

**PRESENTEEISM IN CHINESE HEALTH INSTITUTIONS:
AN APPROACH ON PRESENTEEISM CLIMATE,
PRODUCTIVITY AND WORK-FAMILY CONFLICT**

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Dissertation submitted as a partial requirement for the conferral of a

Master in Human Resources Management

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December 2018

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Acknowledgement

Firstly, I would like to express my gratitude to my supervisor Aristides Isidoro Ferreira, without whose support and encouragement this paper would not have been possible.

I would also like to thank Vitor Reis who gave me significant help during the whole of my research period at ISCTE-IUL. I would also like to express my gratitude to ISCTE-IUL for affording me this opportunity to improve.

Lastly, I would like to express my gratitude to my family and friends, who gave me precious help with collecting data for the questionnaire in this paper.

My most sincere thanks for all your support and encouragement.

ABSTRACT:

This article examines the possible relation between the presenteeism climate and productivity despite presenteeism, which is considered to be mediated by work-family conflicts in Chinese health institutions. The data was collected from 152 medical industry employees including doctors, nurses and management workers in hospitals from 11 provinces in China. The results showed that a presenteeism climate of supervisor distrust and extra-hour valuation are negatively correlated with completed work. Furthermore, work-family conflict mediates the indirect relationship between supervisor distrust, extra-hour valuation and completed work. Finally, the implications and limitations of these results and directions for further research are discussed.

Keywords: presenteeism climate; supervisor distrust; extra-hour valuation; work-family conflict

Resumo:

O objectivo desta dissertação consiste em avaliar a possível relação entre o clima de presentismo e a produtividade associada ao presentismo, mediada pela variável conflito trabalho-família em instituições de saúde Chinesas. Os dados foram recolhidos junto de 152 funcionários de instituições de saúde de 11 províncias da China, incluindo médicos, enfermeiros e funcionários administrativos de hospitais. Os resultados revelaram que a desconfiança das chefias e a valorização das horas extras enquanto variáveis de clima de presenteísmo estão negativamente correlacionados com a capacidade de concluir o trabalho quando as pessoas estão doentes. Além disso, o conflito trabalho-família medeia a relação entre a desconfiança das chefias, valorização das horas extra e o trabalho concluído. Finalmente, são discutidas as implicações destes resultados e as direções para pesquisas futuras.

Palavras-chave: clima de presenteísmo; desconfiança das chefias ; valorização das horas extras; conflito trabalho-família

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Introduction:

Presenteeism is increasingly being seen as a threat to employee efficiency. The important focal point of its relevance for management comes from the fact that presenteeism is associated with significant productivity loss (Hemp, 2004; Lofland *et al.*, 2004).

The concept of presenteeism is rooted in absenteeism, which itself is defined as not showing up for scheduled work and has a long research history. Presenteeism, however, concerns subjects who show up for work when they are ill, and describes situations where people turn up for work unable to deliver a full performance due to physical or psychological problems (Hemp, 2004).

Various research points to the concept of a “presenteeism climate” as being the climate within a company that tends to influence most employees’ choices on the practice of presenteeism (Chadwick-Jones *et al.*, 1982; Ferreira *et al.*, 2015). Thus, a company with a high presenteeism climate would be one where both co-workers and supervisors may pressure employees to continue working beyond the usual time necessary for efficient performance at work (Ferreira *et al.* 2015). This current study is directed toward filling the gap with regard to assessing the possible construct and dimensions involved in a climate of presenteeism. Research has consistently shown that Leader-Member exchange, competitiveness, difficulty of replacement, lack of supervisor support and work-family conflict have a correlation with the presenteeism climate (Ferreira *et al.*, 2015; Zhou, Ferreira, Martinez & Rodrigues, 2016). These factors can be interpreted in many ways due to the various environments in which this climate can be constructed. A cultural environment where employees are encouraged to stay at work while ill may lead to higher levels of health care expenses (Sheridan 2004) and, at the same time, possibly reduce the performance of those around them.

Work and family are two of the most central and significant roles of adulthood. Work-family conflict (i.e., work activities interfering with family matters) can affect organizational behavior (Greenhaus *et al.*, 2001; Kosset *et al.*, 2001; Frone *et al.*, 1997) and could result in undesirable work-related outcomes (Frye & Breugh, 2004). In past decades, both academics and practitioners have agreed that the conflict between work and family arises when the time devoted to or the time spent fulfilling

professional responsibilities interferes with or limits the amount of time available for family-related responsibilities, making it difficult to manage both (Netemeyer, Mcmurrian & Boles, 1996). This may result in employees reducing work demands to spend less time on their work role than they should in order to meet the demands of their family. The impact of the work-family conflict on absenteeism has already been proved in previous studies (e.g., Boyar, 2004; Vistnes, 1997) and it may well be that there are similar dynamics at play regarding cases of presenteeism.

Meta-analysis has indicated that a reduction in performance is one of the consequences of the WFC (Judge & Colquit, 2004). According to Hammer *et al.* (2003), work-family conflict has been found to have cross-over effects on organizational outcome, which is indeed harmful to productivity. However, the focus has rarely been devoted to the reciprocal effects of the work-family conflict, a climate of presenteeism and performance.

Thus, this research is exploratory with the aim being to describe and analyze the potential outcomes of a presenteeism climate and its correlation with work-family conflict and productivity related variables (e.g. completed work). While presenteeism arises in most professions, in education and the health sector and the hospital environment in particular, with its strenuous organizational culture of long demanding hours, it ranks particularly highly (Aronsson Gustafsson and Dallner 2000; Bergsrom *et al.* 2009; Martinez and Ferreira 2012).

