

**A Research on Presenteeism in Students Who Attend Bilsem and Project Schools**

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**Abstract**

The aim of this research is to investigate presenteeism levels of high school students who attend science and art centers and project schools in Bursa. The research is a descriptive research designed in survey model. A quantitative research methods was used. Personal Information Form prepared by the researchers and Presenteeism Scale for Students were used as data collection tools in the study. 705 high school students who attend BILSEM and project schools in Bursa participated in the research. In the study, it was found that students' level of presenteeism did not differ statistically according to gender and attendance at BILSEM, but differed according to grade level and school type. It has been observed that science high school students focus more on the school academically than Anatolian high school students, they feel included in the school environment not only physically but in every sense when they are at school, they feel high sense of belonging to their school, they are better than the Anatolian high school students in focusing on the lesson, managing their stress and completing their homework. It is suggested that an in-depth examination together with different variables for other research studies, to reveal the presenteeism levels of students especially who have passed certain academic processes, exams and tests and who are considered more successful than other students, will be guided for future studies.

**Keywords:** Students, Presenteeism, Science and Art Centers, Project Schools

**Introduction**

Changes in the balance of supply and demand in today's world, the necessity for the quality of outputs to be above a certain level in all kinds of production, have become a compelling factor in the competitive conditions between institutions. For this reason, institutions need physically and psychologically healthy individuals who can respond to changes immediately, adapt to sudden events, are aware of their responsibilities, know their talents and are willing to develop them, communicative, in order to survive now and in the future. Individuals who can easily adapt to the world order are raised primarily in the family and then in the education system. It is important that individuals who have acquired the age-appropriate skills in the education system and can exist without breaking away from the system are brought into society. In this sense, the results of the existence of students who do not break away from the education system but cannot continue to the system effectively and efficiently, and especially if this situation is seen in gifted individuals, will not be positive for the society. This situation, on the other

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hand, raises the need to examine the dimension of presenteeism in the education system, which is first seen in the literature on business administration, especially in gifted individuals who have the potential to contribute to social development.

Presenteeism, which is used as the equivalent of non-existence at work, is a concept of Latin origin, but it is used as the absence or non-existence in Turkey. Hemp (2004) defines presenteeism as a situation that prevents employees from being at work but cannot fully devote themselves to their work due to illness and other health problems, and states that it reduces individual productivity in great extent. Aronson and Gustafson (2005) define presenteeism as the employee's going to work without taking leave or a report, although he or she should take leave or a report due to illness and take a rest.

Presenteeism, which is defined as the situation where employees cannot be mentally at work even though they are physically at work and inability of the employees to take an active part in the workflow or production process due to health problems even though they are at work (Üzüm & Şenol, 2019), brings inefficiency in production and can cause significant cost losses for businesses. In this context, studies on the research of job and productivity loss have drawn attention to the importance of the concept of presenteeism (Aronsson & Gustafsson, 2005; Kaplan, 2019). On the other hand, from an educational point of view, high presenteeism can be defined as students' minds elsewhere while they are in class, not being able to do their homework and failing to perform academically (Matsushita et al., 2011).

While the absence of employees due to illness is considered as a visible obvious situation, presenteeism, which is called being at work but not present in the process, is not very clear. It is very difficult to determine to what extent presenteeism decreases the performance of the individual at work and to what extent it causes loss of productivity (Hemp, 2004). Presenteeism can be caused by physical or mental illnesses of individuals, as well as non-illness factors such as lack of organizational support, stress, work-life conflict. Research studies have shown that thoughts such as workload, false sense of duty, role conflict, fear of being left behind, not wanting to take sick leave, negative impact on career development, not being able to say no to job demands, pressure from managers and colleagues, disciplinary punishment, lack of job security are effective on employees who come to work despite being sick (Akdoğan et al., 2018; Halbesleben et al., 2014; Kaplan, 2019; Quazi, 2013). In addition, it is thought that the economic loss or fear of losing the job is an important reason for the employee's decision not to go to work although s/he is sick.

