

Absenteeism of factory workers at the Grain Field Chickens Abattoir.

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ABSTRACT

This research was conducted to assess absenteeism at the Grain Field Chickens broiler abattoir in Reitz. This was assessed through the analyses of absenteeism by contextualizing the different forms of absenteeism according to the literature; determining the contributing factors of absenteeism; determining how absenteeism affects the workplace and determining if strategies exist to assist in reducing absenteeism. The researcher adopted a quantitative research design where questionnaires were distributed. The researcher used Regression Analysis, Kruskal-Wallis analysis, Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient, and Chi-Squared Analysis to analyse the results. The population consisted of 352 factory workers working at the Grain Field Chickens Abattoir. The primary explanatory factor of absenteeism was found to be years of employment, followed by family responsibility. It was found that as the years of employment increase, the rate of absenteeism increases. The average absent days for employees that are employed for less than three years were 8.93 days per year, while employees that are employed for longer than three years were absent on average of 20.39 days per year. It was found that the average absent days for employees with family members in their care were 18.67 days per year, as opposed to 9.16 days per year for employees who do not have a family member in their care. Based on the findings, absenteeism figures should be documented in such a way as to inform managers of any adverse trends that may exist.

DECLARATION

I, Kevin de Villiers, declare that the field study hereby handed in for the qualification Master's in Business Administration at the UFS Business School at the University of the Free State is my own independent work and that I have not previously submitted the same work, either as a whole or in part, for a qualification at/in another university/faculty.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kevin de Villiers', is written over a light blue rectangular background.

Kevin de Villiers

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I want to start by expressing my gratitude to my Heavenly Father, Jesus Christ, for leading me and providing me with the strength to conclude this research. Philippians 4:13 “ I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me”

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Table of Contents

LIST OF FIGURES.....	ix
LIST OF TABLES	x
Chapter 1.....	1
1.1 Introduction	1
1.2 Background	1
1.2.1 Absenteeism	1
1.2.2 Contributing factors of Absenteeism.....	2
1.2 Problem Statement.....	7
1.3.1 Research Questions.....	7
1.4 Research Objectives	7
1.4.1 Primary Objective.....	7
1.4.2 Secondary Objectives	8
1.5 Research Methodology.....	8
1.5.1 Research Design.....	8
1.5.2 Sampling Strategy.....	9
1.5.3 Recruitment Strategy	9
1.5.4 Data Collection Method.....	10
1.5.5 Data analyses method	10
1.5.6 Ethical Considerations	11
1.6 Demarcation	13
1.6.1 Field of study.....	13
1.7 Field Study Layout.....	13
1.8 Conclusion.....	14
2.1 Introduction.....	15
2.2 Definitions of absenteeism.....	15
2.3 Types of Absenteeism.....	16
2.3.1 Planned Absenteeism	16
2.3.2 Unplanned Absenteeism	17

2.3.3 Necessary and Unnecessary Absenteeism	17
2.4 Contributing factors of absenteeism.....	18
2.4.1 Bullying	18
2.4.2 Job Stress	19
2.4.3 Family Responsibility	19
2.4.4 Poor management and leadership	20
2.4.5 Workload.....	20
2.4.6 Job Satisfaction.....	21
2.4.7 Years of service	22
2.5 Strategies to decrease absenteeism.....	23
2.5.1 Individual Approach.....	23
2.6 Absenteeism Policies to manage absenteeism	25
2.7 Measurement of Absenteeism	26
2.7.1 Absence Rate	26
2.7.2 Frequency Rate	27
2.7.3 Bradford Factor	28
2.8 Costs associated with absenteeism	29
2.8.1 Indirect Costs associated with absenteeism	30
2.9 Correlation between absenteeism and age.....	30
2.10 The impact of absenteeism on operations and efficiencies	30
2.11 Presenteeism.....	31
2.12 Models of Absenteeism	32
2.12.1 An Integrative Model of absenteeism	32
2.12.2 Individual approach	33
2.12.3 Social psychological approach	33
2.12.4 Economic Approach	33
2.12.5 Rhodes and Steers Model.....	34
2.13 Conclusion.....	35
Chapter 3 Research Methodology	36
3.1 Introduction.....	36
3.2 Research Design	36
3.3 Sampling Strategy	37
3.4 Recruitment Strategy.....	38

3.5 Data Collection Method	38
3.6 Data Analysis method.....	39
3.6.1 Regression Analysis.....	40
3.6.2 Kruskal-Wallis Analysis	41
3.6.3 Pearson's Correlation Coefficient	41
3.6.4 Chi-square Analysis	42
3.7 Ethical Considerations	42
3.7.1 Permission obtained.....	42
3.7.2 Informed Consent.....	43
3.7.3 Voluntary participation.....	43
3.7.4 Confidentiality and anonymity.....	44
3.7.5 No Harm	44
3.8 Conclusion.....	44
Chapter 4 Data Analysis	46
4.1 Introduction.....	46
4.1.1 Main Research Finding	47
4.2 Statistical tests that were used for the research.....	48
4.3 Average Absenteeism days per department per year	50
4.4 Questionnaire Variables	52
4.4.1 Family Responsibility	52
4.4.2 Years of employment	54
4.4.3 Workload.....	57
4.4.4 Number of Members in family.....	59
4.4.5 Single Parent	59
4.4.6 People that indicated that they felt stressed at work.....	60
4.4.7 Bullying	61
4.5 Additional Analysis	62
4.5.1 Reduced Regression.....	63
4.5.2 Correlations.....	64
4.6 Discussion of the results.....	65
4.6.1 Family Responsibility	66
4.6.2 Years of Employment.....	66
4.6.3 Workload.....	67

4.7 Conclusion.....	68
Chapter 5 Conclusion and Recommendations	69
5.1 Introduction.....	69
5.2 Achievement of the study Objectives	69
5.2.1 Primary Objective.....	69
5.2.2 Secondary Objectives	69
5.3 Conclusions from the study	70
5.3.1 Family Responsibility	70
5.3.2 Single Parent	70
5.3.3 Years of Employment.....	70
5.3.4 Employees indicating they feel stressed at work	70
5.3.5 Workload.....	71
5.3.6 Bullying and harassment.....	71
5.3.7 Shift Work	71
5.4 Recommendations.....	71
5.4.1 Implementation of a wellness program	72
5.4.2 Enhance workplace satisfaction and employee morale	72
5.4.3 Implement incentives to reduce absenteeism.....	72
5.4.4 Return-to-work interviews.....	73
5.4.5 Focus on above-average absenteeism.....	73
5.4.6 Provide daycare	74
5.5 Limitations of the investigation.....	74
5.6 Summary	75
REFERENCES.....	76
APPENDIXES	84
Appendix 1 Questionnaire.....	84
Appendix 2 Permission to conduct research	85
Appendix 3 Ethical Clearance	86

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1	GFC Absenteeism 2019	4
Figure 1.2	GFC Absenteeism 2020	5
Figure 1.3	GFC Absenteeism 2021	6
Figure 2.1	Attendance Process Model (Rhodes & Steers, 1978)	35
Figure 4.1	The rate of absenteeism when family responsibility is tested in the presence of work experience	48
Figure 4.2	A graphical representation of the sample with regard to average absenteeism days per year in the different departments.	50
Figure 4.3	A graphical presentation of the breakdown of employees with and without a family member in their care	52
Figure 4.4	The days absent for employees with and without family members in their care	54
Figure 4.5	The years of employment of the various employees that completed the questionnaire	55
Figure 4.6	The absenteeism days when compared to years of employment	57
Figure 4.7	The breakdown of how employees perceive their workload	58
Figure 4.8	The different correlations that exist between the different variables	66

LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1	Absence frequency rate	29
Table 2.2	Examples of calculating the Bradford score	30
Table 3.1	Questionnaire used in the study of absenteeism at the Grain Field Chickens Abattoir	39
Table 4.1	GFC Departments that completed the questionnaire	46
Table 4.2	Regression analysis data	49
Table 4.3	Kruskall-Wallis analysis for absenteeism	51
Table 4.4	The Kruskall-Wallis analysis of employees that have a family member in their care	53
Table 4.5	The Kruskall-Wallis analysis between the years of employment and the rate of absenteeism	56
Table 4.6	The data of the Kruskall-Wallis analysis of workload compared to absenteeism	59
Table 4.7	A comparison of the number of members in a family in relation to the rate of absenteeism	60
Table 4.8	The Kruskall-Wallis analysis for the relationship between single and non-single parents and absenteeism	61
Table 4.9	The breakdown of employees that indicated that they felt stressed at work	61

Table 4.10	The breakdown of employees who indicated that they felt bullied at work	62
Table 4.11	The results of the test done to determine independence	64
Table 4.12	The test for responsibility and experience as a continuous predictor, without interaction	65

Chapter 1

1.1 Introduction

The primary focus of this research is absenteeism within the operating division of the Grain Field Chickens Abattoir, which is located in Reitz in the Free State Province of South Africa.

1.2 Background

1.2.1 Absenteeism

An employee's failure to report for duty, with or without prior authorisation from their employer, is referred to as absenteeism. Absenteeism may be planned or unplanned. Planned absenteeism is when an employee is absent from duty while prior arrangements have been made and agreed upon between the employer and employee. Examples of planned absenteeism include annual leave, maternity, and paternity leave. Unplanned absenteeism is when an employee is absent from duty, and no prior arrangements are made. Examples of unplanned absenteeism include sick leave and AWOL (Sibbald, 2018). It is estimated that 50% of absenteeism is classified as unwarranted. Unplanned absenteeism is estimated to reduce productivity in the workplace by 36.6%. In comparison, planned absence is estimated to result in 22.6 % productivity loss and is therefore critical to minimise absenteeism, especially unplanned absenteeism (Van Vulpen, 2021).

Absenteeism does not only refer to being absent from work but also arriving late and leaving early, taking extended lunch and tea breaks, and attending to personal matters during work time. Sick leave, maternity/paternity leave, and AWOL are also types of absenteeism (Claassen, 2022).

In 2019, absenteeism cost the world's leading economy, the United States economy, an estimated amount of \$225.8 billion, while the European economy lost an estimated amount of \$460 billion (Van Vulpen, 2021). During the same period, the South African economy lost

an estimated R25 billion due to absenteeism (Bizhub, 2019). Absenteeism remains one of the primary concerns for organisations across the globe as this leads to economic losses, a change in the organisational environment, poor customer service, increased costs, and it negatively impacts the work-life balance of other employees (Montalvo et al., 2020). Absenteeism also disrupts the operational processes and decreases efficiencies. Simply put, the less an individual works, the likeliness is that they are less productive. It also impacts operational processes when an individual performs an important function and without notice, this role is not performed, and the operational chain is broken (Cushard, 2022).

