

Gender, Presenteeism, and Turnover Intention and the Mediation Effect of Presenteeism in the Workplace

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Abstract: Background/Objectives: Showing up at work while ill, commonly called presenteeism is a prevalent organizational issue. The current study investigated the connotation among gender, presenteeism, and turnover intention in the workplace and tested differential effects of gender on presenteeism. And the effect of presenteeism on turnover intention and a mediating role of the presenteeism in the association between gender and turnover intention were also examined. **Methods/Statistical Analysis:** We used 435 survey data collected from different organizations of diverse industries in Korea. To test the measurement model, we used LISREL 8.54 for CFA and model fit test, and SPSS 23 for hierarchical regression analysis and Bootstrapping for mediation effect analysis. **Findings:** The research revealed the differential effects of gender on presenteeism and found female workers were more vulnerable to presenteeism than male. Hierarchical regression analysis demonstrated that presenteeism had a significant effect on turnover intention and played a mediating role between gender and turnover intention. **Improvements/Applications:** Our findings revealed Korean female workers were more associated with presenteeism behavior than male like many other Western developed countries. In this regard, this is the first empirical research verified the gender difference effect on presenteeism within Korean context. With the finding that presenteeism played a mediation role between gender and turnover intention, the current study sheds light on the presenteeism phenomenon and reminds management of a special attention that needs to be paid to mitigate this adverse impact on the performance and productivity of the organization. Further in-depth study needs to be conducted for identifying the antecedents and consequences of presenteeism behavior. The mechanism and dynamics fetching out presenteeism behavior including personal disposition and fundamental motives need to be taken into account for future research.

Keywords: Presenteeism, Gender, Male, Female, Turnover Intention

I. INTRODUCTION

Employee productivity has been shown to be distressed by employee health: this is readily obvious in work statistics. In one study of a medical database of 375,000 employees in the USA as well as five productivity surveys on 10 common health conditions, such as diabetes and hypertension, the researchers found that as much as sixty percent of the total cost on worker illness arises from “on-the-job productivity losses”, surpassing what companies pay out on medical

benefits and sick days [1]. The notion of “presenteeism” relates to this problem. A number of employees physically appears at work on any given days, but they are not functioning effectively enough [2]. Presenteeism defines in such a situation when employees are physically at work but, on account of medical and psychological conditions such as disease, slight injury, which they are not performing at ultimate levels.

Subsequent to the global economic recession, many organizations have carried out restructuring and downsizing, seeking more with less resources. Thus this kind of sudden work environmental change may have disputably increased the prevalence of presenteeism from related spread in job insecurity. When presenteeism arises, employees often manifest lower productivity and performance. Such lower level of individual performance and productivity would give direct and adverse effects on corporate level of performance and productivity.

Moreover, most of the research on presenteeism has been done in the healthcare field, driven by the view that effectively coping with presenteeism could be a distinguishable fount of competitive advantage in organization [3]. Although recent organizational studies have looked at antecedents of presenteeism, they focus almost exclusively on features of the work context and organizational culture [4], overlooking individual characteristics such as personality and gender difference. Thus, the aim of the current study shown in Figure 1 is to assess how differently the gender affects presenteeism and so to unravel the gender difference underlying effects on presenteeism as well as the gender effects on turnover intention with the presenteeism and to test if presenteeism between the gender and turnover intention plays mediation role in the workplace. Study findings would assist to contribute to a better and unique understanding of the antecedents of presenteeism and in particular the mechanisms through which presenteeism affects subsequent turnover intention, which would leads to gender specific behavior.

Many researches about the relationship between an individual disposition and behaviors have been conducted throughout human history [5]. According to previous study such presenteeism, which had mostly conducted in Western developed countries, was found to be gendered and it imposes substantial costs on women because they try to accommodate the contradictory demands between work and home.

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As aforementioned, presenteeism is found to be associated with restructuring and also is gendered phenomenon. Such presenteeism is linked with a “competitive masculine culture” [6]. And it was suggested that organizational restructuring could create adverse consequences like a “competitive presenteeism” [6] and that such ends have significant gender connotations.

