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The Link Between High Performance Work Systems, Job Security, Absenteeism and Authentic Leadership: A Moderated Mediation Model

Abstract

The workplace antecedents of positive behavior have been demonstrated, but less is known about the cross-cutting outcomes, particularly how authentic leadership and high-performance work systems may affect absenteeism. This empirical study aims to address this unexplored side by considering social exchange theory in the Norwegian tourism industry. In the current study, a moderated mediation model was tested by PROCESS macro in which HPWS stimulates absenteeism behavior among permanent contract employees of the industry through job security and authentic leadership acts as a supportive construct. A self-administered questionnaire was designed targeting permanent contract employees of the industry. Having utilized data from tourism industry employees in Norway, the findings support the following: The existence of HPWS positively and significantly influences employees' absenteeism behavior. Job security was found to be one of the underlying mechanisms of this link, as it mediates the relationship between HPWS and employee absenteeism. Furthermore, the moderated role of authentic leadership was validated as it was found to play a supportive role in the linkage between HPWS and absenteeism. That is, such an indirect relationship between those constructs through job security was stronger for those who were supervised by leaders who adopt authentic leadership. The theoretical and practical contributions of these findings are discussed.

Keywords: *High performance work systems, Authentic leadership, Job security, Employee absenteeism, Norway, Moderated mediation model*

JEL Codes: M54, M1, M12

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1. Introduction

Absenteeism has always been a great concern of organizations as it can create undesired organizational costs such as productivity, poor performance, and frustrated coworkers (Schaumberg & Flynn, 2017). Scholars have been paying attention to that issue, and recent studies argued that workplace incivility (Zia-ud-Din et al., 2017), managerial turnover (Løkke & Sørensen, 2020), family responsibilities (Mukwevho et al., 2020), stress, sickness, and leadership styles (Wanninayaka, & Weerasooriya, 2021) are among the reasons of absenteeism; whereas several other publications focused on investigating the strategies for avoiding that issue (Johnson-Tate, 2018; Nunes et al., 2018).

On the other hand, Norway-specific studies have shown that the numbers of absenteeism have been increasing over the years, and the problem of rising absenteeism is even more worrying than the rise indicated by aggregate statistics (Biørn et al., 2013). Løkke et al (2007) highlighted that Norway has a significantly higher level of absenteeism compared to all the other Nordic countries. Moreover, it is suggested that there is a negative relationship between job satisfaction and absenteeism (Diestel et al., 2014). Hence, it became even more vital to investigate why the individuals tend to not attend their jobs in Norwegian context, especially considering the fact that the employees in the Norway are generally satisfied with their job (Eskildsen, 2004). However, the reason behind this issue has not grabbed enough attention among the researchers, and few studies conducted in Norway claimed that employee heterogeneity, sickness insurance (Markussen et al., 2011), daylight hours (Markussen & Røed, 2015), and work-family conflict (Jacobsen & Fjeldbraaten, 2020) cause absenteeism. Yet the topic should be handled in a wider scope by combining the effects of national, organizational, and leadership aspects.

According to a literature review published by Harrison & Martocchio (1998), absenteeism has 5 different origins, namely, personality, demographics, attitudes, social context, and decision making. Especially the sub-dimension, decision making, which is discussed by economical and psychological context, stated that individuals would take as many fully paid absence days in a given period as allowed or not penalized by their employer (economical); and that the individual's willingness to be in the workplace and the expectations of those around him/her about that person's presence in the workplace are the determinants of absenteeism (psychological). They also suggested that working in a non-union environment contributes to lower absenteeism. In parallel with that point of view, it is worth mentioning that Norway has an increasing absenteeism curve despite the unemployment rate having decreased between the years 1993 and 2005 (Biørn et al., 2013). Additionally, in Norway, as a part of Scandinavia where national unions and union confederations play an important role compared to most other countries, there is a high degree of union density. The proportion of unionized employees in the Norwegian labor market is 57 percent (Olsen & Kalleberg, 2004). This may be interpreted as people not possessing deep concerns about being unemployed as they will not face the risk of being dismissed due to multiple absences. It can also be argued that employees have a strong belief that they will find a job in the labor market without experiencing big difficulties. The job security feelings were subjected to some of the research, and Erlinghagen (2008) found out that, Norway was the second European country whose workers are least affected by job insecurity with only 9.2 percent expressing anxiety about the sustainability of their job's future.

