"Factors Affecting Academic Staff Absenteeism in Public Campuses of Butwal Sub-Metropolitan City, Nepal"

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Abstract

The study aims to explore the relationship between job satisfaction, employee relations, health status, occupational stress, working conditions, family responsibilities, and academic staff absenteeism. It seeks to identify how different dimensions of these factors influence academic staff absenteeism. The study adopted a quantitative approach, gathering responses from 154 employees of a public campus in Butwal Sub-Metropolitan City, using a structured questionnaire and following a census study method. Data was analyzed using statistical tools such as PLS-SEM software, including assessment of measurement items, model fit, Importance-Performance Map Analysis (IPMA), and the bootstrapping technique for hypothesis testing. The results revealed that employee relations, among the independent variables, are key predictors of academic staff absenteeism. It is evident that employee relations are major contributors to academic staff absenteeism. Therefore, the management of public campuses should prioritize these aspects to reduce absenteeism. By understanding and reformulating policies based on these factors, there is a greater possibility of improving attendance among academic staff.

Keywords: *Academic Staff Absenteeism Job Satisfaction, Employee Relations, Occupational Stress, Working Conditions.*

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I. Introduction

Teacher absenteeism is a pervasive challenge that significantly undermines the quality of education worldwide, and Nepal is no exception. In Nepal, an estimated 25 percent of teachers are absent on any given day, which translates to over 80,000 educators missing from classrooms, severely disrupting the learning process (Joshi, 2022). Academic staff absenteeism in public campuses of Butwal Sub-Metropolitan City has become a critical concern, as it directly affects the continuity of teaching, student engagement, and overall institutional performance. When faculty members are frequently absent, students experience inconsistent instruction, which leads to poor academic outcomes and diminished motivation. Furthermore, absenteeism increases the workload on present faculty, potentially leading to burnout and reduced morale (Roy & Sharma, 2019). The reputational damage caused by chronic absenteeism can also reduce student enrollment and weaken the public perception of educational institutions. Given these significant repercussions, it is essential to explore the factors influencing academic staff absenteeism in public campuses to develop targeted interventions that enhance faculty attendance and educational quality.

The habitual or frequent absence of academic personnel from their scheduled teaching duties without valid justification, negatively impacting institutional effectiveness (Joshi, 2022).The extent to which academic staff feel fulfilled and content with their job roles, responsibilities, and work environment (Herzberg, 1966).The quality of interpersonal and professional interactions between faculty members and administrative bodies, including communication, support, and trust (Kahn, 1990).The physical and mental well-being of academic staff, which influences their capacity to perform work duties consistently (Cooper & Cartwright, 1994).The psychological strain experienced due to work-related pressures that exceed an individual's coping mechanisms (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001).The environmental, organizational, and resource-related factors that constitute the workplace setting (Wright & Cropanzano, 2000).The caregiving and domestic obligations that academic staff manage alongside their professional duties (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985).

The study of absenteeism originated in industrial and organizational psychology during the early 20th century, as businesses sought to understand and improve workforce productivity (Price, 1977). Over time, absenteeism has been recognized as a multifaceted phenomenon influenced by individual, organizational, and societal factors. Herzberg's (1966) two-factor theory identified job satisfaction as a critical determinant of employee attendance, emphasizing that dissatisfaction often leads to withdrawal behaviors such as absenteeism. Subsequent research expanded to include health and occupational stress as significant contributors to absenteeism (Cooper & Cartwright, 1994; Maslach et al., 2001). The work-family conflict framework introduced by Greenhaus and Beutell (1985) highlighted how family responsibilities interfere with work attendance, especially for women. These foundational theories have informed contemporary studies on absenteeism, underscoring the need for integrated approaches that consider multiple influencing factors.

Academic staff absenteeism in public campuses has attracted research attention due to its detrimental effects on educational quality and institutional sustainability. In Nepal, public campuses often face resource constraints, insufficient administrative support, and inadequate faculty development programs, which exacerbate absenteeism (Roy & Sharma, 2019). Additionally, the cultural context, including gender roles that assign disproportionate household responsibilities to women, further complicates attendance patterns (Joshi, 2022). Despite the critical importance of faculty presence for effective teaching, the Nepalese government lacks comprehensive data on teacher absenteeism, making it difficult to assess the problem's magnitude and develop evidence-based policies (Joshi, 2022). These challenges highlight the urgency of research focused on identifying and addressing the root causes of academic staff absenteeism in the specific context of public campuses in Butwal.

Several factors hinder regular attendance among academic staff. Low job satisfaction due to inadequate salaries, limited career advancement opportunities, and lack of recognition reduces motivation to attend work consistently (Herzberg, 1966). Poor working conditions, such as insufficient teaching resources and overcrowded classrooms, contribute to stress and dissatisfaction (Wright & Cropanzano, 2000). Health issues, both physical and mental, are significant barriers to consistent attendance, especially in the absence of institutional health support (Cooper & Cartwright, 1994). Family responsibilities, particularly caregiving duties, create conflicts between work and home life that can lead to absenteeism (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Additionally, strained employee relations and workplace conflicts diminish commitment and increase the likelihood of absenteeism (Kahn, 1990). These interconnected problems create a complex environment that challenges faculty attendance and institutional effectiveness.

While numerous studies have explored factors influencing absenteeism, most have examined isolated variables such as job satisfaction or occupational stress without considering their combined effect (Johns, 2008). Moreover, much of the existing research is based on private institutions or conducted in developed countries, limiting its relevance to public campuses in developing regions like Nepal. There is a notable lack of comprehensive studies that simultaneously investigate job satisfaction, employee relations, health status, occupational stress, working conditions, and family responsibilities within the context of Nepalese public higher education. Furthermore, previous research often neglects to incorporate perspectives from both academic staff and administrators, which are crucial for a holistic understanding of absenteeism dynamics. This study aims to address these gaps by providing an integrative analysis focused on public campuses in Butwal Sub-Metropolitan City.