Home is usually elucidated as a place where employees can kick back from the workplace demands. While this may be true for most male employees within Asian culture and blue color workers, it is not inevitably the case for many working mothers or for female managers and professionals. In the previous studies female workers, managers, and professions especially in healthcare and school professions such as nurses and school teachers are more reluctant to the act of presenteeism [6-9]. Employees in those groups may realize the practical duties at home more burdensome than an interesting and creative job at work with a reasonable level of control and freedom, and thus prefer presenteeism to taking sick leave [10]. Thus, this study is to reveal the gender effects on presenteeism within the Korean corporate context and to compare the findings with the ones that had been already studied in most of Western countries with different cultural backgrounds. From the aforementioned literatures and findings the following hypothesis emerges:

Hypothesis 1. There will be a difference in gender on the act of presenteeism.

Hypothesis 2. Gender will be differently related to presenteeism. Specifically female workers are more likely to show the act of presenteeism than male workers.

Job dissatisfaction is one of the primary reasons people leave. Evidence has also shown that decision process concerning turnover involves a procedure in which individual employee evaluates his/her present job across alternatives available, evolve intentions about what to achieve, and involve in different kinds of actions such as job seeking activity[11-13]. In general, specific individual and organizational factors that trigger turnover have direct effects on job satisfaction, one of the key job attitudes, which result in the withdrawal process. Among others, turnover intention tends to be the strongest turnover predictors which relates to the withdrawal process [14]. People who perceived job dissatisfaction there is higher likely to have turnover intention. In many previous researches having examined the relationship between presenteeism and job satisfaction, the results were found that presenteeism was negatively related to job satisfaction [15,16]. So job dissatisfaction is strongly related to turnover intention in workplace context. Therefore, with the above Hypothesis 2, it is anticipated that presenteeism would play a mediating role of the relation between the gender and turnover intention. From aforementioned literatures the following hypotheses emerge:

Hypothesis 3. Presenteeism is positively related to turnover intention.

Hypothesis 4. Presenteeism will be mediating the relationship between gender and turnover intention. Specifically, female workers are positively related to presenteeism that is, in turn, positively related to turnover intention.

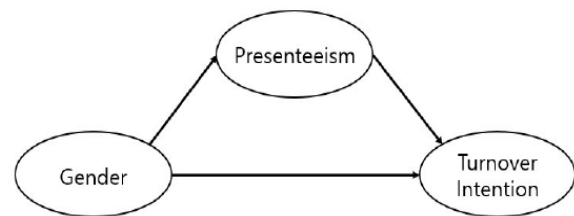


Fig 1. Hypothesized Model

II. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1. Research Sample

To test our hypothesis, data was collected from full-time workers in different organization of diverse industries such as banking, finance, IB, healthcare, small & medium sized corporates, and municipal government across Korea in 2017. Pre-test survey was conducted from August through September 2017 with 92 samples. Based on the pre-test survey results, the questionnaire items were refined and revised consequently and administered the regular survey from September 14, 2017 for approximately two weeks. 533 sets of questionnaire were initially distributed and 451 sets of data were collected. With the data sets collected, then we finalized and eventually used the total of 435 completed samples for this study after removing any data sets unfaithfully completed or omitted survey items. All this self-reported cross-sectional questionnaires were conducted with 5 point Likert Scale. The study sample was 47.6% of male, 52.4% of female, with 37.3 (SD = 9.2) of Mean age, 15.4 (SD = 1.5) of Mean year of education, and 9.3 (SD = 5.8) of Mean job tenure years. These were included in control variables.

2.2. Measures

We tested the current hypothesis empirically using cross-sectional data. With the exception of the demographic survey items, all the items were rated on a 5point Likert scale and ranged from 1 to 5 (strongly disagree to strongly agree) unless otherwise indicated. And the measures for appraising gender, the act of presenteeism behavior, turnover intention, and demographic variables have been provided with Korean versions which adapted from previous studies with proven acceptable validity and reliability. And the survey was managed in Korean.

