# Is There A Relationship Between Job Satisfaction And Workplace Absenteeism? An Investigation Involving Brazilian And Bangladeshi Workers.

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# Abstract:

**Background**: The theoretical framework explores the interaction between job satisfaction and workplace absenteeism. Job satisfaction, an organizational variable that involves the individual's connection with work, influencing self-realization and professional identity. Although its direct correlation with productivity is not confirmed, it has a significant impact on workers' well-being. Absenteeism, defined by different typologies, is recognized for its multifactorial nature, resulting from social, cultural, health and individual factors. Theoretical discussions postulate that job dissatisfaction contributes to absenteeism, emphasizing the importance of understanding worker satisfaction for effective organizational participation.

**Research Methodology**: The study, carried out in the South of Brazil, is a quantitative and descriptive research focusing on job satisfaction and absenteeism in an industrial company with 1,517 workers. The investigation analyzes sectors related to production, particularly poultry slaughter, cutting room and shipping. The decision to explore absenteeism in productive sectors arises from its high rates and management concerns. The non-parametric sample of 108 workers (80 Brazilians, 28 Bangladeshis) was based on a convenience sampling method. The data, collected through a questionnaire, used adapted scales of job satisfaction and absenteeism.

**Results and Discussions**: The relationship between job satisfaction and workplace absenteeism was examined. The significant negative correlation found supports the hypothesis that greater job satisfaction leads to lower absenteeism in the workplace. The study suggests that the low absenteeism rates observed may be linked to factors such as the company's benefits policy. The comparison between Brazilian and Bangladeshi workers showed no significant differences, indicating similar behavior in the workplace within the Brazilian context. Overall, the results emphasize the importance of a positive work environment in reducing absenteeism.

**Conclusion:** The study finds a significant relationship between job satisfaction and workplace absenteeism among Brazilian and Bangladeshi workers. No significant correlations were found with sociodemographic variables. Limitations include non-validated scale adaptations and convenience sampling. The study suggests future research without adaptations to explore dimensions of satisfaction and address limitations.

Key Word: Organizational behavior. Job satisfaction. Workplace absenteeism.

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# I. Introduction

The work environment can significantly impact the quality of life of employees and the outcomes of a company. Therefore, numerous factors are associated with the work environment, often interconnected, such as job satisfaction and absenteeism.

In this context, job satisfaction can influence both productivity and overall company performance. It may also contribute to mitigating factors that negatively affect the work environment, such as absenteeism. High absenteeism rates can be responsible for significant losses within a company, affecting productivity and increasing costs. Additionally, absenteeism-related penalties, such as salary deductions or even termination of employment contracts, can impact employees.

Within the business environment, absenteeism is a subject of concern among managers, who strive to identify its causes and address the factors contributing to increased absenteeism among their workforce. Elevated absenteeism within a company may signal low job satisfaction or serve as a coping mechanism for employees

dissatisfied with their work<sup>1</sup>. A worker who is dissatisfied with their tasks typically exhibits lower productivity compared to a highly satisfied counterpart. Similarly, satisfaction is considered a crucial factor for efficiency and increased productivity in a company<sup>2</sup>.

Creating an integrated and satisfying work environment can enable better individual performance and enhance the company's competitiveness by prioritizing the well-being of its employees<sup>3</sup>. Consequently, job satisfaction and absenteeism have become topics of discussion in forums, academic and business workshops, seminars, and lectures, aiming to comprehend human behavior in work relationships<sup>4</sup>.

Absenteeism has been linked to job satisfaction and can serve as an indicator of discomfort within a company. A significant number of absences result in reduced production, increased costs, and added workload for diligent employees<sup>5</sup>. In industrial sectors with a large workforce, such as slaughterhouses and meat product manufacturing, absenteeism rates tend to be high. In these environments, absenteeism often stems from a significant number of medical certificates indicating absences due to illness and workplace accidents. Such workplaces involve risks, intense labor activities, and rapid, repetitive movements that may lead to repetitive strain injuries (RSI) and work-related musculoskeletal disorders (WRMSDs).

Additionally, absenteeism may result from legally provided leaves. According to labor legislation, leaves that must be compensated or acknowledged by the company include marriage leave, paternity leave, death certificate, blood donation leave, participation in electoral activities, military service, entrance exam for higher education institutions, and representation of a trade union during the exercised period<sup>6</sup>.

