

## The Relationship Between Job Stress and Presenteeism in Five-Star Hotel Employees: An Example from Istanbul Province

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### ABSTRACT

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**Purpose**– Job stress and presenteeism are stressors that have become chronic problems in the current business world. The primary objective of this study is to assess the levels of job stress and presenteeism among employees in five-star hotels, and to examine the potential interaction between these two factors.

**Design/Methodology/Approach**– The survey method, classified as a descriptive model type, was chosen for the research objectives. The quantitative approach was implemented. The research was conducted utilizing the survey method and measurement instruments in accordance with this premise. The employee of five-star hotels in Istanbul that possess "Tourism Operation Certificate" comprise the research sample. 392 hotel employees participated in the research.

**Results**– Based on the data derived from this research, it can be concluded that there is a substantial positive correlation between job stress levels experienced by hotel employees and their inclination to engage in presenteeism behavior. It can be inferred that employees who are under increased levels of job-related stress will demonstrate a higher likelihood of presenteeism, as supported by this finding. For the purpose of the research, frequency analysis, factor analysis, normality tests, correlation, and regression analyses were used.

**Discussion**– It can be stated that businesses that do not want to face various costs for the orientation and training of new personnel should take into account situations such as job stress and presenteeism for the continuity of the business. In addition, relevant public institutions have great responsibilities to determine and supervise whether overtime is applied to personnel, whether wages are paid regularly and in accordance with the rules, whether the working environment is appropriate, and whether social rights are provided. Non-governmental organizations also have important duties in this regard.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

In the context of a highly competitive global landscape, organizations are compelled to enhance the performance and efficiency of their workforce in order to effectively attain their objectives. The significance of employee well-being in relation to corporate performance is particularly highlighted in studies focusing on human resources (Baker-McCleary et al., 2010; Bierla et al., 2013; Kendir et al., 2018). Conversely, it appears implausible for employees to consistently maintain good health. In the majority of instances, an employee who is experiencing illness has the ability to report to the workplace and sustain their professional activities. The phenomenon of employees choosing to attend work while experiencing physical or mental health issues, rather than being absent, has led to the emergence of the notion known as presenteeism (Cullen and McLaughlin, 2006; Bierla et al., 2013). Presenteeism has been found to have detrimental consequences for organizations, since it hampers employees' ability to operate at their maximum potential. The presence of an employee who is experiencing medical or psychological illness can have detrimental effects on both their own performance as well as the well-being and productivity of other employees.

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There are many reasons for the emergence of presenteeism. Presenteeism, which occurs especially psychologically, may also be caused by job stress. Job stress, which occurs due to reasons such as intense workload, working environment conditions, and relationships with managers and colleagues, brings with it psychological diseases over time. If a psychologically ill employee continues to work, it creates inefficiency in businesses (Cooper, 1998; MacGregor et al., 2008; Chia and Chu, 2016; Yeşiltaş and Ayaz, 2019). In addition, according to research, as the age of employees decreases, the level of organizational resilience also decreases (Arıkan and Çilesiz, 2020). Due to the seasonal concentration of businesses operating in the tourism sector, the workload increases and the working environment conditions become harsher. Job stress may occur, especially for hotel employees, due to reasons such as heavy workloads and overtime during the summer months. On the other hand, this situation can lead to psychological diseases in hotel employees.

The primary objective of this study is to investigate the correlation between job-related stress levels and the prevalence of presenteeism among employees in the hotel industry. Furthermore, one of the primary objectives of this study is to devise strategies and suggestions for hotel management in addressing challenging situations, including job-related stress and presenteeism (Deng et al., 2019; Yang et al., 2020). However, despite the existence of prior research in several disciplines, it is evident that the area of tourist management has not extensively explored this particular issue. Hence, an additional objective of this research is to address this gap in the existing body of knowledge on tourist management.