According to Akdoğan et al. (2018), the results of presenteeism include poor performance, decrease in joint performance, deterioration in relations with colleagues, decrease in motivation, need for additional time to complete the work, increase in accidents/risks and the risk of transmission of the disease to other employees. There are also researchers who state that presenteeism does not require the employee to be sick himself or herself, and that presenteeism can also be seen because any family member of the employee is sick. Especially the health problems that can be seen in the first-degree relatives of the employee cause the employees to have problems in maintaining their work or cause serious decreases in the work performance and productivity of the employee who cannot give or herself to work even if s/he goes to work (Goetzel et al., 2004). In addition to many studies conducted in different business sectors (aviation, health, textile, tourism, local governments, etc.), a study conducted in Switzerland found that presenteeism is more common especially in the education sector and in individuals who cannot change

their job (Johns, 2010; Yıldız and Yıldız, 2013, cited in Demirbulat & Bozok, 2015). In the literature, studies in the education sector focused on the management staff and education staff, and studies revealing the negative effects of presenteeism on students were found to be insufficient. Presenteeism is defined as the inability of employees to exist in the workplace despite being physically at work, while from the point of view of students, it is defined as the students' mind being elsewhere while they are in class, not being able to do their homework and failing to perform academically (Cèspedes et al., 2018; Matsushita et al. 2011). Searching the presence of presenteeism in the educational environment is important in order to take precautions against this situation. Presenteeism is a concept that manifests itself in situations such as inability to attend the class even though the student actually in the class, seems to be listening while in the class but minds elsewhere, deals with other activities, decrease in academic achievement, low motivation, dissatisfaction, although s/he does not come to school due to physical or mental health problems, but the students who come to the school because it is compulsory cannot attend the class effectively (Sarıçam & Çetintaş, 2015). Presenteeism can turn into a problem that negatively affects the student's school life and creates long-term problems that reduce academic success. Therefore, it becomes more important to detect the presence of presenteeism and prevent it before it becomes a habit.

The aim of this research is to investigate the presenteeism levels of high school students who attend science and art centers and project schools in Bursa. For this purpose, in the research; answers were sought for "What are the levels of presenteeism of high school students who attend different science and art centers and project schools in Bursa? Do students' presenteeism levels differ significantly in terms of various demographic variables?" questions. This research is limited to the views of students who attend science and art centers and project schools in Bursa in the 2021-2022 academic year. It was assumed that the students participating in the study answered the questions sincerely.

### **Method**

The research is a descriptive research designed in survey model. A quantitative research design was used. Survey models aims to describe a past or present situation as it is (Karasar, 1999). In this research, it is aimed to reveal the level of high school students who attend science and art centers and project schools in Bursa on presenteeism. High school students who attend BILSEM and project schools in Bursa participated in the research. Purposive sampling method was used in the research and volunteerism was taken as basis.

Personal Information Form prepared by the researchers and Presenteeism Scale for Students were used as data collection tools in the study. Presenteeism Scale for Students was developed by Matsushita et al. (2011), adapted by Sarıçam et al. (2013), revised version for children and adolescents made by Sarıçam and Çetintaş (2015), Sarıçam and Akgül (2015).

The scale consists of 10 items and 2 sub-dimensions as work completion and entertainment avoidance. The Cronbach's alpha internal consistency reliability coefficient for the whole scale was calculated as .76 in children, .83 in adolescents and .47 in this study. 705 high school students who attend BILSEM and project schools in Bursa participated in the research.

Research data were collected by the researchers. The data were first processed into Microsoft Excel and then analyzed using the SPSS 23 program. First, it was checked whether the data were normally distributed. According to Büyüköztürk (2004), the Shapiro-Wilk Test is used if the group size is less than 50, and the Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test is used if the group size is larger than 50 in examining the conformity of the scores to the normal distribution. If the calculated  $p$  value is greater than .05, it is interpreted that the scores do not deviate significantly from the normal distribution at this significance level. As a result of the Kolmogorov Smirnov Test,  $p$  was measured as  $p = .200$  ( $p > .005$ ). Skewness and kurtosis values for the 5% confidence interval, the statistical value interval is expected to be  $\pm 2.58$ , and for the 1% confidence interval, the statistical value interval is expected to be  $\pm 1.96$  (Liu et al. 2005). When the results of the skewness and kurtosis test are examined, it is seen that the skewness value is .153 and the kurtosis value is .245, and it is within the expected range at the 5% confidence interval.