Studies related to the physical health of workers and occupational diseases have identified slaughterhouses as environments that pose significant health risks to employees, constituting a serious public health issue<sup>7</sup>. However, it is essential to investigate other causes that may contribute to high rates of short-term absences and medical certificates, particularly those related to worker satisfaction with the work environment or tasks, which can influence absenteeism.

Thus, the relevance of the proposed topic is justified for both academic and managerial reasons. From a managerial perspective, this study contributes to understanding human behavior in organizations by gathering insights from employees that can help improve various aspects of the company. From an academic standpoint, this study allows for a deeper exploration of the relationship between job satisfaction and absenteeism, considering the existing debate on the existence of such a relationship. Therefore, this study seeks to answer the following research question: What is the relationship between job satisfaction and workplace absenteeism? Additionally, does this relationship occur similarly among workers of different nationalities? To address this research question, the study aims to investigate the relationship between job satisfaction and workplace absenteeism among Brazilian and Bengali workers.

# **II.** Theoretical Framework

#### **Job Satisfaction**

Work represents a dimension of significance in society, an element contributing to the construction of social identity. Additionally, it is in the workplace that an individual spends the majority of their time. The individual's relationship with their work encompasses self-realization, professional identification, and identification by others8.

Job satisfaction is a variable of interest in the organizational environment, explored in studies on worker performance concerning other variables such as turnover, absenteeism, and overall performance. While it is not confirmed that satisfied workers are more productive, job satisfaction is considered to influence the well-being of workers within companies9.

Job satisfaction is an attitude variable indicating how individuals feel about their work<sup>10</sup>. The concept of job satisfaction began aligning with worker health in the 1990s, both within and outside the workplace, considered a concept dealing with affectivity in the work context. Thus, satisfaction should be observed through the connection a worker establishes with their job, the affective characteristics involved, and its extent regarding other dimensions of the worker's life, such as health and quality of life<sup>11</sup>. It involves the identification with the job and whether the worker appreciates it or not. Therefore, it is crucial for the company to understand worker satisfaction as values, attitudes, and personal goals that need to be identified, understood, and stimulated for effective participation in the company.

#### Workplace Absenteeism

Absenteeism refers to the lack of attendance at work or other social commitments<sup>12</sup> and presents different typologies (Table 1) $^{13}$ .

Type of Absenteeism	Description
Voluntary Absenteeism	Personal reasons
Absenteeism due to illness	Absences due to illnesses or medical procedures
Absenteeism due to work-related illness/accident	Workplace accidents or occupational diseases
Legal Absenteeism	All absences covered by law
Compulsory Absenteeism	Absences due to management impediments (suspensions), imprisonment, or any other hindrance preventing the worker from reaching the workplace

 Table no 1: Absenteeism Typology

The problem of absenteeism in companies is recognized for its multifactorial and complex nature, where there seems to be no clear cause-and-effect relationship but rather a set of variables that can contribute to it. These variables include social, work-related, cultural, individual, geographical, health-related, or disease-related factors<sup>1</sup>. By tracking the numbers of absent workers, absenteeism can be an important indicator for assessing health, labor conditions, people management policies, and health services offered to company employees<sup>14</sup>.

Absenteeism due to occupational diseases and workplace accidents can result from the worker's exposure to risks that may be physical, chemical, biological, ergonomic, or accidental in nature. Extended working hours, low remuneration relative to the complexity of the job, and a fast-paced environment are also factors that can trigger this form of absenteeism<sup>15</sup>.

In the health sector, absences reach up to 74.3%, related to illness and workplace accidents in a public hospital's nursing sector<sup>16</sup>. Similarly, the major cause of absenteeism in hospitals stems from workplace accidents due to the overload to which professionals are exposed<sup>17</sup>. Absenteeism in the health sector negatively affects the quality-of-service provision to users<sup>9</sup>.

As a significant portion of worker absences is justified by the submission of short-term medical certificates<sup>15</sup>, the International Labour Organization (ILO) notes that absenteeism due to illness covers 75% of absences in companies, justified by the submission of certificates according to social security regulations.

A study in a plastic packaging industry concluded that the cause leading to absenteeism of less than 15 days was the demotivation of workers in performing their activities<sup>18</sup>. Overwork and lack of cooperation and integration among teams also reflect in the absence and leave of workers in companies<sup>19</sup>.