Therefore, managers need to constantly manage absenteeism to reduce or prevent it as far as possible and, where it cannot be prevented, to minimise its impact. This can be done using an individual approach by constantly communicating with staff to understand their needs and problems better. By knowing these needs, management can assist in optimising the working environment to improve efficiencies and reduce absenteeism. An economic approach may also be used to reduce absenteeism. This is where incentive or deterrent strategies are implemented to encourage good behavior and discourage negative behavior (Duncombe, 2019).

While employers anticipate that employees will be absent a number of workdays each year, excessive absences can result in decreased productivity and have a significant impact on the efficiency and profitability of organisations. Approximately 8.7% of payroll is lost because of unplanned absences, and employers need to understand how these costs associated with increased absenteeism affect their bottom line and what strategies can be implemented to combat it (Kocakülâh, et al., 2018).

1.2.2 Contributing factors of Absenteeism

Collier (2018, p.5) suggests that many factors contribute to the increased rate of absenteeism, including bullying and harassment, caretaking of family members, stress, burnout, and unfavorable working conditions. When people are bullied or harassed at work, they are more likely to stay at home to avoid unpleasantness at work (Cushard, 2022). Additionally, people are more likely to miss work when caring for a young child or an elderly

relative. This happens due to factors like doctors' appointments, special activities, or when special care arrangements fall through. Stress or burnout is also considered a leading factor of absenteeism and may be a result of work or personal-related issues. As a result of stress, people are more likely to be disengaged from their work. Work stress mainly comes from office politics, heavy workload, and fear of losing one's job or not getting along with a manager, boss, or colleagues (Cushard, 2022). When the working conditions are not desirable, it also results in higher levels of absenteeism. This may include factors directly related to the job, like long working hours, repetitive unsatisfying work, and concerns for one's safety. The successful management of absenteeism requires clear rules, policies, and guidelines to assist in maintaining low levels of absenteeism for an organisation (Goodman & Atkin, 1984).

In this study, absenteeism will be investigated at the Grain Field Chicken abattoir that is based in Reitz in the Free State. Grain Field Chickens currently employs over 1 600 people who help operate an abattoir that slaughters +- 880 000 chickens per week, equating to 7 000 tons of chicken per month. In a factory of this size and working with this many people, it is essential for management to understand absenteeism; what causes it; the effect it has on efficiencies in the abattoir, and the losses brought on by it. Knowing this will assist management in planning accordingly to minimise loss of throughput and revenue (Grain Field Chickens, 2021).

Statistics compiled by the Human Resources Department of Grain Field Chickens, as seen in figures 1.1 to 1.3 below, show that 952 days were lost in 2019 due to absenteeism; 902 days in 2020; and 998 days in 2021 (Grain Field Chickens, 2021).

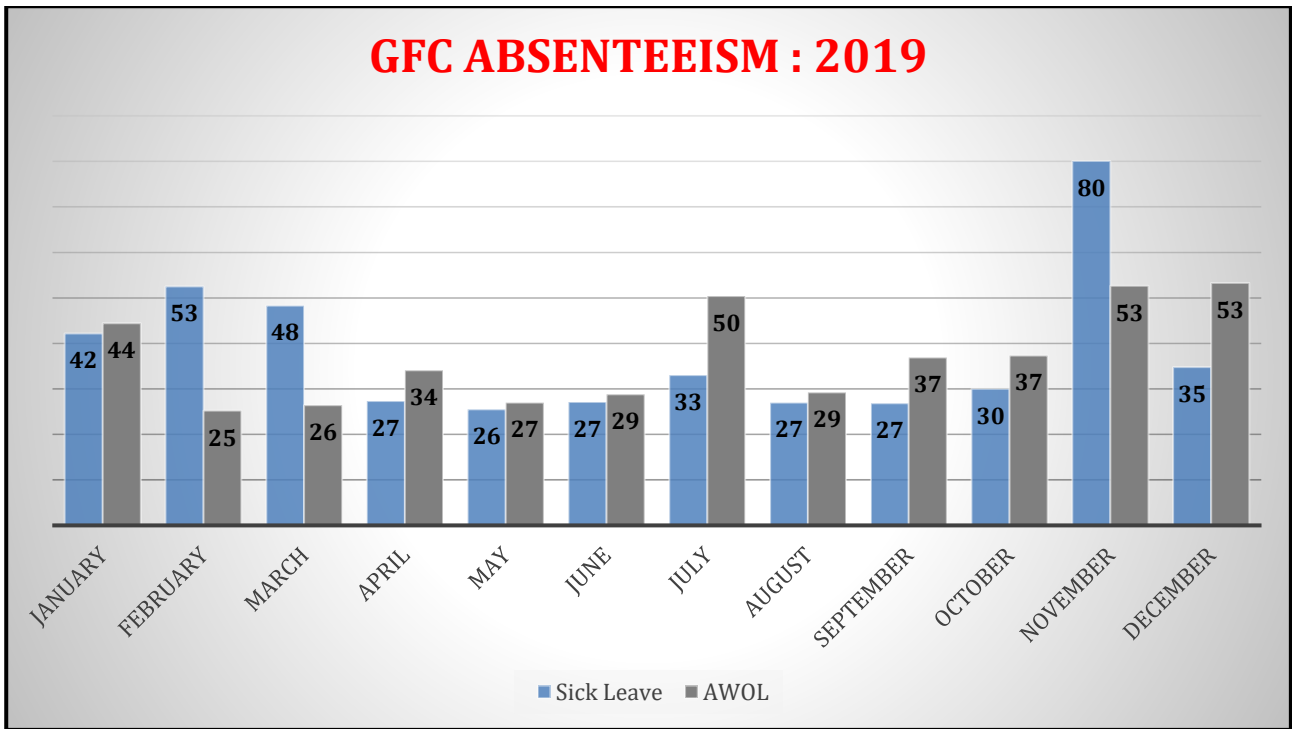


Figure 1.1 GFC Absenteeism 2019

Figure 1.1 indicates that in 2019, a total of 952 working days were lost at the abattoir due to sick leave and AWOL. November had the highest number of sick leave days, and November and December had the highest number of AWOL days.



Figure 1.2 GFC Absenteeism 2020

Figure 1.2 indicates that in 2020, a total of 903 working days were lost at the abattoir due to absenteeism. February 2020 had the highest number of sick leave days, and May 2020 had the highest number of days lost due to AWOL.



Figure 1.3 GFC Absenteeism 2021

Figure 1.3 indicates that in 2021, a total of 998 working days were lost due to absenteeism. AWOL contributed to 62% of the absenteeism and reported 123 days lost in January 2021.

When looking at the data supplied by the Human Resources Department of Grain Field Chickens, it is clear that productivity will be affected due to a significant loss of labour due to unplanned absenteeism. It is important to note that organisations worldwide were affected by Covid-19 and the national lockdown implemented that prevented people from reporting for duty. Grain Field Chickens is an organisation that is essential in the manufacturing of food-related products; hence, the factory was not closed during this period. In the instance where people were forced to go into quarantine, special Covid-19 leave was provided, and these figures do not reflect in the absenteeism data supplied (Grain Field Chickens, 2021).

1.2 Problem Statement

The problem at the Grain Field Chickens Abattoir is that many people responsible for critical labour are frequently absent from work. This is due to many reasons, including sick leave, social and family responsibility leave, and unpaid leave without any excuse. If this problem is not addressed and resolved, it will increase the production costs of the factory or decrease the throughput, which will result in either an increase in the selling price of the manufactured products or a decrease in profit.

1.3.1 Research Questions

In the following section, the research questions will be discussed. Research is done to gain knowledge of specific questions to which the answers are unknown. Once the three research questions below are answered, it will give management a better understanding of absenteeism at the Grain Field Chickens Abattoir:

- i. Which types of absenteeism exist among factory workers at the Grain Field Chickens Abattoir?
- ii. Which factors contribute to the absenteeism of factory workers at the Grain Field Chickens Abattoir?
- iii. What strategies can be proposed to decrease absenteeism at the Grain Field Chickens Abattoir?

1.4 Research Objectives

1.4.1 Primary Objective

To analyse absenteeism of factory workers at the Grain Field Chickens Abattoir.

1.4.2 Secondary Objectives

- i. To contextualize the different forms of absenteeism.
- ii. To identify the different types of absenteeism that exist among factory workers at the Grain Field Chickens Abattoir
- iii. To identify factors that contribute to the absenteeism of factory workers at the Grain Field Chickens Abattoir.

1.5 Research Methodology

1.5.1 Research Design

Epistemology is one of the critical parts of philosophy and is concerned with knowledge. This includes the nature, limitations, and sources of knowledge. Ontological assumptions is where there is one defined reality for these constructs and if measured, will be readily visible to all who observe it (Ludwig, 2020). In this study, knowledge will be obtained by individuals and groups doing quantitative research using questionnaires.

A quantitative research approach employs statistical methods to analyse data. Quantitative research emphasises precision and objective accuracy with the researcher being an independent observer (Zikmund et al., 2013:134). The key features of quantitative researches are generalisability of results, objectivity, formulation and testing of hypotheses, use of large samples, further to being able to recommend a final course of action (Malhotra, 2010). Quantitative research involves gathering and analysing numerical data. It can be applied to make predictions, evaluate causal linkages, and generalise findings to a larger population. In quantitative research, the standard format is for each respondent to have the same set of questions so that all respondents' data can be analysed fairly. The data is provided in a numerical format so that analysis can be done in a quantitative manner (Bhandari, 2020).

A quantitative research approach was adopted for this study, where employees were given questionnaires to complete.

1.5.2 Sampling Strategy

Non-probability sampling was used for this study. Non-probability sampling methods are less stringent than probability sampling methods because they rely on the researcher's subjective opinion to choose samples rather than a random selection. This type of sampling method does not allow every population member to participate equally in the study (Wolf et al., 2016). A population's individuals who are conveniently accessible to take part in an experiment are referred to as an accessible sample, also known as convenience sampling. People are sampled using convenience sampling, a sort of non-probability sampling, only because they provide researchers with "convenient" sources of data (Bryman, 2011).

At the Grain Field Chickens (GFC) abattoir, more than 1 600 factory workers are employed. A total of 1 300 essential factory workers formed part of the population. These essential workers perform a critical role in the production process of Grain Field Chickens. When the production chain is broken due to essential workers being absent, it impacts the processes and productivity in the factory negatively. As seen in the statistics above provided by the HR department of GFC, unplanned absenteeism is very evident in this segment. Convenience sampling was used where essential workers were drawn randomly and based on the availability of these workers to participate in the study.

By using a sampling calculator, it was found that a minimum of 297 employees should participate in achieving a confidence level of 95%. Altogether 352 employees were recruited to participate.

1.5.3 Recruitment Strategy

Recruitment and retention of study participants must be successful for a research study to be successful. During the recruitment process, prospective research participants are identified and provided with information about the proposed research study and their interest in participating. Study results can be significantly impacted by the inappropriate recruitment of test participants, which is often time-consuming and labour-intensive (Manohar, 2019).

