

Presenteeism among teachers and administrators in primary and secondary schools in Morocco case study: The Moroccan public school system

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Abstract: This research is conducted with the aim of studying presenteeism among teachers and administrators in Moroccan public schools. It seeks to enhance knowledge and understanding of a recently recognized subject, namely, presenteeism. Presenteeism is a novel concept in organizational behavior that describes an individual who is physically present yet mentally disengaged. It denotes productivity that falls below expectations despite the employee's attendance and presumed competence, and it encompasses subpar performance by an employee who reports to work while being unwell. It also includes a phenomenon of excessive presence in the workplace. Empirical research on presenteeism is reasonably plentiful, mostly in the domains of medical and management, but empirical studies in the realm of education are exceedingly scarce. This research seeks to enhance our comprehension of presenteeism by identifying the factors that compel teachers and administrators to engage in it, as well as by elucidating the repercussions that ensue from this behavior. This study is carried out at primary and secondary schools in Casablanca, specifically at the Elfida Mers Sultan Directorate, using a sample of 32 instructors and 20 administrators. Key findings indicate that presenteeism is an under-recognized but widespread phenomenon, with 55.8% of participants admitting to having worked while ill. Contributing factors identified were workplace conflicts, demanding schedules, health problems, burnout, advanced age and lack of training in this area among administrators. The effects of presenteeism have a negative impact on student engagement, academic performance and lead to behaviors such as inattention and classroom disruptions.

Keywords: Absenteeism, Administrator, Education, Presenteeism, Teacher.

1. Introduction

Presenteeism is a burgeoning concept and a focal point of concern for organizations. This is a recognized problem frequently associated with absenteeism; both are regarded as two facets of the same issue. It is essential to enhance awareness within society and administration regarding this phenomenon, which is frequently neglected and hardly addressed in the education sector, yet may contribute to academic failure and the perceived deficiencies of our educational system. This research on presenteeism among educators and administrators seeks to analyze the causes, effects, and conditions that have contributed to its emergence, to propose effective methods to mitigate it.

Indeed, there has been ongoing discourse over the shortcomings of the education system and academic attrition for several years, with several causes under examination; yet, presenteeism has not been regarded as a significant contributor to educational failure.

Presenteeism is associated with workplace dynamics and attendance; it is a strategy employed by certain employees to circumvent the repercussions of absence and the necessity for medical certificates.

Historically, various studies have concentrated on absenteeism (Loeppke, Taitel, Haufle, Parry, Kessler, & Jinnett, 2009) and its detrimental effect on workplace productivity. Although absenteeism rates are notably elevated, presenteeism is emerging as a significant concern, seemingly correlating with a decline in organizational productivity.

National figures from the United Kingdom (UK) in 2008 indicated that the country forfeited 5.8 million workdays due to illness or injury from July 2007 to June 2008, or 1.5% of total workdays. Since 2006, the sickness absence rate for all employees in the UK has consistently Stabilized at approximately 2,5%.

The UK's representative for Public and Commercial Services asserts: " There's a risk of people coming in to work and not getting better... All medical conditions related to presenteeism lead to reductions of productivity levels."

A 2004 US Omnibus survey by the National Foundation for Infectious Diseases revealed that 60% of employees who were still ill attended work due to concerns about incomplete tasks, 48% experienced guilt about absenteeism, 20% feared their supervisor, and 18% were apprehensive about potential job loss. Despite the resurgence of interest in presenteeism among experts across multiple disciplines, the majority of study on this subject is concentrated on European nations, the United States, Canada, and Australia (Cooper & Dewe, 2008); yet, studies on presenteeism within the educational sector are limited. So, can we talk about presenteeism in Moroccan schools?

This research aims to enhance awareness within society and administration regarding this phenomenon, which is frequently neglected and seldom addressed in the education sector, although may be a fundamental cause of academic failure and perceived deficiencies in our educational system. Examining presenteeism among educators and administrators seeks to elucidate the causes, effects, and conditions that contribute to its occurrence, with the objective of proposing effective preventative measures. Indeed, discussions regarding the failure of the educational system and school dropout rates have persisted for numerous years, with various factors examined; however, presenteeism has not been considered as a potential contributor to academic failure. Our research targets primary school teachers and administrators, including primary and secondary school principals, supervisors, tutors, and secretaries.