## 2. Conceptual Framework

### 2.1. Job Stress

Stress is the body's nonspecific response to external stimuli (Selye, 1975). It is stated that external stimuli, known as "stressors", have some negative effects on the body (Griffin et al., 2010). Stress, which causes negative effects on individual behavior and health problems, is also in a positive relationship with concepts such as absenteeism, dismissal, and turnover (Kreitner, 1982). Stress in general, and job stress in particular, has become an integral part of daily life. For this reason, stress, which has attracted the attention of researchers for many years, maintains its place among today's popular topics (Vokic and Bogdanic, 2008). Job stress is a recognized construct that pertains to both the physical and mental well-being of employees (Gupta and Beehr, 1979). Job stress is defined as the psychological reactions of personnel to the dangerous situations they encounter in the working environment and the job requirements they have to meet beyond their abilities (Yiwen et al., 2014). Therefore, job stress emerges largely as an individual reaction. However, job stress is a different concept from general stress because it is related to organization and work (Montgomery et al., 1996).

Job stress indicates a mismatch between the work environment, where there are excessive demands on the employee relative to the employee's abilities, or where the employee is not fully equipped to deal with a particular situation (Jamal and Baba, 2000). On the other hand, it is noteworthy that job-related stress not only manifests detrimental consequences on individual employees, but also has equally deleterious impacts on the business and the broader economy. The financial implications of stress can be substantial since it leads to time lost, decreased productivity, and increased likelihood of accidents (Ganster and Schaubroeck, 1991; Cropanzano et al., 1997). Therefore, it is important to know the stress factors that force employees and businesses to bear significant costs. When evaluated in general terms, organizational and individual stress factors are classified into five stages. The factors encompassed in this list are as follows: (1) job and task attributes such as autonomy, workload, and work area; (2) organizational practices including supervision approaches, performance reward systems, and promotion prospects; (3) interpersonal relationships including those with managers, colleagues, and customers; (4) organizational culture and climate pertaining to employee value, personal growth, and integrity; and (5) employee personal qualities including personality traits, familial connections, and problem-solving capabilities (Hurrell et al., 1988; Murpy, 1995).

It is emphasized that job stress is an important factor in businesses in the tourism sector, where the human element is at the forefront, as in every sector (Zohar, 1994). Therefore, in labor-intensive hotel businesses, employees play a key role in increasing guest satisfaction and maximizing profits. On the other hand, high

workloads in some departments of hotel businesses, insufficient personnel during high season, inadequate reward-punishment methods, high personnel turnover rates, uncertainty of working hours, an inappropriate working environment, and insufficient opportunities for career advancement facilitate the emergence of job stress in employees. In employees experiencing high levels of job stress, presenteeism (Deng et al., 2019; Yeşiltaş and Ayaz, 2019; Yang et al., 2020), turnover intention (Arshadi and Damini, 2013; Gök et al., 2017; Fong et al., 2018; Kendir, 2020; Külekci et al., 2020; Ergun et al., 2023), low job satisfaction and organizational commitment (Griffin et al., 2010), absenteeism (Gupta and Beehr, 1979; Arsenault and Dolan, 1983), low performance (negative consequences such as Chen and Silverthorne, 2008), and burnout (Erol and Tarhan Öztoprak, 2015) may occur.

## 2.2. Presenteeism

The concept of presenteeism emerged, especially during the studies of European researchers on epidemiology or occupational health (Johns, 2010). While presence literally means 'presence', presenteeism means 'being present while sick'. The concept of presenteeism is defined as the state of making an effort to be able to work, or at least to appear to be working. (Cooper, 1998, s. 314). Studies of presenteeism focus on health problems such as migraines, reflux, allergies, joint pain, depression, or obesity that reduce workers' productivity. In addition to these problems, anxiety, lack of motivation, or being overly motivated are actually health problems that reduce work efficiency (Beer, 2014, Ferreira and Martinez 2012).

The reason for examining this issue in the literature is to examine the effects of being at work while sick and the effects of this situation on productivity (Bierla et al., 2013). According to different studies, it is estimated that the rate of employees coming to work while sick can range from 30% to 90% (Böckerman and Laukkanen, 2010; Kim et al., 2016; Fernando et al., 2017; Lohaus and Habermann, 2019). Presenteeism can lead to deterioration in employees' ability to work and health status (Gustafsson and Marklund, 2011). Therefore, presenteeism, e.g., may be associated with other negative mental and physical conditions such as job stress, emotional exhaustion, fatigue, and depression.