2.2.1. Presenteeism

To assess the act of presenteeism behavior, we employed SPS (Stanford Presenteeism Scale) as the scale items developed by Turpin et al. [17]. SPS consists of 10 items and participants rated each marker of presenteeism based on the following instruction such as “Were you able to focus on achieving work goals?”, “Were the stresses of your job hard to handle?”

2.2.2. Turnover Intention

To assess turnover intention, we adapted four questionnaire items from the original questionnaire developed by O’Reilly, Chatman, & Caldwell [18] and revised them into five items and validated their validity and reliability. We finally used five items in Korean version with satisfactory validity and reliability.



2.2.3. Control Variables

In addition, information on age, school years (level of education; coded less than high school = 12, college graduate = 14, 4-year university graduate = 16, over graduate school = 18), and tenure was recorded and these were intended as control variables. And also we used attendance management as an additional control variable because it may affect to the act of presenteeism as suggested by Iverson & Deery [19] and Deery et al. [20]. Attendance management was measured by two items and included “Management is very strict about unscheduled days off” and “when you are scheduled for work management really expects you to be there.”

2.3. Data Analysis

The statistical programs of SPSS 23 and LIREL 8.54 [21] were utilized to test the hypothesized model.

To test the validities of each variable, EFA (Exploratory Factor Analysis) was administered with PCA (Principal Component Analysis) and Varimax rotation. All survey items showed more than .4 in factor loadings, so all the items had acceptable validities because they all fulfilled the condition that to be acceptable the factor loading should be over .4 [22]. Since one of the research variables in the present study, presenteeism, was a distinct construct and to check the potential bias issue of common method variance (CMV), we conducted CFA (Confirmatory Factor Analysis) for presenteeism. And to test the model fit, we compared a hypothesized three-factor model (i.e., gender, presenteeism,

and turnover intention) with one-factor model (combining all three variables) using LIREL 8.54 [21] for all item measures. Among the ten survey items on presenteeism one item was deleted because the factor loading value was less than .4, which did not meet the criteria (.4) suggested by Stevens [22]. The results are presented in Table 1.

To the extent the model fit is concerned, the higher NFI, CFI, and IFI are and the lower SRMR and RMSEA are, the better the model fits [21,23,24]. The measurement model of the three-factor model demonstrated the better fit to the data than the one-factor model: NFI (normed-fit index) of .89, CFI (comparative-fit index) of .91, IFI (incremental-fit index) of .91, SRMR (standardized root-mean-square residual) of .063, and RMSEA (root-mean-square error of approximation) of .086. Because these indices demonstrated acceptable fit, this supports that the three-factor model fitted the data considerably better than the one-factor model, thus supporting the construct validity of our research model.

To test the internal consistency reliability we conducted reliability with Cronbach’s . All the constructs (presenteeism = .781, turnover intention = .786) in the current study exceeded .7 which was suggested by Nunnally & Bernstein [25].

Table 1. Summary of Measurement Models Comparison

Models	χ^2	df	NFI	CFI	IFI	SRMR	RMSEA
Three-factor model	304.46	76	.89	.91	.91	.063	.086
One-factor model	768.71	77	.71	.73	.73	.12	.17

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Prior to the hypothesis testing, descriptive statistics and zero-order Pearson correlations (among variables are shown in Table 2 below. Consistent with our expectation, it will be noted that female and presenteeism were positively associated

to presenteeism (= .170, $p < .001$) and turnover intention (= .263, $p < .001$), respectively, while both female and presenteeism were negatively associated with age (= -.351, $p < .001$; = -.176, $p < .001$) and tenure (= -.286, $p < .001$; = -.182, $p < .001$). Furthermore, attendance management was positively associated with turnover intention (= .181, $p < .001$).