In order to deal with that issue, organizations may be acting proactively and employing High-Performance Work Systems (HPWS), which refer to a set of best practices, including selectivity, comprehensive training, internal career opportunities, performance appraisals, empowerment, and incentive pay. Even though those systems provide some desired individual or organizational outcomes such as job satisfaction, affective commitment (Wu & Chaturvedi, 2009), and trust in management (Macky & Boxall, 2007), they also transfer power to employees and raise labor costs per employee (Cappelli & Neumark, 2001). Social exchange

theory suggests that mutual obligations are generated by the involvement of a series of interactions that are interdependent and contingent on the actions of another person. (Emerson, 1976; Blau, 1964). The basic rule of social exchange theory, reciprocity, refers to providing benefits in exchange for benefits obtained from the other part (Molm, 2010). Drawing on that, in countries like Norway, where there is a low unemployment rate and high unionized workers, the employees who are aware of their value and rights are likely feel secure about the continuation of their jobs. In other words, they might be assuming that it is not rational for the companies to dismiss employees before receiving a return on the investments made for them.

The study conducted by Olsen and Kalleberg (2004) revealed that Norwegian companies prefer to establish non-standard working agreements (such as hiring on-call employees) and argued that such tendency is due to the restrictive labor market regulations that create boundaries in firing permanent workers. Moreover, they suggested that demand for temporary labor results from generous access to leaves of absence of permanent employees. Even though hiring employees with such non-standard contracts creates some undesired consequences like increases in turnover (Grimshaw et al., 2001), and lower employee trust (Pearce, 1993); the main focus of this study, considering the scant attention of the academia, is to investigate the dynamics behind the absenteeism behavior of tourism employees in Norway who have permanent contracts.

Finally, it would be an insufficient approach to ignore the role of leadership while explaining the effects of HRM applications like HPWS. As Zhao et al (2020) suggested, focusing on either leadership or HRM alone fails to explain most of the variance in resultant outcomes, and they can be examined simultaneously to minimize omitted variable bias when estimating their impacts. This study argues that authentic leadership will be an effective leadership style in terms of implementation of the existing HRM systems, as they are driven to maintain integrity between intended, espoused, and implemented practices and to ensure that employees perceive integrity in the implementation of HR practices (Gill et al., 2018).

2. Literature Review, Hypothesis Development and Theoretical Model

2.1. High-Performance Work Systems (HPWS)

In order to provide a better understanding of the definition of HPWS, the emphasis should be given to the distinction of HR practices (control-oriented & commitment-oriented). It was claimed that, whereas control-oriented HR practices, which focus on reducing labor costs and increasing efficiency, mostly enforce employees to comply with the specified rules and regulations (Chang & Chen, 2011; Su & Wright, 2012) commitment-oriented HR practices create an organizational social climate that improves the motivation levels of employees in a way that they act in the best interests of their companies rather than their individual interest (Collins & Smith, 2006). In this direction, it was recently suggested that HPWS was considered a synonymous concept of commitment-oriented HR practices (Bakkalbasi, 2021). HPWS can be defined as a group of separate but interconnected HR management practices designed to enhance employee and firm performance outcomes through improving workforce competence, attitude, and motivation. Extensive recruitment and selection procedures, incentive compensation and performance management systems, employee involvement, training, mentoring are the main applications of HPWS (Takeuchi et al., 2009). Even though the usefulness of HPWS was criticized based on the idea that the value of the human capital might be transferred to other firms if the employees leave the organization (Wright et al., 2001); numerous empirical pieces of evidence between HPWS and desired outcomes regarding employees' competencies, motivation, and performance exists in the literature (e.g., lower employee turnover rates, higher satisfaction, employee commitment, higher labor productivity) (Dayarathna, 2018).

2.2. Absenteeism

According to Harrison and Price (2003), not being physically present at the workplace doesn't equal being absent from it. Therefore, they defined absenteeism as "lack of physical presence at a behavior setting when and where one is expected to be" (p. 204). Many studies revealed a macro-level impact of absenteeism in terms of productivity loss. For example, concerning their research conducted in the construction sector, Hanna et al (2005) found that the absenteeism rate between 6 and 10%, causes a 24.4% loss in productivity. A more remarkable estimation was also made by Leaker (2008). According to his research, "United Kingdom had approximately lost £19.2 billion in 2007 to direct and indirect costs of employee absenteeism".

Apart from the impact on productivity, the cost of absenteeism in the national budget is huge especially in countries like Norway which has a public system refunding a great share of sickness absenteeism. Saksvik et al (2017) presented that, a grant of 38 billion NOK was used for sick pay in the national budget in 2014 which represents around 1.9% of the national budget. This figure has increased up to 120 billion NOK in 2018 (Palmer, 2018). Considering the total impact of absenteeism on a large scale, the topic has been a great concern of researchers over the years, and many attempts were made in order to reveal what the antecedents of absenteeism might be.

As personality characteristics, Porter and Steers (1973) suggested that emotional instability, anxiety, low achievement orientation, aggression, independence, and sociability are the source of absenteeism. Besides, size of organization, quality and nature of supervision, workgroup size and structure, shift work, overtime, organization control systems, and absence control policies, incentive schemes, and type of work were claimed as the organizational source of absenteeism (Van der Merwe & Miller, 1988; as cited in Rehman, 2019).