This research on managing presenteeism is expected to fill the gap in presenteeism research in China and, in addition, both deepen and broaden research on organizational behavior in the Chinese health sector.

The remainder of this paper is divided into four sections. The first section lays the theoretical foundation and develops the research hypothesis. The research method employed in the study is discussed in the second section. The third section presents the results and findings. Finally, the fourth section concludes the study, discusses the limitations and suggests directions for future research.

1 Theoretical model and hypothesis development

1. Presenteeism

From among the definitions of presenteeism, we adopt the basic definition recommended by Hemp (2010), which is that presenteeism derives from absenteeism but inversely involves the subject showing up for work when ill, and describes the situations in which those people do not fully function when working. As Johns (2010, p.522) puts it: ‘(...) it has the capacity to contribute to the literature on absenteeism by addressing the “grey” area that exists between no productivity and full work engagement’. However, the impact of the presenteeism phenomenon on organizational productivity is hard to quantify.

Models are emerging to systematically incorporate the information already available and to formulate theoretical insights into the relationships between a growing number of possible determinants of presenteeism within organizational behavior (Gosselin, Lemyre & Corneil, 2013). Johns’ synthesis model (Figure 1) puts forward a systematic perspective on presenteeism by demonstrating the possible behavioral interactions between presenteeism and subsequent occurrences of absenteeism. In the model, it proposed that personal factors (attitude to work, personality, perceived justice, stress, perceived absence legitimacy, proclivity for being sick, health locus of control, gender) and work-context factors (job demands, job security, reward system, absence policy, absence/presence culture, teamwork, ease of replacement, adjustment latitude) strongly influence the choice between absenteeism and presenteeism.

According to Johns’ theoretical framework, while health events play a primary role in presenteeism, individual and organizational factors are the decision levers determining the choice to come to work in spite of illness (Gosselin & Lauzier, 2011). Among the physical causes of presenteeism, the most frequent are musculoskeletal problems, such as lower back pain (Prasad *et al.*, 2004) and arthritis (Allen *et al.*, 2005), and lung infections (Martinez & Ferreira, 2012). In the psychological field, anxiety and depression (Druss, Schlesinger & Allen, 2001), explosive degree of pressure (Cooper, 1998), stress (Goetzel *et al.*, 2003), as well as attention deficit disorder (Kessler *et al.*, 2005) can all lead to presenteeism.