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics and Correlations 1)

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Female ²⁾	0.52	0.50	1						
2. Presenteeism	2.86	0.51	.170***	1					
3. Turnover Intention	3.04	0.72	.07	.263***	1				
4. Age	37.29	9.22	-.351***	-.176***	-.116*	1			
5. School Year ³⁾	15.39	1.47	-.095*	-.00	.02	.114*	1		
6. Tenure	9.27	5.81	-.286***	-.182***	-.08	.761**	.139**	1	
7. Attendance Management	3.45	.98	.09	.04	.181***	.03	.04	.04	1

1) * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

2) female = 1, male= 0

3) Transformed the level of education to 12 = high school graduate or less, 14 = college

graduate, 16 = university graduate, and 18 = over graduate school

To test the Hypothesis 1, two-independent samples t-test was conducted and result was shown that t-value between gender (female vs. male) was reported as $t = 3.596$ ($p < .001$). This shows a significant difference between female and male workers toward the act of presenteeism. Thus Hypothesis 1 was accepted.

To verify the Hypothesis 2, regression analysis was performed. For Hypothesis 2, the outcome is presented in Table 3, showing that female workers are positively related to presenteeism ($\beta = .117$, $p < .05$). This supported Hypothesis 2

as female workers are more likely to presenteeism than male workers in Korean corporate context, which resulted in the same findings [6,8,9,26] with various previous studies mainly conducted in Western developed countries. Also prior to the analysis, we checked multi-collinearity of the variables used in the model by examining the VIF (Variance Inflation Factors). Because the VIF values of all variables included in the regression analysis were shown less than 2.49 and not beyond the threshold of 10, it was concluded that no multi-collinearity issues exist.

Table 3. Regression Analysis of Gender on Presenteeism¹⁾

Variables	Dependent: Presenteeism ¹⁾					
	Step 1			Step 2		
	B	SE	β	B	SE	β
	2.945***	.284		2.788***	.291	
Age	-.005	.004	-.091	-.003	.004	-.054
School year ²⁾	.008	.017	.022	.010	.017	.029
Tenure	-.010	.006	-.119	-.010	.006	-.114
Att. Mgt.	.026	.025	.049	.019	.025	.037
Female ³⁾				.119*	.052	.117*
R ²	0.40			0.52		
ΔR^2	.040**			.012*		
F-value	4.48**			4.68***		

1) * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$

2) Transformed the level of education to 12 = high school graduate or less, 14 = college graduate, 16 = university graduate, and 18 = over graduate school

3) female = 1, male = 0

The result of hierarchical regression analysis conducted to test Hypothesis 3 was as below Table 4. As shown in the Table 4, presenteeism was significantly and positively related to turnover intention ($\beta = .244$, $p < .001$) after controlling the control variables (age, school year, tenure, and attendance management) and independent variable (female). Therefore, Hypothesis 3 was supported. And the VIFs of all variables included in the hierarchical regression analysis were analyzed and they all represented less than 2.49, so there seems to have no multi-collinearity issue among variables included.

To test the Hypothesis 4, the mediation analysis suggested by Baron & Kenny [27] was employed. According to them, mediation is supported when three fundamental requirements are met: (Phase 1) the path from the independent variable, i.e.

female to the dependent variable, i.e. turnover intention should be statistically significant; (Phase 2) the path from the independent variable, i.e. female to the mediating variable, i.e. presenteeism should be statistically significant; and (Phase 3) the path from the mediating variable to the dependent variable should be statistically significant while controlling the independent variable. (Phase 4) When all the requirements are met, there exist a mediation effect. And in Phase 3 it is argued that there is a partial mediation effect when there exists any statistically significant effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable or that there is a full mediation effect when there exist no statistically significant effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable.