This research in the realm of education is motivated by the notably high presumed rate of presenteeism in certain institutions, coupled with the absence of relevant statistics or studies on the topic. We have examined the relationship between presenteeism and educational characteristics (age, gender, family circumstances, seniority, position, etc.), subsequently offering recommendations and remedies derived from the findings.

1.1. Research Objective

This study pertains to human resource management and seeks to investigate the causes and implications of presenteeism among teachers and administrators in the public sector. We are investigating a significant and intricate phenomenon with various implications: presenteeism inside the Moroccan public education system. The intended demographic comprises primary school educators and administrators, including principals, supervisors, and secretaries. The study was carried out in several primary and secondary schools in Casablanca, the economic hub of the Kingdom of Morocco.

In our research, we will utilize Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory (SCT) to examine presenteeism behavior in our research. According to SCT, it is essential to examine psychological and social functioning as a consequence of "reciprocal causation" among individual internal factors, behavioral determinants characterized by action patterns and schemas, and the attributes of the material and social environment, which both influence and are influenced by internal and behavioral factors.

We have constructed a model grounded in functional analysis, delineating our understanding of this project.

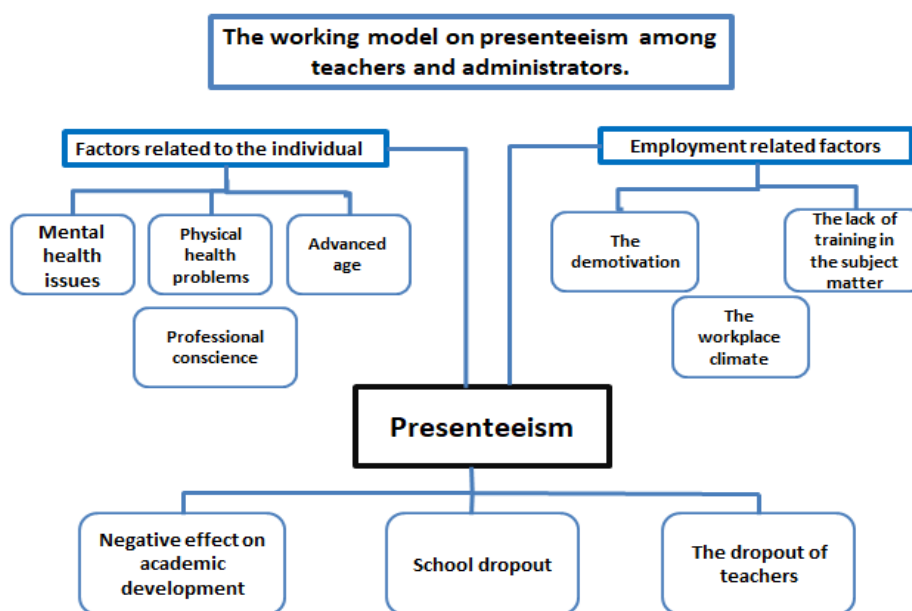


Figure 1.
The model of our work.

While the Moroccan education system has achieved progress that should be capitalized on and evolved, it remains true that it still suffers from chronic dysfunctions. "It is therefore imperative to seriously and resolutely address this system, which we place, moreover, at the top of our national priorities. Because this system, which challenges us today..."¹

This dysfunction is noted by the Higher Council of Education in the analytical report established by the National Evaluation Authority regarding "the implementation of the National Charter for Education, Training, and Scientific Research 2000-2013: achievements, deficits, and challenges." This evaluation, which was comprehensive and panoramic for the period (2000-2013) of the implementation of the national charter, showed concerning the governance of the Education and Training System that there was a lack of a comprehensive vision and engineering, that despite the efforts deployed, the primary cycle remains poorly developed both in rural and urban areas, that dropout and non-schooling are not fully addressed by non-formal education or vocational training, that the PNEA survey revealed concerning the performance of students in mathematics and sciences, in the TIMSS² research, that there is a decline in the achievements of students in the 4th year of primary school, between 2003 and 2011, decreasing from 347 to 335 in mathematics and from 304 to 264 in sciences, and these students did not have a good score regarding the mobilization of resources, that the TIMSS survey (2008) revealed that most students who participated in this study did not achieve the average in Arabic and French.³

This dysfunction is also evident in Morocco's ranking, both at the primary, secondary, and tertiary levels, placing it among the lowest ranks. "According to 'The Territorial Atlas of Disparities in Education' report, conducted by the National Evaluation Authority (NEA) under the Higher Council of Education, Training, and Vocational Research: Morocco ranks 154th out of a total of 218 countries."