## 2.3. The Relationship Between Presenteeism and Job Stress

In addition to causing a loss of productivity in employees, presenteeism also creates increased costs for medical and psychological treatments. Therefore, the negative consequences of this situation can seriously harm individuals, society, and businesses (Hemp, 2004; Kendir et al., 2018). One study identified various personal factors of employees related to presenteeism, such as health and work attitudes. Presenteeism is correlated with leader support, understaffing, excessive burden, and overtime pay, according to the findings (Miraglia and Johns, 2016). Since these factors are frequently encountered in hotel businesses, they can also be closely related to job stress. For this reason, the relationship between job stress and presenteeism is an issue that should also be examined for hotel employees.

Presenteeism in employees can be seen in two ways: presenteeism that occurs due to work conditions and presenteeism that occurs due to psychological reasons (Koopman et al., 2002). Presenteeism, especially when it occurs psychologically, may have many sources. One of these is presenteeism, which occurs due to reasons arising from job stress. Presenteeism, which occurs due to psychological reasons such as job stress, can significantly reduce the performance and productivity of employees (Yeşiltaş and Ayaz, 2019). When looking at the literature, it is noteworthy that in many previous studies, presenteeism emerged as a result of job stress (Cooper, 1998; MacGregor et al., 2008; Chia and Chu, 2016; Yeşiltaş and Ayaz, 2019).

In light of this information, the research hypothesis was developed as follows:

H<sub>1</sub>: There is a significant relationship between the level of job stress and the level of presenteeism among the five-star hotel employees participating in the research.

### 3. Methodology

The objective of this study is to ascertain the relationship between occupational stress levels and presenteeism levels among personnel in five-star hotels. In order to facilitate the study objectives, the survey method, classified as one of the descriptive model types, was selected as the preferable approach, with a focus on employing quantitative techniques. The research was implemented using a measuring instrument, as shown by this point. The development of the measurement instrument involved a comprehensive review of relevant literature and an analysis of existing scales used in previous investigations. The investigation employs a measuring instrument with two distinct scales. The Job Stress Scale, originally formulated by House and Rizzo in 1972b, underwent adaptation into the Turkish language by Deveci and Avciokurt in 2017. The Job Stress Scale, which is used in many studies (Mengenci, 2015; Rashid et al., 2016; Eser and Akgündüz, 2018), consists of seven statements and a single dimension: presenteeism; Koopman et al. The scale developed by (2002) consists of six statements. The statements in both scales were rated on a 5-point Likert scale and evaluated by scoring between "Strongly Disagree = 1 and Completely Agree = 5". Data obtained from surveys was analyzed using statistical methods such as frequency distribution, reliability analysis, factor analysis, correlation, and simple linear regression analysis.

The research sample consists of employees in five-star hotels with "Tourism Operation Certificate" operating in Istanbul. The convenience sampling technique, one of the non-probability sampling methods, was used to determine the sample that could represent the research population. According to the May 2023 report of the Istanbul Provincial Directorate of Culture and Tourism, there are 134 five-star hotel establishments throughout Istanbul as of 2023. The total bed capacity of these hotel establishments, which constitute the research population, is 64,839 (Istanbul Provincial Directorate of Culture and Tourism, 2023). There is one staff member for every 3.08 beds in five-star hotels, according to a study on tourism employment by TÜROFED (Turkish Hoteliers Federation) in 2010 (TÜROFED, 2010). In light of all these data, it is calculated that approximately 21,051 employees are employed in five-star hotels in Istanbul. In order to determine the sample for the study, Yamane developed a sampling formula (Yamane, 2001: 116). According to this formula, when the research population was evaluated as 21,051 employees, the sample size of the research was determined to be 378 people at 95% confidence level. On the contrary, Hair et al. (2014: 100) state that in the case of explanatory factor analysis, ten times the number of statements in the research measures is deemed adequate. Based on the thirteen-item nature of the job stress and presenteeism assessments, it is viable to administer the survey to a sample of 130 hotel employees. Survey forms were administered face-to-face to employees of five-star hotels operating in Istanbul between July 1 and July 31, 2023. A total of 450 survey forms were filled out by the participants. Then, the incorrect, inconsistent, and incompletely marked forms were removed, and the remaining 392 survey forms were evaluated. Therefore, the number of samples in the research was above the statistically required number of 378. Ethics committee permission for the research was approved by the decision of Tokat Gaziosmanpaşa University Social and Human Sciences Ethics Committee dated June 13, 2023, and numbered 10/14.