Public campuses in Butwal face unique challenges, including limited funding, outdated infrastructure, and insufficient administrative support, which contribute to high rates of academic staff absenteeism (Roy & Sharma, 2019). The lack of faculty development programs and work-life balance policies further exacerbates the problem. Cultural expectations, particularly regarding women's domestic roles, disproportionately affect female faculty members' attendance (Joshi, 2022). Addressing absenteeism in this context requires a nuanced understanding of these multifaceted factors.

This study is justified as it offers practical benefits to various stakeholders. University administrators can use the findings to develop targeted policies that improve job satisfaction, working conditions, and employee relations, thereby reducing absenteeism. Policymakers will gain insights to formulate supportive regulations that promote faculty well-being and work-life

balance. Faculty members will benefit from improved work environments that enhance motivation and productivity. Finally, this research contributes to academic literature by offering a comprehensive model of absenteeism tailored to public campuses in a developing country context, serving as a foundation for future studies.

In summary, investigating the complex interplay of job satisfaction, employee relations, health status, occupational stress, working conditions, and family responsibilities in relation to academic staff absenteeism is critical for improving educational quality in Nepal's public campuses. By addressing identified research gaps and contextual challenges, this study aims to provide actionable recommendations to enhance faculty attendance, institutional effectiveness, and student learning outcomes.

The objectives of the study are as follows:

- To analyze the relationship between Job satisfaction, Health Status, Family responsibilities, working condition, Employee relation, Occupational stress and academic staff absenteeism.
- To analyze the effect of Job satisfaction, Health status, Family responsibilities, Working condition, Employee relations, Occupational stress on academic staff absenteeism.

II. Literature Review

This section deals with theoretical and empirical reviews of the study. The theoretical review examines related theories that support the link between the variables mentioned in the framework. Moreover, the empirical review incorporates the findings of previous research conducted on the same topic. The following theoretical and empirical reviews support the conceptual framework of the study and form the basis for the development of hypotheses.

Job satisfaction and academic staff absenteeism

The link between job-satisfaction and academic staff absenteeism is strongly supported by several motivational theories. According to Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, motivators and hygiene elements are the two categories of factors that affect job satisfaction. While motivators like responsibility and recognition increase job satisfaction, hygiene variables like pay, working environment, and corporate policies can cause dissatisfaction if they are not sufficiently handled. High job satisfaction among academic employees can result in more dedication to their work and, as a result, decreased absence rates. Teachers are more likely to show up for work on a regular basis if they believe their working conditions are pleasant (Herzberg, 1966). Notably, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs emphasizes that esteem needs, which

include recognition and respect, are crucial for employee motivation (Maslow, 1943). When employees feel valued, their self-esteem increases, leading to improved performance.

Empirical studies indicate that working conditions, which directly affect job satisfaction, play a crucial role in absenteeism. Wright and Cropanzano (2000) highlight that positive working conditions can enhance employee morale and commitment, leading to lower absenteeism rates. This is particularly relevant in public colleges in Butwal, where inadequate support and resources can impede job satisfaction and increase absenteeism. Sargent and Hannum (2005) found that job satisfaction significantly affects teachers' absenteeism, where higher job satisfaction correlates with lower rates of absenteeism. This indicates that academic staff in higher jobs who are more satisfied with their work conditions are less likely to be absent. Based on these studies, the following hypothesis can be formulated:

H1: There is a significant effect of job satisfaction on academic staff absenteeism.

Health status and academic staff absenteeism

The link between health status and academic staff absenteeism is strongly supported by several theories. The Health and Stress Theory posits that poor health and high levels of stress can lead to absenteeism in the workplace (Kahn & Byos, 2006). This theory suggests that when employees (including academic staff) experience physical or mental health challenges, their attendance levels decline. The Sickness Absence Model by Johannsson and Lundberg (2004) illustrates how health status influences absenteeism. It emphasizes that both physical and psychological health problems can be significant determinants of absenteeism.

Empirical studies have consistently demonstrated a positive relationship between health status and academic staff absenteeism. For instance, a study conducted by A study conducted by Rosenblatt et al. (2010) found that health conditions significantly affect the absenteeism rate among educators. Poor health status was directly correlated with increased sick leave among teachers, supporting the assertion that health problems are a critical factor influencing absenteeism in academic settings. Research by McCarthy et al. (2016) demonstrated that mental health issues, including depression and anxiety, are significant predictors of absenteeism in the workforce. This is particularly relevant for academic staff who may experience high levels of stress and burnout, leading to a decline in mental well-being and, consequently, increased absenteeism. Based on these studies, the following hypothesis can be formulated:

H2: There is a significant effect of employee health status on academic staff absenteeism.

Family responsibilities and academic staff absenteeism

The link between recognition and employee performance is strongly supported by several theories. Role Theory posits that individuals juggle multiple roles, such as work and family, which can create competing demands (Kahn, 1990). This theory suggests that when academic staff experience conflicts between their family responsibilities (such as childcare, elder care, or family obligations) and their professional duties, they may miss work to fulfill family roles. In academic settings, this conflict can lead to increased absenteeism, particularly among staff with significant family commitments. The Work-Family Conflict Theory specifically addresses how pressures from work and home environments can conflict, resulting in stress and absenteeism (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). For academic staff, the demands of teaching, research, and administrative responsibilities may clash with family obligations, leading to higher absentee rates when family issues take precedence. Those with young children or dependent family members may find themselves more frequently absent as they navigate these competing roles.