By the end of **2014-2015**, the HCP (High Commission for Planning) revealed in its report on "literacy and education" that only 7.5% of the population aged 25 and older had achieved a higher level

¹ The royal speech of August 20, 2012¹

² Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study.²

⁴ www.csefrs.ma/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/Résumé-du-rapport-analytique.pdf

of education. Those who reached secondary level education, whether at the college or vocational level, accounted for only 23.2%, compared to 23.9% with primary level education.

Thus, this issue is clearly reflected in the results of other studies conducted on school dropout rates, which is one of the serious problems in our educational system. Thousands of children leave school very early: 7 out of 10 children drop out before completing high school⁴.

According to these studies, school dropout is a serious issue afflicting our educational system, justifying the efforts to identify its origins and measure all variables within the Moroccan school institution.

As an educator affected by the current circumstances that disrupt our education system, we cannot remain passive. Our goal is to contribute to filling the gaps in human resource management through this study.

The deterioration or lack of motivation has emerged as a critical issue today, impacting both educators and administrators. This demotivation might result in perilous consequences, including absenteeism and presenteeism among educators and administrators.

Presenteeism and absenteeism represent two facets of the same phenomenon. Although absenteeism is distinctly defined in the literature and extensively researched, the definition of presenteeism lacks uniformity. It is a phenomenon that remains little comprehended in education and is an ambiguous concept inside corporations and the Moroccan educational system. Presenteeism substantially exacerbates the deficiencies within the educational system and, to some extent, influences school dropout rates. Consequently, it is essential to analyze this occurrence to evaluate its effects and appropriately address it.

How can we define presenteeism within our Moroccan institutions? How can it be diagnosed?

Our objective is to understand the complexity of this phenomenon by attempting to answer the following problem: What are the causes and consequences of presenteeism among teachers and administrators in the Moroccan public primary and secondary education system?

To address our problem, seven questions arise:

What are the forms of presenteeism among teachers practicing and administrators? What are the causes of presenteeism? What are the consequences of presenteeism? What is the impact of presenteeism on the productivity of teachers in their classroom practice? Is there an impact of presenteeism on students' academic development? Is there an impact of presenteeism on school dropout? How can it be avoided?

The overarching premise of this research is that high levels of presenteeism among elementary school teachers and administrators negatively affect student achievement and, by extension, the likelihood that they would drop out of school.

This research hypothesis gives rise to five more ones:

H₁: Presenteeism is a phenomenon that exists among primary school teachers and administrators.

H₂: Mental health issues are a cause of presenteeism.

H₃: Physical health issues are a cause of presenteeism.

H₄: working conditions are a cause of presenteeism.

H₅: Presenteeism is one of the determining factors of school dropout.

Understanding the causes of presenteeism among teachers is important to identify the underlying factors contributing to it, which would help in discovering the consequences of this phenomenon.

2. Materials and Methods

We have adopted a quantitative approach using a self-administered written questionnaire, which we found to be most useful. This questionnaire allows us to collect data regarding the opinions of both teachers and administrators on the relatively unknown phenomenon of presenteeism.

The quantitative aspect of the collected information should allow us to test our hypotheses. All respondents belong to the public education sector and must be active. Therefore, all categories of

« Selon une étude enquête réalisée par le ministère de l'Education en 2012, seuls 30 enfants sur 100 dans le primaire arrivent à atteindre ⁴ leur bac. Pour les 70% des élèves restants, 50% quittent le milieu scolaire ».

teaching and administrative staff (official teachers, academic cadre teachers, primary school directors, secondary school directors, general supervisors, secretaries, and tutors) were solicited. The sample for this research consists of 53% active teachers, 7.7% academy officials, and 38.4% administrators, including 11.5% primary school directors, 17.3% secondary school directors, 5.8% secretaries, and 3.8% general supervisors.

We have identified the following independent variables:

- Lack of training in the field.
- General work climate (strained relationship between teachers and administration) (strained relationship between administrators and colleagues): conflicts.
- Working hours.
- Psychological health problems.
- Physical health problems.
- Professional burnout.
- Working conditions.
- Motivation.