For this study, recruitment was done by the Human Resource department of Grain Field Chickens based on the schedule and availability of employees to participate in the study.

1.5.4 Data Collection Method

For this study, a structured questionnaire was used. A questionnaire is a set of questions used in research to gather data from participants that are pertinent to the study. Questionnaires function much like written interviews and can be conducted on the telephone, online, or by filling out a document (Bryman, 2011).

A structured questionnaire includes pre-coded questions that follow an established skip pattern. Most quantitative data collection businesses use structured questionnaires. Structured questionnaires have the advantages of reducing discrepancies, making administering them more accessible, and providing consistency in the answers (Acharya, 2010).

1.5.5 Data analyses method

For this study, various statistical techniques were used to analyse the data collected from the questionnaires, including regression analysis, Kruskal-Wallis analysis, Chi-squared analysis, and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient.

Regression analysis seeks to establish a relationship between the explanatory and response variables. Regression analysis is most commonly used to quantify how one factor affects another. Regression analysis is also used to identify if trends exist in data (Arkes, 2019).

The statistical significance was assessed using the Kruskal-Wallis test, a non-parametric method for comparing samples from two or more independent observations. This test was chosen because it is more stable to outliers and does not require that the groups be regularly distributed (Sciencedirect, 2022).

The Chi-squared test is used to compare actual outcomes to predictions. This test aims to determine whether a discrepancy between actual and projected data is caused by chance or by a relationship between the examined variables. The Chi-squared test can also be used to determine the relationship between the categorical variables in the data. It is essential to identify whether a difference between two category variables is due to coincidence or if a relationship between them exists (Simplilearn, 2022).

The correlation coefficient is used to assess how closely two variables are related and if any relationships exist between these variables. Correlation by itself does not imply causation. Using the scaled data, the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient is calculated. Positive correlations indicate responses that tend to change in the same direction. Responses that contradict one another are shown by negative correlations (R Core Team, 2022). For this study, correlations were used to measure the relationship between various variables that impact absenteeism and the actual rate of absenteeism at Grain Field Chickens to determine if relationships exist.

1.5.6 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are one of the most crucial aspects of research because if they are ignored or not followed, research dissertations may be set up for failure. According to Bryman and Bell (2007), ethical considerations include principles like:

1.5.6.1 Permission obtained

When an employee of an organisation completes a questionnaire, permission must be obtained to include the specific individual in the study (Schreiner, 2009). Mr. Theo van Strijp, Managing Director of Grain Field Chickens, has granted permission for a study to be done of Grain Field Chickens and for the company name to be used in the study. He has also agreed to make resources available to assist in the study of absenteeism at the abattoir.

1.5.6.2 Informed Consent

The informed consent form provides the respondent with details on the topic being researched. It also provides both the researcher and the respondent with a mutual understanding. It presents an opportunity at the beginning of the study to raise any questions or concerns from either party (Schreiner, 2009). All respondents in this study will be informed of the purpose of the study and how it will assist Grain Field Chickens in making the necessary change if needed.

1.5.6.3 Voluntary participation

In research, all participation should be voluntary, and there should be no deception or coercion. In practice, this means that research participants must fully understand the procedures and risks before consenting to participate (Trochim, 2021). Respondents will be made aware that their participation in this study is voluntary and that they are free to stop participating at any point.

1.5.6.4 Confidentiality and anonymity

It is important to distinguish between confidentiality and anonymity. Anonymity is not knowing who the participants are. This can be done by conducting telephonic interviews or when surveys are distributed on behalf of the researcher. When respondents are known, but their identities are kept private during the study, this is known as confidentiality (Trochim, 2021). For this study, all respondents were informed that any information would be handled as confidential. A confidential agreement was signed with each respondent.

1.5.6.5 No Harm

The gist of ethical research is to prevent any harm from being done to any groups or individuals by participating. Different kinds of harm should be considered, and ways should be determined to minimise the risk of harm (Iphofen & Tolich, 2018). All communication and

information with regard to the study should be done with honesty and transparency (Iphofen & Tolich, 2018).

1.6 Demarcation

The study was done to analyse the absenteeism trends of factory workers at the Grain Field Chickens abattoir in Reitz. All questionnaires were completed at the offices of Grain Field Chickens. Factory workers formed part of the study to establish factors that lead to absenteeism. Mr. Wally Kok, Head of Human Resources at Grain Field Chickens, assisted in supplying any data required and also assisted in making staff available to complete questionnaires should they consent to participate in the study.

1.6.1 Field of study

The study of absenteeism is part of Human Resource Management.

1.7 Field Study Layout

Chapter 1 – Introduction

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

Chapter 3 – Research Methodology

Chapter 4 – Data Analysis and Interpretation

Chapter 5 – Conclusion and Recommendations.

1.8 Conclusion

Analysing the absenteeism trends of factory workers at the Grain Field Chickens Abattoir will assist the Human Resource Management team in understanding the reasoning behind absenteeism. Management will be better equipped to formulate plans and strategies to decrease absenteeism rates by knowing the reason behind absenteeism. Identifying trends can also help management plan alongside them and lessen absenteeism's adverse effects on the abattoir's production efficiencies.

Chapter 2 - Literature review

2.1 Introduction

In the following section, the researcher uses academic literature to provide information on absenteeism, including the definitions of absenteeism; the causing factors of absenteeism; the impact absenteeism has on organisations; how to measure absenteeism; and strategies to decrease absenteeism.

Although employers anticipate workers to miss a certain number of days at work each year, frequent absences can result in lower productivity and significantly impact a company's profitability. It is, therefore, essential for managers to understand the issues regarding absenteeism (Duncombe, 2019).

2.2 Definitions of absenteeism

Absenteeism refers to a pattern of frequent absence from work. Companies understand that showing up for work every day can be challenging. They provide leave policies for employees with health issues and emergencies, but when employees skip work frequently, it becomes a problem and is defined as absenteeism (Lawrance, 2021).

The term "absenteeism" refers to irregular absences from work, which can occur for various reasons, such as illness, family obligations, compassionate leave, or going AWOL without being paid. Any organisation, whether large or small, private or public, faces a prevalent problem of absenteeism (Van Vulpen, 2021).

According to Lima (2020), a person's physical absence, typically from his place of employment, is a complex phenomenon known as absenteeism.

Madlinger (2018) defines absenteeism as failing to report for duty without a valid excuse. It does not include medical appointments or circumstances beyond a person's control, such as a car breakdown.

Absenteeism is defined as a habitual trend or pattern of not reporting for duty or obligation and is accepted as the loss of labour. In this definition, absenteeism excludes absences from work that are scheduled in advance, like annual leave. Absenteeism includes employees coming in late for work, taking longer than agreed lunch and tea breaks, and attending to personal matters during work hours (Kocakülâh et al., 2018).

Absenteeism is when an employee fails to appear for duty despite being scheduled for work on a scheduled working day. Absenteeism is an unauthorised absence from the workplace (Acharya, 2017).

For this study, the researcher will use the definition from Kocakülâh et al. (2018), as it excludes scheduled absences like annual leave, but includes other labour losses like unplanned or unscheduled leave.

2.3 Types of Absenteeism

Organisations must educate themselves on the different reasons for people being absent to manage absenteeism more effectively. People are absent for a variety of reasons, and the two main types of absenteeism are planned absenteeism and unplanned absenteeism (Metcalf, 2022). Cleveland (2017) classified the types of absenteeism as unnecessary (avoidable) or necessary (unavoidable) absenteeism.

2.3.1 Planned Absenteeism

Planned absences occur for pre-agreed reasons that are authorised by the manager and result in an employee leaving the workplace. This form of absenteeism is legal and easy to prepare for, which means they cause minimal productivity disruptions. Examples may include annual leave, sick leave for pre-planned medical treatment, and maternity leave (Goodman & Atkin, 1984).

The absences of all types of planned leave will not always be paid, and organisations must ensure their policies and procedures specify this explicitly for each kind of leave.

Organisations should have clear policies regarding planned absences that may include notice periods, written authorisation, and even the delegation of their duties to fill-in staff (Sibbald, 2018).

2.3.2 Unplanned Absenteeism

Unplanned is when an employee is absent without prior knowledge that the absence will occur. It is common for employees to take unplanned leave at some point during their employment. Whether they are ill or taking care of a family member, every employee will likely take unplanned time off at some point (Alexander, 2022).

Unplanned absences are far more disruptive to organisations than planned absence, as it is unforeseen, and there is usually very little or no time to plan for the loss of labour. The costs of unplanned absences for the company are usually high. When an employee is not present, another employee must fill in for that shift. This can lead to extra wages being paid to those who cover the absence. This usually includes absences like sick leave and family responsibility leave when caring for a child or relative. This form of absenteeism is authorised on short notice and usually forms part of paid leave (Sands, 2021).

2.3.3 Necessary and Unnecessary Absenteeism

Necessary absenteeism is when an employee is ill or has a valid reason to be absent. A variety of absences start unexpectedly but are justified or necessary and, therefore, likely to be excused by an employer - including illness, family leave, and personal leave. It is important to note that even though absenteeism may be necessary, it may be classified as planned or unplanned (Mateo, 2018).

Unnecessary absenteeism is when an employee does not have a valid reason for being absent. Absence is habitual without good reason and may also include partial absences such as arriving late at work, extended lunches, and early departures (Lawrance, 2021).

2.4 Contributing factors of absenteeism

In this section, the researcher will focus on the different factors (independent variables) that influence the rate of absenteeism (dependent variable).

Duncombe (2019) found that 60.7% of people who took sick leave took it for reasons other than genuinely being sick. Therefore, organisations must understand the contributing factors of absenteeism to enable them to formulate strategies to reduce it. There are many planned and unplanned causes of absenteeism, some valid and others invalid, and may be a result of many different factors, including:

2.4.1 Bullying

Employees who are bullied at work are more likely to call in sick to avoid such situations. Bullying at the workplace has been found to result in a high rate of absenteeism, which is directly related to lost productivity. Bullying has been directly linked to both mental and physical health problems as a workplace stressor. It is not surprising to learn that bullying has been proven to predict sickness absence (Nielsen et al., 2019).

Magee et al. (2017) found that bullying led to health impairment and disengagement from work, resulting in employee absenteeism. According to Spiridon (2019), bullying directly contributes to employee absenteeism, suggesting that bullying contributes to both direct and indirect employee absenteeism. Einarsen (2020) also found that workplace bullying resulted in an increase in absenteeism.

Given the information gathered on bullying and the impact it has on absenteeism, the following hypothesis can be set:

- Hypothesis 1: There is a positive relationship between bullying and absenteeism.