Empirical studies have consistently demonstrated a positive relationship between employee recognition and employee performance. For instance, a study conducted by A study by Kahn & Byos (2006) found a strong correlation between family obligations and work absenteeism among educators. They revealed that staff experiencing high family-related stress were more likely to miss workdays, suggesting that unresolved family matters directly impacted attendance. Research indicates that female academic staff are often more affected by family responsibilities than their male counterparts. According to Acker (2006), female educators frequently assume the primary role in family caregiving, leading to increased absenteeism. This trend highlights the gender dynamics of family responsibilities within academic institutions and their implications on attendance. Based on these studies, the following hypothesis can be formulated:

H3: There is a significant effect of family responsibility on academic staff absenteeism.

Working condition and academic staff absenteeism

The link between working conditions is strongly supported by several theories. The JD-R Model suggests that job demands (e.g., workload and time pressure) can lead to burnout and absenteeism if they exceed the resources available to cope with them (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). For academic staff, high teaching loads, administrative responsibilities, and insufficient support can create excessive demands. When resources, such as professional development opportunities and administrative support, are lacking, the increased stress can lead to higher rates of absenteeism, as staff may take time off to recuperate from excessive demands. Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (1966) posits that job satisfaction and dissatisfaction arise from

two distinct sets of factors: hygiene factors and motivators. Hygiene factors, such as working conditions, salary, and company policies, do not lead to positive satisfaction if they are inadequate; however, their presence does mitigate dissatisfaction. In the context of academic staff, poor working conditions (such as inadequate facilities, lack of resources, and unresolved grievances) can lead to dissatisfaction, which may manifest as increased absenteeism.

Empirical studies have consistently demonstrated a positive relationship between working conditions and academic staff absenteeism. A study by Ather & Binsal (2020) explored how various working conditions, including physical environment and institutional support, impacted teacher absenteeism in Pakistan. Findings indicated that insufficient infrastructure and resources significantly contributed to higher absenteeism rates among educators. Similar conditions are likely prevalent in public campuses in Butwal, where limited resources can exacerbate stress and lead to increased absenteeism. A study conducted by Ghosh et al. (2018) assessed the relationship between job satisfaction and absenteeism among university staff. The results indicated that perceived institutional support and positive working conditions significantly reduced absenteeism by enhancing job satisfaction. Based on these studies, the following hypothesis can be formulated:

H4: There is a significant effect of working conditions on academic staff absenteeism.

Employee relations and academic staff absenteeism

The link between working conditions is strongly supported by several theories. Social Exchange Theory (SET) posits that human relationships are formed by the use of subjective cost-benefit analysis and the comparison of alternatives (Blau, 1964). In an academic setting, the relationship between faculty and administration is critical. When academic staff perceive that they are respected, valued, and supported, they are more likely to reciprocate with their commitment and attendance. Conversely, negative relationships characterized by lack of support, poor communication, and perceived injustice can lead to disengagement and increased absenteeism. While primarily focused on job satisfaction, Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory also touches on interpersonal relations as a key factor in employee satisfaction (Herzberg, 1966). According to this theory, positive interactions with colleagues and administrators can act as motivators, enhancing job satisfaction and reducing absenteeism. When academic staff enjoy good relationships with peers and supervisors, they are more likely to contribute positively to the campus environment and maintain regular attendance.

Empirical studies have consistently demonstrated a positive relationship between employee relations and academic staff absenteeism. Research conducted by Tella et al. (2007) identified that positive employee relations significantly reduce absenteeism in educational institutions.

Their findings indicate that when faculty members feel that their concerns are acknowledged and that they have supportive relationships within their workplace, they are less likely to take unscheduled leaves. Research conducted by Fischer (2012) examined how workplace environment and employee relations contributed to staff absenteeism in educational settings. The study found that a collaborative and supportive workplace culture leads to lower absenteeism rates. Based on these studies, the following hypothesis can be formulated:

H5: There is a significant effect of employee relations on academic staff absenteeism.

Occupational stress and academic staff absenteeism

The link between working conditions is strongly supported by several theories. The JD-R model posits that occupational stress arises when job demands exceed an employee's resources (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Academic staff face various demands, such as research, teaching load, administrative responsibilities, and student expectations. When these demands are high and resources such as support from colleagues and administration are lacking, staff are more likely to experience burnout and stress, leading to increased absenteeism. According to Lazarus and Folkman (1984), the cognitive appraisal of stressors plays a crucial role in determining the level of stress experienced by individuals. When academic staff perceive their work environment as excessively demanding or unrewarding, their stress levels increase, potentially leading to absenteeism. In the context of public campuses, fostering a supportive and positive environment may change staff perceptions and reduce their absenteeism due to stress.

Empirical studies have consistently demonstrated a positive relationship between occupational stress and academic staff absenteeism. A study by Baka and Lassinson (2012) identified that job-related stress significantly affects absenteeism rates, particularly in educational settings. The researchers concluded that factors such as unhealthy work environments, lack of resources, and inadequate staff support lead to increased stress levels and, consequently, higher absenteeism. According to a study by Abubakar et al. (2020), occupational stress negatively correlates with job satisfaction among academic staff, which subsequently leads to higher absenteeism rates. The research highlights that when faculty members experience high levels of stress, their job satisfaction diminishes, influencing their commitment and attendance. Based on these studies, the following hypothesis can be formulated:

