

## UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE IN PRESENTEEISM AND EMPLOYEE WELL-BEING

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### ABSTRACT

*Employee well-being has been affected in both positive and negative ways by the development of ICT and the growing emphasis on productivity. The current tendency of downsizing inside corporations and the ongoing spread of Covid-19 only make the problem worse. Consequently, the persistently high levels of anxiety experienced by employees can lead to physical and mental exhaustion, resulting in sickness presenteeism and detrimental effects on their psychological well-being. As a result, the major goal of this article is to investigate and establish a connection between time pressure, continual connectedness, illness presenteeism, and the mental health of workers. Sickness presenteeism was shown to have a negative relationship with workers' mental health, whereas time pressure was found to have a favorable relationship with it. The implications of these results are thoroughly discussed, and suggestions for future research are proposed to investigate the relationships outlined in this study empirically.*

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**Keywords:** Psychological Well-Being, Constant Connectivity, Time Pressure, Sickness Presenteeism.

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### Introduction

The remarkable development of information and communication technologies has brought widespread happiness because of its numerous positive effects (ICT); it is important to acknowledge the potential drawbacks it poses for employees within a company. Constant interaction with co-workers and customers makes it difficult to switch off during off-hours (Yahaya et al., 2010). As a result of the unanticipated difficulties brought on by the Covid-19 outbreak and the subsequent tendency of downsizing inside enterprises, this state of permanent connectedness has become both an implicit expectation and an essential feature of job security. (Johns, 2010). As a result, this prolonged state of heightened anxiety can lead to physical and mental exhaustion among employees, ultimately giving rise to sickness presenteeism. Employees who come to work sick are said to be engaging in sick presenteeism. who are mentally or physically unwell choose to be at work instead of resting at home (Halbesleben et al., 2014).

It is worth noting that a significant proportion of employees, ranging from a third to half, "continue to report to work even when they are ill, even though such presenteeism is more expensive for businesses than absenteeism (Haque et al., 2019; Taifor et al., 2011; Wee et al., 2019). In the United States, for instance, presenteeism costs the economy \$311.8 million per year, but absenteeism only costs \$176.2 million per year (Haque et al., 2019). In the United Kingdom, the cost of absenteeism is £8.4 billion whereas the cost of presenteeism is £15.1 billion (Wee et al., 2019). There was a 3.5-fold difference between the costs of absenteeism (MYR 1,548.3) and presenteeism (MYR 5392.6) in Malaysia (Wong et al., 2020)".

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Studies have demonstrated that presenteeism not only reduces production but also has negative effects on employees' physical health. Low quality of life and increased vulnerability to depression are associated with presenteeism, as shown by Conway et al. (2014). There is a dearth of study on this topic in the Malaysian workplace, despite growing interest and investigation elsewhere. In addition, there hasn't been much research done on illness presenteeism in Malaysia. As a result, there is an urgent need to study presenteeism because of the harm it causes to workers' health and productivity. Therefore, this research investigates the causes and consequences of presenteeism in Malaysian workplaces.

## **Literature Review**

### **Time Pressure**

Time pressure, as used in the literature, is an environment in which workers are pressed to perform their jobs more quickly than is comfortable (Malik, 2015). Because there is more to do than there is time to do, a feeling of urgency develops (Rosenbloom, 2022). Because of the urgency with which workers must complete their tasks and make decisions, time constraints are a major source of stress in the workplace (Silla & Gamero, 2014; Teng et al., 2010). The ramifications of efficiency have been studied extensively, yet there is still no agreement. According to studies done by Teng et al. (2010), workplace stress causes unpleasant feelings and emotional tiredness and increases the risk of mistakes. Time constraints, according to Murali (2017), may lead to stress in the body and reduce workers' capacity for strategic thinking.

### **Constant Connectivity**

Constant connectivity refers to the uninterrupted access to work-related communication tools provided by the organization, irrespective of whether it is during work hours or personal time (Büchler et al., 2020). Smart mobile device connectivity to the office has become the norm, enabling individuals to be available at any location and time. However, this constant connectivity has also become burdensome as it creates an expectation for immediate feedback (Loeschner, 2018). Employees in highly responsive environments frequently complain that they have little time for leisure activities due to the constant flow of communications. Therefore, information overload, higher job expectations leading to stress, and less chance for recuperation are all ways in which continual connection may negatively impact the well-being of workers (Ruhle et al., 2020). In a similar vein, Mazmanian (2013) emphasised that being constantly connected might have unfavourable consequences including burnout, an inability to unplug from work, strained connections at home, marital problems, and less time spent bettering oneself.