2.4.2 Job Stress

Stress at the workplace is caused by a variety of factors that are prevalent in the working environment and has an impact on absenteeism. These include job security, hazardous working conditions, long hours, monotonous jobs, and conflict in the workplace. Poor mental health can also result from work-related stress and may impact presenteeism or absenteeism (Kocakulah et al., 2016). According to Stander (2020), stress resulting from situational work-related issues affects employee job satisfaction, which causes absenteeism.

Schmidt (2019) found that stress was positively related to employee absenteeism. According to Howard (2019), there was a strong relationship between job stress and the frequency of illness days of employees.

Given the information gathered on job stress and the impact it has on absenteeism, the following hypothesis can be set:

- Hypothesis 2: There is a positive relationship between job stress and absenteeism.

2.4.3 Family Responsibility

Work and family life can be difficult to balance, which has an impact on absenteeism. The care of children is often a significant concern. An employee may be absent from work if everyday arrangements fail, like when care arrangements fall through and the employee needs to take care of their child, which often requires them to take time off or be late for work until the problem has been resolved (Kocakulah et al., 2016).

Kocakulah (2016) found that older children are responsible for the well-being of their elderly parents, which is a common issue among employees that leads to absenteeism. Family responsibilities are one of the other variables that contribute to absenteeism, according to Tasia (2020), since people may need to care for their family when they are ill, which requires them to miss work.

Given the information gathered on job stress and the impact it has on absenteeism, the following hypothesis can be set:

- Hypothesis 3: There is a positive relationship between family responsibility and absenteeism.

2.4.4 Poor management and leadership

Various relationships are forged at the workplace. Even though organisations have a variety of goals to pursue, it is essential to maintain healthy relationships within an organisation. A leader's relationship with their subordinate can significantly impact job satisfaction and happiness, affecting the rate of absenteeism (Magee et al., 2017).

Leaders play a significant role in fostering relationships in the workplace. They display their distinctive personality, which is expressed in a particular manner on the job. A leader's behaviour affects employees emotionally, so such behaviour should be encouraging rather than harmful. In the workplace, negative interactions may negatively influence an employee, resulting in sickness absence (Buzeti, 2021).

Given the information gathered on management and leadership and the impact it has on absenteeism, the following hypothesis can be set:

- Hypothesis 4: A positive relationship exists between poor management and leadership and absenteeism.

2.4.5 Workload

As the 24-hour economy intensifies, production processes are becoming increasingly necessary to be continuous within different industries and businesses. It, therefore, requires a lot of staff to be available on nights outside of regular working hours. Employees working

night shifts are more likely to suffer negative consequences from shift work that negatively impacts employee health and leads to higher levels of absenteeism (Merkus et al., 2017).

Reducing the workload for the individual employee to a manageable level and restructuring sick leave policies were found to counteract absenteeism and presenteeism effectively and may be a feasible option for better labour productivity and employee health (Lee et al., 2020).

It has been established that a heavy workload is bad for employees' health, since it interferes with their biological rhythms and other psychophysiological processes. In addition to suffering from this short-term impact, long-term effects are also evident. Excessive workload has several detrimental health effects, including an increased chance of developing sleeping disorders, insomnia, and exhaustion from insufficient sleep (Frick, 2020).

Given the information gathered on working and the impact it has on absenteeism, the following hypothesis can be set:

- Hypothesis 5: There is a relationship between workload and absenteeism.

2.4.6 Job Satisfaction

In the context of work attitudes, job satisfaction or dissatisfaction brings together personal feelings or beliefs about the job. In many cases, absence from work seems to be a natural result of discontent with one's job. Wombulu (2017) points out that job satisfaction involves various factors, including remuneration, supervisory oversight, coworkers, and professional development opportunities. Employee satisfaction is largely influenced by financial reward; when workers feel they are being paid fairly, they are generally happier with their jobs. It is critical for workers to be recognised for their contributions in addition to being paid what they are worth (Stander, 2020).

Across all industries, absenteeism has been a significant and widespread issue. One of the main factors contributing to absenteeism is a lack of job satisfaction. To determine the

causes of absenteeism, numerous theories and studies have been developed. Absenteeism is often caused by employees escaping unpleasant or dissatisfying work situations, which is likely to be one of the most common causes of absenteeism. In the same vein, employees who find their jobs to be challenging, more exciting, or more pleasurable in any other way are likely to be absent less often than those who find their jobs to be less enjoyable (Thirulogasundaram & Sahu, 2018)

Since research revealed that withdrawal behaviors were significantly influenced by individual attitudes, particularly job unhappiness and low work commitment, the withdrawal model of absenteeism has drawn much attention. Withdrawal theory helps explain the relationship between job satisfaction and absenteeism (Steers & Rhodes 1984).

Martocchio (2020) discovered that job dissatisfaction could lower motivation to show up for work and increase absenteeism. Given the information gathered on job satisfaction and the impact it has on absenteeism, the following hypothesis can be set:

- Hypothesis 6: There is a positive relationship between job satisfaction and absenteeism.

2.4.7 Years of service

Years of service are the number of years a person has worked for a particular company. Years of service have been proven to have a significant impact on absenteeism and to be related to absence behaviour (Buzeti, 2020).

Given the information gathered on years of service and the impact it has on absenteeism, the following hypothesis can be set:

- Hypothesis 7: There is a positive relationship between years of service and absenteeism.

2.5 Strategies to decrease absenteeism

Organisations that take the initiative to invest in the health and well-being of their workers are more likely to see lower levels of unauthorised absences and fewer prolonged periods of sick leave for reasons related to economic stress or workplace avoidance (Alexander, 2022). Additionally, organisations should expect an increase in workplace performance and productivity. Absenteeism will be reduced if a healthy and happy workforce is in place, while presenteeism will be reduced, too (Arunachalamurthy, 2014). The following approaches were found to be helpful in the reduction of absenteeism.

2.5.1 Individual Approach

2.5.1.1 Flexible working hours

Forsey (2022) found that working flexible working hours resulted in higher productivity and lower sickness absence. The term "flex time" refers to an alternative or flexible timetable that enables employees to complete work outside of the typical 9 to 5 workday. Companies can provide employees with flexible work schedules that are beneficial to both the business and their employees. A flexible schedule is intended to assist staff members in maintaining a positive work-life balance and decreasing absenteeism. A typical flex-time schedule still encompasses 40 hours per week (McQuerrey, 2022).

Providing flexible working may reduce absenteeism due to its ability to give employees more control over work, which reduces the stress associated with a heavy workload (Stander, 2020).

2.5.1.2 Prioritising employee health and wellbeing

Employee health and wellbeing should be encouraged by organisations by adopting an approach that places employees' health at the forefront, showing them that their physical and mental well-being is being valued and prioritised. Organisations should always take steps to alleviate stress factors leading to poor health, personal conflict, and burnout.

Employees that are less stressed at work are more engaged and are less likely to be absent (Collier, 2018).

There are a variety of factors that determine a person's general well-being beyond their physical health. Employers have always been concerned about employee health as it improves productivity, enhances workplace culture, reduces burnout, and offers several other benefits (Pathak, 2021).

2.5.1.3 Implement Wellness Programs

Implementing a wellness program can help organisations reduce healthcare costs and employee stress while mitigating health-related absences. Wellness programs can also contribute to improved morale, workplace culture, and productivity. It is possible to decrease employee absenteeism by promoting a work environment where health and wellness are prioritised (Forsey, 2022).

With the advancement of technology, workplace wellness now offers a variety of options, and organisations are planning strategies to drive programs that drive employee health and wellness (Pathak, 2021).

2.5.1.4 Improve Workplace Morale

Employee morale refers to how employees feel about their jobs and their work environment. Employees with a positive work attitude are likely to be productive. An employee with high morale enjoys his job and is happy at it. Low-morale employees are much more likely to be dissatisfied and hostile toward their work (Pathak, 2021).

When employee absenteeism is a problem, it could be because employees are not engaged with their coworkers. A sense of belonging is crucial for workplace satisfaction. Building morale can be achieved by participating in team-building exercises, organising friendly competitions between departments, or participating in community service programs. To combat employee absenteeism, it is imperative that employees feel proud and inspired by

their team, as well as engage with one another. When coworkers appreciate and recognise an employee's efforts, they will feel motivated to come to work (Forsey, 2022).

2.5.1.5 Economic Incentives

Economic incentives are effective ways of reducing absenteeism (Scognamiglio, 2020). Good financial compensation may increase employee motivation and engagement, resulting in decreased absenteeism. This is also true for the opposite, where poor financial compensation results in decreased motivation and higher levels of absenteeism (Stander, 2020).

Some employers may use rewards and incentive strategies to reduce absenteeism. Programs of this type are affectionately referred to as "carrot approaches" rather than "stick approaches." There are several ways to offer incentives. One way is to pay employees when they do not take sick leaves or personal days (Kocakulah et al., 2016).

Incentive strategies may include rewards when the rate of absenteeism is low. A company may, for example, give a R1 000 cash bonus to workers who missed no days from work. Workers who missed one or two days may be given R500. This motivates staff to work hard and not be absent unnecessarily to receive these incentives and rewards (Kocakülâh et al., 2018). Incentive strategies may also include lotteries where a company offers lottery programs for employees with little or no absences during the period, allowing them to enter a drawing to be eligible for a prize. They will have a chance to win a prize if their name is drawn (Kinman, 2019).

2.6 Absenteeism Policies to manage absenteeism

An absenteeism policy describes how an organisation will manage employee absenteeism. It provides clear instructions to all employees and managers regarding absence procedures. By establishing an absence policy, all employees and managers know what action to take,

keeping consistency and standardisation throughout the organisation (Haywood, 2020). This policy may include the following information: who should be notified of an absence; how and when notification must take place; when does evidence of absence need to be provided; is the absence paid or unpaid; when is a medical certificate required (Madlinger, 2018).

Absenteeism policies and procedures may outline what constitutes acceptable absence from work, including sick leave, injury, annual leave, paternity leave, wage negotiation, etc. (Lee et al., 2020).

2.7 Measurement of Absenteeism

Absenteeism is detrimental to all organisations, and managers should conduct periodic calculations to determine and evaluate the seriousness of the issue (Badubi, 2017).

Companies measure their employees' absenteeism rate to evaluate the extent and causes of the problem. The ability to track employee absences can benefit organisations in more ways than one. It can provide managers with facts about which employees are absent from work frequently, but it will also highlight situations within the company that would otherwise be overlooked and allows the organisation to implement corrective measures to reduce absenteeism. Absenteeism can be measured using three common factors: the absence rate, the frequency rate of absences, and the Bradford factor (Stander, 2020).

2.7.1 Absence Rate

The absence rate method refers to the amount of time that has been lost as a percentage of the total time that would be worked as specified in the working agreement (Badubi, 2017). For example, if an employee works 176 hours in a month based on an 8-hour working day and is absent 3 days of the month, this will amount to 24 hours lost.