Absenteeism affects companies by causing high direct and indirect costs<sup>13,15</sup>. When a worker is absent from their activities, it necessitates the reorganization of others to meet the absent worker's demands, resulting in overtime and workload. This, in turn, diminishes the pace of productivity of other workers and increases the costs of the final product, as there may be excess overtime or a reduction in production<sup>20</sup>.

Companies seek to curb excessive unexcused absences through disciplinary actions such as warnings and suspensions or preventive measures. Preventive measures aim to encourage and change worker behavior through actions ensuring attendance, such as monthly and/or annual incentives<sup>21</sup>.

If a company is aware of the causes leading its workers to be absent, whether intrinsic to the individual or extrinsic to the company, strategies can be developed to contain absenteeism. If the reasons are individual, the actions that the company can take are more limited. On the other hand, if absenteeism is due to intraorganizational factors, actions to contain absenteeism and prevent other workers from adopting similar behavior can be planned<sup>13</sup>.

The most common factors causing absenteeism in companies are related to management issues, workplace safety, task overload, relationships with supervision and colleagues, dissatisfaction with assigned tasks, company policies, diseases, workplace accidents, family-related reasons, and financial difficulties<sup>17</sup>. Thus, absenteeism is related not only to biological factors (illnesses) but also to social, cultural, economic, and individual factors<sup>21</sup>.

#### Job Satisfaction and Workplace Absenteeism

Dissatisfaction is an organizational issue and is considered one of the causes of absenteeism. The duration of work absences may be directly or indirectly related to job satisfaction, as many workers, as a form of escape or avoidance, absent themselves from work periods, thus avoiding undesirable situations<sup>21</sup>.

A worker who is not satisfied with their job is less likely to be present. Job satisfaction can be used as a unit of analysis for absenteeism cases related to choices, i.e., when a worker prefers to attend a specific event rather than work<sup>22</sup>. Whether voluntary or involuntary, it is pertinent to investigate the possible relationship between motivational factors and absenteeism in a company.

Certain work-related attitudes, such as integration, motivation, and satisfaction, result in lower absenteeism. Conversely, factors that deteriorate the worker's relationship with the company, such as dissatisfaction, low salary, routine and repetitive tasks, can lead to increased absenteeism<sup>9</sup>.

Dissatisfaction affects worker health and is related to absenteeism<sup>23</sup>, where they point out that one of the consequential effects of dissatisfaction is absenteeism, and satisfied workers have fewer absences<sup>23,25</sup>. The

workers with higher absenteeism rates are those who are less motivated and satisfied with certain relevant aspects of the company<sup>21</sup>. Job dissatisfaction can lead a worker to be absent or to be late for their activities without planning. Satisfied workers can also be absent from their activities, but in a justified and planned manner.

The satisfaction significantly influences absenteeism, especially regarding relationships with colleagues and supervision and expectations of promotion<sup>9</sup>. In a study in the public sector of the state of Rio Grande do Sul, it was emphasized that worker dissatisfaction with certain aspects of the company is related to their absenteeism, mainly concerning the lack of transportation, relationships with colleagues and supervisors, and a lack of identity<sup>26</sup>.

The satisfaction of nursing sector workers in a public hospital was considered positive in their study, especially regarding the activities they performed. 88.9% of nurse managers said they were satisfied with their duties <sup>27</sup>. Based on the analysis of factors already raised by studies and research, it is assumed that job satisfaction can influence workplace absenteeism. These arguments allow the presentation of the following research hypothesis:

Hypothesis 1 (H<sub>1</sub>): Job satisfaction is negatively related to workplace absenteeism.

# **III. Research Methodology**

This study is a quantitative and descriptive research, conducted through a survey with workers from an industrial company located in southern Brazil. The research population comprises 1,517 workers of both genders, aged over 18 years, including 188 administrative workers and 1,329 production-related workers. The focus of the investigation is on job satisfaction and absenteeism in the production-related sectors, specifically in the poultry slaughter, cutting room, and dispatch sectors, divided into two work shifts.

The decision to investigate the issue of absenteeism only in the production sectors was made due to these sectors having the highest absenteeism rates in the company. Absenteeism has been a topic of discussion in various board meetings of the company in previous years, considered one of the major concerns of supervisors and production managers.

The research sample was characterized as a non-parametric sample, and the convenience sampling technique criteria were used, considering availability and accessibility. The sample consisted of 108 workers, including 80 Brazilians and 28 Bangladeshis. Additionally, 9 questionnaires with outlier values were discarded, all of which belonged to the group of Brazilian workers.