2.3. Social Exchange Theory & Job Security

The norm of reciprocity, the basic rule of social exchange theory, refers to the notion that "contributions will be reciprocated and that (...) the actions of one party are bound to those of another" (Rousseau, 1989, p. 128). Similarly, Blau (1964) argues that the exchange partners will strive for balance in the relationship, and, in case of imbalance, attempts will be made to restore the balance. It can be argued that as HPWS transfer power to employees and raise labor costs (Cappelli & Neumark, 2001), employees who are been supported by such systems feel secure in terms of their employability.

In terms of job security, this study adopts the idea suggested by Probst (2003) claiming that the perception of job security is influenced by both continuance of one's job and stability with respect to desired features of one's job. By clearly differentiating the satisfaction regarding one's job security, she suggested that the measurement called job security index assessed cognitive appraisal of the future of his or her job with respect to the perceived level of stability and continuance of that job.

2.4. Authentic Leadership

The term authenticity can be described as owning one's personal experiences, including one's thoughts, emotions, needs, desires, or beliefs (Harter, 2002). Conceptualization of authenticity encompasses four key components: (1) awareness (i.e., knowledge and trust in one's thoughts, feelings, motives, and values); (2) unbiased processing (i.e., objectivity about and acceptance of one's positive and negative attributes); (3) behavior (i.e., acting based on one's true preferences, values, and needs rather than merely acting to please others, secure rewards, or avoid punishments); and (4) relational orientation (i.e., achieving and valuing truthfulness and openness in one's close relationships (Gardner et al., 2011).

Authentic Leadership style emerged from the contributions of Luthans and Avolio (2003) to the existing literature and has become increasingly popular ever since. It can be defined as

a process that draws from both positive psychological capacities and a highly developed organizational context, which results in both greater self-awareness and self-regulated positive behaviors on the part of leaders and associates, fostering positive self-development (Luthans & Avolio, 2003). Besides, authentic leadership has been a fundamental element of ethical leadership studies over recent decades (Arasli et al., 2019).

Another definition was provided by Walumbwa et al. (2008). According to them, authentic leadership is “a pattern of leader behavior that draws upon and promotes both positive psychological capacities and a positive ethical climate to foster greater self-awareness, an internalized moral perspective, balanced processing of information, and relational transparency on the part of leaders working with followers, fostering positive self-development.” (p. 94). Integrity, benevolence, high self-awareness, and ethical values are the main characteristics of authentic leaders. They exhibit transparent and consistent behaviors in the relationships they establish with their followers. It provides the creation of positive emotional states such as confidence, optimism, hope, resilience, and integrity (Wulffers, 2017).

2.5. Relationship Between HPWS & Absenteeism and Job Security as a Mediator

There are contradictory findings in terms of how HPWS impacts employee absenteeism. For example, whereas Guthrie et al (2009) suggested that firms utilizing higher levels of HPWS tend to have lower rates of employee absenteeism; Ananthram et al (2018) revealed that there was no significant direct effect of HPWS on presenteeism. Moreover, some other studies suggested the negative association between those two constructs under quite specific circumstances, which leads us to question the generalizability issue of this relationship. For example, Thite and Russell (2010) (as cited in Ananthram et al., 2018) pointed out that strategic HR initiatives may be effective in reversing the problem of absenteeism of the employees who were highly educated and overqualified for the semi-skilled positions they have in the Indian call-centers. In a similar vein, rather than discussing the HPWS as a whole construct, Zatzick and Iverson (2011) investigated the impact of the high involvement work systems (HIWS), which can be considered as a sub-dimension of HPWS; and found a negative association between HIWS and absenteeism. Finally, de Reuver et al (2019) revealed that among three different types of HPWS (opportunity-enhancing, skill-enhancing, and motivation-enhancing) only opportunity-enhancing HPWS can reduce absenteeism as long as employees are in feel of high workload. In light of these findings, in order to clarify the expected outcomes of HPWS, it is crucial to investigate how HPWS and absenteeism relationship is formed within the Norwegian tourism context. We suggest that there is a positive relationship between the two constructs. Because employees perceive that their value to the firm increases when they are supported and empowered by such systems (Batt, 2004). Because of that reason, it is predictable that they feel more freedom to be absent from their work since they might believe that it is relatively difficult for their employers to penalize them due to the high number of their absence days. Based on the abovementioned discussion, the following hypothesis is stated:

Hypothesis 1: HPWS is positively related to absenteeism.

Bertaux and Queneau (2002) suggested that great use of HPWS makes employees think that their job securities are insured given the fact that the applications under the HPWS make them convinced that it will not cost them their jobs. Besides, some of the studies pointed out that conceptualization of HPWS should comprise job security, suggesting that, as long as companies invest in HPWS practices, employees become more valuable assets, so that they should not be let go easily (Shih et al., 2006; Zacharatos et al., 2005). Even though findings of the studies conducted by Ramsay et al (2000) and Osterman (2000) suggested that HPWS

may decrease job security, Batt (2004) pointed out that the relationship between two constructs might differ across occupational groups. Regarding that, we take a step further by suggesting that cultural context can also play an important role defining in that relationship. In line with previous studies, and in order to fill the gap in the literature concerning the lack of attention to such relationship in the Norwegian tourism context, the following hypothesis is stated:

Hypothesis 2: HPWS is positively related to job security.

