizaciones,* vol. 25, no. 2, pp. 113-121, 2009.

22. H. Z. Cummins, "Experimental studies of structurally incommensurate crystal phases," *Physics Reports,* vol. 185, no. 5-6, pp. 211-409, 1990.

23. R. Eisenberger, R. Huntington, S. Hutchison, and D. Sowa, "Perceived organizational support," *Journal of Applied psychology,* vol. 71, no. 3, p. 500, 1986.

24. H. Levinson, "Reciprocation: The relationship between man and organization," *Administrative science quarterly,* pp. 370-390, 1965.

25. E. A. Fleishman and E. F. Harris, "Patterns of leadership behavior related to employee grievances and turnover," *Personnel psychology,* 1962.

26. C. R. Walker and H. Robert, "Guest, and Arthur N," *Turner. The,* 1956.

27. W. A. Karlin, E. Brondolo, and J. Schwartz, "Workplace social support and ambulatory cardiovascular activity in New York City traffic agents," *Psychosomatic Medicine,* vol. 65, no. 2, pp. 167-176, 2003.

28. N. Wager, G. Fieldman, and T. Hussey, "The effect on ambulatory blood pressure of working under favourably and unfavourably perceived supervisors," *Occupational and Environmental Medicine,* vol. 60, no. 7, pp. 468-474, 2003.

29. L. Karimi, H. Karimi, and A. Nouri, "Predicting employees' well‐being using work‐family conflict and job strain models," *Stress and health,* vol. 27, no. 2, pp. 111-122, 2011.

30. L. Karimi and A. Nouri, "Do work demands and resources predict work-to-family conflict and facilitation? A study of Iranian male employees," *Journal of Family and Economic Issues,* vol. 30, no. 2, pp. 193-202, 2009.

31. W. B. Schaufeli and A. B. Bakker, "Job demands, job resources, and their relationship with burnout and engagement: A multi‐sample study," *Journal of Organizational Behavior: The International Journal of Industrial, Occupational and Organizational Psychology and Behavior,* vol. 25, no. 3, pp. 293-315, 2004.

32. E. Demerouti, P. M. Le Blanc, A. B. Bakker, W. B. Schaufeli, and J. Hox, "Present but sick: a three-wave study on job demands, presenteeism and burnout," *Career Development International,* vol. 14, no. 1, pp. 50-68, 2009.

33. E. Demerouti, A. B. Bakker, F. Nachreiner, and W. B. Schaufeli, "The job demands-resources model of burnout," *Journal of Applied psychology,* vol. 86, no. 3, p. 499, 2001.

34. S. A. Hewlett and C. B. Luce, "Extreme jobs: The dangerous allure of the 70-hour workweek," *Harvard business review,* vol. 84, no. 12, pp. 49-59, 2006.

35. I. Ajzen, "Perceived behavioral control, self‐efficacy, locus of control, and the theory of planned behavior 1," *Journal of applied social psychology,* vol. 32, no. 4, pp. 665-683, 2002.