### 4. Results

This section contains the results of the research. The results of frequency distribution, factor analysis, correlation, and regression analysis are subsequently presented. Table 1 provides an overview of the demographic characteristics of the hotel employees who took part in the survey as part of the research.

**Table 1.** Demographic Characteristics of Participants (n=392)

| Demographic Variables  |                    | n   | %    |
|------------------------|--------------------|-----|------|
| Gender                 | Male               | 234 | 59,7 |
|                        | Female             | 158 | 40,3 |
| Age                    | 18-24              | 202 | 51,5 |
|                        | 25-31              | 102 | 26,0 |
|                        | 32-38              | 61  | 15,6 |
|                        | 39-45              | 27  | 6,9  |
| Income                 | 10001-20000 ₺      | 224 | 57,1 |
|                        | 20001-30000 ₺      | 123 | 31,4 |
|                        | 30001-40000 ₺      | 45  | 11,5 |
| Educational Status     | Primary Education  | 70  | 17,9 |
|                        | High School        | 172 | 43,9 |
|                        | Associate Degree   | 60  | 15,3 |
|                        | Licence            | 90  | 23,0 |
| Tenure in the Industry | Less than 1 years  | 97  | 24,7 |
|                        | 1-5 years          | 150 | 38,3 |
|                        | 6-10 years         | 94  | 24,0 |
|                        | 11 years and above | 51  | 13,0 |
| Tourism Education      | Yes                | 153 | 39,0 |
|                        | No                 | 239 | 61,0 |

According to Table 1, the majority of participants in terms of gender are male participants (59.7%). The proportion of female (40.3%) is less than that of men. It was determined that the participants of the research were concentrated in the age range of 18–24 (51.5%), and almost half (43.9%) were high school graduates. It is noteworthy that the majority of those who answered the survey have an income between 10001-20000 TL (57.1%), have worked in the sector for 1–10 years (62.3%), and have not received tourism education (61.0%).

**Table 2.** Factor Analysis Results of the Job Stress Scale

| ITEMS                                                                                                  | Factor Loadings | Eigenvalue   | % of Variance | Cronbach's Alpha |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|--------------|---------------|------------------|
| <b>Job Stress</b>                                                                                      |                 | <b>3,948</b> | <b>56,396</b> | <b>0,867</b>     |
| I feel frustrated with my job.                                                                         | 0,773           |              |               |                  |
| My health would probably be better if I worked a different job.                                        | 0,765           |              |               |                  |
| I work under quite a lot of tension.                                                                   | 0,725           |              |               |                  |
| Problems with my job cause me to have trouble sleeping.                                                | 0,645           |              |               |                  |
| My job tends to directly affect my health.                                                             | 0,767           |              |               |                  |
| I feel nervous before meetings held at the business.                                                   | 0,759           |              |               |                  |
| Even though I am doing other things when I am at home, I often think about matters related to my work. | 0,812           |              |               |                  |
| <b>Total Scale Reliability and Variance</b>                                                            |                 |              | <b>56,396</b> | <b>0,867</b>     |
| <i>Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy: KMO = 0,900;</i>                                   |                 |              |               |                  |
| <i>Bartlett's Test of Sphericity: <math>\chi^2 = 1106,417</math>; <math>P = 0,000</math></i>           |                 |              |               |                  |

The findings of the factor analysis and reliability analysis conducted on the job stress scale utilized in this study are presented in Table 2. Upon examination of the table's results, the KMO value was assessed to ascertain whether the sample size was sufficient for the scale; the value was found to be 0.900. Based on the

obtained results, the significance of the Bartlett test and the KMO value being greater than 0.6 (Hair et al., 2014) indicate that the data is appropriate for factor analysis. Furthermore, it was ascertained that the job stress scale accounted for around 56.396% of the overall variability.