Nicholson & Johns (1985) suggested that absence should not be discussed without considering the interpersonal influence, therefore, defined absence culture as "the set of shared understandings about absence legitimacy and the established 'custom and practice' of employee absence behavior and its control". Based on the high absence numbers (Biørn et al., 2013; Løkke et al., 2007), and/or due to the impact of unionized employees (Olsen & Kalleberg, 2004), and high-level job security in the labor market (Erlinghagen, 2008), it is possible to claim that absence culture has been dominant in Norway. Besides, considering the principles of reciprocity, employees might believe that the company expects them to repay those extra expenses incurred for them in the long-term, therefore do not feel any insecurity about being dismissed as this exchange process will reciprocally continue. Based on the abovementioned discussion, the following hypothesis is stated:

Hypothesis 3: Job security is positively related to absenteeism.

Even though job security mediates the relationship between leader-member exchange and work engagement (Altinay et al., 2019), predicts job satisfaction, organizational commitment (Hur, 2019), and employee's customer focus (Dienhart & Gregoire, 1993); many studies conducted in the past years showed inconsistent results between job security work performance relationship as both non-significant and negative relationships between those constructs were found (Loi et al., 2011). However, one of the most recent studies that were devoted to exploring such a relationship showed that labor productivity decreased when the perceived job security of employees is high. More specifically, it was claimed that when job security is very high, and the employment is too secure, employees may lose incentives to work productively (Machek, 2019).

This finding somehow plays a supportive role with the proposed idea of this study, which suggests that job security explains the indirect relationship between HPWS and absenteeism. Because employees who have a strong perception regarding their job security might withdraw from their extra efforts in order to work productively, by showing extra tendencies of being absent from their jobs. Livanos and Zangelidis (2013) indicated that employees working in flexible and lightly regulated labor markets where it is easy to fire people may exhibit lower absences, since being absent from work may increase the risk of job loss. To the authors' best knowledge, there is only one, and outdated attempt in the literature that investigated the impact of job security on absenteeism. According to Moch and Fitzgibbons (1979), when employees with many dependents and long tenure perceive low job security, they are less likely than others to be absent. When employees tend to withdraw from their extra efforts and contributions, as they might feel that the employability is secured, they are less likely to be present at their workplace. Bearing this in mind, the following hypotheses were proposed:

Hypothesis 4: Job security mediates the relationship between HPWS and absenteeism.

2.6. Authentic Leadership as Moderator

It was suggested that, implemented HR practices can diverge substantially from managers' original intentions (Truss, 2001), thus, in order for HR practices to be successfully implemented, there is a need for effective leadership activities of the sort recognized and reciprocated by employees. (Purcell & Hutchinson, 2007). In this study, we seek an empirical response to the question wheatear if authentic leadership act as the supportive construct within the relationship of HPWS absenteeism. Congruent with the study conducted by Gill et al (2018), it is claimed that the authentic leader implements the existing HPWS practices in the way that it was intended. Because they are autonomously motivated in their activities, engaging mostly in behaviors that they would willingly self-endorse.

Moreover, their high self-awareness and abilities of balanced processing led them to be more open to alternative views of existing HR practices. Besides, their transparency helps them to express their views about those practices in order to adjust them with their own perspective. Authentic leaders, who internalize and have a sense of ownership regarding existing HR practices, are perceived by employees as "owning" the HR practices as well. According to Piening et al (2014), the effective implementation of an HR system depends on employees' perceptions of the system's distinctiveness that refers to its credibility and supportiveness. With this regard, it is argued that authentic leadership can provide successful implementation of HR applications as they increase trust (Wong & Giallonardo, 2013), strengthen organizational justice (Spencer-Muldraw, 2020), and create a supportive working environment (Laschinger et al., 2012).

As it was stated in the previous parts of the study, recruitment, performance management systems, employee involvement, and mentoring are considered as the main applications of HPWS. The detailed examination regarding how authentic leaders influence their followers within those specific processes, and the linkage between each component of HPWS and the role of authentic leaders can also predict authentic leadership style's supportive role for HPWS-absenteeism relationship. Firstly, during the recruitment process, authentic leaders can demonstrate their commitment to openness, concern for others, positive values, and positive emotions. This approach can transfer a message to candidates (future subordinates) that this is a type of organization that gives opportunities in terms of growth (Karam et al., 2017). Drawing on the social exchange theory, recruitment in that sense should be considered as the first stage where psychological contract establishes due to the transparency displayed by authentic leaders, thus shaping the feeling of trust in the eyes of subordinates toward their authentic leaders (Clapp-Smith et al., 2009; Kleynhans et al., 2021).