Data collection took place on the company premises using a questionnaire developed based on the validated Job Satisfaction Scale - JSS<sup>28</sup> and the validated Workplace Absenteeism Factors Scale - WAFS<sup>12</sup>. The JSS measures the degree of job satisfaction, with its full version consisting of 25 items. It uses a Likert scale extended to seven points, ranging from one (totally dissatisfied) to seven (totally satisfied). The WAFS measures workplace absenteeism, with the original scale comprising 19 items. It uses a Likert scale extended to six points, ranging from one (a little) to six (a lot).

Adaptations were made to the JSS and WAFS scales in the questionnaire due to the selected research context, which included workers from a meat processing plant with basic and high school education performing operational tasks.

The JSS scale was validated in research conducted with 287 workers (the sector of activity was not specified) of both genders<sup>28</sup>, while the WAFS scale was validated in research with 194 nurses of both genders<sup>12</sup>. In both scales, Likert scales were standardized to seven points, maintaining attributes on the JSS scale from one (not at all satisfied) to seven (totally satisfied) and on the WAFS scale from one (strongly disagree) to seven (strongly agree).

Data analysis was performed using descriptive and inferential analysis techniques. In the descriptive analysis technique, frequency distribution, mean, and standard deviation were used to characterize the research sample. In the inferential analysis technique, linear correlation was used to verify the relationship between job satisfaction and workplace absenteeism. Correlation allows checking the linear relationship between two variables, with the correlation coefficient ranging from -1.000 to +1.000. Values close to zero (0) are considered to have a weak correlation, while values close to -1.000 or +1.000 have a strong correlation between variables.

In positive correlation, variables move in the same direction, while in negative correlation, variables move in opposite directions. Thus, the hypothesis is that the relationship between satisfaction and absenteeism shows a negative correlation, indicating that higher satisfaction leads to lower absenteeism, or conversely, lower satisfaction leads to higher absenteeism. These situations can be verified based on the means obtained for each variable, and the analyses were conducted using the SPSS software.

# **IV. Result and Discussions**

The sample consisted of 108 workers, with 80 Brazilians and 28 Bangladeshis, who participated in a study aimed at evaluating job satisfaction and work-related absenteeism in an industrial company located in southern Brazil. The company's main activity is producing poultry-derived food products, exported to various

countries in the Middle East. Both Brazilian and Bangladeshi workers perform operational tasks within the production sectors.

Workers participated voluntarily in the research and had a work relationship with the company for at least 12 months. The sample comprised 47.2% female and 52.8% male workers. Workers were divided into two groups based on nationality: 80 Brazilians and 28 Bangladeshis. Brazilian workers had an average age of 33 years ( $33.775\pm9.448$ ), while Bangladeshi workers had an average age of 24 years ( $24.607\pm5.050$ ). In terms of education level, Brazilian workers had primary education (38.75%), secondary education (58.75%), and higher education (2.50%), while Bangladeshi workers had primary education (71.43%) and secondary education (28.57%).

To examine the relationship between job satisfaction and workplace absenteeism, descriptive statistics and correlation analysis were performed (Table 1). The goal was to assess the relationship between satisfaction and absenteeism variables.

Workers Variables		Mean	Standard	Variables	
workers	variables	Iviean	Deviation	Satisfaction	Absenteeism
Brazilians	Satisfaction	4.672	0.678	1.000	
Drazillalis	Absenteeism	2.777	1.444	-0.330	1.000
Danaladashis	Satisfaction	4.532	0.927	1.000	
Bangladeshis	Absenteeism	2.367	1.214	-0.612	1.000

**Table 1:** Relationship between satisfaction and absenteeism

Note: Pearson correlations are significant at the level of p<	0.01.

In analyzing the relationship between variables, a significant correlation was observed between satisfaction and absenteeism. The significant correlation found between satisfaction and absenteeism is negative, meaning that the variables move in opposite directions. This result aligns with the study's objective of investigating the relationship between job satisfaction and workplace absenteeism. Thus, the relationship between satisfaction and absenteeism was confirmed for both Brazilian workers (r = 0.333) and Bangladeshi workers (r = 0.612), supporting the acceptance of hypothesis (H<sub>1</sub>).