The percentage is calculated as follows:

Absence Rate= (Total hours lost)/(Total possible hours) X 100

Total possible hours will be 8 hours X working days. Thus 8 X 22 Days is 176 Hours.

Thus $24/176 \times 100 = 13.64\%$. This shows that the employee was absent for 13.64% of the total agreed time.

Only using absenteeism rates as an indicator of attendance is insufficient to determine the precise level of absence at any organisation. Absenteeism rates may decrease due to a decrease in absences of longer duration, but higher absences of shorter duration may increase. Therefore, organisations must consider both the absence and frequency rate of absenteeism (Stander, 2020).

2.7.2 Frequency Rate

The absence frequency rate measures how often an employee is absent over a specified period (Stander, 2020). To calculate absenteeism frequency rates, the following formula can be used:

Frequency rate= (Total number of times unplanned leave was availed)/(Total number of workdays in period) X 100

Frequency rates indicate absence frequency without considering the length of absences. Companies that identify higher absenteeism as a source of management challenges prefer to measure absenteeism in this manner comparing to less but longer absences (Sands, 2021).

The absenteeism frequency rate provides a measure of the typical amount of time (in workdays) between absences. The following example illustrates how the measurement of absenteeism frequency rate can be applied: Organisation X consisting of 16 employees, recorded four separate instances of absences where one employee (employee A) was

absent twice and two employees (employees B & C) were absent one time during a month that had 22 working days. Table 2.1 below illustrates the frequency measurement for Organisation X:

Table 2.1 Absence frequency rate

	Available working days	Individual Absences	Frequency Rate	Worked days vs. Absent days
Employee A	22	2	$2/22 \times 100 = 9.09\%$	$1/(2/22) = 11$
Employee B	22	1	$1/22 \times 100 = 4.55\%$	$1/(1/22) = 22$
Employee C	22	1	$1/22 \times 100 = 4.55\%$	$1/(1/22) = 22$

In table 2.1 above, it can be seen that employee A has an absence frequency rate of 9.09% and is absent one day for every eleven days worked. Employee B and employee C have an absence frequency rate of 4.55% and are absent one day for every 22 days worked.

2.7.3 Bradford Factor

The Bradford factor is used to calculate the impact of employee absences on the organisation. It is based on the theory that short, frequent, and unplanned absences disrupt organisations more than longer ones. It is useful in identifying persistent short-term absences and can be used to identify particular employee problems (Sands, 2021).

The Bradford Factor is a measure of the frequency and duration of an employee's absence within a defined period, usually 52 weeks, and is calculated as follows:

$$\text{Bradford Factor} = S^2 \times D$$

Where,

S = The number of occurrences an individual has been absent during the given period

D = The total number of days missed by an individual during the given period

In table 2.2 below, three different examples are illustrated to calculate the Bradford score for employees A, B, and C, where the same number of absence days were recorded during a specific period for all three employees, but the number of occurrences was different.

Table 2.2 Examples of calculating the Bradford score

	Number of occurrences (S)	Total Absent days (D)	Bradford Factor Score
Employee A	1	10	10
Employee B	4	10	160
Employee C	8	10	640

Employers may use the Bradford Factor to intervene and take action as it may indicate adverse absenteeism trends of an individual (Sands, 2021).

2.8 Costs associated with absenteeism

Leblond (2019) found that costs associated with absenteeism include: wages paid to the absent person without receiving a service and wages for temporary staff to perform the tasks of the absent person. This may include overtime wages for staff filling in, as a permanent employment agreement does not bind them. Temporary staff may be less productive, resulting in reduced efficiency and quality of services that add to increased costs.

2.8.1 Indirect Costs associated with absenteeism

There are also indirect costs associated with absenteeism in addition to the direct monetary cost. These costs are not obvious and are more "hidden" and include understaffing or overtime fatigue leading to poor quality of goods or services, excess manager time where management needs to find suitable replacements or deal with disciplinary actions, and poor morale of staff having to fill in for the absent person, leading to them being less productive (Cushard, 2022).

Indirect costs also include other departments having to spend time dealing with the absence. HR teams usually have little information on the employee's reasons for absence and when they expect to return to work. Consequently, this lack of information makes workforce planning very difficult and time-consuming. It costs a lot of time and effort to update payroll, HR, and ERP systems; in other cases, these systems are not fully populated (Jordaan, 2020).

2.9 Correlation between absenteeism and age

Haywood (2020) found that younger employees had a higher absence frequency rate, but they were absent for shorter periods, while older individuals had a lower absence frequency rate but were absent for longer periods. Thompson (2017) reported that non-certified absence was negatively related to age, while certified absence was positively related to age.

Cleveland and Shore (2007) found that both avoidable and unavoidable absenteeism behaviours interact with the employee's age and gender. The relationship between age and time lost is more evident for females than males. In contrast, age and frequency of absence show a negative relationship for males and a positive relationship for females.

2.10 The impact of absenteeism on operations and efficiencies

Manual workers' absenteeism is one of the most significant factors impacting assembly line performance. A high level of absenteeism harms the quality and efficiencies of operations

due to a lack of specialisation of workers who temporarily fill in for absent colleagues (Mateo, 2018). Furthermore, an employee's absence negatively affects both co-workers and managers as an unplanned absence increases the workload on co-workers, who have to cover for the employee's absence to keep the system operating. Managers are also less productive when an employee is absent, as they have to attend to additional administration, reorganise the workflow and operational processes, and may be involved in the training of stand-in personnel (Natter, 2018).

There is no question that a staff member who regularly misses work will not be able to deliver the same results as those who do not. Missing work regularly will lead to reduced performance because of the time lost on projects, training, and updates, resulting in decreased performance. Declining performance leads to decreased productivity and work quality (Carver, 2019).

2.11 Presenteeism

Presenteeism can be defined in several ways, but most commonly refers to people reporting for duty, even though unwell and not functioning at their best, when they need to be away from work. In most organisations, some employees report for duty even if they are ill. While many employers would see this as a sign of loyalty and dedication, some may identify the danger it poses to the organisation. Presenteeism could have the same effect as absenteeism; in many cases, the negative impact may be more significant than absenteeism. Currently, there are no reliable standards to measure presenteeism as they are time-consuming and costly to record. As presenteeism is an 'invisible behaviour', as measuring the prevalence and costs may be unrealistic (Kinman, 2019). The most common reasons for presenteeism are: perceived pressure from management, work-related stress, financial worries and job security concerns (Brighthr, 2022).

Presenteeism may be bad for business for various reasons. It may include the following factors: sick employees will be unable to work at their most efficient level, resulting in a decline in productivity. Having ill employees in the workplace can negatively affect other employees, as they can spread their germs, making the workplace even less productive.

There may also be a decline in productivity from an employee when they are ill, which may place pressure on other employees. It poses a severe health and safety risk when an employee is ill and working in dangerous environments or when being responsible for other people's safety (Frick, 2020).

2.12 Models of Absenteeism

Numerous models and theories have explored absenteeism from various angles, resulting in multiple perspectives on the problem. Models and theories that have made large contributions to the field of absenteeism are explored below.

2.12.1 An Integrative Model of absenteeism

Absenteeism is a complex phenomenon that impacts employees' attendance decisions and abilities based on many factors associated with it. To determine the cause of absenteeism, it is possible to examine absenteeism in terms of individual, social and economic factors. There is a connection between the different approaches and reducing or increasing absence behavior (Arunachalamurthy, 2014). A person who has a low degree of job satisfaction is more likely to continue or even increase their absence behaviour if they are put in an organisational unit where absences are accepted, and there is no financial incentive or deterrent to change the absence behavior. The different approaches to absenteeism should be understood as a result (Stander, 2020).

As a consequence of the above, absenteeism results from not just one cause but is a consequence of several factors that create the environment in which a decision to miss work is deemed acceptable by the individual. Based on the characteristics of each contributing element, these different factors can be classified in different ways. Organisations can then take direct action to rectify the loss of labour based on the learnings and increased understanding gained (Forsey, 2022).

2.12.2 Individual approach

Kaiser (2018) indicated that several variables impact workplace attendance from various perspectives, including age, gender, job satisfaction, motivation, behavior, and commitment, as well as factors related to a person's nature, such as their attitude toward their work. Organisations need to gain a good understanding of the characteristics of individuals that display higher attendance and lower levels of absenteeism.

2.12.3 Social psychological approach

In the social-psychological approach to absenteeism, organisations consider the perception of fairness surrounding how employees are treated relative to other employees and whether or not the organisation accepts absent behaviour as part of its workforce policy. The likelihood of employees missing work commitments rises if absenteeism is considered acceptable since other employees or managers frequently miss work as well. It is, therefore, likely to decrease levels of absenteeism within an organisation if frequent absences are discouraged (Augustino, 2017).

2.12.4 Economic Approach

Employers can use reward and incentive strategies to reduce absenteeism. This type of program is affectionately called an incentive approach. There are a variety of techniques for offering incentives. For instance, employees can be rewarded for not taking sick leave or personal time (Kocakulah et al., 2016).

Favorable financial compensation is generally correlated with employee engagement, and high levels of motivation results in lower levels of absenteeism. However, the opposite is also true regarding poor financial compensation, which results in lower motivation and engagement and higher levels of absenteeism (Stander, 2020).

2.12.5 Rhodes and Steers Model

Based on Rhodes and Steers (1978), the attendance of employees is determined by their motivation to attend as well as their ability to attend. George and Jones (2017) state that an employee's motivation to attend work may be affected by job satisfaction. Absenteeism becomes considered an important indicator of job satisfaction since positive attitudes can sometimes serve to draw individuals towards the organisation, while negative attitudes can often result in the opposite effect. The Rhodes and Steers model attempt to include the contributing factors of both planned and unplanned absenteeism (Mukwevho et al., 2020).