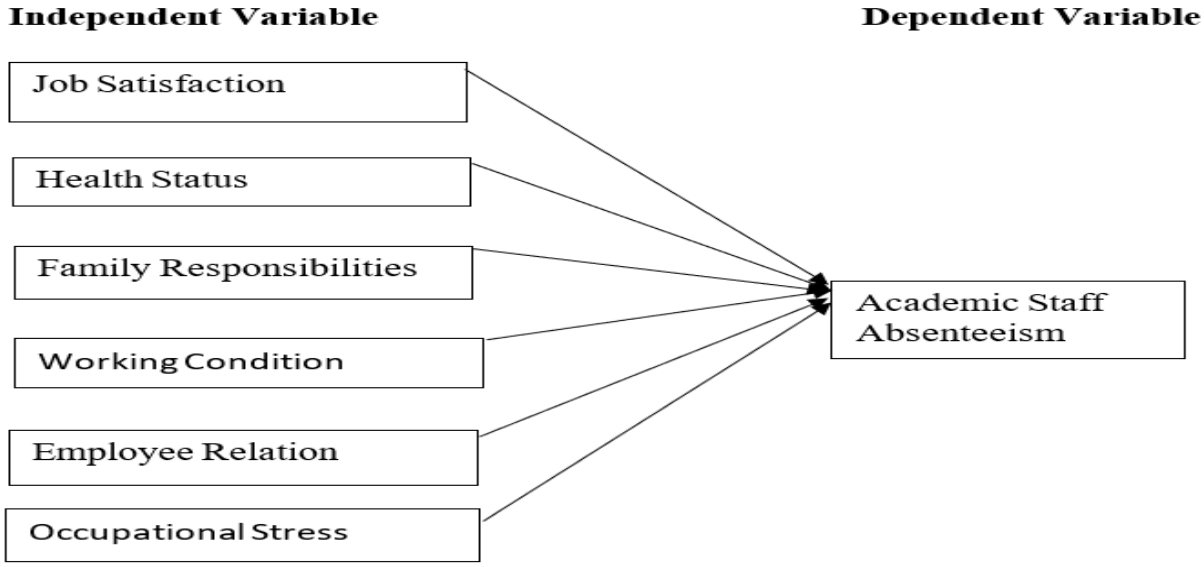
H6: There is a significant effect of occupational stress on academic staff absenteeism.

Research Framework

The research framework is the structure that illustrates the relationship among various variables. In this context, two variables are employed. Job satisfaction, health status, Family responsibilities, working condition, employee relation and occupational stress as independent

variables. Academic staff absenteeism is used as the dependent variable. The research framework of the study is outlined below:

Figure 1 - *Research framework*



Note: Adapted from Ojha (2020)

III. Research Methodology

This section deals with the research methods adopted by the researcher in conducting the research. It looks at the various methods and procedures of the research study adopted in conducting the study in order to address and answer the research problems and questions stipulated by the researcher. In this regard, it deals with different components of research design which guides researcher to decide the population and sample from the desired research area, techniques of approaching the sampled respondent, sources of data collection, research instrument used for data collection and different types of tools used to analyze the collected data. Thus, this section is organized in the following structure: research design, population, sample size, sampling technique, sources of data collection, data collection methods, tools used for data analysis.

Research Design

A research design is a structured plan that guides data collection and analysis, shaping the study (Cooper & Schindler, 2003). This study adopts Descriptive Research Design and Explanatory Research Design to achieve its objectives.

Descriptive Research Design systematically presents characteristics, behaviors, or phenomena without altering variables. It identifies trends, patterns, and relationships within a population (Creswell, 2014). Explanatory Research Design investigates cause-and-effect relationships by examining how changes in independent variables lead to variations in dependent variables through structured and hypothesis-driven methods (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Likewise,

Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2019) emphasize that explanatory studies focus on identifying causal links between variables to understand the underlying reasons for a particular phenomenon. Common statistical methods include the Spearman Rank Order Coefficient, Phi Correlation Coefficient, Regression, t-test, Chi-square, and Analysis of Variance (Isaac, 1978; Pant, 2012, p. 118).

By combining descriptive and causal-comparative designs, this study effectively examines variable relationships and their impact (Kerlinger, 1986), ensuring a structured and systematic approach.

Population and sample Size

The population of this research study comprises all respondents within the research area. In this study, the chosen research area is Butwal Sub-Metropolitan City, and the population consists of all employees working in different public campuses located in Butwal. The total number of employees on these campuses is 176. The details of the campuses and their respective number of employees are presented in Table 1.

Table 1 - *Total staff of public campuses in Butwal*

S. No	Name of public campuses	Number of Academic Staff
1	Lumbini Banijya Campus	74
2	Siddhartha Campus	42
3	Butwal Kalika Campus	60
	Total	176

The total academic staff as mentioned in the Table 1 in three different public campuses are 176. Thus, the Population of the study is 176. The study follows census study. So in the census study the total population of the study is equal to total sample size. Therefore, the minimum sample size of the study is 154.

Nature and Sources of Data Collection

This study primarily relies on quantitative data, which were collected from primary sources. A structured questionnaire was designed to gather first-hand information directly from respondents.

Survey Instrument

A self-structured questionnaire was used as the survey instrument for data collection. It was developed based on operational definitions from previous literature. The questionnaire employs a five-point Likert scale (5 = Strongly Agree, 4 = Agree, 3 = Neutral, 2 = Disagree, and 1 = Strongly Disagree) to gather responses from participants.

A set of questions was designed to measure each independent and dependent, and variable, totaling 35 items. To ensure clarity and accuracy, a pilot test was conducted by distributing the questionnaire to a sample of 30 respondents. Out of 450 distributed questionnaires**,** 384 were fully completed, yielding a response rate of 88%**.**

Statistical Tools

The study utilized various statistical tools based on the nature of the data. Descriptive statistics, including mean and standard deviation (SD), were computed to analyze and interpret customer responses. Additionally, a reliability test was conducted to assess the consistency of the research instrument. A normality test, specifically the Kolmogorov-Smirnov (K-S) test, was performed to evaluate the data's distribution.