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2.1. Items

1. Understanding of the concept of presenteeism among teachers and administrators.
2. Existence of presenteeism among teachers and administrators.
3. Identification of teachers and administrators most prone to practicing presenteeism.
4. Forms of presenteeism among the study population. This item is divided into four dimensions: (a) Presenteeism among administrators and/or teachers who refuse to work and only come to mark their presence, (b) Administrators and/or teachers who work despite being ill because the system could sanction their absence, (c) Carelessness of administrators and/or teachers, and (d) Administrators and/or teachers who handle personal affairs at work.
5. Causes of presenteeism. This item is divided into ten dimensions: (a) Lack of training in the field, (b) General work climate (strained relationship between teachers and administration, strained relationship between administrators and colleagues): conflicts, (c) Working hours, (d) Psychological health problems, (e) Physical health problems, (f) Professional burnout, (g) Working conditions, (h) Salary motivation, (i) Advanced age, and (j) Physical and psychological health reasons related to presenteeism.
6. Practice of presenteeism among personnel in Moroccan schools.
7. Awareness of presenteeism among these personnel.
8. Awareness of presenteeism among students regarding their teachers. This item is divided into two dimensions: one related to the study of students' awareness of manifestations of presenteeism among their teachers, and the other related to the study of students' reactions to manifestations of presenteeism by their teachers.
9. Existence of negative effects of presenteeism on students' academic development.
10. Effect of presenteeism on school dropout.
11. Study of remedies for presenteeism.

Based on the responses retrieved from 52 questionnaires on presenteeism, we conducted a data analysis for this quantitative research. We utilized the SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) software for descriptive and comparative statistical analysis to test hypotheses, produce statistics, and

frequencies. Additionally, we used Excel to create graphs. The results are presented in tables and graphs. The analysis is divided into a primary part and a secondary part.

3. Results

The fieldwork conducted during our research on presenteeism in the educational system, particularly among primary school teachers and administrators, revealed several findings:

- Presenteeism is an unknown phenomenon among teachers and administrators.
- Presenteeism is a phenomenon that exists among teachers and administrators.
- 55.8% of the study population report that working despite illness is a common form among teachers and administrators, while 30.8% state that this form is very uncommon among administrators.
- 46.4% of teachers affirm that teachers and/or administrators who handle personal matters at work are moderately common among teachers, while this form is very uncommon among administrators.
- Presenteeism among teachers and administrators is caused by workplace conflicts, working hours, psychological and physical health problems, professional burnout, advanced age, and work demotivation.
- Lack of training in the field is a cause of presenteeism among administrators.
- The practice of presenteeism among teachers and administrators is occasional, and they are aware of their practice.
- Students are aware of manifestations of presenteeism by their teachers, and they react to these manifestations by chatting, making noise, being distracted, being inattentive, being absent, showing indifference, causing disorder in class, losing confidence in the teacher, losing respect for them, complaining, and dropping out.
- Presenteeism has a detrimental effect on academic development and is a major factor in school dropout.
- Public sector teaching and administrative staff have proposed many solutions such as continuous training, creating listening cells, raising human awareness, respecting professional ethics, combating the causes of presenteeism, motivating teachers, managing HR, and creating a code of conduct.

4. Discussion

H₁/ Presenteeism exists among teachers and administrators in the public sector

- 30 teachers (62.5%) and 18 administrators (37.6%) responded "yes". They affirm that in the past twelve months, there have been times when they went to work while thinking they should have stayed home.
- 35 individuals (67.3%) selected "more than 10 times," indicating that they have felt it preferable to stay home instead of going to work on more than 10 occasions.
- 88% of the study population checked "yes," stating that they remember being presenteeist in the last six months.
- 33 individuals, including 86.66% primary and secondary school directors and 56.25% teachers, have never been absent for illness-related reasons in a year (0 days), according to studies conducted by Eric Goselin (2012). Not being absent for a year proves the existence of presenteeism.
- 66.7% of administrators and 28.6% of teachers affirm that their health is poor.

We can therefore prove the existence of presenteeism among primary school teachers and administrators, thus the hypothesis:

"Presenteeism exists among teachers and administrators in the public sector" is true.

H₂/Mental health problems are a cause of presenteeism.