Figure 1

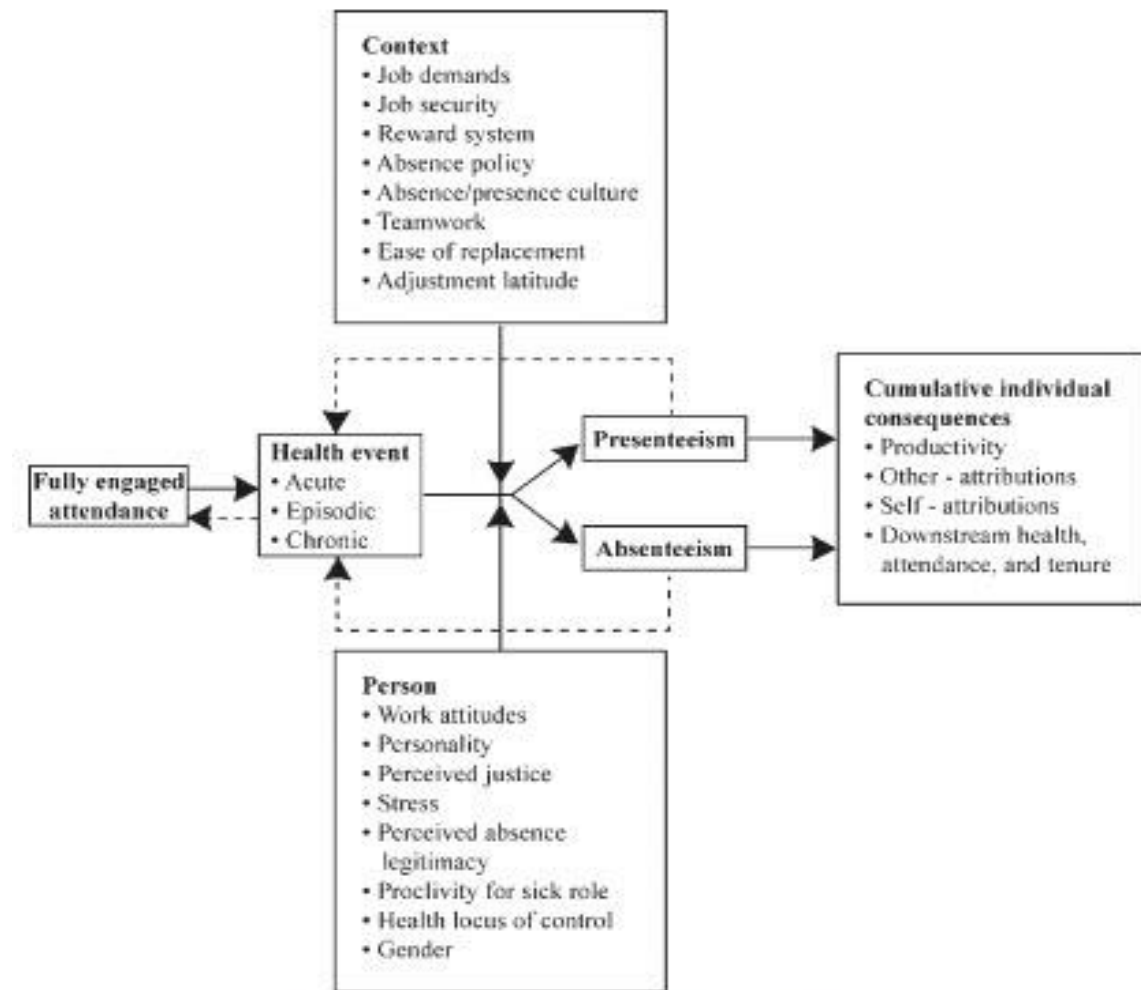


Figure 1. A dynamic model of presenteeism and absenteeism

In addition, organizational factors (e.g., leadership, ease of replacement) most likely account for substantial variance in participants' responses to self-reported presenteeism (Johns, 2010). The possibility of a violation of ethical values based on the disclosure of illness (Meerding et al., 2005), the fear of being passed over for promotion, culture barriers in the workplace, fear of staff replacement, organizational norms, and excessive workload (Simpson, 1998; Carveley *et al.*, 2007; Munir *et al.*, 2008; Böckerman & Laukkanen, 2010; Aydemir, 2011) can all cause presenteeism behaviors.

Moreover, previous research (Simpson, 1998) pointed out that presenteeism is highly associated with a competitive masculine culture (Ferreira & Martinez, 2011). It has also been posited that personal factors (attitudes, personality, gender) further influence the choice between absenteeism and presenteeism. Additionally, there is a large amount of evidence that women are absent more than men (Patton & Johns, 2007;

McKevitt *et al.*, 1997; Aronsson *et al.*, 2000; Theroell *et al.*, 2003; Arosso & Gustafsson, 2005). One example is the study Patton and Johns conducted to analyze over 100 years of absenteeism among the workforce of the *New York Times*, which concluded that there is a generalized social expectation that women will be absent more than men (Johns, 2010). Other studies, however, have obtained contrary results in which men are more absent than women (Simpson, 1998; Demerouti *et al.*, 2009). Age is also one of the socio-demographic characteristics associated with presenteeism, specifically among older workers (Heponiemi *et al.*, 2010).

Although it is harder to measure and evaluate the productivity loss caused by presenteeism, both presenteeism and absenteeism cause productivity loss according to Johns' model. Owing to its perceived detrimental effect on the quality of a person's work and the increasing perception of their ineffectiveness at work, presenteeism is frequently associated with significant productivity loss (e.g., Hemp 2004; Lofland, Pizzi & Frick 2004), with the resultant losses being more serious perhaps than those caused by employee absenteeism (Hemp, 2004; Hummer, Sherman & Quinn, 2002) .

1.2 Presenteeism climate

It has been proposed that norm-based “absent cultures”, said to operate at a collective level, account for the variance in individual attendance (Johns & Nicholson, 1982; Nicholson & Johns, 1985; Johns 2010).

According to the research of Rentsch and Steel (2003), three components shape the culture of absenteeism: i) an individual's characteristics, such as personality, social and cultural values; ii) job characteristics, such as responsibilities, workload, interdependence and inherent goals; and iii) contextual characteristics - factors specific to the ecosystem in question, such as the company's communication system, human resources management practices, threats of layoff, competition among workers and pressure from supervisors.

The “climate of presenteeism” is a topic that is growing in the literature (e.g. Gosselin *et al.*, 2013). Prior studies of Grinyer and Singleton (2000) and Munir *et al.* (2007) suggest that policies meant to affect absenteeism can also affect presenteeism. The role of the “climate of presenteeism” is extremely important in encouraging the

practice of presenteeism, as the pressure to be present in the workplace may generate some side effects - such as increased stress levels - that are detrimental to productivity (Brockner et al., 1993; Ferreira *et al.*, 2015). In addition, discussions on team dynamics would appear to indicate the potential value of a particular culture and how it influences presenteeism as well.

Nicholson and Johns (1985) show that the format of a climate of presenteeism is the aggregate of two distinct but complementary spheres: the value and beliefs of society and the specific belief set in a particular sector, department or organization, with social and financial pressures affecting the climate of presenteeism in each ecosystem. Since the financial crisis of 2008, a large number of organizations have downsized or closed down. In this context, presenteeism has a tendency to increase, due to reduced resources and job insecurity (Lu et al., 2013). At the same time, companies increasingly seek cost efficiency and are pressured to reduce employees' benefits and career opportunities (Böckerman & Laukkanen, 2010). As a consequence, companies are persistently developing climates of presenteeism by stimulating competition from within, and through obsessing over increasing productivity, and organizational development (Simpson, 1998). With regard to specific occupations, those in caring, helping, and the primary teaching sectors were most prone to presenteeism, suggesting a culture predicated, in part, on loyalty and concern for vulnerable clients (i.e., patients and children); a culture in which professional identity, ethnic identity and institutional loyalty actually fostered presenteeism. Indeed, Simpson (1998) found evidence of "competitive presenteeism" in cultures that demanded long working hours, forgoing recuperation time, and working while unwell. The results of this study would suggest that climate tends to influence most employees' choices regarding the practice of presenteeism (Chadwick-Jones *et al.*, 1982).