After assessing normality, parametric and non-parametric tests were applied inferential statistics. Furthermore, correlation analysis was used to measure the relationship between variables, while regression analysis examined the effect of independent variables on the dependent variable.

IV. Results and Analysis

Measurement Items Assessment

Table 2 - *Assessment of measurement scale items*

Variables	Items	Outer loadings	VIF	Mean	Standard deviation
Employee relation	ER1	0.873	3.057	6	1.396
	ER2	0.911	3.799	5.844	1.512
	ER3	0.912	3.994	5.688	1.719
	ER4	0.704	1.716	5.149	1.757
	ER5	0.758	1.807	5.494	1.703
Family Responsibility	FR1	0.915	3.699	3.273	1.968
	FR2	0.907	4.181	3.669	1.954
	FR3	0.826	2.405	3.656	2.087
	FR4	0.809	2.318	4.104	1.974
	FR5	0.908	4.042	3.766	2.022
Health status	HS1	0.707	1.483	2.831	1.746
	HS2	0.887	3.307	2.766	1.52
	HS3	0.801	2.626	3.052	1.728
	HS4	0.853	2.452	2.76	1.482

	HS5	0.713	1.592	3.123	1.741
	JS1	0.896	3.518	5.234	1.52
	JS2	0.818	2.587	4.948	1.728
Job satisfaction	JS3	0.865	2.891	5.24	1.482
	JS4	0.869	2.782	5.169	1.586
	JS5	0.784	1.768	5.89	1.536
	OS1	0.834	2.153	5.169	1.586
	OS2	0.763	1.84	5.214	1.862
Occupational stress	OS3	0.843	2.443	5.565	1.472
	OS4	0.77	1.985	5.851	1.494
	OS5	0.774	1.641	5.234	1.591
	SA1	0.839	2.2	5.701	1.473
	SA2	0.78	2.04	5.74	1.515
Academic staff absenteeism	SA3	0.865	2.707	5.63	1.503
	SA4	0.88	3.617	5.052	1.678
	SA5	0.78	2.564	4.623	1.729
	WC1	0.829	2.715	3.403	1.979
	WC2	0.809	2.494	3.013	1.876
Working condition	WC3	0.912	3.753	3.708	1.855
	WC4	0.877	3.113	3.773	2.008
	WC5	0.77	1.726	4.727	1.968

Table 2 presents the standardized outer loading and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) of the scale items employed to measure the variables pertinent to this investigation. In accordance to Sarstedt et al. (2017), the outer loading of an item must exceed 0.708 to signify a substantial contribution of that item in assessing the associated variable. Therefore, all 35 scale items are preserved for subsequent analysis. Furthermore, the VIF values for each item are less than 5, thereby indicating no multicollinearity within the scale items (Sarstedt et al., 2014). Likewise, the mean value of the items are more on higher side of the scale and which reflect most of the respondents are towards the side of agreeable list. The standard deviation values are small, which indicates less deviation in response. This indicates that the data is suitable for further analysis.

Quality Criteria Assessment

Table 3 - *Construct Reliability and Validity*

Variables	Alpha	CR (rho_A)	CR (rho_C)	AVE

ER	0.889	0.903	0.92	0.699
FR	0.923	0.943	0.942	0.764
HS	0.852	0.857	0.895	0.633
JS	0.902	0.905	0.927	0.718
OS	0.857	0.864	0.897	0.636
SA	0.886	0.888	0.917	0.689
WC	0.896	0.911	0.923	0.707

Table 3 contains the values of Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability (CR), and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) to evaluate the convergent validity of the variables employed in this study. The Cronbach's Alpha coefficients for all items exceed the threshold of 0.705, signifying the adequate contribution of each scale item in the assessment of related constructs (Bland & Altman, 1997). Furthermore, the CR values for rho_A and rho_C surpass the minimum criterion of 0.70, denoting a robust measure of internal consistency (Saari et al., 2021; Hair et al., 2022). The AVE values also exceed the pivotal threshold of 0.50, suggesting that each variable accounts for more than 50 percent of the explained variance. This finding confirms the establishment of convergent validity (Hair et al., 2022). Subsequently, the outcomes depicted in the table as mentioned above satisfy all requisite of quality criteria measures.

Discriminant Validity

Table 4 - *Heterotrait- Monotrait ratio of correlation (HTMT) matrix*

	ER	FR	HS	JS	OS	SA	WC
WC	0.451	0.88	0.357	0.383	0.493	0.374	
SA	0.701	0.362	0.877	0.874	0.873		
OS	0.873	0.487	0.718	0.801			
JS	0.826	0.422	0.535				
HS	0.837	0.37					
FR	0.533						
ER							

Table 4 contains the HTMT ratio of the correlation matrix, which evaluates the discriminant validity of the latent variables. The values of the HTMT ratio vary from 0.37 to 0.88. The HTMT ratio values need to remain below the critical threshold of 0.85; nevertheless, a range extending up to 0.90 is deemed acceptable, as posited by Henseler et al. (2015). Consequently, the presence of discriminant validity is confirmed among the reflective constructs (Hair & Alamer, 2022).