### **Sickness Presenteeism**

Sickness presenteeism is when workers show up to work despite being unwell, as opposed to calling in sick and staying home to recover (Aronsson & Gustafsson, 2005). Sickness presenteeism is defined by Conway et al. (2014) as the practise of coming to work despite feeling ill. Which goes against the recommended practice of taking time off to recover. Presenteeism, which is characterised by built-up exhaustion, may be even more harmful to employees than absenteeism Health and productivity (Dietz & Scheel, 2017). Presenteeism not only decreases productivity but also raises the probability of future coronary attacks and serious health issues, as discovered by the study of Hansen and Andersen (2008). In addition to its negative effects on health, presenteeism is a major cause of stress and work discontent, as described by Lu et al. (2013).

### **Employee Psychological Well-being**

In addition to physical health, one's well-being also includes "peak mental health" and "happiness" (Chuah, 2019). "The term "psychological well-being" is used to describe an individual's level of happiness and contentment with life and their own mental health (Momtaz et al., 2011). Optimism and pleasure generated by a high state of psychological health can boost productivity. Robertson & Cooper (2010) and Robertson et al. (2012) found that in the workplace, people with greater levels of psychological well-being are likely to perform better because they are healthier on the inside and out. Achieving a state of optimal mental health in the workplace requires having both a pleasant time while working and believing in the significance of what they do (Kundi et al., 2020). As a result, it is in the best interest of businesses to keep an eye on and encourage their workers' mental health (Kundi et al., 2020)".

## Hypothesis

### Presenteeism due to Sickness or Time Constraints

When workers are under time constraints, they make an extra effort to do their work more quickly than normal (Malik, 2015). Burnout may occur in workers who constantly push themselves to fulfil time limitations, whether because of deadlines or to prevent a backlog of work and the need to take medical leave (Hansen & Andersen, 2008; Teng et al., 2010). The significant correlation between time constraints and ill presenteeism is supported by the findings of three recent research (McGregor et al., 2016, Dietz & Scheel, 2017, and Nordenmark et al., 2019). Therefore, the following hypotheses are proposed in this research considering the available evidence:

First Hypothesis: Being pressed for time increases the likelihood that an employee will come to work despite being unwell.

### Constant Contact and Presenteeism Due to Sickness

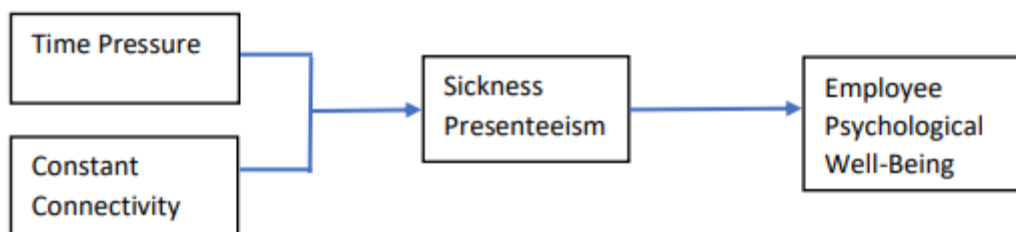
According to the work of Büchler et al. (2020), "constant connectedness" refers to an always-on, across-the-clock connection with several stakeholders in an organisation. Constant connectedness may lead to information overload, physical and emotional stress, and fatigue among workers, which in turn might raise the risk of absenteeism due to illness (Ruhle et al., 2020). Constant connectedness is positively related to disease presenteeism, as shown by many surveys, including those conducted by Ayyagari et al. (2011) and Ruhle et al. (2020). Therefore, the following theory is advanced in this investigation:

Second Hypothesis: Being constantly connected has a favourable correlation with sick-day absenteeism.

