

Presenteeism and Absenteeism

CALL FOR PAPERS

EAWOP Small Group Meeting



“To work, or not to work (when sick), that is the question” – Recent trends and avenues for research on presenteeism and absenteeism

July 27 and 28, 2018

University of Klagenfurt, Austria



Submission deadline for abstracts: February 18, 2018

Organizers

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Despite having been researched for decades, the scholarly interest in attendance behavior is unbroken. One of the many reasons for this ongoing interest is the variety of definitions and behaviors related to attendance. Attendance behavior encompasses presenteeism, i.e. attending work despite illness (Johns, 2010), as well as absenteeism, i.e. the failure to report for work as scheduled (Johns, 2008). Even though these two fields of research are closely related, their developments have been relatively independent. However, recent research provides evidence that a more fine-grained analysis of attendance behaviors is needed to understand and deal with irregularities of attendance (Halbesleben, Whitman, & Crawford, 2014; Schaumberg & Flynn, 2017). While changes in the world of work and its design (e.g., Parker, Morgeson, & Johns, 2017) keep up the pressure on organizational practice to “optimize” the attendance of their workforce, the demands from that workforce increase, especially regarding aspects such as a healthy workplace or a positive work-life balance (e.g., Wayne, Casper, Matthews, & Allen, 2013). Understanding and proactively influencing attendance behavior within this context is important, as the prevalence of dysfunctional attendance behavior may be increasing (e.g., the prevalence of presenteeism, Jourdain & Vézina, 2014; motivational absenteeism, Rousseau & Aubé, 2013).

Furthermore, because of its complexity and importance, attendance behavior attracts interest in various fields with the development of its conceptualization. This includes (but is not limited to) work and organizational psychology, workgroup and team behavior, work performance, and withdrawal behaviors, but also organizational behavior in general, human resource management as well as other health sciences, such as occupational health psychology and epidemiology (Gerich, 2014, 2016; Miraglia & Johns, 2016; Russo, Miraglia, Borgogni, & Johns, 2013; Yang et al., 2017). In addition to this thematic variety, research within these fields is spread out across Europe and around the world. While such a plurality is generally beneficial for scientific progress, it is to some degree a liability, as interdisciplinary exchange and cooperation are often limited. However, the potential for cross-cultural and interdisciplinary research is greater.

Therefore, several EAWOP members have started an international and interdisciplinary exchange in order to move the field forward on issues such as the following. First, the conceptual foundations of attendance behavior need to include and distinguish various forms of presenteeism and absenteeism. This is necessary in order to understand contingencies and consequences of one behavior for the other (Deery, Walsh, & Zatzick, 2014; Gosselin, Lemyre, & Corneil, 2013; Halbesleben, Whitman & Crawford, 2014), as research results regarding the correlation between attendance behaviors are still ambiguous. Second, we need more knowledge about the strengths and weaknesses of different methodological approaches as well as data collection tools for presence and absence behaviors to overcome known limitations. Research still struggles to identify an adequate way of measuring and analyzing attendance behavior (Gerich, 2015; Johns & Miraglia, 2015) to align individual, organizational and scientific interests.

Consequently, our SGM aims to bring together scholars of different disciplines of, and perspectives on, attendance behavior in order to gain a more unified and comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon.

Consequently, the SGM aims to:

- Bring together scholars of different disciplines, and perspectives on attendance behavior in order to gain a more unified and comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon, continuing an exchange of ideas that started in a 2017 Academy of Management Annual Meeting Symposium.
- Evaluate, discuss and stimulate research interest in attendance behavior to increase our understanding of presenteeism and absenteeism. This may help us in better investigating (a) how attendance decisions are made, (b) factors that shape attendance behaviors at multiple levels (e.g., individual, group, organization), (c) how attendance behaviors influence individual and organizational health and productivity (or effectiveness) and (d) how both healthy organizations and healthy workers can be achieved.
- Share experiences with different methodological approaches (conceptual, qualitative, quantitative, simulation) to studying attendance behaviors.
- Provide opportunities to deepen existing cooperation and foster new cross-national collaborations, as cross-cultural research is still sparse, particularly regarding presenteeism.
- Initiate reflection about the key elements that should be considered in developing a conceptual framework for the processes and contextual factors influencing organizational interventions regarding presenteeism and absenteeism, including their relationship to stress and well-being.

Possible topics for presentations may include, but are not limited to:

- How are presenteeism and absenteeism (and their different forms) related?
- How do presenteeism and absenteeism develop over time? Are there differences in the formation of long- and short-term presenteeism?
- How are attendance decisions made and what factors shape presenteeism (and absenteeism) at multiple levels (e.g., individual, group, organization)? What role do psychosocial factors play?
- How does attendance behavior influence individual and organizational health and productivity (or effectiveness)? What are the outcomes and costs of presenteeism? And are there positive consequences of working while ill? Can presenteeism be functional for individuals?
- How can we measure presenteeism? What are the most prevalent threats to valid measures of presenteeism and how can we deal with them?

Questions about potential submissions can be addressed via email to the organizers (sgm2018@aau.at).

Meeting format

This Small Group Meeting will include around 25 scholars, allowing for in-depth discussion, and fostering further collaboration. The program will consist of paper presentations as well as more interactive formats, plenty of time for informal exchange, and a keynote address by Professor Gary Johns. The meeting will take place over two days (Friday and Saturday) at the University of Klagenfurt, which is located in beautiful Carinthia, Austria, on the borders of Slovenia and Italy.

Participation fees

The maximum fee for participating in the Small Group Meeting is 100 Euros, or 50 Euros for students. This fee will cover participation in the meeting as well as lunches and refreshments during meeting

days, and dinners (Friday and Saturday). Participants will have to cover their travel and accommodation expenses. Suggestions for travel and accommodation will be provided upon acceptance of submissions.

Submissions

Scholars interested in participating are invited to submit abstracts (up to 1000 words, excl. references) before February 18, 2018. Abstracts should contain the title, names and affiliations of the authors (on a separate title page) as well as the aim of the study and its possible contribution to the small group meeting. Citation style must be formatted according to APA style, 6th edition (for more information, please visit www.apastyle.org). Submitted abstracts will be pre-screened, and will undergo blind review by the organizing committee. Participants will be notified about the acceptance of their paper by the end of March, 2018. Prior to the SGM, a more detailed working paper (3,000-5,000 words) may be submitted by June, 30th and will then be shared with participants in order to stimulate discussion and cooperation.

Please send submissions via email to sgm2018@aau.at.

Publication and further development of papers

We are currently looking into opportunities for a special issue of an academic journal and a position paper in the European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology to be written following this meeting. To explore opportunities there will be an allocated slot in the program of the meeting in which we will discuss possibilities for collaboration and publishing.

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