A measure is defined as a factor comprising scale items with load values of 0.50 or greater. It was ascertained that the factor loadings were a minimum of 0.645 due to the explanatory factor analysis. Furthermore, to ascertain the internal consistency and dependability of the scale, the Cronbach Alpha (CA) value was computed to be 0.867. It was acknowledged that this exceeded the minimum value that is generally accepted (Hair et al., 2014). Consequently, the reliability of the job stress scale can be asserted.

**Table 3.** Factor Analysis Results of the Presenteeism Scale

| ITEMS                                                                                        | Factor Loadings | Eigenvalue   | % of Variance | Cronbach's Alpha |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|--------------|---------------|------------------|
| <b>Presenteeism</b>                                                                          |                 | <b>4,452</b> | <b>74,196</b> | <b>0,930</b>     |
| Even though I have a health problem, I can finish difficult tasks at work. (R)               | 0,857           |              |               |                  |
| Even though I have a health problem, I can focus on achieving my goals at work. (R)          | 0,914           |              |               |                  |
| Even though I have a health problem, I feel energetic enough to complete all my work. (R)    | 0,831           |              |               |                  |
| Because of my health problem, I have difficulty coping with job stress.                      | 0,857           |              |               |                  |
| My health problem prevents me from enjoying my job.                                          | 0,811           |              |               |                  |
| Because of my health problem, I feel hopeless about completing some work-related tasks.      | 0,894           |              |               |                  |
| <b>Total Scale Reliability and Variance</b>                                                  |                 |              | <b>74,196</b> | <b>0,930</b>     |
| <i>Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy: KMO = 0,894;</i>                         |                 |              |               |                  |
| <i>Bartlett's Test of Sphericity: <math>\chi^2 = 1846,435</math>; <math>P = 0,000</math></i> |                 |              |               |                  |

The results of the applied factor analysis and reliability analysis of the presenteeism scale utilized in this study are presented in Table 3. Upon examination of the table's results, the KMO value was assessed to ascertain whether the sample size was sufficient for the scale. The value was found to be 0.894. Based on the obtained results, the significance of the Bartlett test and the KMO value being greater than 0.6 (Hair et al., 2014) indicate that the data is appropriate for factor analysis. Furthermore, it was ascertained that the presenteeism scale accounted for around 74.196% of the overall variability.

A measure is defined as a factor comprising scale items with load values of 0.50 or greater. It was determined that factor loadings were a minimum of 0.811 through the application of explanatory factor analysis. Furthermore, to ascertain the internal consistency and dependability of the scale, the Cronbach Alpha (CA) value was computed to be 0.930. It was acknowledged that this exceeded the minimum value that is generally accepted (Hair et al., 2014). Consequently, the presenteeism scale can be deemed reliable.

**Table 4.** Skewness and Kurtosis Coefficients for Variables

|                         | JS    | PR    |
|-------------------------|-------|-------|
| N                       | 392   | 392   |
| Skewness                | -,759 | -,092 |
| Std. Mistake (Skewness) | ,123  | ,123  |
| Kurtosis                | ,950  | -,824 |
| Std. Mistake (Kurtosis) | ,246  | ,246  |

**NOTE:** JS: Job Stress; PR: Presenteeism

The results of the analysis pertaining to the normality of the data distribution are presented in Table 4. As stated by Kline (2011), the presence of skewness and kurtosis coefficients within the interval of  $\pm 1.5$  signifies that the data follows a normal distribution. The analysis reveals that the calculated coefficients fall within the interval of  $\pm 1.5$ . Consequently, the data pertaining to the independent and dependent variables exhibit a normal distribution.

**Table 5.** Correlation Matrix Between Variables

| Variables (n=392)                                        | Job Stress | Presenteeism |
|----------------------------------------------------------|------------|--------------|
| <b>Job Stress</b><br>(pearson correlation coefficient)   | 1          |              |
| <b>Presenteeism</b><br>(pearson correlation coefficient) | ,301**     | 1            |

\* $p < 0,05$ ; \*\* $p < 0,01$

In the correlation matrix between variables, a Pearson correlation coefficient of 1.00 defines a perfect positive relationship, while -1.00 defines a perfect negative relationship. A relationship between 0.30 and 0.00 can be described as low, a relationship between 0.70 and 0.30 as a medium level, and a relationship between 0.70 and 1.00 as a high level (Büyüköztürk, 2008: 32). According to Table 5, there is a positive, moderately significant relationship between job stress and presenteeism, one of the scales used in the research (Pearson correlation coefficient  $\rightarrow$  0.301). Therefore, "H1: There is a significant relationship between the level of job stress and the level of presenteeism in the five-star hotel employees participating in the research." The hypothesis was accepted.