### Presenteeism Due to Illness and Workers' Psychological Health

"The World Health Organization (WHO) recognises that an individual's psychological well-being is a key indicator of health and has a pivotal influence in productivity results connected to presenteeism (Brown et al., 2011). According to research by Collins et al. (2018)", high rates of illness presenteeism are associated with stress from organisational changes and job insecurity, both of which may have a detrimental effect on an employee's health and well-being. There is strong evidence linking presenteeism to negative outcomes for physical and mental health, which only become worse throughout time (Lu et al., 2014). The following speculations are plausible considering the available data:

Third Hypothesis: Sick-Day Showings Have a Serious, Negative Impact on a Person's Mood, and Mental Health.



**Figure 1: Structure of Ideas**

Figure 1 depicts the theoretical basis for this investigation, which centres on the influence of temporal constraints and continual connectedness on disease presenteeism. The effects of sick-day-taking on workers' mental health are also explored.

The framework suggests that both time pressure and constant connectivity are factors that contribute to sickness presenteeism. Employees experiencing high levels of time pressure and constant connectivity may be more prone to engaging in sickness presenteeism, as they strive to meet deadlines and always remain connected to work.

The psychological effects of illness presenteeism on workers will also be investigated in this research. Higher rates of sick presenteeism are likely to be linked to lower levels of psychological health., as employees who continue to work despite being unwell may experience increased stress, fatigue, and negative emotions, which can ultimately impact their overall psychological well-being. By delving into these connections, the research hopes to provide light on the ways in which time pressure, continuous connectedness, and ill presenteeism may affect workers' mental health.

## **Methodology**

To assess the hypotheses, this study used a quantitative approach and used cross-sectional data. The participants in this research were Malaysian workers. Convenience sampling was used to choose respondents for an online survey. The survey results were assessed based on the 135 workers that participated.

In this study, we borrowed everything we utilised from other studies. Both the time pressure items (from Malik 2015) and the connection items (from Buchler 2015) were used in this study (2020). We borrowed the items measuring sick-day absence from Lu et al (2013). Items evaluating employees' emotional health were adapted from the World Health Organization (WHO, 2004).

This study used SPSS version 26 and Smart PLS version 3.3.9 for statistical analysis. Mean, kurtosis, skewness, and standard deviation were only few of the descriptive statistics computed with the help of the SPSS programme. Partial Least Squares structural equation modelling was used for the analysis in this work (PLS-SEM). Data validity and trustworthiness were determined with the help of Ringle et al (2015)'s Smart PLS 3.3.9. After doing the analysis, the team set out to verify the hypotheses.

## **Result**

### **Common Method Bias (CMB)**

Common method bias (CMB) refers to the potential bias that may arise when data are collected from a single source using similar measurement methods (Campbell and Fishke, 1959). CMB is a concern when all variables are measured at the same time using consistent Likert-type scales, as this can introduce systematic variance in the responses (Podsakoff & Organ, 1986; Jordan & Troth, 2019). Since questionnaires were used to gather information from a single participant, this research had several limitations., it is important to address the potential issue of CMB.

A comprehensive collinearity test, focusing on the variance inflation factor, was performed to determine the existence of CMB (VIF). The VIF values in this investigation were much below the 3.3 criterion proposed by Kock and Lynn. They ranged from 1.029 to 1.219. (2012). These findings demonstrate that there is little to no collinearity across the notions, and hence that CMB is not a serious problem.

By addressing and mitigating the potential influence of CMB, the study ensures the validity and reliability of the data collected, enhancing the credibility of the findings and the overall quality of the research.

### **Model for Measuring**

In this research, we evaluated the measurement model by looking at its consistency reliability, discriminant validity, "and average variance extracted. You can see how these tests fared in Table 1.

The AVE values were used to assess convergent validity, which is the degree to which items in a construct measure the same underlying notion. All of the AVE values in this investigation were higher than the minimal acceptable level of 0.5. (Hair et al., 2017). This suggests that the measurement items within each construct effectively capture the intended concept and demonstrate convergent validity.

Internal consistency reliability, which assesses the extent to which the items within each construct consistently measure the same concept, was evaluated using the composite reliability (CR) values. The CR values in this study ranged from 0.833 to 0.955, all of which exceeded the recommended level of 0.7 (Hair et al., 2017). These results indicate that the items within each construct have high internal consistency and reliability".