Consequently, authentic leaders convey a message about the existing HPWS during the recruitment process and instill a sense of confidence in the applicability of those applications. In terms of performance management systems, it can be claimed that the existence of authentic leadership assures that, instead of having perceived as perfunctory or a waste of time, it is a functioning system that measures performance. Because authentic leaders are known to be strongly committed to follower development (Gardner et al., 2005). Similarly, mentoring activities, as an integral component of career development, are suggested to be conducted effectively in the authentic leader-follower relationship, as authentic leaders promote self-clarity that makes it easier for the leader to provide honest and acceptable feedback (Karam et al., 2017). On the other hand, employee involvement is an important part of HPWS as an opportunity-enhancing HR practice. According to Lawler (1986), involvement occurs when employees have power, information, knowledge, and rewards. Those notions can be associated with autonomy, which reflects the extent to which a job allows the freedom, independence, and discretion to schedule work, make decisions, and select the methods used to perform tasks (Hackman & Oldham, 1975). According to Ilies et al (2005), authentic leaders use autonomy or empowerment as a motivational tool. Therefore,

logically, when managers lead according to authentic leadership style and give autonomy, their followers would be involved in their job more often.

Finally, a negative relationship between authentic leadership and job insecurity was suggested by previous studies (e.g., Wang et al., 2021; Wang & Xie, 2020). Because authentic leaders increase their subordinates' trust in supervisors, and perceptions of psychological safety and justice (Maximo et al., 2019). By this means employees feeling of security regarding the future of their employment status may be strengthened, since trust in supervisors, psychological safety, and justice are negatively correlated to job insecurity (Jiang & Lavaysse, 2018). Consequently, based on the abovementioned discussion, we claim that authentic leadership is a supportive way of increasing the absenteeism behavior emerged by HPWS through job security. Therefore, the following hypotheses are stated:

Hypothesis 5: Authentic leadership moderates the relationship between HPWS and job security.

Hypothesis 6: The indirect relationship between HPWS and absenteeism through job security is moderated by authentic leadership, such that this indirect relationship is stronger with a higher level of authentic leadership.

Based on the above discussion, the theoretical model of the study, which is shown in Figure 1, captures the impact of HPWS on employee absenteeism with the mediator role of job security. Additionally, it further examines the presence of authentic leadership that can strengthen the impact of HPWS on job security directly, and employee absenteeism indirectly.

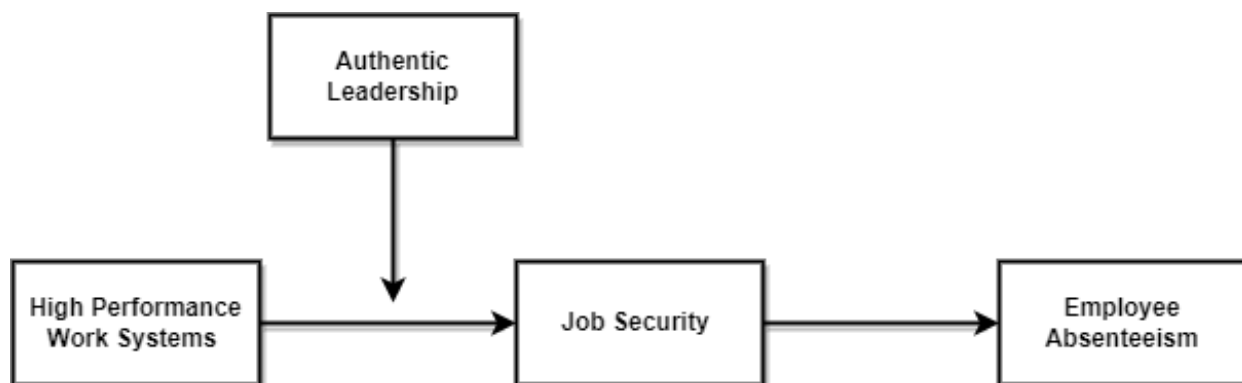


Figure 1: Theoretical Model

3. Methodology

3.1. Sample and Data Collection

This research gathered data from tourism organizations in Stavanger, Norway. The cover letter included a question that was used to identify the participant's contract type in the work setting (i.e., on-call, part-time, permanent) to differentiate the study sample, followed by a brief paragraph clarifying the purpose of the study. It was also stated that the anonymity of the respondents will be protected. The cover letter, as well as the survey, was distributed by a researcher to all participating employees. We used the convenience sampling method to choose permanent contract holders from the population, utilizing the above-indicated question.

As suggested by Podsakoff et al (2003), a one-month time lag was used to control for common method variance (CMV). At time 1, 300 questionnaires were distributed and 237 of them were answered. After the period of one month, 300 questionnaires were delivered, of

which 202 were returned. After sorting all the surveys and identifying the invalid ones that have lack information 427 questionnaires were considered valid.