In other studies, researchers have investigated the influence of cultural values on organizational justice. Johns and Xie (1998), having conducted interviews focusing on absence related questions, concluded that Chinese workers were more protective of their peers. They reported the attendance of their colleagues as being higher than it was, whereas among Canadian workers the opposite was true. Ferreira, Martinez, Mach, Brewster, Dagher, Perez-Nebra & Lisovskya (2017) carried out research among health sector employees in six countries (Brazil, Ecuador, Lebanon, Portugal, Russia, Spain), with higher levels of Work-family conflict being found in non-Latin

countries. Addae and Johns (2002) put forward research suggesting that in countries where work is more valued, absenteeism should be seen as less permissible (Ferreira, Martinez, Cooper & Gui, 2015).

In sum, both theory and evidence indicate that a climate of presenteeism is a multidimensional construct that integrates different aspects, such as a greater than expected preoccupation with working hours (e.g. Nicholson & Johns, 1985), distrust from supervisors (e.g. Rentsch & Steel, 2003), preoccupation with performance (e.g. Brockner et al., 1993; Koopman et al., 2002), task specificity and major responsibilities at work (Johns, 2010) and concern about career and competitiveness (e.g. Nicholson & Johns, 1985; Simpson, 1998).

1.3 Presenteeism climate and performance

The perceived legitimacy of presenteeism depends on how far society and organizations admit certain health conditions as acceptable reasons for being absent from work (Nicholson & Johns, 1985). An organization's attendance policy, management style and workplace culture can all contribute to workplace pressure, which is considered to be one of the factors that trigger presenteeism (Baker-McClearn *et al.*, 2010). A company with a strong climate of presenteeism is one where both the co-workers and supervisors may pressure employees to continue working beyond the time necessary for efficient performance at work (Ferreira *et al.*, 2015). The pressure employees feel to be present in the workplace may increase stress levels, which is one of the side effects of presenteeism that is considered to be detrimental to productivity (Krischer, Penney & Hunter, 2010).

According to the equity theory of Adams, employees are more motivated to work if they perceive that the distribution of resources is fair. Organizational practices associated with a competitive presenteeism climate may reflect unfair treatments such as supervisors requiring employees be present even in cases of serious illness. (Simpson, 1998).

Hypothesis 1a: presenteeism induced by a climate of supervisor distrust correlates negatively with completed work.

Hypothesis 1b: presenteeism induced by a climate that values working extra hours (extra-hour valuation) correlates negatively with completed work .

1.4 The mediatory role of work-family conflict on performance in a climate of presenteeism.

WFC is defined as the psychological “conflict” individuals experience when dealing with the demands of work and home in light of the resources available to them and their ability to use them (Felstead, Jewson, Phizacklea & Waltes, 2002; Saltzstein & Ting, 2001). The role of WFC, however, has so far not been extensively studied in the presenteeism research.

Research on the work/family relationship has identified supervisory support as one of the main work-based social resources that may help employees successfully manage multiple job demands (Moen, Waismel-Manor & Sweet, 2003; Thompson, Beauvais & Lyness, 1999; Voydanoff, 2005; Dolcos & Daley, 2002). Supervision conducted with a supportive attitude has been found to lead to reduced WFC and positive work outcomes (Moen & Yu, 2000; O’Driscoll et al., 2003; Thomas & Ganster, 1995). Based on prior research, we expect that the organizational climate of presenteeism consists of i) supervision conducted with a negative attitude, and ii) supervisor distrust. We also expect that the mediatory role of WFC will allow us to explain employees’ ability to complete work.

Hypothesis 2a: WFC mediates the relationship between supervisor distrust and completed work.

Workload, regarded as an aspect of work demand, was proved to be positively and strongly associated with WFC (Higgins, Duxbury & Johnson, 2000; Voydanoff, 1988). Employees who feel overwhelmed by increased pressure of work brought on by an excessive workload, also experience a higher level of WFC (Dolcos & Daley, 2002). Moreover, meta-analysis has indicated that one of the consequences of WFC is poorer performance (Judge & Colquit, 2004). With regard to the presenteeism induced

by an organizational climate that values working extra hours, employee productivity could be reduced due to WFC. Thus, it is expected that WFC mediates the relationship between completed work and productivity in a presenteeism climate that attributes value to working extra hours.

Hypothesis 2b: WFC mediates the relationship between completed work and extra-hour valuation.

In sum, the research framework for this study can be illustrated by Figure 2. In particular, it suggests that a presenteeism climate resulting from supervisor distrust and extra-hour valuation has a negative impact on the performance of completed work. Indeed, the pressure to be present in the workplace may generate side effects like, for instance, increased stress levels that are detrimental to productivity (Brockner et al., 1993; Ferreira *et al.*, 2015). In a presenteeism climate in which there is supervisor distrust and extra-hour valuation, employees may be more concerned with turning up for work when ill than with productivity.

Indeed, with regard to completed work, in a climate of presenteeism where there is supervisor distrust and extra-hour valuation, work-family conflict plays a mediatory role. When supervisors had a supportive attitude, however, WFC was reduced and work outcomes were more positive (Moen & Yu, 2000; O'Driscoll et al., 2003; Thomas & Ganster, 1995). Workload, regarded as an aspect of work demand, proved to be positively and strongly associated with WFC (Higgins, Duxbury & Johnson, 2000; Voydanoff, 1988). Thus, based on prior research, we expect that a presenteeism climate of supervisor distrust and extra-hour valuation is associated with productivity and that this relationship is mediated by WFC.