Moreover, considering that the correlations are moderate (r > 0.333 < 0.666), it can be suggested that the low absenteeism rate may also be associated with other factors, such as the company's benefits policy.

To assess potential differences between Brazilian and Bangladeshi workers, a descriptive analysis and ttest for comparison between the two nationalities were conducted (Table 2).

Variables	Workers	Number of Workers	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-Test	Sig.
Satisfaction	Brazilians	80	4,672	0,678	0,734	0,469
Satisfaction	Bangladeshis	28	4,532	0,927		
Absenteeism	Brazilians	80	2,777	1,444	1,366	0,175
Absenteeism	Bangladeshis	28	2,367	1,214		

 Table 2: Comparison between Brazilian and Bangladeshi workers

In the comparison between the two nationalities, no significant differences were observed between Brazilian and Bangladeshi workers. The test results did not indicate acceptable significant differences (p < 0.05). Thus, it can be concluded that, in the workplace, workers of different nationalities behaved similarly.

However, it is crucial to understand that the means ( $\overline{x} = 4.672$ ;  $\overline{x} = 4.532$ ) for the satisfaction variable have values greater than 4.000, corresponding to the upper part of the scale (totally satisfied). This suggests that workers may be satisfied with the work environment provided by the company.

Nevertheless, the means ( $\overline{x} = 2.777$ ;  $\overline{x} = 2.367$ ) for the absenteeism variable have values lower than 4.000, corresponding to the lower part of the scale (strongly disagree), indicating that workers may have low work absenteeism. Thus, there is a low level of workplace absenteeism among both Brazilian and Bangladeshi workers.

In this regard, the results support the assumption that higher job satisfaction correlates with lower workplace absenteeism, as there is a high level of job satisfaction and low workplace absenteeism. As mentioned, the negative correlation coefficient indicates that satisfaction moves in the opposite direction to absenteeism – increasing job satisfaction reduces workplace absenteeism.

Similarly, the negative correlation coefficient between absenteeism and satisfaction may also indicate that the likelihood of absenteeism is higher among workers with low job satisfaction than among those highly satisfied. This argument aligns with studies, which indicated that 2.5% of dissatisfied workers exhibited absenteeism, whereas this number reduced to 0.15% among satisfied workers<sup>29,25</sup>.

Thus, workers satisfied with their jobs tend to evaluate the work environment positively, reducing the chances of absence (i.e., absences or delays), as observed in a study with nurses<sup>30</sup>. Other studies found similar

results, concluding that there is a relationship between job satisfaction and workplace absenteeism<sup>21,31</sup>. These studies suggest that more satisfied workers are less likely to exhibit avoidance or escape behaviors, such as being absent from work in undesirable situations.

Furthermore, these results support studies conducted, highlighting the importance of investing in a pleasant, attractive work environment and companies that care for their workers<sup>31</sup>. Thus, the better perceived the work environment and the interpersonal relationships established therein, the more satisfied the worker will be and less prone to absenteeism.

### V. Conclusion

In conclusion, there is a relationship between job satisfaction and workplace absenteeism, achieving the objective of this study. The results indicate that job satisfaction is associated with workplace absenteeism among both Brazilian and Bangladeshi workers who participated in the study. Regarding socio-demographic variables such as gender, age, education, and nationality, no significant correlation was observed with job satisfaction and workplace absenteeism.

One limitation of this study is related to the adaptations made to the JSS and WAFS scales. These adaptations were not validated through exploratory factor analysis, which could provide a more in-depth analysis of the results, especially regarding the factors that compose job satisfaction, such as satisfaction with colleagues and superiors, salary, nature of work, and promotions. For future research, it is suggested that the JSS and WAFS scales be reapplied without adaptations so that these five dimensions of satisfaction can be studied more deeply, allowing for more specific results, particularly to suggest improvements in absenteeism indicators.

Another limitation of the study was the convenience sampling method, as it was influenced by the time required to answer the questionnaire and the authorization from supervisors in specific sectors to release participating workers. Therefore, it is not possible to infer workplace absenteeism with the respondent's specific work sector. Although the data collection procedure was executed carefully, the fact that it was carried out by an employee from the human resources department of the establishment itself may have introduced bias into the responses, especially regarding job satisfaction.

In summary, this study provides results that can contribute to further investigations into the discussed variables. Conducting periodic or occasional studies like this in a company is a simple way to assess working conditions and the perception of its employees. However, the results and limitations identified in this study point to the need for further research.

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