Discriminant validity, "which examines whether the constructs in the study are distinct from each other, was assessed using the heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) ratio of correlations. The HTMT values in this study were all below the recommended threshold of 0.85 (Kline, 2015), indicating satisfactory discriminant validity. This suggests that the constructs in the study are distinct from each other and do not overlap excessively".

Overall, the measurement model assessments indicate that the constructs in the study have satisfactory convergent validity, internal consistency reliability, and discriminant validity. These findings provide confidence in the quality of the measurement model and support the validity and reliability of the data collected for further analysis.

**Table 1: Results of Measurement Model**

Table 1 <i>Results of Measurement Model</i>					
				Average Variance	Composite
	Mean	Std Deviation	Loading	Extracted (AVE)	Reliability (CR)
Constant Connectivity	5.074	1.418		0.676	0.912
CC1			0.674		
CC2			0.889		
CC3			0.821		
CC4			0.794		
CC5			0.913		
Sickness Presenteeism	3.263	1.253		0.913	0.955
SP1			0.951		
SP2			0.960		
Time Pressure	3.538	0.859		0.624	0.833
TP1			0.820		
TP2			0.769		
TP3			0.780		
Psychological Well-Being	3.575	0.745		0.678	0.913
PWB1			0.826		
PWB2			0.888		
PWB3			0.711		
PWB4			0.803		
PWB5			0.876		

**Table 2: Discriminant Validity (HTMT)**

	Constant Connectivity	Sickness Presenteeism	Time Pressure	Psychological Well-Being
Constant Connectivity				
Sickness Presenteeism	0.19			
Time Pressure	0.175	0.52		
Psychological Well-Being	0.088	0.243	0.33	

**Model of Structure**

To test the reliability of the estimates, we employed a bootstrapping technique using 5,000 replicates. The results of the hypothesis tests are summarised in Table 3.

Table 3 shows that a beta coefficient ( $\beta$ ) of 0.405 and a matching t-value of 5.447 suggest that time pressure significantly and positively affects ill presenteeism. This indicates that workers are more likely to show up to work unwell when under a lot of time pressure.

Illness presenteeism also had a statistically significant negative correlation with productivity and psychological health ( $t=2.984$ ,  $\beta=-0.231$ ). This suggests that a negative correlation exists between illness presenteeism and employee mental health.

Therefore, H1 and H3 were accepted, suggesting that time constraints have a favourable effect on illness presenteeism and that sickness presenteeism has a detrimental impact on psychological health.

The coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) was calculated for H1 and H3, indicating the proportion of variance explained by the respective hypotheses. For H1, the  $R^2$  value was 0.192, suggesting that time pressure explains approximately 19.2% of the variance in sickness presenteeism. Similarly, for H3, the  $R^2$  value was 0.053, indicating that sickness presenteeism accounts for approximately 5.3% of the variance in psychological well-being.

Furthermore, the effect sizes ( $f^2$ ) for H1 and H3 were computed as 0.199 and 0.056, respectively. These effect sizes suggest a medium effect for time constraints and illness presenteeism (H1), and a moderate association between the latter and emotional health (H3).

In conclusion, the findings of the hypothesis tests indicate that time pressure has a favourable effect on Negative effects on mental health have been linked to disease presenteeism among employees. The identified effect sizes and  $R^2$  values provide insights into the strength and explanatory power of these relationships within the context of the study.

**Table 3 Evaluation of the Hypotheses: A Synthesis**

		Beta	Std Deviation	T Stat	P Values	Remark
H1	Time Pressure -> Sickness Presenteeism	0.405	0.074	5.447	0	Supported
H2	Constant Connectivity -> Sickness Presenteeism	0.121	0.087	1.386	0.166	Not Supported
H3	Sickness Presenteeism -> Psychological Well-Being	-0.231	0.077	2.984	0.003	Supported

## Discussion

Constant communication enables workers to plan ahead and execute their tasks with precision. Before arriving at the office, which may contribute to better time management and reduced time pressure. Additionally, constant connectivity facilitates improved communication among team members, managers, and customers, which can enhance coordination and productivity.