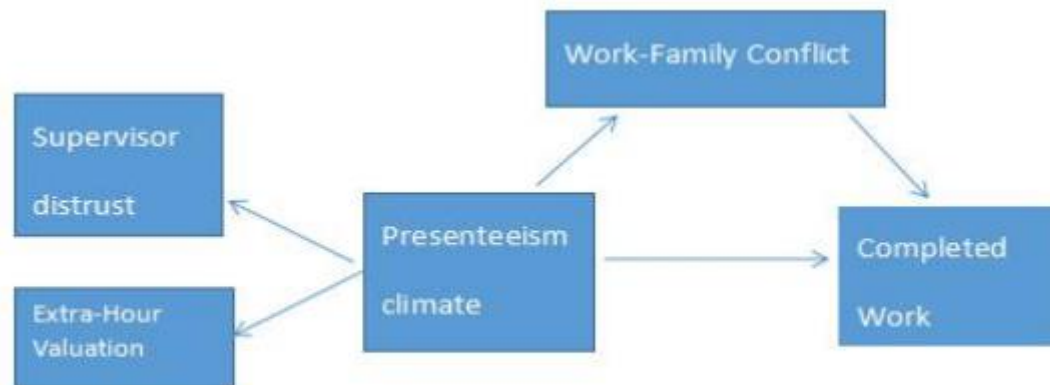


Figure 2 Conceptual model of Presenteeism climate and mediation analysis

2 Research and methods

2.1 Sample and procedures

The research questionnaire was administrated to a random sample of 152 employees in the medical and health sector, the majority of whom are currently doctors and nurses at varying hierarchical levels working in hospitals. They are all in a position to give meaningful responses to the questionnaire. From 152 feedback questionnaires, 67 participants are male (44%), 85 of them are female (56%). The mean age of participants is 27.11, with the standard deviation (SD) =5.52. Twenty two participants (14%) are supervisors, with the remaining 86% (130) being subordinates. The mean seniority of the participants is 4.24 years, with a standard deviation of 5.40. On average, employees worked 43.66 hours per week (SD=7.10).

In order to represent the presenteeism situation of the medical field in China, we sought to distribute the questionnaire as widely as possible.

We asked 350 health care employees to complete a questionnaire about presenteeism and health at work and obtained 152 (43.4%). The questionnaire includes general indicators like age, gender, health status, hours present at work, seniority, job description and leadership status, plus closed yes or no questions like “have you been absent in the last last six months? ” and “have you ever been ill but still attended

work? ”. If the answer is yes, the respondent is also required to report how many days they were absent. Besides the demographic and descriptive questions, the questionnaires comprise 3 scales: the Stanford Presenteeism Scale (SPS-6); the work-family conflict scale; and the presenteeism climate scale. The questionnaire was translated by professional translators into Chinese from the English version. The data were compiled using a Qualtrics survey tool. The questionnaires were collected over a 3 month period.

2.2 Instruments

2.2.1 Socio-demographic

The Variable selection was informed by existing literature reporting associations with presenteeism (Aronsson & Gustafsson, 2005; Bockerman & Laukkanen, 2009). Thus, sex (male, female); age; seniority; years of work experience; province; job designation were included.

2.2.2 Presenteeism climate

The presenteeism climate scale involves individual attitudes toward presenteeism and organizational factors that affected presenteeism. We examined the two dimensions pertaining to our conceptual model: supervisor distrust and extra-hour valuation.

In the case of extra-hour valuation, the question was whether employee productivity was directly related to time spent at work. Five items pertained: I feel that there is a cult of “living at work” in my organization; I feel judged by the number of hours I spend at work; I benefit from spending more hours at work; My career depends on the number of hours I work per day; I feel that I am more valued if I leave late from work without getting things done than if I left earlier having accomplished my tasks.

Supervisor distrust is about whether management regard an absence to be illegitimate, and whether it will affect the involuntary presenteeism. This involved four items: when I call someone in my organization to say I am ill, I feel that they mistrust me; my supervisor suspects the reasons for my absences from work; I feel that my supervisor is suspicious of me if I am absent from work due to illness; I fear that my supervisor will consider me less important if I miss work due to illness.

All items were scored on a seven-point Likert-type scale developed by Ferreira *et al*, with higher scores representing greater conflict. (2015).

2.2.3 Work-family conflict

WFC assesses how work affects family life. We used a seven-item scale developed by Netemeyer, Boles and McMurrian (1996). The descriptors are “ The demands of my work interfere with my home and family life”, “ The amount of time my job takes up makes it difficult to fulfil family responsibilities”, “Things I want to do at home do not get done because of the demands of my job” and “ My job produces strain that makes it difficult to fulfil family duties”.

2.2.4 SPS-6

The Stanford Presenteeism Scale (SPS-6) measures productivity losses due to sickness presence (Koopman *et al.*, 2002). The factor “Completed Work” is measured on the scale, and refers to the amount of work accomplished despite some sort of presenteeism effect (Ferreira & Martinez, 2012). The sample descriptor is “ Despite having my (health problem), I was able to finish my work.”

3 Results and findings

In order to perceive the mediatory role that WFC plays between completed work and a presenteeism climate of both supervisor distrust and extra-hour valuation, we developed an inferential analysis. Table 1 presents the means, standard deviations and correlations among the measures. All the variables presented significant correlations.