Frequency ( $f$ ) and percentage (%) values were calculated for the demographic characteristics of the participants in the research group. The demographic characteristics of students participating in the research is given in Table 1.

**Table 1**

*Demographic Characteristics of Students*

Gender	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Female	244	34.6	34.6	34.6
Male	461	65.4	65.4	100.0
Total	705	100.0	100.0	
<b>Grade</b>				
9	197	27.9	27.9	27.9
10	282	40.0	40.0	67.9
11	152	21.6	21.6	89.5
12	74	10.5	10.5	100
Total	705	100.0	100.0	
<b>Attendance to BILSEM</b>				
Yes	84	11.9	11.9	11.9
No	621	88.1	88.1	100.0
Total	705	100.0	100.0	
<b>School</b>				
Science High School	187	26.5	26.5	26.5
Social Science HS	44	6.2	6.2	32.8
Anatolian High School	157	22.3	22.3	55.0

Vocational and Technical An. HS	181	25.7	25.7	80.7
Anatolian Imam Hatip HS	136	19.3	19.3	100
Total	705	100.0	100.0	

According to Table 1, 34.6% of the students participating in the research are female and 65.4% are male. 27.9% of the students participating in the research are 9th grade, 40% are 10th grade, 21.6% are 11th grade, 10.5% are 12th grade. 11.9% of the students participating in the research continue to BILSEM. 26.5% of the students participating in the research attend science high school, 6.2% social sciences high school, 22.3% Anatolian high school, 25.7% vocational and technical Anatolian high school, 19.3% Anatolian imam hatip high school.

The Presenteeism Scale is scaled with a 5-point Likert scale. The arithmetic mean evaluation intervals according to 5-point Likert scales are given in Table 2, and the findings are interpreted accordingly.

**Table 2**

*Evaluation Range of Arithmetic Means According to 5-Point Likert Scale*

Interval	Level
1.00-1.80	Low level (Not define at all)
1.81-2.60	Partially low (Somewhat does not define)
2.61-3.40	Intermediate (Describe intermediate level)
3.41-4.20	Partially high (Describe well)
4.21-5.00	High level (Describes very well)

According to Table 2, the increase in the scores indicates the highness of the presenteeism, and the decrease indicates the lowness. Since the research data has a normal distribution, parametric test statistics were used in the analysis.

### Findings

The students' level of presenteeism is given in Table 3.

**Table 3**

*Students' Level of Presenteeism*

Variables	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	Minimum	Maximum	Level
Presenteeism	705	3.56	6.61	10.00	50.00	Partially high
1. Work Completion	705	2.89	4.12	5.00	25.00	Intermediate
2. Entertainment Avoidance	705	3.62	4.09	5.00	25.00	Partially high

According to Table 3, when the findings regarding the students' level of presenteeism are examined, it is seen that the high school students attending BILSEM and project schools have a partially high level of presenteeism, with an average value of  $\bar{x} = 3.56$ . Considering the sub-dimensions, it is seen that the student's level of work completion is intermediate ( $\bar{x} = 2.89$ ), while their level of entertainment avoidance is partially high ( $\bar{x} = 3.62$ ). The t-test results of students' level of presenteeism by gender are given in Table 4.

**Table 4**

*The t-test Results of Students' Level of Presenteeism by Gender*

Variables	Gender	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	DF	t	p
Presenteeism	Female	244	3.59	6.77	703	2.539	.160
	Male	461	3.54	6.49			
1. Work Completion	Female	244	3.44	3.83	703	-1.244	.125
	Male	461	3.52	4.26			
2. Entertainment Avoidance	Female	244	3.74	3.87	703	2.852	.366
	Male	461	3.56	4.16			

\* $p < .05$

When Table 4 is examined, the student's level of presenteeism [ $t_{(703)} = 2.539, p > .05$ ], work completion [ $t_{(703)} = -1.244, p > .05$ ], and entertainment avoidance [ $t_{(703)} = 2.852, p > .05$ ] did not differ statistically significantly according to gender. The t-test results of students' level of presenteeism according to their attendance to BILSEM is given in Table 5.