Table 5 - *Fornell-Larcker Criterion*

	ER	FR	HS	JS	OS	SA	WC
ER	0.836						
FR	-0.497	0.874					
HS	-0.727	0.334	0.796				
JS	0.745	-0.395	-0.953	0.848			
OS	0.766	-0.447	-0.825	0.755	0.798		
SA	0.829	-0.338	-0.762	0.789	0.772	0.83	
WC	0.421	-0.818	-0.325	0.361	0.446	0.345	0.841

Table 5 displays the Fornell-Larcker Criterion, an important discriminant validity assessment in a structural equation model (SEM) (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). This criterion is satisfied when the average variance extracted (AVE) for every construct is higher than the squared correlation between that construct and any other construct in the model. The diagonal entries, the square root of AVE of every construct, are to be higher than the off-diagonal values for their corresponding columns and rows. As evident in Table 5, diagonal values (in bold) of employee relation(0.836), family responsibility (0.874), Health status (0.796), Job satisfaction (0.848), Occupational stress(0.798), Working condition(0.841), and Academic staff absenteeism(0.83) are all higher than their inter-construct correlations. This means the measurement model's discriminant validity is assured, implying that each construct is unique and taps into a distinct segment of variance (Hair et al., 2010). This ensures that the constructs do not overlap and that the measures are measuring what they should measure.

Model Fit Assessment

The SRMR fit indices evaluate the model's explanatory efficacy. The model's SRMR value is 0.78, below the acceptable threshold of 0.080 (Bollen & Stine, 1992). Consequently, this finding suggests that the model exhibits adequate explanatory capability.

Moreover, the effect sizes of Job satisfaction, Health status, Family responsibility, working conditions, Occupational stress, and Employee relation, on Academic staff absenteeism are quantified as 0.049, 0.05, 0.097, 0.031, 0.041,0.857 respectively. This reveals that Job satisfaction, Health status, Family responsibility, working condition and Occupational stress weakly influences Academic staff absenteeism, whereas Employee relation wields a substantial impact on Academic staff absenteeism (Cohen, 1988). Finally, the r-square values corresponding to Academic staff absenteeism are 0.806 respectively. That shows Academic staff absenteeism demonstrates moderate predictive ability (Hair et al., 2013).

Structural Equation Model

Figure 2 - Path relationship Model

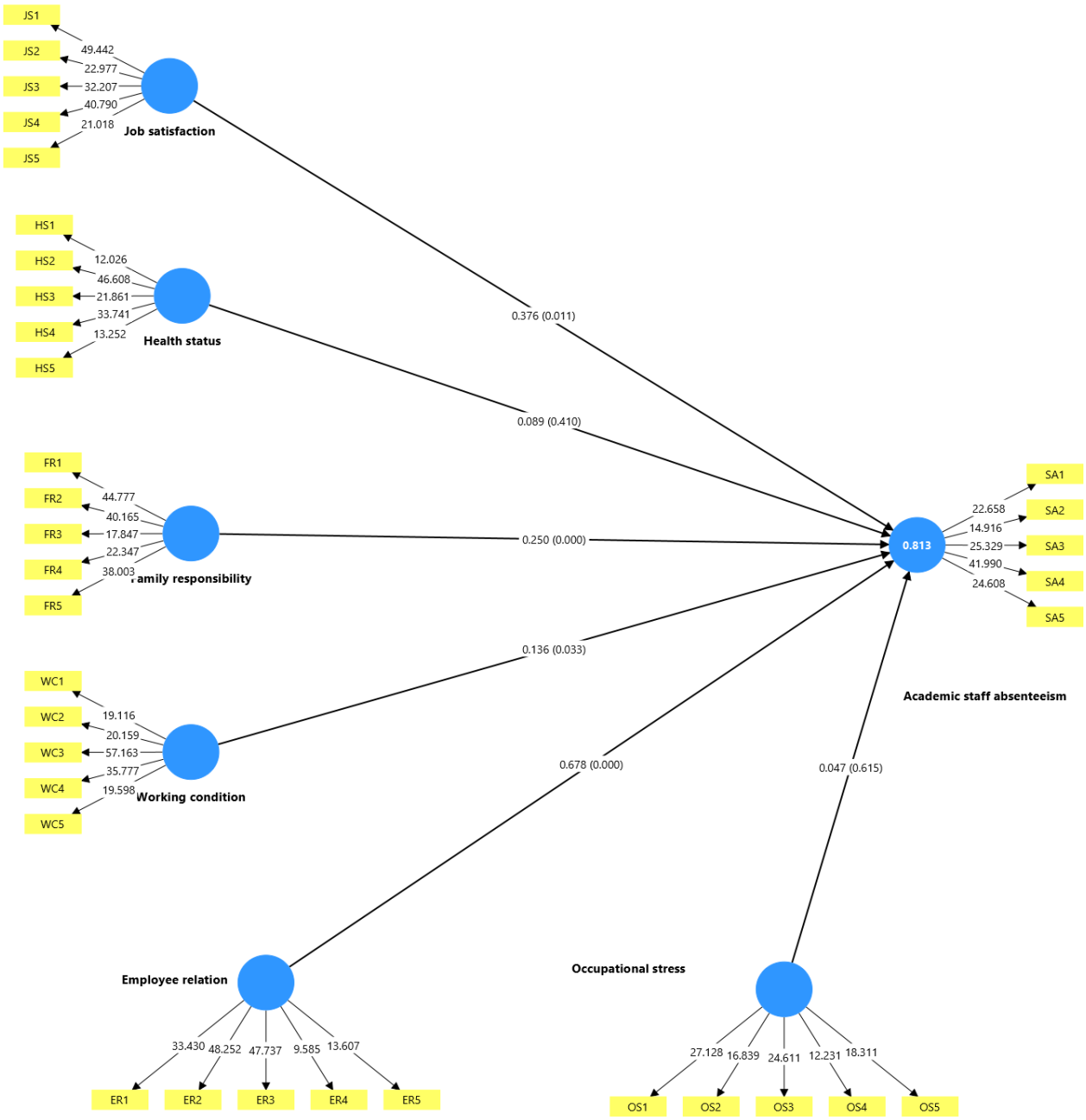


Table 6 - *Hypothesis Testing using Bootstrapping*

Hypothesis	B	Mean (M)	(STDEV)	Confidence interval		T stat.	P values	Decision
				2.50%	97.50%			
H1: Job satisfaction -> Academic staff absenteeism	-0.376	0.367	0.148	0.071	0.649	2.544	0.011	Accepted
H2: Health status -> Academic	-0.089	0.088	0.107	-0.123	0.302	0.824	0.41	Rejected