**Table 6.** Effect of Job Stress on Presenteeism

| Independent Variable | Unstandardized Coefficients |      | Standardized Coefficients | t     | Sig.   | F      | R <sup>2</sup> |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|------|---------------------------|-------|--------|--------|----------------|
|                      | Beta                        | S.H. | Beta                      |       |        |        |                |
| <b>Constant</b>      | 1,052                       | 0,33 | -                         | 3,192 | 0,002* | 38,875 | 0,091          |
| <b>Job Stress</b>    | 0,496                       | 0,08 | <b>0,301*</b>             | 6,235 | 0,000* |        |                |

\* $p < 0,01$

The results of the basic linear regression analysis, which are displayed in Table 6, offer valuable insights regarding the correlation between employee presenteeism and job-related stress. The investigation's results supported the conclusion that a significant relationship existed between the variables, as demonstrated by the linear regression model ( $F = 38.875$ ;  $p < 0.01$ ). After conducting an analysis of the model, it was determined that a one-unit increase in job stress is associated with a commensurate 0.301-unit increase in the level of presenteeism.

## 5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study, which aimed to determine the interaction between job stress and presenteeism among the staff of a five-star hotel in Istanbul that possesses a tourism management certificate, involved the participation of 392 employees. 40.3% of the hotel employees participating in the research are female, and 59.7% are male. The rate of female working in the tourism sector in Turkey is around 27.3%, and it is predicted that this rate will be 36.5% in 2023 (WTTC, 2014, Arslan and Kılıçlar, 2018)). Based on the aforementioned information, the 40.3% female employee rate observed in this study is consistent with the present state of employment in the tourism industry.

According to the results obtained from the correlation and regression analyses conducted within the scope of the study, there is a significant relationship between the job stress levels and presenteeism levels of the five-star hotel employees in Istanbul who participated in the research. Accordingly, it has been determined that employees' job stress level positively affects their presenteeism level. Therefore, it can be said that as the job stress level of employees increases, the level of presenteeism (coming to work when sick) increases. This finding obtained from the study is similar to the findings of previous research on employees of different sectors (Cooper, 1998; MacGregor et al., 2008; Yeşiltaş and Ayaz, 2019). The findings of the study by Chia and Chu (2016) on 358 hotel employees in Malaysia are in line with those of the tourism industry. According to this result, the presenteeism level of employees with high job stress levels is expected to increase in parallel with other research findings.

In light of the findings obtained from the study, it can be stated that businesses that do not want to face various costs for the orientation and training of new personnel should take into account situations such as job stress and presenteeism for the continuity of the business. In addition, it is important for the management to determine the factors that cause job stress among hotel employees and to create an appropriate organizational structure. In addition, relevant public institutions have great responsibilities to determine and supervise whether overtime is applied to personnel, whether wages are paid regularly and in accordance with the rules, whether the working environment is appropriate, and whether social rights are provided. In this regard, hotel management managers, trade unions, and non-governmental organizations in the field of tourism also have responsibilities.

### Limitations and Implications

One of the limitations of the research is that this study was conducted between July 1 and July 31, 2023, with employees of a five-star hotel business with a tourism management certificate in Istanbul. Another limitation is that hotels that do not want to participate in the survey cannot be included in the research. For this reason, it may be recommended that academics who want to study related concepts in the future conduct research on employees of hotel businesses of different concepts (city hotels and resort hotels), taking these limitations into consideration. On the other hand, hotel managers may be advised not to create situations that will cause work stress in employees and to take precautions accordingly. It is thought that this research addresses the field of human resources, especially in the hotel industry. Therefore, sector representatives, hotel management managers and employees, and academicians conducting research activities in the field of tourism and management can primarily benefit from the findings of this research.



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