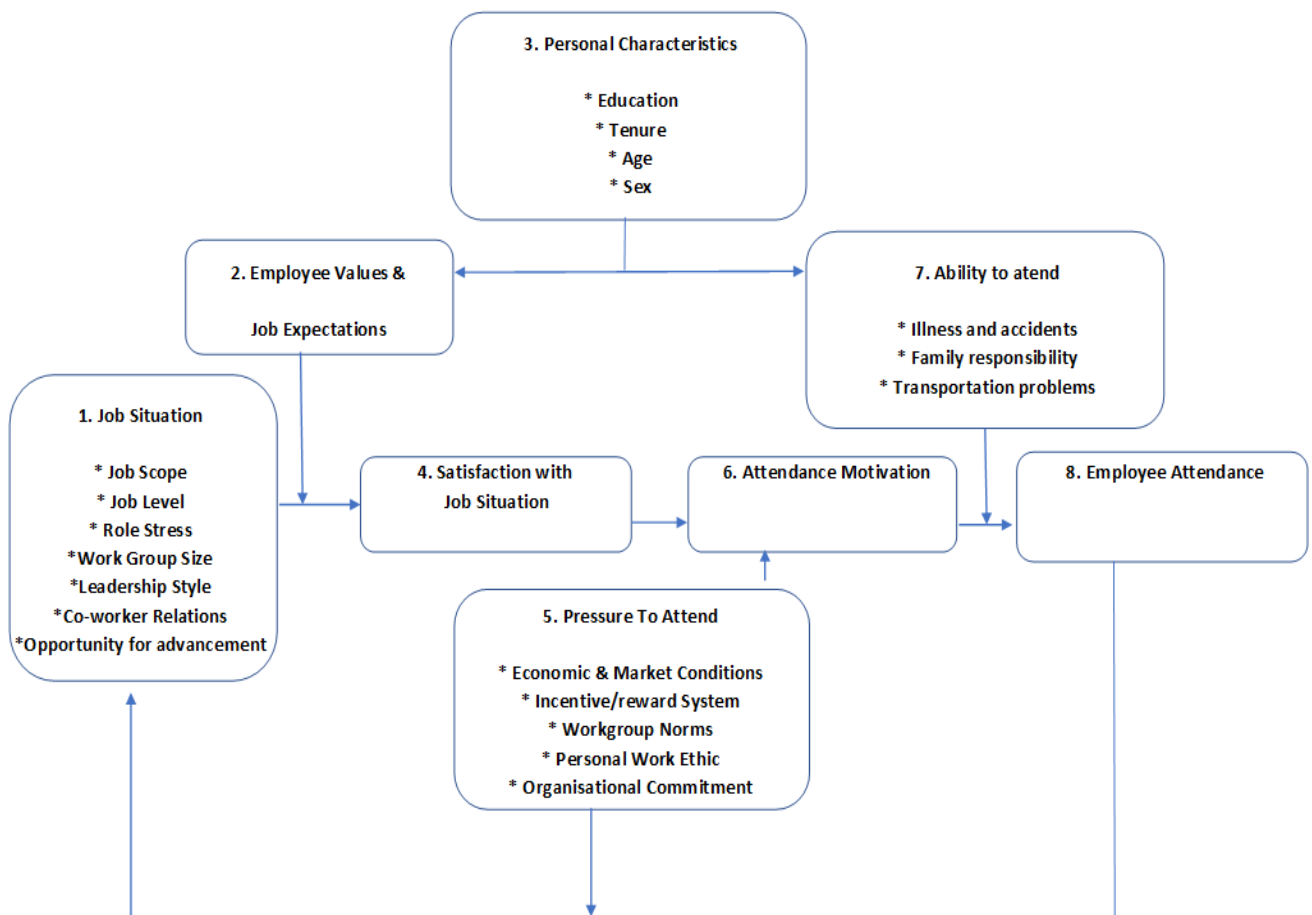


Figure 2.1: Attendance Process Model (Rhodes & Steers, 1978)

According to the Rhodes and Steers Model in figure 2.1 above, Employees' personal characteristics affect their values and expectations for the job. They will determine their job satisfaction based on their values and expectations. Consequently, if the employee is satisfied with the work environment, they will be more motivated to show up for work. The ability of an employee to attend can be influenced by factors such as family responsibilities, accidents, or issues with transportation. When managers understand all the variables, they may better understand why employees do not show up for work even when they are capable of doing so. Several factors contribute to absenteeism that has been highlighted in the model (Mukwevho et al., 2020).

For this study, the researcher will use the Rhodes and Steers attendance model as it examines the employee's willingness and ability to attend work. It finds the root cause of the absence by evaluating a variety of factors that may impact absenteeism. Once these factors or reasons are identified, strategies can be implemented to reduce absenteeism.

2.13 Conclusion

In this chapter, the researcher used academic literature to provide information on absenteeism to gain a better understanding of the factors leading to absenteeism, the impact it has on an organisation, and strategies to decrease it. By gaining this knowledge, management will be better equipped to formulate plans and initiatives to reduce absenteeism and decrease the negative impact it has on the Grain Field Chickens Abattoir.

The following chapter will discuss the research methodology that was followed in this study.

Chapter 3 Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction

The research methodology used in this study is discussed in this chapter. Research methods define the plan of the study, which will help the researcher achieve the objectives of Chapter 1. This chapter discusses the research design and why quantitative research is best suited for this study. It also discusses what sampling strategy was followed, who the population is, and how the data was collected. Lastly, this chapter discusses different ethical considerations to be considered.

An analysis of questionnaires on employee absences at the Grain Field Chickens Abattoir is the main objective of this study.

3.2 Research Design

Cooper (2011) defines research design as "the blueprint" for achieving the objectives of a study. In a more formal manner, the research design is defined as "a framework for collecting and analysing data" (Bryman, 2014). Epistemological stance – How we know what we know. Epistemology is one of the key parts of philosophy and is concerned with knowledge. This includes the nature, limitations, and sources of knowledge (Ludwig, 2020). In this study, knowledge will be obtained by individuals and groups doing quantitative research using questionnaires.

For this study, a positivism approach was used. As a sociological and philosophical approach, positivism looks at how society works through empirical evidence, such as statistics. Positivism is usually experimental, in which pre-specified quantifiable variables are changed to see what impact they have on other variables. (Nickerson, 2022).

In quantitative research, numerical data is collected and analysed. It can be used to test causal relationships, generate predictions, and generalise results to a wider population. In

quantitative research, the standard format is for each respondent to have the same set of questions so that all respondents' data can be analysed fairly. The data is provided in a numerical format so that analysis can be done in a quantitative manner (Bhandari, 2020).

For this study, a quantitative research design was used where questionnaires were distributed among employees for completion.

3.3 Sampling Strategy

A non-probability sampling technique was used for this study. A non-probability sampling technique relies on the researcher's subjective judgment to pick samples rather than a random selection, making it less stringent than a probability sampling approach. This type of sampling method does not allow every member of the population to take part equally in the study (Wolf et al., 2016). An accessible sample, also called convenience sampling, refers to data collected from members of a population who are conveniently available to participate in an experiment. Convenience sampling is a type of non-probability sampling that was used for this study where people were sampled because they were "convenient" sources of data for researchers (Bryman, 2011).

At the Grain Field Chickens (GFC) abattoir, more than 1 600 factory workers are employed. Altogether 1 300 essential factory workers formed part of the population. These essential workers perform a critical role in the production process of Grain Field Chickens. When the production chain is broken due to essential workers being absent, it negatively impacts the processes and productivity in the factory. Convenience sampling was used where essential workers were drawn at random and based on the availability of these workers to take part in the study.

By using Raosoft Sample size Calculator, it was found that with a population of 1 300, a minimum of 297 employees should participate in the study to achieve a confidence level of 95%. To improve the accuracy of the study, 352 employees were recruited to participate in the study.

3.4 Recruitment Strategy

In order for a research study to be successful, recruitment and retention of study participants must be successful. During the recruitment process, prospective research participants are identified and provided with information about the proposed research study and their interest in taking part. Study results can be significantly impacted by the inappropriate recruitment of test participants, which is often time-consuming and labour-intensive (Manohar, 2019).

For this study, recruitment was done by the Human Resource department of Grain Field Chickens based on the schedule and availability of employees to participate in the study.

3.5 Data Collection Method

A structured questionnaire was used for this research. A questionnaire consists of a series of questions used in research to collect respondents' information relevant to the study. Questionnaires function much like written interviews and can be conducted on the telephone, online, or by filling out a document (Bryman, 2016).

A structured questionnaire includes questions that are pre-coded and follow an established skip pattern. Most quantitative data collection businesses use structured questionnaires. Structured questionnaires have the advantages of reducing discrepancies, making administering them more manageable, and providing consistency in the answers (Brace, 2018).

The questionnaires were completed at the Grain Field Chickens Abattoir in Reitz. An HR administrator assisted in facilitating the data collection by providing the employees' access to Microsoft forms to complete the questionnaires. The questionnaires included 22 multiple-choice questions that took merely 15 minutes to complete. The data collection took place in July after the research study had received ethical clearance [UFS-HSD2022/1041/22].

Table 3.1: Questionnaire used in the study of absenteeism at the Grain Field Chickens Abattoir

Question 1	Choose your department
Question 2	I am absent from work _____ days per year.
Question 3	Do you have kids or any family member in your care?
Question 4	How many members are in your family?
Question 5	Are you a single parent?
Question 6	How long have you been working at GFC?
Question 7	What do you think are two main reasons for the absenteeism of employees? (choose 2)
Question 8	If you chose "other", please specify below
Question 9	The following two rewards are most likely to reduce absenteeism (select two)
Question 10	If you chose "other", please specify below2
Question 11	How do you commute to work?
Question 12	In a typical week, I often feel stressed at work
Question 13	I would be less absent if I was rewarded for not being absent
Question 14	I am satisfied with the current absenteeism policy
Question 15	I am clear about my work/job responsibilities
Question 16	I am Satisfied with my work and workload
Question 17	I have opportunities for promotions or career advancement with our company
Question 18	My organisation pays attention to employees' health and welfare
Question 19	I have very good relationships with my superiors
Question 20	I have very good relationships with my Co-workers
Question 21	Do you ever get bullied at your workplace?
Question 22	My Superior is very attentive to my needs and problems
Question 23	My annual Leave is always approved when requested
Question 24	I am more likely to be absent on Public Holidays
Question 25	I am more likely to be absent during the night shift

Table 3.1 provides the questions that were asked to test the different hypotheses as discussed in Chapter 2.

3.6 Data Analysis method

For this study, various statistical techniques were used to analyse the data collected from the questionnaires, including regression analysis, Kruskal-Wallis analysis, Chi-squared analysis, and Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient.

3.6.1 Regression Analysis

Regression analysis aims to find a relationship between the explanatory variables and the response variables. Regression analysis is most commonly used to quantify how one factor affects another. Regression analysis is also used to identify if trends exist in data (Arkes, 2019).

Regression analysis is a reliable method for determining which variables affect a topic of interest. Regression analysis can examine the relationships between different variables. With regression, the researcher can determine which characteristics are most important, which elements can be ignored, and how these characteristics are influenced by each other (Thrane, 2019). An example would be to determine how relationships at work impact the rate of absenteeism of an employee.