3.2. Measurements

The authentic leadership self-assessment questionnaire developed by Walumbwa et al (2008) was used to capture leaders' authentic leadership behavior. The scale has four subscales – self-awareness, internalized moral perspective, balanced processing, and relational transparency. Absenteeism was measured through two items from Autry and Daugherty (2003), and the reported Cronbach's α value of was 0.82 in their study. In order to measure job security, the 10-item scale developed by Oldham et al (1986) was used in this research. The reliability coefficient for the scale was 0.87. HPWS is measured through the three most significant sub-dimensions of the construct namely, training, empowerment, and employee rewards. The empowerment scale (Cronbach's $\alpha = .81$) was adapted from (Hayes, 1994), training (Cronbach's $\alpha = .87$), and employee rewards (Cronbach's $\alpha = .83$) were measured using items from Boshoff and Allen (2000). Responses to the scale items were elicited on 5-point scales from “strongly agree” to “strongly disagree”

4. Results

4.1. Descriptive statistics

Out of 439 questionnaires answered by anonymous respondents, 427 of them were eligible for further analysis. As it is presented in Table 1, %43 of all participants is female. The distribution of the participants' education level is as follows; The largest number of respondents had bachelor's degree (%38,4), whereas %9,84 of them had primary school graduation. Besides, 158 respondents had high school diploma (%37). As for age group classification, the majority of people who participated in the survey were between the ages of 21 – 30 (%43,4), while respondents from the age group of 31-40 represented the second biggest one (%29,04).

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Respondents.

Gender				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	242	56.7	56.7	56.7
Female	185	43.3	43.3	100.0
Total	427	100.0	100.0	

The highest education degree				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Primary School	42	9.8	9.8	9.8
High School	158	37.0	37.0	46.8
Bachelor's degree	164	38.4	38.4	85.2
Master's degree / MBA	63	14.8	14.8	100.0

Total	427	100.0	100.0
Age			
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent
			Cumulative Percent
Less than 20	77	18,0	18,0
21-30	185	43,4	61,4
31-40	124	29,0	90,4
41-50	32	7,5	97,9
50 and above	9	2,1	100,0
Total	376	100.0	100.0

4.2. Measurement Model

The measurement model is comprised of four latent variables such as HPWS, AL, JSEC, and ABSNT. Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was utilized to validate the measurement model, the study performed the following fit indices to confirm the measurement model; model χ^2 , Comparative Fit Index (CFI), Root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), Tucker-Lewis Fit Index (TLI), and Incremental Fit Index (IFI). The insignificant χ^2 , Values prove a good fit which is 0.98 for CFI, both IFI, and TLI prove a good model fit. While the values of RMSEA below 0.05 indicate a good fit of the model (Hair et al., 2010). According to the results of the preliminary statistical tests as shown in Table 1, the results supported the proposed model as a contrast to the alternative models: $\chi^2/df = 1.52$, CFI=0.98, RMSEA=0.030 proves an excellent model fit. Thus, the outcomes of the confirmatory factor analysis back up the uniqueness of all the theoretical dimensions.

Table 2: Comparison of Alternative Measurement Models for Main Constructs.

Model	χ^2	df	$\Delta\chi^2$	Δdf	RMSEA	CFI	SRMR
4-Factor Model	1162.88	763	-	-	.030	.98	0.0301
3-Factor Model	1566.322	766	403.42	3	.064	.94	0.0488
1-Factor Model	4132.211	769	2565.889	3	.112	.72	0.0952

*P<0.001(A) Blend of JSEC And Authentic Leadership (AL) (ABSNT); (B)Blend Of All Variables

As it can be seen clearly, the construct validity of the suggested model was explained via both convergent and discriminant validity. The values of the average variance extracted (AVE) demonstrate that the convergent validity of the proposed model is at the required cut off level since 1 the values of AVE are above the expected criteria which is 0.50 (see Table 2). The discriminant validity of all of the constructs is also tested by using the criteria suggested by (Hair et al., 2010; Fornell & Larcker, 1981). As per the criteria, the square root of the variables should be larger than their correlations. This condition is very favorable for our results since the square root of all the constructs are greater than their correlations. Moreover, Cronbach's alpha values of HPWS, JSEC, AL and ABSNT respectively were 0.97, 0.92, 0.94 and 0.93, which are also at the acceptable levels where the threshold criteria which is about 0.70 at minimum as suggested by Hair et al (2014).

The correlation analysis depicts that HPWS is significantly related to JSEC as presented by regression coefficients ($r=0.209$, $p<.01$), ABSNT ($r=0.097$, $p<.05$) and AL ($r=-0.134$, $p<.01$). Accordingly, JSEC is significantly related with AL ($r=0.134$, $p<.01$), and ABSNT ($r=0.126$, $p<.01$). ABSNT is not significantly related to AL ($r=-.718$, $p<.05$). Thus, correlation results proved the initial verification of the proposed hypothesis.