Table 1

Means, Standard deviations and correlations among variables

	M	SD	1	2	3
1 WFC	3.85	1.30			
2 EH	3.49	1.26	.285**		
3 Supervisor Distrust	3.74	1.63	.339**	.387**	
4 Completed work	3.15	.85	-.368**	-.188*	-.278**

Notes M=Mean; SD=Standard Deviation; WFC=Work-Family Conflict;EH=Attributing Value to Working Extra Hours

* $p < 0.05$, ** $p < 0.01$

Regression analysis was performed in order to investigate whether WFC mediated the presenteeism climate of supervisor distrust, attributing value to working extra hours and completed work.

The first step regression tested whether supervisor distrust and extra- hour valuation predicted the mediator WFC. Supervisor distrust was found to be positively associated ($\beta = .27$, $t_{(126)} = 4.01$, $p < 0.01$) with WFC, and so too was extra-hour valuation ($\beta = .30$, $t_{(126)} = 3.31$, $p < 0.05$).

A regression analysis was carried out using completed work as the outcome variable, with supervisor distrust, extra-hour valuation and WFC as predictors in the second step. The results indicated that supervisor distrust ($\beta = -.14$, $t_{(126)} = -3.11$, $p < 0.05$), extra-hour valuation ($\beta = -.12$, $t_{(126)} = -1.94$, $p < 0.05$) and WFC ($\beta = -.21$, $t_{(126)} = -3.56$, $p < 0.01$) were predictors of completed work.

In the third step, the independent variables supervisor distrust, extra-hour valuation and the outcome completed work were tested with the mediator variable WFC. With

the WFC variable, the predictability of supervisor distrust ($\beta = -.09$, $t_{(126)} = -1.85$, $p = 0.07$) and extra-hour valuation ($\beta = -.05$, $t_{(126)} = -.83$, $p = 0.40$) to completed work was not significant. Thus, the data suggested a full mediation effect of the WFC variable.

A Sobel test was conducted to test the mediating criteria and to assess whether the indirect effects of supervisor distrust and extra hours were significant or not. The result showed that the indirect effect of supervisor distrust ($Z = -2.98$, $p < 0.01$) and extra-hour valuation ($Z = -2.66$, $p < 0.01$) on the mediatory role of WFC regarding completed work was significant.

Table 2 Multiple linear regression analyses explaining the mediatory role of work-family Conflict(WFC) in the relation between completed work and a presenteeism climate of supervisor distrust/extra-hour valuation.

	Completed Work	WFC	Completed Work
	β	β	β
Supervisor Distrust	-.14*	0.27**	-.08
WFC	-	-	-.21**
R	.27	.34	.40
R_{square}	.07	.11	.16
Extra-Hour Valuation	-.12*	.30*	-.05
WFC	-	-	-.24**
R	.17	.29	.37
R_{square}	.03	.08	.14

Notes M=Mean; SD=Standard Deviation; WFC=Work-Family Conflict;

$*p < 0.05$, $**p < 0.01$

In sum, we found that supervisor distrust and extra-hour valuation are significantly and negatively related with completed work, which proved hypotheses 1a and 1b. And with a linear regression mediator test, we proved the mediatory role of WFC between completed work and in a presenteeism climate of both supervisor distrust and extra-hour valuation. A further Sobel test showed the indirect effect of both supervisor distrust and extra-hour valuation was significant, thus, indicating that WFC mediates the effect of a presenteeism climate of supervisor distrust on completed work (hypothesis 2a). The mediatory role of WFC between extra-hour valuation and completed work (hypothesis 2b) was also proved.

Figure 3

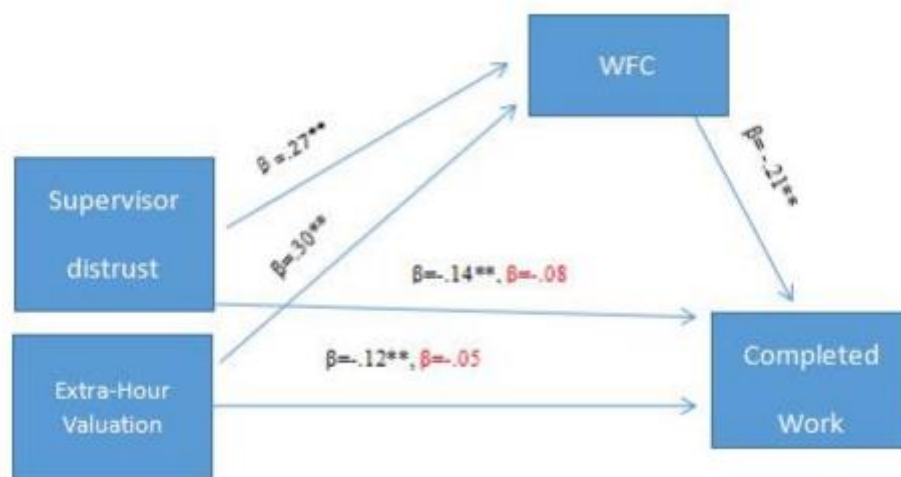


Figure 3 A mediation model showing that the effect of Supervisor distrust and Extra-Hour Valuation on Completed work is mediated by WFC.

Changes in Beta weights when the mediator is present are highlighted in red.