The regression can be expressed mathematically as:

$$y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 X_{1i} + \beta_2 X_{2i} + \beta_3 X_{3i} + \beta_4 X_{4i} + \beta_5 X_{5i} + \beta_6 X_{6i} + \beta_7 X_{7i} + \beta_8 X_{8i} + \beta_9 X_{9i} + \varepsilon_i$$

Where each term is defined as follows:

- y_i = Observed Days Absent for person i
- X_{1i} = Family responsibility for person i
- X_{2i} = Job stress for person i
- X_{3i} = Clear responsibilities for person i
- X_{4i} = Satisfaction for person i
- X_{5i} = Work relations superiors for person i
- X_{6i} = Work relations co-workers for person i
- X_{7i} = Bullying for person i
- X_{8i} = Management for person i

- X_{9i} = Leave for person i
- β_0 is the baseline intercept for someone with no family responsibility and average levels for the other explanatory variables
- β_1 is the estimated additional days absent for someone with family responsibility in the presence of the other explanatory variables
- $\beta_{2...9}$ is the estimated additional days absent due to a 1 unit increase in that explanatory variable in the presence of the other explanatory variables
- ε_i is the residual (unexplained) variation around the expectation in days absent for person i

3.6.2 Kruskal-Wallis Analysis

The Kruskal-Wallis test is the non-parametric alternative to the One Way ANOVA. Non-parametric means that the Kruskal-Wallis test does not assume that the data comes from a particular distribution. It examines the null hypothesis, according to which the populations from the different samples drawn are equal in the sense that none of the populations dominates the others. When one element is randomly chosen from each population of a group, a group is dominant over the others if it is more likely that the largest element belongs to that group (Real Statistics, 2022).

3.6.3 Pearson's Correlation Coefficient

The correlation coefficient is used to measure how strong a relationship is between two variables. Correlation by itself does not imply cause. Using the scaled data, the Pearson correlation coefficients is calculated. Responses that tend to change in the same direction are indicated by positive correlations. Responses that contradict one another are shown by negative correlations (R Core Team, 2022). For this study, correlations were used to measure the relationship between variables that may impact absenteeism and the actual rate of absenteeism at Grain Field Chickens to determine if relationships exist.

3.6.4 Chi-square Analysis

The chi-square test is used to compare actual outcomes to predictions. This test aims to determine whether a discrepancy between actual and projected data is caused by chance or by a relationship between the variables being examined. The Chi-squared test assists in comprehending and evaluating the relationship between two categorical variables. This test can also be performed to see if the data's categorical variables are related to it. It is useful to determine whether a discrepancy between two categorical variables is the result of coincidence or an association between them (Simplilearn, 2022).

3.7 Ethical Considerations

Research ethics refers to the code of conduct that researchers must follow when collecting data from people. They define the ethical principles that underlie research designs and practices. Research ethics' objective is to ensure that individuals participating in studies do so voluntarily, in the knowledge of their rights, and in a safe environment. Ethics is the integration of integrity, human rights, and dignity in all aspects of science and society (Bhandari, 2021).

Ethical Considerations are one of the most important parts of research, as dissertations may be doomed to failure if ethical considerations are missing or not followed. This includes the ethical aspect of the study and ensures all aspects of the study are handled ethically and responsibly. According to Bryman and Bell (2016), ethical considerations include principles like:

3.7.1 Permission obtained

The CSIR Research Ethics Principles state that permission is needed from the respondents when any confidential information is disclosed (Bryman, 2016). Permission was obtained by the respondents that actual absenteeism rates were provided for them to fill in the

questionnaire. This questionnaire would remain anonymous, and the absenteeism rates were only used for statistical purposes.

Permission was granted by the Human Resources manager of Grain Field Chickens' Mr. Wally Kok, to conduct the study. Permission was also granted by Mr. Theo van Strijp, Managing Director of Grainfield Chickens, who agreed to make resources available to assist in the study of absenteeism at the abattoir.

3.7.2 Informed Consent

The informed consent form provides the respondent with details on the topic being researched. It also provides both the researcher and the respondent with a mutual understanding and presents an opportunity at the beginning of the study to raise any questions or concerns from either party. Participants understand how the study will benefit them, what risks they will face, and how it will be financed before they agree to participate. (Schreiner, 2009). All respondents in this study were informed of the purpose of the study and how it can help Grain Field Chickens to make the necessary change if needed.

3.7.3 Voluntary participation

In research, all participants should be voluntary, and there should be no deception or coercion. In practice, this means that research participants must fully understand the procedures and risks before consenting to participate. All potential participants were informed before they were recruited for the study that they were free to decline participation and they were free to withdraw at any time without any negative consequences (Trochim, 2021).

Respondents do not need to state a reason for leaving and must be assured that their refusal to participate will not result in any negative consequences (Bhandari, 2020). For this study,

respondents were informed that they participated voluntarily and that they may withdraw at any time during the study if they wished to do so.

3.7.4 Confidentiality and anonymity

It is important to distinguish between confidentiality and anonymity. Anonymity is not knowing who the participants are (Surmiak, 2018). This can be done by conducting telephonic interviews or when surveys are distributed on behalf of the researcher. Confidentiality is when the respondents are known, but their identity will not be revealed at any point during the study (Trochim, 2021). For this study, all respondents were informed that any information would be handled as confidential. A confidential agreement was signed with each respondent.

3.7.5 No Harm

Researchers should never carry out research with the intent of hurting anyone or discovering information at other people's expense. Research should always be based on new information that will benefit society. The gist of ethical research and, indeed, of research ethics scrutiny is to prevent any harm from being done to any groups or individuals by participating. Different kinds of harm should be considered, and ways should be determined to minimise the risk of any harm (Iphofen & Tolich, 2018). All communication and information with regard to the study should be done with honesty and transparency (Iphofen & Tolich, 2018).

3.8 Conclusion

This chapter described how the study's design and methodology addressed the problem statement and research questions. For the stated research problem and the associated research objectives, the study followed a quantitative research design. For this study, convenience sampling was found to be the most appropriate strategy for gathering data due

to the nature of the business. Lastly, this chapter provided ethical considerations that guided the study. The following chapter will focus on the analysis of the data that was collected from the questionnaires.

Chapter 4 Data Analysis

4.1 Introduction

The data analysis findings on the absenteeism of factory workers at the Grain Field Chickens Abattoir are presented and discussed in this chapter.

The data analysed in the following section reflect the attendance patterns of the general population. The data was collected randomly from respondents who were available at the time and were asked to participate in the study. The data was collected over a two-week period to ensure the entire population working day and night shifts were included in the gathering of information. The sample size was 352 from a population of 1 300. Responses were collected from various departments of the factory in equal ratios to ensure that the data was more accurate and reflected the bigger picture of absenteeism at the Grain Field Chickens Abattoir.

The departments of the Grain Field Chickens Abattoir that completed the questionnaire are indicated in table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1 GFC Departments that completed the questionnaire

Response	Frequency	Relative Frequency
Deboning	13	4%
Defeathering	23	7%
Dispatch	4	1%
Fresh Fillets	21	6%
Fresh lines	76	22%
Giblet Packing	49	14%
IQF	68	19%
KFC Fillets and mini Fillets	18	5%
KFC Zinger wings	34	10%
Palletizing	24	7%
Receiving	22	6%

From Table 4.1, it is evident that the majority of the responses were from the fresh lines department at 22%, followed by the IQF line at 19%, and Giblet Packaging comprised 14% of the sample. However, only 1% of the sample was from the Dispatch Division, given it is the smallest department in the factory.

4.1.1 Main Research Finding

After analysis, three statistically significant variables were identified that impact the rate of absenteeism at the Grain Field Chickens Abattoir. Family responsibility, years of employment, and workload. Family responsibility and years of employment are most significant. After running additional tests where family responsibility was tested in the presence of years of employment, years of employment at the Grain Field Chickens Abattoir was found to be the primary explanatory factor for absenteeism.

Figure 4.1 below illustrates the rate of absenteeism at the Grain Field Chickens Abattoir when family responsibility is tested as an explanatory variable in the presence of work experience.

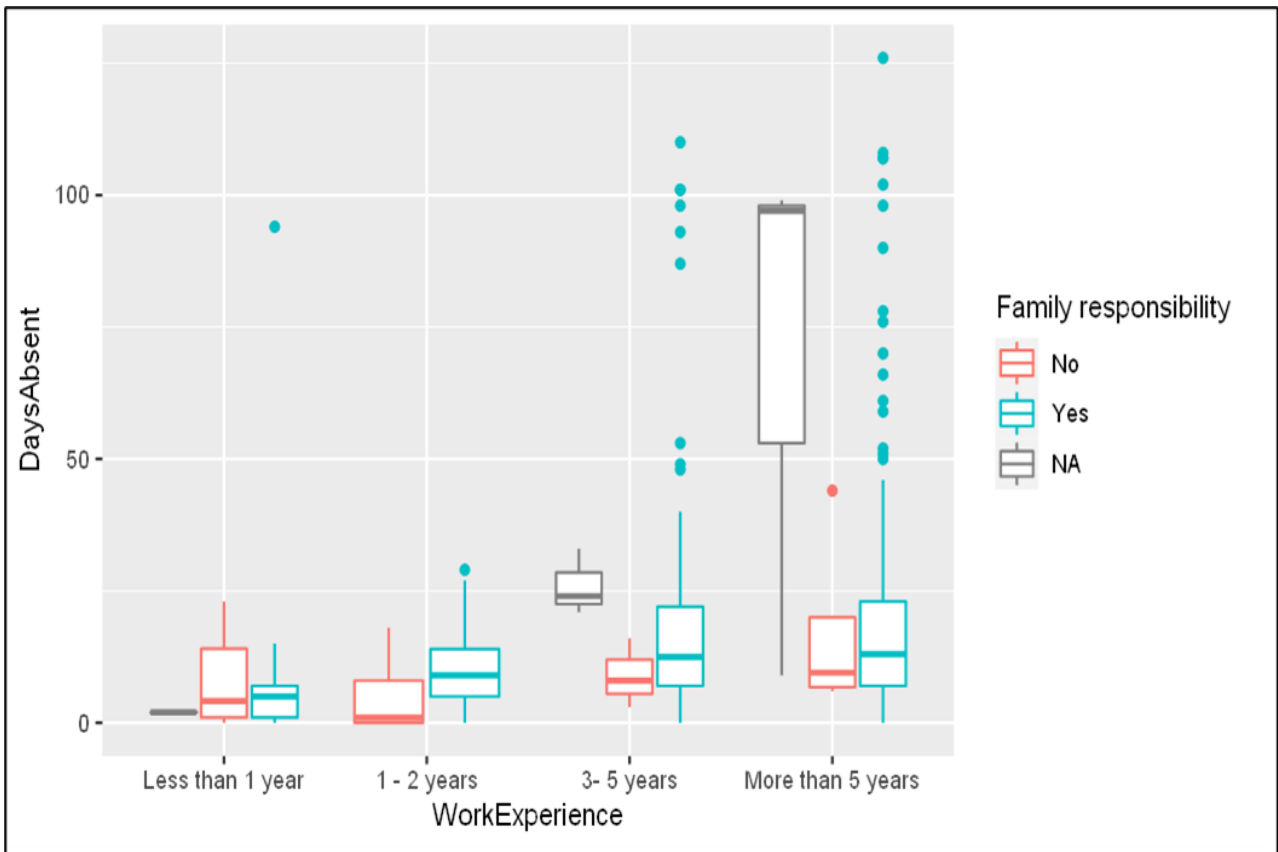


Figure 4.1 The rate of absenteeism when family responsibility is tested in the presence of work experience

Figure 4.1 shows that family responsibility is not significant in the presence of work experience and does not contribute additional information once the experience level is established.