**Table 5**

*The t-test Results of Students' Level of Presenteeism According to Attendance to BILSEM*

Variables	Attendance to BILSEM	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	DF	t	p
Presenteeism	Yes	84	3.60	6.21	703	-2.589	.562
	No	621	3.55	6.63			
1. Work Completion	Yes	84	3.71	3.83	703	2.704	.073
	No	621	3.46	4.19			
2. Entertainment Avoidance	Yes	84	3.50	4.02	703	-1.458	.624
	No	621	3.64	4.09			

\* $p < .05$

When Table 5 is examined, the students' presenteeism level [ $t_{(703)} = -2.589, p > .05$ ], work completion [ $t_{(703)} = 2.704, p > .05$ ] and entertainment avoidance [ $t_{(703)} = -1.458, p > .05$ ] did not differ statistically significantly according to attendance to BILSEM. ANOVA results of students' level of presenteeism by grade level are given in Table 6.

**Table 6**

*ANOVA Results of Students' Level of Presenteeism by Grade*

Variables	Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Squares	F	p	Difference
Presenteeism	Between Groups	455,496	3	151,832	3.508	.015	9-12
	Within Groups	30339,120	701	43,280			10-12
	Total	30794,616	704				
1. Work Completion	Between Groups	252,043	3	84,014	5.021	.002	9-12
	Within Groups	11728,973	701	16,732			10-12
	Total	11981,016	704				
2. Entertainment Avoidance	Between Groups	42,923	3	14,308	.856	.463	-
	Within Groups	11710,544	701	16,705			
	Total	11753,467	704				

\* $p < .05$

When Table 6 is examined, the student's level of presenteeism [ $F_{(3,701)}=3.508, p<.05$ ] and work completion [ $F_{(3,701)}=5.021, p<.05$ ] differ statistically significantly according to the grade level of the student and did not differ statistically significantly on entertainment avoidance [ $F_{(3,701)}=.856, p>.05$ ] sub-dimension according to grade level. According to the results of the Scheffe Test, which was conducted to find out between which groups the difference was, it was seen that the presenteeism level of 12th grade ( $\bar{x} = 3.27$ ) students were higher than 9th ( $\bar{x} = 1.82$ ) and 10th grade ( $\bar{x} = 2.18$ ) students. In the dimension of work completion, the presenteeism level of 12<sup>th</sup>-grade ( $\bar{x} = 3.81$ ) students were higher than 9th ( $\bar{x} = 3.48$ ) and 10<sup>th</sup>-grade ( $\bar{x} = 3.40$ ) students. ANOVA results of students' level of presenteeism according to school type is given in Table 7.

**Table 7***ANOVA Results of Students' Level of Presenteeism According to School Type*

Variables	Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Squares	F	p	Difference
Presenteeism	Between Groups	1029,529	4	257,382	6.053	.000	SHS-AHS
	Within Groups	29765,087	700	42,522			
	Total	30794,616	704				
1. Work Completion	Between Groups	186,000	4	46,500	2.760	.027	SHS-AHS
	Within Groups	11795,016	700	16,850			
	Total	11981,016	704				
2. Entertainment Avoidance	Between Groups	480,581	4	120,145	7.461	.000	SHS-AHS
	Within Groups	11272,885	700	16,104			SHS - AİHHS
	Total	11753,467	704				AHS - VTAHS

\* $p < .05$ 

When Table 7 is examined, the students tend to have presenteeism [ $F_{(4,700)} = 6.053$ ,  $p < .05$ ] and work completion [ $F_{(4,700)} = 2.760$ ,  $p < .05$ ] and entertainment avoidance [ $F_{(4,700)} = 7.461$ ,  $p > .05$ ] differ statistically significantly according to school type. According to the results of the Scheffe Test, which was conducted to find out between which groups the difference was, it was seen that the presenteeism level of the Anatolian high school ( $\bar{x} = 3.61$ ) students were higher than the science high school students ( $\bar{x} = 3.50$ ). The presenteeism level of science high school ( $\bar{x} = 3.59$ ) students on the job completion were higher than Anatolian high school ( $\bar{x} = 3.35$ ) students. In entertainment avoidance, the presenteeism level of Anatolian high school ( $\bar{x} = 3.86$ ) and Anatolian Imam Hatip high school ( $\bar{x} = 3.72$ ) students were higher than science high school ( $\bar{x} = 3.42$ ) students, and Anatolian high school ( $\bar{x} = 3.86$ ) students' presenteeism level was higher than vocational and technical Anatolian high school students ( $\bar{x} = 3.54$ ).