staff absenteeism								
H3: Family responsibility -> Academic staff absenteeism	0.25	0.247	0.063	0.124	0.37	3.978	0	Accepted
H4: Working condition -> Academic staff absenteeism	-0.136	0.133	0.064	0.004	0.256	2.131	0.033	Accepted
H5: Employee relation -> Academic staff absenteeism	-0.678	0.678	0.057	0.563	0.786	11.99	0	Accepted
H6: Occupational stress -> Academic staff absenteeism	0.047	0.057	0.094	-0.119	0.248	0.503	0.615	Rejected

Figure 2 and Table 6 report the results of a bootstrapping analysis performed with 10,000 subsamples, which examine decisions regarding the proposed hypotheses. Hypotheses H1, H3, H4, and H5, have achieved acceptance at a significance threshold 0.05. However, H2 and H6 are rejected as their p-value is above 0.05. There is a positive and significant impact of job satisfaction, family responsibility, working conditions, and employee relations on academic staff absenteeism. However, there is a positive and insignificant impact of health status and occupational stress on academic staff absenteeism.

Table 7 - *Necessary Condition Analysis (NCA)-Bottleneck Values*

	LV scores - Academic staff absenteeism	LV scores - Employee relation	LV scores - Family responsibility	LV scores - Health status	LV scores - Job satisfaction	LV scores - Occupational stress	LV scores - Working condition
0.00%	23%	NN	NN	NN	NN	NN	NN
10.00%	30%	NN	NN	NN	NN	34%	NN
20.00%	38%	NN	NN	NN	36%	34%	NN
30.00%	46%	55%	NN	NN	36%	42%	NN
40.00%	54%	55%	NN	NN	36%	42%	NN

50.00%	61%	61%	NN	NN	48%	42%	NN
60.00%	69%	65%	NN	NN	48%	42%	NN
70.00%	77%	65%	NN	NN	48%	55%	NN
80.00%	85%	65%	NN	NN	55%	56%	NN
90.00%	92%	78%	NN	NN	67%	56%	NN
100.00 %	100%	78%	NN	NN	85%	83%	18%

Table 7 indicates bottleneck value of latent variables using necessary condition and analysis. To achieve 23% of the academic staff absenteeism no factors are necessary. Similarly, to achieve 30 % of academic staff absenteeism 34% of occupational stress is required. Likewise, to achieve 38% of academic staff absenteeism 36% job satisfaction and 34% occupational stress are required. Alike, to achieve 46% of academic staff absenteeism then 55% of employee relation, 36% of job satisfaction and 42% of occupational stress are required. Similarly, to achieve 100% academic staff absenteeism, 78% of employee relation, 85% of job satisfaction, 83% of occupational stress and 18% of working conditions are required.

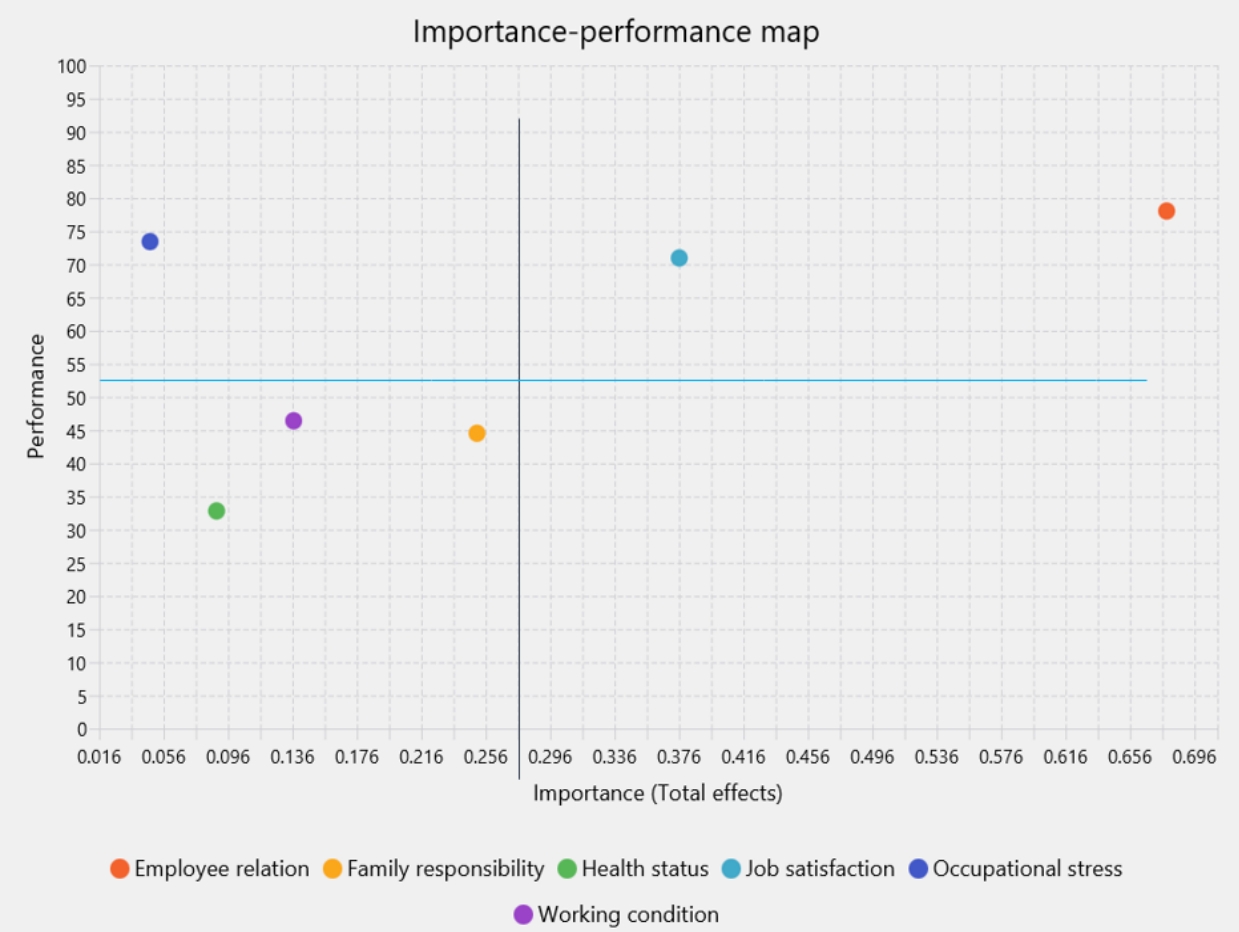
Table 8 - *Importance performance map analysis*