$*p < 0.05$, $**p < 0.01$

4 Discussions

The aim of this study was twofold: to examine the relationship between a climate of presenteeism and productivity; and to examine the mediatory role of work-family conflict on productivity in a presenteeism climate. Based on the results, all of the proposed hypotheses were proved and conclusions drawn. Organizational practices associated with a competitive presenteeism climate may reflect unfair treatments such as supervisors requiring presence even in cases of serious illness (Simpson, 1998). In an organizational presenteeism climate of supervisor distrust and extra-hour valuation, this may increase the pressure on employees to be present in the workplace and generate some side effects - such as increased stress levels - that are detrimental to productivity (Krischer, Penney&Hunter, 2010). The results supported hypothesis 1a which posits that presenteeism induced by a climate of supervisor distrust correlates negatively with completed work. Hypothesis 1b, that presenteeism induced by a climate of extra-hour valuation correlates negatively with completed work, is supported by the results as well.

In accordance with Hammer *et. al.* (2003), work-family conflict was found to have cross-over effects on organizational outcome and is, indeed, harmful to productivity. Previous presenteeism research rarely mentioned the role of WFC. A supportive attitude from supervisors led to reduced WFC and positive work outcomes (Moen & Yu, 2000; O'Driscoll et al.,2003; Thomas & Ganster, 1995). Based on prior research, we proposed hypothesis 2a, in which we expected that a negative attitude of supervision, such as supervisor distrust, is associated with productivity and that this relationship is mediated by WFC. The correlation was proved significant.

Excessive workload resulting from extra-hour valuation increases the work pressure of employees, with employees who feel overwhelmed by the pressure of work also experiencing a greater degree of WFC (Dolcos & Daley, 2002). In hypothesis 2b, we expected that extra-hour valuation is associated with productivity and that this relationship is mediated by WFC. The correlation was proved significant.

These findings contribute to the field of employee performance by evidencing the climate of presenteeism as a predictor variable, and makes a further contribution by analyzing the role of WFC in employee performance and an organizational presenteeism climate.

4.1 Limitations, implications and future research

This study is not without its limitations. Firstly, the descriptors regarding productivity are self-assessed descriptors, and surveys have shown that respondents tend to avoid extreme response cases in the Likert scales. This essentially introduces some skew in the data.

Secondly, the mean age of the participants is comparatively young (Mean = 23), they might be single and do not yet have pressure from a spouse or children, which could affect the result of work-family conflict. We suggest that further studies should take into account the age factor of the participants.

Otherwise, this study measures presenteeism climate at an individual level. Future research could advance in this field by studying presenteeism at an organizational level and by introducing a more in-depth concept of presenteeism culture.

Overall, this study has implications for managers and academics. Managers and organizations need to be aware not only of absenteeism but also of presenteeism. The effective management of presenteeism is essential (Hemp, 2004) for a company to improve efficiency and retain competitiveness in the market. It emphasizes the importance of favorable behaviors between organizations and employees in order to improve productivity by managing presenteeism climate. The conceptual model developed in this paper provides new insight into managing presenteeism effectiveness. In line with this, organizations should provide structured leadership policies, as proximity and trust between leaders and subordinates improve individual performance and organizational productivity (Gagnon & Michael, 2004). Additionally, organizational policies such as flexible working time, as well as other contextual factors are known to affect WFC (Michel et al., 2011; Stock et al., 2016). Both academical and practical evidence suggest that employees who experience a high degree of work-family conflict reported declining performance. Strategies and policies regarding overtime and extra-hour valuation should be applied in medical institutions in order to decrease employees' WFC, since employees with a better work-life balance exhibited higher productivity. In addition, the more benevolent climate thus created would help to improve productivity despite presenteeism.

Thus, the conceptual model developed in this paper provides new insight into managing presenteeism effectiveness. We suggest there be further studies in the

domain of presenteeism that take into account the role of WFC and its effects on performance.

4.2 Conclusions

Current research has pointed out the evidence of a “presenteeism climate”, which tends to influence most employees’ choices regarding the practice of presenteeism (Chadwick-Jones *et al.*, 1982; Ferreira *et al.*, 2015). Companies are increasingly seeking efficiency (Böckerman & Laukkanen, 2010) due to an increased tendency towards presenteeism since the financial crisis of 2008 (Lu *et al.*, 2013). Results of this study have shown that presenteeism climates where supervisor distrust and extra-hour valuation are negatively correlated with completed work despite the prevalence of presenteeism.

The impact of work-family conflict on absenteeism has already been proved in previous studies (e.g., Scott L. Boyar, 2004; Vistnes, 1997). This study has now proved that similar dynamics are also at work in cases of presenteeism: both supervisor distrust and extra-hour valuation are positively associated with WFC; furthermore, WFC mediates the indirect relationship between both supervisor distrust and extra-hour valuation with productivity, despite the prevalence of presenteeism.

Conclusão

As pesquisas atuais apontaram a evidência de um “clima de presenteísmo”, que tende a influenciar as escolhas dos empregados em relação à prática do presenteísmo (Chadwick-Jones et al, 1982; Ferreira et al., 2015). Os resultados revelaram que a desconfiança das chefias e a valorização das horas extras enquanto variáveis de clima de presenteísmo estão negativamente correlacionados com a capacidade de concluir o trabalho quando as pessoas estão doentes.

Além disso, o impacto do conflito trabalho-família no absenteísmo já foi comprovado em estudos anteriores (por exemplo, Scott L. Boyar, 2004; Vistnes, 1997). Este estudo já provou que dinâmicas similares também estão presentes nos casos de presenteísmo: o conflito trabalho-família medeia a relação entre a desconfiança das chefias, valorização das horas extra e o trabalho concluído .