It is also worth considering the potential moderating factors that could influence the relationship between constant connectivity and sickness presenteeism. "For example, the presence of supportive leadership and a positive work culture that promotes work-life balance may mitigate the negative effects of constant connectivity on employees' well-being and reduce the likelihood of sickness presenteeism.

Further research is needed to explore the complex relationship between constant connectivity and sickness presenteeism. Factors such as individual differences, organizational context, and technological boundaries should be considered to gain a comprehensive understanding of this relationship.

This research shows how time constraints and ill presenteeism have a major impact on workers' mental health. It highlights the necessity of establishing a healthy work environment and controlling time pressure to reduce the harmful effects of ill presenteeism. The unexpected finding regarding the relationship between constant connectivity and sickness presenteeism opens up avenues for future research to delve deeper into the underlying mechanisms and contextual factors that influence this relationship".

While better communication among stakeholders can certainly play a role in reducing sickness presenteeism, it is important to approach the issue from a broader perspective. Reducing sickness presenteeism requires a comprehensive and multifaceted approach that addresses various factors contributing to this phenomenon.

Effective communication can help create a supportive work environment where employees feel comfortable taking sick leave when needed. This includes open and transparent communication between employees and their supervisors or managers, as well as clear policies and guidelines regarding sick leave and absence management.

However, it is essential to recognize that reducing sickness presenteeism goes beyond communication alone. It involves addressing underlying factors such as organizational culture, workload management, work-life balance, and employee well-being. Strategies may include promoting a healthy work-life balance, providing flexible work arrangements, fostering a supportive and inclusive work environment, implementing wellness programs, and offering resources for managing stress and mental health.

Additionally, organizations can benefit from proactive measures such as promoting preventive health practices, providing access to healthcare resources, and educating employees about the importance of self-care and taking time off when ill. By adopting a holistic approach that combines effective communication, supportive policies, and a focus on employee well-being, organizations can create an environment where employees feel empowered to prioritize their health and well-being, leading to reduced sickness presenteeism and improved overall productivity.

#### **Limitation and Suggestions for Future Study**

Indeed, the limitation of focusing on employees in Malaysia prevents the results from being applied to a broader set of situations or nations. Conducting comparative studies across different industries or countries would provide valuable insights into the potential variations in pressures of time, being constantly connected, sick-day presenteeism, and mental health. This comparative approach could uncover industry-specific or cultural factors that influence these relationships. In addition, using a longitudinal research design would be for the investigation of the connections through time, capturing shifts and possible causal linkages between the variables of interest. Longitudinal studies can provide more robust evidence and insights into the dynamics and long-term impacts of time constraints, always-on connection, bringing work home while unwell, and how it affects morale.

When other moderators, including teamwork and supervisory support, are taken into account, and personality traits, could also enrich the understanding of how these variables interact and influence the outcomes of interest. For example, exploring the role of teamwork in mitigating the negative effects of time pressure or constant connectivity on sickness presenteeism could provide valuable insights for promoting employee well-being. Future research should aim to address these limitations by adopting a comparative approach, incorporating longitudinal designs, and exploring additional moderating factors. These efforts would contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the complex relationships between time crunches, being always connected to the internet, working when unwell, and how it affects one's mental health in various settings.

#### **Conclusion**

In conclusion, this study sheds light on the factors that contribute to sickness presenteeism and emphasizes the significance of addressing this issue in organizations. The findings underscore the importance of effective management and planning of employee work schedules to prevent and mitigate sickness presenteeism. By understanding how absenteeism due to illness might affect workers' mental health, organizations can prioritize interventions and strategies to promote employee health and enhance overall work performance and job satisfaction. The implications of this study extend beyond the individual level, as sickness presenteeism can have ripple effects on team dynamics, organizational culture, and productivity. Therefore, organizations should prioritize the implementation of supportive policies, such as flexible work arrangements, clear communication channels, and leadership support, to create a work environment that values employee well-being and discourages the pressure to work while sick. By addressing sickness presenteeism and promoting employees' psychological well-being, organizations can cultivate a healthier and more productive workforce. This, in turn, can lead to improved job satisfaction, employee engagement, and overall organizational performance.

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