Table 3: Correlation Analysis.

Variables	Mean	SD	CR	α	AVE	1	2	3	4
1 HPWS	3.02	0.317	0.951	0.97	0.554	(0.736)			
2 JSEC	2.43	0.848	0.933	0.92	0.638	0.209**	(0.951)		
3 ABSNT	3.71	1.136	0.957	0.94	0.917	0.097*	0.126**	(0.789)	
4 AL	2.21	0.827	0.894	0.93	0.548	0.136**	0.134**	-.718	(0.725)

CR=Construct Reliability, AVE=Average Variance Extracted, HPWS= High Performance Work Systems, JSEC =Job Security, ABSNT=Absenteeism, AL=Authentic Leadership

4.3. Test of Hypotheses

In this study, a recent statistical approach was used to test the hypothesis model in this paper (Preacher et al., 2007). Specifically, the hypotheses were verified by utilizing PROCESS macro developed by Hayes (2013). The moderated mediation analysis was performed by using PROCESS model 7 which is accurately suitable for the hypothesized model. In Table 3, the results of the mediation analysis are demonstrated. In line with hypothesis 1, high performance work systems (HPWS) was positively related to the employee absenteeism (ABSNT) of the participants. The statistical results supported the hypothesized relationship ($\beta=0.457$, $p < 0.01$), hence hypothesis 1 was accepted. In line with hypothesis 2, HPWS was positively related to the participants' JSEC. The statistical results supported the hypothesized relationship ($\beta=0.7784$, $p < 0.01$), hence hypothesis 2 was accepted. Hypothesis 3 states, JSEC was positively related to the participants' ABSNT. The statistical results also supported the hypothesized relationship ($\beta=0.2014$, $p < 0.01$), hence hypothesis 3 was accepted. Hypothesis 4 states, HPWS was likely to have an indirect effect on ABSNT through JSEC. The indirect effect of HPWS on ABSNT was verified to be considered as proved by the 95% confidence interval which did not hold zero (0.0373; 0.2396). Thus, in table 3, the results of

the mediation analysis proved the existence of JSEC as a mediator in the direct relationship between HPWS and ABSNT.

Table 4: Results of The Mediation Analyses.

	Coefficient	SE	Bootstrap 95% CI
IV to the mediator (a path)			
HPWS → JSEC	0.209**	0.127	
Mediator to DV (b path)			
JSEC → ABSNT	0.124**	0.065	
Total effect of IV on DV (c path)	0.345***	0.1728	
Direct effect of IV on DV (c' path)	0.457***	.1750	
Indirect effect of IV on DV through the proposed mediator			
HPWS → JSEC → ABSNT	-0.112	.512	[-0.2414 ; -.0344]

*p < .10, **p < .05, ***p < .01

According to hypothesis 5, AL moderates the relationship between HPWS and JSEC which has been supported with the statistical results presented in Table 4 ($\beta = -0.5608, p < 0.01$). In line with our prediction, the association was weaker for JSECs' having a high level of AL. Therefore, hypothesis 5 was accepted. Moreover, the overall models depicted that the index of moderated mediation was significant because 95% bootstrap confidence interval (.0373– .0239) did not contain zero.

Moreover, we also established the conditional indirect effects of HPWS on ABSNT through JSEC at the values of AL. All SD were well above the mean was significant because upper and lower limits of confidence interval did not contain zero respectively. (-.018 - .095); (-.018 - .095) and (-.018 - .095). Regarding, the statistical results were significant because the bootstraps 95% confidence interval did not contain zero (0.0906 – 0.0954). Thus, based on the statistical evidence hypothesis 6 was supported.

Table 5: Ordinary Least Squares Regression Coefficients from Moderated Mediation Model.

Predictors	Outcome	
	M: JSEC	Y: ABSNT
Constant	2.4107	.475

X: HPWS	.7784***	0.4577***
M: JSEC		0.2014**
AL	.1630**	
HPWS × AL	.5608***	
R ²	.951	.0309
F	14.7614***	5.3727***

Moderator	Index of Moderated Mediation	95% Confidence Interval (5000 bootstraps)
AL	.1130	.0373 – .2396

Conditional Indirect Effects = Mean ± 1SD

AL	Bootstrap Indirect Effect	Bootstrap SE	Boot LLCI	Boot ULCI
-.8280	-.2503	.0966	-.4833	-.0852
.0000	-.1568	.0633	-.3124	-.0550
.8280	-.0633	.0397	-.1747	-.0076

Note: N = 427

PROCESS Model 7, Bootstrap sample size = 5,000, LL = lower limit, UL = upper limit, CI = confidence interval; JSEC=job security, AL=authentic leadership, * p < .10, ** p < .05, *** p < .01 (two-tailed).