	LV performance	Importance
Employee relation	78.049	0.678
Family responsibility	44.532	0.25
Health status	32.826	0.089
Job satisfaction	70.964	0.376
Occupational stress	73.438	0.047
Working condition	46.416	0.136
Mean	57.70416667	0.262666667

Table 8 shows the total effects of job satisfaction, health status, family responsibility, working conditions, employee relation and occupational stress on academic staff absenteeism for the unstandardized effects. These effects are the same as the unstandardized weights of ordinary least square regression modelling (Hair et al. 2010). Furthermore, the performance of Academic staff absenteeism was calculated as 73.19

Notably, we derived the six quadrants successfully based on the mean values of the constructs' importance and performance value. As per Fig. 3, if we increase 1 unit in occupational stress performance from 73.438 to 74.438, academic staff absenteeism increases from 73.19 to 73.237. Similarly, if we increased 1 unit in performance of employee relations from 78.049 to

79.049, then academic staff absenteeism increases from 73.19 to 73.868. Therefore, out of the six determinants of academic staff absenteeism, the most critical factor was noted to be employee relations.



V. Discussion

The current study identifies several institutional and personal factors employee relations, health status, occupational stress, job satisfaction, family responsibilities, and working conditions that positively and significantly influence academic staff absenteeism at public campuses in Butwal Sub-Metropolitan City, Nepal. These results are strongly in line with findings from Nepali commercial banks, where similar variables were shown to have significant positive impacts on absenteeism (e.g., occupational stress, family responsibilities, working conditions, employee relations, job satisfaction, and health status) Occupational stress, in particular, has been widely documented as a key driver of absenteeism-when employees experience prolonged stress due to demanding workloads or inadequate support, their absenteeism tends to rise . Likewise, in educational contexts in Kathmandu, high levels of workplace stress have been linked to reduced job performance and increased absenteeism. The negative correlation between job satisfaction and absenteeism in this study mirrors global meta-analytic findings that higher job satisfaction tends to predict lower rates of absence Family responsibilities also emerge as a

consistent predictor; across sectors-from construction to banking studies-greater caregiving obligations correlate with more frequent work absences. Health status is similarly crucial: poorer physical or mental health leads to higher absenteeism, as shown in both Malaysian public health research and Nepali occupational studies. Employee relations thrive on group cohesion and organizational justice, both critical in reducing absentee rates Lastly, unfavorable working conditions-such as inadequate facilities, high job demands, and lack of flexibility-consistently forecast higher absence In contrast, the non-significant but positive relationship between perceived quality and absenteeism suggests that, although staff who perceive higher institutional quality may experience fewer absences, this effect was too weak to be statistically meaningful. Literature in organizational research supports this nuance: while perceived quality and organizational justice can influence employee behavior, their direct impact on absenteeism is often indirect or overshadowed by more proximal factors like stress, health, and job satisfaction.

VI. Implication and Conclusion

This study concludes that academic staff absenteeism in public campuses of Butwal Sub-Metropolitan City, Nepal, is shaped by a combination of individual and institutional factors. Grounded in Social Exchange Theory, Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, and the Health and Stress Theory, the findings demonstrate that job satisfaction, employee relations, working conditions, family responsibilities, health status, and occupational stress positively influence absenteeism. The study emphasizes that absenteeism is not merely a behavioral issue but a reflection of broader workplace dynamics and personal circumstances.

The implications of this research are multifold. For institutional leaders and policymakers, the results suggest an urgent need to foster a supportive and healthy work environment that enhances job satisfaction and acknowledges staff responsibilities beyond work. Strategies such as improving working conditions, offering wellness programs, and creating family-friendly policies can effectively reduce absenteeism. Additionally, future studies should adopt longitudinal or mixed method approaches and explore new variables such as leadership style, burnout, and organizational commitment to build a more comprehensive understanding of absenteeism in higher education. Ultimately, addressing these factors can improve faculty presence, boost institutional performance, and enhance the overall quality of education in Nepal's public campuses.

VII. References

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