Table 4. Hierarchical Regression Analysis Predicting Turnover Intention¹⁾

Variables	Dependent: Turnover Intention ¹⁾								
	Step 1			Step 2			Step 3		
	B	SE	β	B	SE	β	B	SE	β
	2.759***	.396		2.726***	.408		1.772***	.437	
Age	-.010	.006	-.128	-.010	.006	-.122	-.008	.006	-.109
School year ²⁾	.012	.023	.025	.013	.023	.026	.009	.023	.019
Tenure	.001	.009	.005	.001	.009	.006	.004	.009	.034
Att. Mgt.	.133***	.034	.184***	.132***	.035	.182***	.125***	.034	.173***
Female ³⁾				.026	.073	.018	-.015	.071	-.011
Presenteeism							.342***	.066	.244***
R ²	.048			.048			.105		
ΔR^2	.048***			.000			.057***		



F-value	5.417***	4.349**	8.338***
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1) * p<.05, ** p<.01, *** p<.001

2) Transformed the level of education to 12 = high school graduate or less, 14 = college graduate, 16 = university graduate, and 18 = over graduate school

3) female = 1, male = 0

Hypothesis 4 was presenteeism plays a mediating role in the relationship between gender (female) and turnover intention. As we employed Baron & Kenny's mediation analysis method, empirical test results in Table 4 show that gender had no direct effects on turnover intention ($\beta = .018$, n.s. in Step 2); independent variable (female) is significantly related to presenteeism ($\beta = .117$, $p < .05$ in Hypothesis 2 and Table 3); and presenteeism is also significantly related to turnover intention ($\beta = .244$, $p < .001$ in Step 3) and female (independent variable) had no effect on turnover intention (dependent variable) ($\beta = -.011$, n.s. in Step 3) while female is controlled for. Therefore, based on Baron & Kenny's mediation analysis method, it is argued that presenteeism fully and completely mediated the relation between female and turnover intention.

To further assure the mediation effect of presenteeism suggested above by Baron & Kenny, we used the macro program 'Process' developed by Preach & Hayes for SPSS 23. Bootstrapping was conducted along with the method directed [28]. The bootstrapping result reported that the mediation impact of presenteeism in the relation between female and turnover intention was positively related with 99% of confidence level (.068, Z-value = 2.97, $p < .01$). Therefore, presenteeism played a mediating role between female and turnover intention. Hypothesis 4 was also supported. Also with the aforementioned results of mediation analyses, we argue that presenteeism fully mediated the relationship between these two variables as the condition in Phase 4 from Baron & Kenny was met and bootstrapping result also showed the indirect effect of female on turnover intention, given that within the CI (Confidence Interval) did not contain zero (LLCI: .0263, ULCI: .1167) and thus the total indirect effect was significant.

In addition, attendance management among the control variables showed all significant effects on turnover intention in every step. This means when workers perceive attendance enforcement high, they tend to intend to leave the company.

IV. CONCLUSION

The aim of the study was to reveal insight into the presenteeism phenomenon and to remind management and administration in organization of special attentions and considerations needed to be paid on this dysfunctional behavior, which influences performance and productivity of the organization. As predicted, all the hypotheses were supported.

In light of the findings of the present study, female workers were more likely to the act of presenteeism than male workers in Korean corporate climate. This finding showed the similar result with female workers' behavior toward the act of presenteeism in Western countries. This meant to be a relative difference exists on gender toward presenteeism behavior. Therefore, as women under Korean organizational culture

still endeavor to comply with the contradictory requests from work and home, the organization needs to improve working environment to promote gender equality and work-family balance.

Secondly, presenteeism was positively related with turnover intention. This is, the higher the act of presenteeism was emerged in the workplace, the more turnover intention was inherent. Therefore, managers and management should try to find ways to reduce the individual presenteeism behavior of the organization, so it would decrease the turnover intention of employees.

Thirdly, presenteeism fully mediates the relation between female and turnover intention. That is, female workers tends to perceive turnover intention only through presenteeism. As aforementioned, the increased prevalence of presenteeism demonstrates the lower level of performance and productivity. Therefore, managers of the organization should pay attention to this adverse effects caused by the act of presenteeism of individual workers.

When perceived attendance enforcement of employees from management become severe, their intentions to leave will be increasing. Thus this finding implies that the management needs to run the organization to mitigate the employees' perception of the attendance enforcement.

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