5. Conclusions, Implications and Limitations

5.1. Conclusions

This study aimed to examine the potential reasons for high absenteeism figures observed in the Norwegian tourism context. Utilizing the social exchange theory, the current study seems to be the first attempt to consider such an actual phenomenon. In order to achieve this, the study suggests investigating the following objectives: (a) the effect of HPWS on absenteeism, (b) HPWS on job security, (c) job security on absenteeism (d) job security as a mediator in the relationship between HPWS and absenteeism, (e) moderating role of authentic leadership on the abovementioned constructs. The data was collected from a sample of tourism industry employees holding a permanent contract were confirmed the proposed hypothesis. The study findings demonstrate that HPWS is significantly associated with job security and absenteeism, and the association was more powerful for employees led by authentic leaders. Moreover, job security mediates the joint influence of authentic leadership and HPWS on absenteeism.

The research study testing for appertaining to the linkage between HPWS and employee absenteeism as well as job security is consistent with the social exchange theory and its basic principle, reciprocity (Rousseau, 1989); suggesting that the reciprocity belief of employees, regarding the HPWS applications, contributes to their job security feelings. That is, the fact that employees with assumptions about the expectations of their companies in terms of paying back the expenses allocated for them result in elevated levels of job security.

Tourism industry employees' job security likewise causes absenteeism. Concordant to the findings of Machek (2019), the industry staff who feel a high level of job security may have no concerns in terms of work productively, thus showing higher tendencies to be absent from work. One explanation of this relationship could be attributed to the absence culture of the Norwegian context; therefore, findings of the study are likewise in agreement with previous studies suggesting the positive linkage with absence culture and individual absence (e.g., Martocchio, 1994).

The interaction outcome regarding the moderation effect of authentic leadership on the above-mentioned absenteeism determinants received support from the informants selected for the study. The empirical evidence of this study illustrates that authentic leaders create the sense that HPWS are assured to be implemented as they are intended to be. This finding is in line with the study of Cao et al (2020), where it is suggested that the implementation process of HPWS is likely to be contingent on the line managers' authentic leadership.

5.2. Implications

HPWS cannot be considered as the only antecedents of absenteeism issue in Norway as there is an absence culture in the country due to the existence of the factors such as unionization, and low unemployment rates. By pointing out the role of HPWS on absenteeism through job security, this study, therefore, doesn't support the idea of extinguishing HPWS, but suggests that those applications should be organized in a more proper way instead. Herzberg's two-factor motivation theory points out the two main distinctions in employee motivation, namely motivation factors and hygiene factors.

Based on the theory, the presence of motivation factors (e.g., achievement, recognition, work itself, responsibility, advancement, and growth) increase motivation, whereas hygiene factors (e.g., company policy and administration, supervision, relationship with supervisor, working conditions, salary, and relationship with peers, personal relationship, relationship with subordinates, status, and security) is considered as factors that create dissatisfaction in case of their absence (Herzberg, 1966; Herzberg et al., 1959). In this context, in order to increase the motivation of the employees, more emphasis can be given to HPWS applications such as employee involvement, training, and mentoring, which can be associated with the motivation factors (achievement, recognition, advancement, and growth). Melhem and Ozgit (2019) stated that applications such as staff development, empowerment, and internal communication have a positive impact on employee retention through increased motivation. As a result, as long as companies organize HPWS in a way that focuses on the motivation of employees, they will have less tendency to be absent from work since their retention increases.

From a broader perspective, it has been seen that companies in the Norwegian tourism sector utilize a variety of strategies to obtain flexibility by signing temporary and on-call contracts with a high number of employees (Friberg & Midtbøen, 2018). Another argument was presented by Moen (2007), indicating that those types of contracts are used by employers in order to reduce costs and to weaken organized labor. However, such an employment relationship might cause some undesired outcomes on the perceptions and behaviors of employees. It can be easily predicted that not having the same rights as peers and colleagues might create a sense of organizational injustice, which leads to workplace deviant behavior (Lee & Barrett, 2011). In order to proactively deal with that issue, companies must implement

new strategies that strengthen the justice perception of employees or decrease the number of atypical contracts.

5.3. Limitations and Avenues for Future Research

Similar to the predecessor studies, this research also has some limitations. First of all, the sample included only one type of employment status, namely, permanent employees. Future studies could focus on different employment types, and more ideally, use the contract type as a control variable in order to investigate the potential differences among different employee groups. Secondly, in a similar vein, future examinations could be done in order to investigate how non-standard contract holders' perceptions or emotions are affected by their colleagues' (permanent employees) high number of absence days. Thirdly, future studies could also examine the potentially detrimental effects of absenteeism on other employee outcomes such as engagement, citizenship behaviors, organizational commitment. Finally, the present study focused on HPWS as a whole construct rather than in terms of investigating the influences of each sub-dimensions on mentioned outcomes. Further studies may investigate the possible relationships between the sub-dimensions of HPWS and job security and absenteeism to reveal which of them causes more to the ongoing absenteeism issue.

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