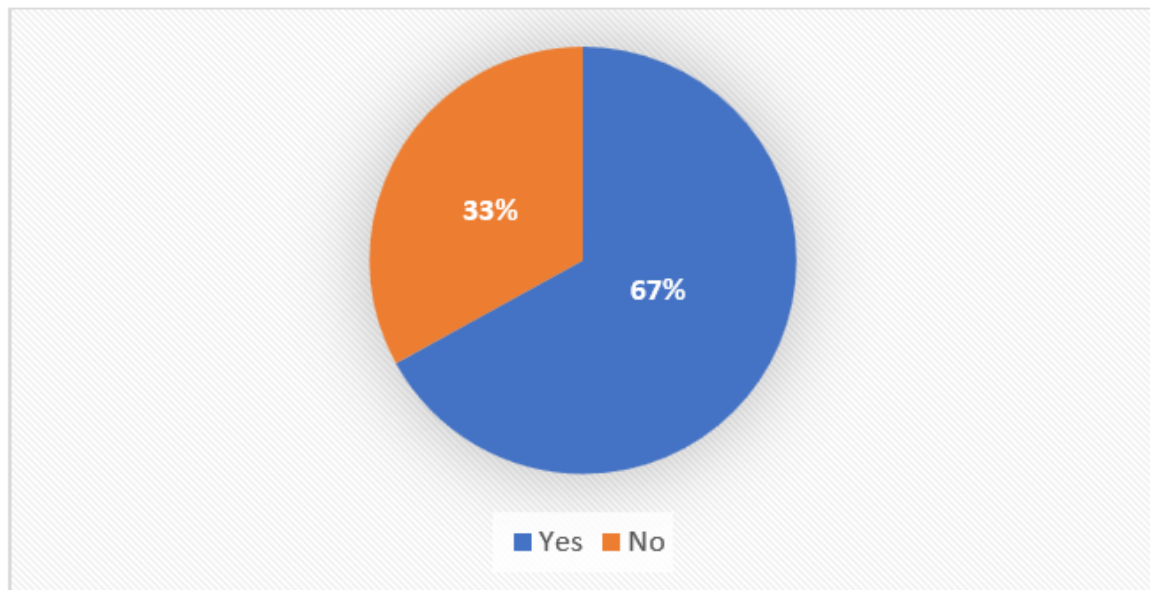


Figure 2.
Statistics regarding psychological health problems.

Figure 2 displays statistics pertaining to mental health issues: 67% of the people surveyed think that administrators and instructors' presenteeism is due to mental health issue.

Table 1.
Chi-square test of.

	Value	Df	Asymptotic significance (2-tailed).
Pearson chi-square	20.260 ^a	5	0.001
Likelihood ratio	21.767	5	0.001
Number of valid observations	52		

Table 2.
Symmetrical measures.

	Valeur	Approximate significance
Nominal Phi	0.624	0.001
By Cramer's V	0.624	0.001
	0.530	
Contingency coefficient		
Number of valid observations	52	

The estimated chi-squared value of 20.260 is not included in the chi-squared table. Consequently, the error probability is below the threshold of 0.01, indicating 1%.

The chi-squared test and correlation analysis indicate that psychological health difficulties significantly contribute to presenteeism among teachers and administrators. Consequently, our hypothesis H2 is confirmed: psychological health difficulties contribute to presenteeism.

H₃/Physical health problems are a cause of presenteeism

There is a significant relationship between presenteeism and physical health problems. 90.4% of respondents unanimously agree that physical health problems are a cause of presenteeism. This includes 75% of teachers, 66.7% of primary school principals, 88.9% of secondary school principals, 100% of secretaries, and general

H₄/Working conditions are a cause of presenteeism

This hypothesis is rejected; working conditions are not a significant cause of presenteeism among teachers and administrators.

Table 3.
Chi-squared test.

	Value	Df	Asymptotic significance (2-tailed).
Pearson chi-square	1.173 ^a	5	0.947
Likelihood ratio	1.675	5	
Number of valid observations	52		

Table 4.
Symmetrical measures.

	Value	Approximate significance
Nominal Phi	0.150	0.947
by Cramer's V	0.150	0.947
	0.149	0.947
Contingency coefficient		
Number of valid observations	52	

Based on the chi-squared test, the degrees of freedom (df), p-value (probability of errors), and the strength of association using Cramer's V will yield the following results: Chi-squared = 1.173; degrees of freedom = 5; asymptotic significance = 0.947, indicating that the result is statistically significant solely at a threshold of 94.7%. Cramer's V = 0.15; according to Cohen's guidelines (1988), a value of 0.10 indicates a small effect size and a weak connection. So, the correlation between the two variables is modest.