### Discussion

The results obtained from the research carried out to determine the presenteeism level of high school students who attend science and art centers and project schools in Bursa are as follows. It was determined that gender and attendance to BILSEM were not effective variables in students' level of presenteeism, but grade level and school type were effective in students' level of presenteeism.

It was seen that the level of 12th grade students about presenteeism and presenteeism's work completion sub-dimension were higher than 9th and 10th grade students. Since 12th grade students are preparing for the university entrance exam, it can be stated that their focus on lessons and homework may have decreased compared to 9th and 10th grade students.

Anatolian high school students' level of presenteeism are higher than science high school students; it was seen that the presenteeism level of science high school students on the work completion sub-dimension were higher than Anatolian high school students. It has been observed that the science high school student concentrates on the school academically better than the Anatolian high school student, feels included in the school environment not only physically but in every sense when they are at school, and are better in attention and focusing skills, managing stress and completing their homework.

In the sub-dimension of entertainment avoidance, the presenteeism level of Anatolian high school and Anatolian imam hatip high school students were higher than science high school students, and the presenteeism level of Anatolian high school students were higher than vocational and technical Anatolian high school students.

In entertainment avoidance sub-dimension of presenteeism, in situations such as easily distracted in the lesson, coping with stress in difficult tasks, not feeling pessimistic when completing homework, not needing a break, not feeling tired; it was seen that science high school students performed better than Anatolian high school and Anatolian imam hatip high school students, and vocational and technical Anatolian high school students performed better than Anatolian high school students. Since the most obvious output of presenteeism is the decrease in performance and productivity (Sarıçam and Akgül, 2015), this situation shows us that the vocational and technical Anatolian high school students from the project school and BILSEM participating in the research focus on vocational competence and skill learning and on the other hand, the high academic goals of the science high school students are academically motivated them. It suggests that all of these protects them against a negative situation such as presenteeism.

According to the data obtained by Bayar (2016) from in-depth interviews with teachers working in private and public institutions and students studying in these institutions, it has been concluded that rewarding has a positive effect, especially in the prevention of presenteeism. It has been stated that rewarding affects performance, increases productivity, and significantly reduces presenteeism as it strengthens the individual's motivation. The results of the research reveal that the high motivation of the students in order to reach that goal by focusing on a goal prevents the students from many negativities and protects them from a situation such as presenteeism, where students are negatively affected.

Even though they are students who attend science and art centers and/or project schools and who prove themselves academically in primary education and go to a higher education in that way, the social support provided by their families and teachers is very important for them to put forward a clear purpose and goal. It can be said that positive school climate and school culture, effective friendship relations, supportive social environment, positive teacher-student relationship, fair and equitable rewarding system will positively affect student behavior by minimizing the presenteeism that can be seen in an inclusive education environment will increase the organizational commitment and belonging of the students.

The presence of many factors, either alone or together, such as students' negative attitudes towards school, negative attitudes of school administration and teachers towards students, violence, peer bullying, negative friendships, or isolation/inclusion, discrimination of students in the school environment can lead to presenteeism, or can lead students out of the system by removing them from school. In a study conducted by Bölür (2018), it was revealed that there is a significant relationship between leadership behavior styles and presenteeism. In another study, it was concluded that the people-oriented management style exhibited by the leaders was more successful in reducing presenteeism than the task-oriented management style (Kalaycı, 2022). In this sense, it can be said that school administrators and teachers have important responsibilities in minimizing the presenteeism that can be seen in students. In this context, presenteeism should be given more importance in educational institutions, studies should be carried out to increase the awareness of school administrators and teachers about presenteeism, and presenteeism screening should be carried out for students at regular intervals.

It is thought that an in-depth examination of other studies together with different variables, to reveal the presenteeism levels of students who have passed certain academic processes, central exams and intelligence tests, have been placed in a higher education, and evaluated as relatively successful, will be a guide for future studies.

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