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Annex:



This questionnaire is part of an international academic research project.

It focuses essentially on organizational behavior topics (e.g., health at work, job characteristics).

Confidentiality is assured. It will take approximately 15 minutes of your time.

Please answer **all** questions, because only that way will you contribute to the success of this research.

Thank you very much!

1. Gender: Male ☐ Female ☐

2. Age: _____

3. Job designation:

_____ **3a.**

Supervisor? Yes ☐ No ☐

4. Years of experience (total): _____ years

5. Seniority (in current company): _____ years

6. During the last year, how many hours did you spend at work (on average)?
_____ hours

7. How do you evaluate your overall health status, using the following scale?

(please circle the number that best describes your condition):

Bad	Reasonable	Good	Very Good	Excellent
1	2	3	4	5

8a. During the last six months, how many days did you miss doing your job due to illness (or not feeling well)? _____ days

8b. During the last six months, how many days did you attend work, despite being ill (or not feeling well)? _____ days

9. Specify both a physical and a psychological condition that somehow affected your performance at work, during the last six months

(e.g., migraines, back pain, depression, anxiety, asthma, allergies, ...):

a) _____ Physical _____ condition:

Chronic? Yes ☐ No ☐

b) _____ Psychological _____ condition:
Chronic?

Yes ☐ No ☐

10. Please indicate the results of your performance evaluation, during the last year:

Obtained score: _____ [Maximum possible score / scale:
 _____]

11. Health Status and Employee Productivity:

Below we would like you to describe you work experiences in the past month. These experiences may be affected by many environmental as well as personal factors and may change from time to time. For each of the following statements, please circle one of the following responses to show your agreement or disagreement with this statement in describing your work experiences in the past month. Please use the following scale:

Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

1. Because of my (health problem)*, the stresses of my job were much harder to handle.	1	2	3	4	5
2. Despite having my (health problem)*, I was able to finish hard tasks in my work.	1	2	3	4	5
3. My (health problem)* distracted me from taking pleasure in my work.	1	2	3	4	5
4. I felt hopeless about finishing certain work tasks, due to my (health problem)*.	1	2	3	4	5
5. At work, I was able to focus on achieving my goals despite my (health problem)*.	1	2	3	4	5
6. Despite having my (health problem)*, I felt energetic enough to complete all my work.	1	2	3	4	5

12. Presenteeism Climate:

The following questions seek to assess the presenteeism climate of your organization. Please circle whether you disagree or agree with each sentence, using the following scale (1 to 7):

			Neither			Totally
Totally		Slightly	Agree	Slightly		Agree
	Disagree				Agree	
Disagree		Disagree	Nor	Agree		
			Disagree			

PRESENTEEISM CLIMATE IN CHINESE HEALTH INSTITUTIONS

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

1. When suffering from health problems, I think that I should request permission to be absent from work, but I choose to attend work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. I still go to work when I am ill, because I'm afraid of being fired.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. My health problems undermine my productivity levels at work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. When I call someone in my organization to say I am ill, I feel that they mistrust me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. Sometimes I prefer to go to work, even knowing that I should have stayed at home.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. I feel that my job performance decreases when I go to work feeling ill.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. With my health problem, the organization where I work gains more by my absence rather than my presence.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. I feel that there is the cult of "living at work" in my organization.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. I feel judged by the number of hours I spend at work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. In my organization, there is a rigid time schedule and a strict control of absences from work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. I benefit from spending more hours at work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

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12. My supervisor suspects the reasons of my absences from work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. I feel that when I am too quick performing a task, the difficulty of the task is not acknowledged.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. I feel that people value more the hours I spend at work than what I do at work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15. My career depends on the number of hours I work per day.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16. I feel that I am more valued if I leave late from work without getting things done than if I left earlier having accomplished my tasks.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17. In the past, I sometimes refrained from missing work because I felt nobody could replace me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18. Some colleagues of mine stay longer hours at work just for the sake of being noticed.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19. Some colleagues of mine stay longer hours at work because they are afraid of losing their job.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20. There is some competition among my colleagues about who stays longer at work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21. Going to work while ill may also affect the performance of my colleagues.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22. I have to go to work even when ill, because I am necessary there.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23. I feel that my supervisor suspects me if I am absent from work due to illness.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24. I fear that my supervisor will consider me less important if I miss work due to illness.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

25. I think that it is every worker's duty to be present at work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
26. I will have more chances of being promoted if I stay longer at work, regardless of [the quantity and quality of] my performance level.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

13. Work-family conflict:

The following questions seek to assess work-family and family-work conflicts. Please circle whether you disagree or agree with each sentence, using the following scale (1 to 7):

Totally Disagree	Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Neither Agree Nor Disagree	Slightly Agree	Agree	Totally Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

1. The demands of my work interfere with my home and family life.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. The amount of time my job takes up makes it difficult to fulfill family responsibilities.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

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3. Things I want to do at home do not get done because of the demands of my job.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. My job produces strain that makes it difficult to fulfill family duties.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. Due to work-related duties, I have to make changes to my plans for family activities.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. The demands of my family or spouse/partner interfere with work-related activities.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. I have to put off doing things at work because of demands on my time at home.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. Things I want to do at work don't get done because of the demands of my family or spouse/partner.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. My home life interferes with my responsibilities at work such as getting to work on time, accomplishing daily tasks, and working overtime.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. Family-related strain interferes with my ability to perform job-related duties.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

*** * * THANK YOU VERY MUCH * * ***