The two variables are independent; therefore, the null hypothesis must be accepted.

Working conditions are not a major cause of presenteeism among teachers and administrators

H₅/Presenteeism is one of the determining factors of academic failure

To validate this hypothesis, we initially inquired of our population on the direct adverse effects of presenteeism on students' academic growth. Secondly, we investigated the impact of presenteeism on academic failure. Thirdly, we examined the remarks of educators and administrators using descriptive statistics to assess their impact on academic failure. Ultimately, we examined if presenteeism constitutes a significant issue that may lead to academic failure. 93.2% of respondents from the studied demographic assert that presenteeism is a significant factor contributing to academic failure.

It could be concluded that our hypothesis H₅ is valid

The fieldwork conducted as part of our research on presenteeism in the educational system, focusing primarily on primary school teachers and administrators, revealed several findings:

- Presenteeism is an unknown phenomenon among teachers and administrators.
- Presenteeism is a phenomenon that exists among teachers and administrators.
- 55.8% of the studied population states that working despite illness is a frequent occurrence among teachers and administrators, with 30.8% reporting it to be very infrequent among administrators.
- 46.4% of teachers report a moderate frequency of dealing with personal matters at work, compared to a very low frequency among administrators.
- Workplace conflicts, work schedules, psychological and physical health issues, professional burnout, advanced age, and work demotivation all contribute to presenteeism among teachers and administrators.
- Lack of training in the matter is a cause of presenteeism among administrators.

- The practice of presenteeism among teachers and administrators is occasional, and they are aware of their practice.
- Students are aware of the manifestations of presenteeism in their teachers and react to them with chatting, noise, lack of concentration, inattention, absence, indifference, disorder in the classroom, loss of confidence in the teacher, complaints, and dropout.
- Presenteeism has a detrimental effect on academic development and is one of the major factors contributing to academic failure.
- Public sector teaching and administrative staff have proposed numerous solutions, such as continuous training, establishing listening cells, raising human awareness, respecting professional ethics, addressing the causes of presenteeism, motivating teachers, HR management, and creating a code of values.

5. Conclusion

For years, the Ministry of National Education has implemented measures to address both legitimate and illegitimate absences and absenteeism among educators and officials in the public sector. Nonetheless, beneath the valid concerns about the costs associated with school absences and absenteeism rates lies a lesser-known reality that represents a hidden issue, as it remains statistically imperceptible. This research focuses on the phenomenon known in the literature as "presenteeism."

Presenteeism undoubtedly poses a challenge for educational institutions, as it embodies a phenomenon that is difficult to diagnose. The implications are definitely complex. In this context, our research represents merely an initial step toward a more comprehensive explanation of this phenomenon.

The incorporation of explanatory variables has facilitated advancements in understanding the causal relationships of presenteeism among educators and administrators. In this endeavor, we established the foundational framework for a longitudinal analysis of presenteeism data.

This study aims to examine this phenomenon to identify its manifestations within educational institutions, assess its recognition among the studied population, explore its forms, extent, and impact on academic development, and propose potential solutions to address it, considering its concurrent nature with the workforce.

This study has demonstrated that presenteeism is an obscure notion among teaching and administrative personnel. Nonetheless, it is a phenomenon prevalent among them, shown in diverse forms, with causes encompassing psychological and physical health issues, inadequate training, a stressful work environment, work schedules, professional burnout, demotivation, and advanced age. The research has demonstrated that the consequences of this occurrence are quite perilous. It has detrimental effects on academic progress and significantly contributes to academic failure.

The interviewees have recommended several measures to mitigate presenteeism, including ongoing training, the establishment of listening cells, fostering a positive social atmosphere within educational institutions, creating listening cells for educators, enhancing human awareness among teaching and administrative personnel, upholding professional ethics, incentivizing teachers and administrators through the cultivation of a healthy work environment, effective human resource management, instilling values through the implementation of a code of ethics, and supervising teaching and administrative staff.

6. Recommendations

Despite the school system's heavy investment in absence reduction initiatives, it would be wise to reevaluate the conversation around "sick leave" and "combatting absenteeism" in light of the damage they cause. The fact that presenteeism is so little understood in the field implies that getting those involved in education to pay attention to the issue could be a good starting point for fixing the problems it causes.

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