4.2 Statistical tests that were used for the research

For this study, regression analysis was used to analyse the data collected from the questionnaires. The goal of regression analysis was to find if a relationship exists between the explanatory variables and absenteeism. The variables that were tested were:

- Observed Days Absent for the employee
- Family responsibility for the employee
- Job stress for the employee
- Clear responsibilities for the employee
- Job Satisfaction for the employee
- Work relations with superiors for the employee
- Work relations co-workers for the employee
- Bullying of the employee
- Management of the employee
- Annual Leave for the employee

Table 4.2 displays the findings from the regression analysis used for the study, testing if relationships exist in the variables as indicated above.

Table 4.2 Regression analysis data

term	estimate	std.error	statistic	p.value
(Intercept)	9.95	5.061	1.966	0.05
Family responsibilityYes	5.286	5.215	1.014	0.311
Experience	4.812	2.005	2.401	0.017
Job stress	1.453	2.118	0.686	0.493
Clear responsibilities	0.754	2.737	0.276	0.783
Satisfaction	-1.08	2.354	-0.459	0.647
Work relations superiors	2.995	3.188	0.939	0.348
Work relations co-workers	-1.101	2.838	-0.388	0.698
Bullying	-0.656	2.373	-0.276	0.782
Management	-5.444	2.8	-1.944	0.053
Leave	2.66	3.034	0.876	0.381
Signif. codes: 0 '***' 0.001 '**' 0.01 '*' 0.05 '.' 0.1 ' ' 1				
Residual standard error: 21.47 on 335 degrees of freedom (7 observations deleted due to missingness)				
Multiple R-squared: 0.02811, Adjusted R-squared: 0.0019				
F-statistic: 1.077 on 9 and 335 DF, p-value: 0.3795 > 0.05				

In table 4.2, it is noted that the regression is not statistically significant as a whole. Thus, no attempt will be made to interpret the results. This does not mean that no relationships exist, merely that the relationships are not clearly and reliably evident from the data.

In addition to the regression analysis, the Kruskal-Wallis statistical test was used, where all the questions from the questionnaire were directly measured against the rate of absenteeism to determine if any relationship exists between these variables and the rate of absenteeism.

Once statistical significance on the various variables was established using the Kruskal-Wallis statistical test, the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to determine whether associations existed between two or more variables.

4.3 Average Absenteeism days per department per year

In the following section, the average days of absenteeism will be shown for the various departments of the Grain Field Chickens Abattoir.

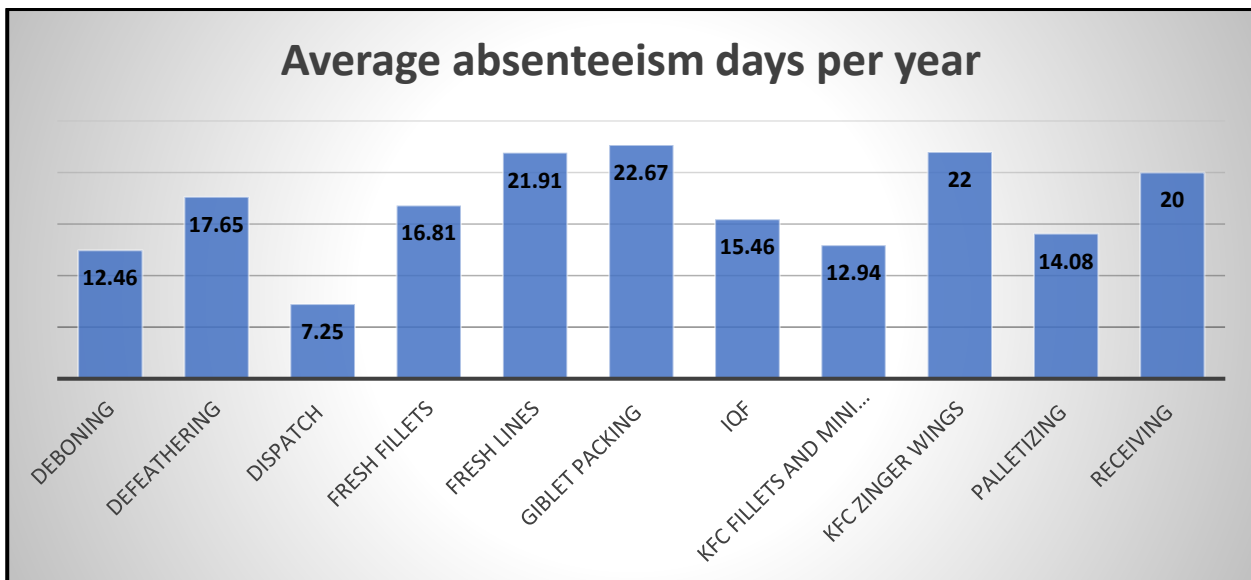


Figure 4.2 A graphical representation of the sample with regard to average absenteeism days per year in the different departments

Figure 4.2 shows that the largest rate of absenteeism is from the giblet packing section at 22.67 per annum, followed by KFC zinger wings at 22 days and fresh lines at 21.91 days. Dispatch has the lowest absenteeism rate at only an average of 7.25 days per annum.

In addition to figure 4.2 above, the Kruskal-Wallis analysis in table 4.3 below displays the average absenteeism days and the minimum and maximum days of absenteeism per department.

Table 4.3 Kruskal-Wallis analysis for absenteeism

Kruskal-Wallis p-value = 0.251											
Group	Count	Average	SD	SE	Lower	Upper	Min	Q1	Median	Q3	Max
Deboning	13	12.46	11.5	3.2	5.5	19.42	1	3	10	19	40
Defeathering	23	17.65	20.5	4.3	8.77	26.54	0	7.5	14	18.5	97
Dispatch	4	7.25	10.9	5.4	-10.05	24.55	0	0	3	10.3	23
Fresh Fillets	21	16.81	11.4	2.5	11.62	22	4	9	14	24	49
Fresh lines	76	21.91	26.4	3	15.88	27.94	0	6.8	12	24.5	110
Giblet Packing	49	22.67	24.1	3.4	15.76	29.58	0	9	15	24	107
IQF	68	15.46	15.2	1.9	11.77	19.14	0	6	10	22	90
KFC Fillets and mini Fillets	18	12.94	8.36	2	8.79	17.1	0	8	12.5	15.5	35
KFC Zinger wings	34	22	29.4	5.1	11.73	32.27	0	8	12	20.8	126
Palletizing	24	14.08	20.3	4.2	5.5	22.67	0	5	8	15.8	99
Receiving	22	20	29.8	6.4	6.77	33.23	1	1.5	8.5	23.5	108

From table 4.3, the maximum absenteeism of individuals in the different departments of the Grain Field Chickens Abattoir can be observed. KFC Zinger Wings have the highest absenteeism for a single employee per year at 126 days, followed by Fresh Lines at 110 days and Receiving at 108 days.

4.4 Questionnaire Variables

The following variables were analysed using the Kruskal-Wallis statistical test to determine if relationships exist between the dimensions and the rate of absenteeism. The variables include family responsibility, years of employment, workload, number of members in a family, single parent, employees indicating that they feel stressed at work, bullying and harassment, and shift work. Only results that display a value of less than 0.05 indicate a statistically significant relationship between the variables and the absenteeism rate. These variables will be discussed in more detail in the following section.

4.4.1 Family Responsibility

In the following section, family responsibility will be discussed to evaluate the impact it has on the rate of absenteeism of an employee.

The respondents were asked if they have any kids or family members in their care, and the results are illustrated in figure 4.3 below.

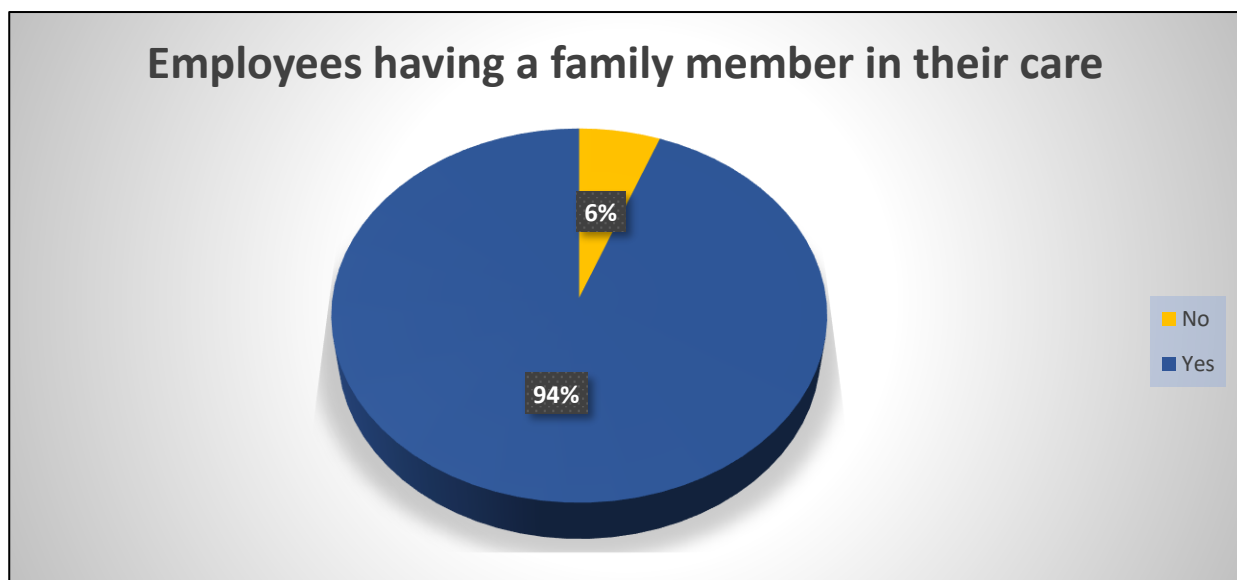


Figure 4.3 A graphical presentation of the breakdown of employees with and without a family member in their care

Figure 4.3 shows that the vast majority of respondents (94%) have family members in their care, while only 6% of respondents indicated that they did not have a family member in their care.

After obtaining the breakdown of employees with and without family members in their care, a Kruskal-Wallis analysis was done. Table 4.4 below shows the Kruskal-Wallis analysis of absenteeism when evaluating the relationship between family responsibility and absenteeism at the Grain Field Chickens Abattoir.

Table 4.4 The Kruskal-Wallis analysis of employees that have a family member in their care

Kruskal-Wallis p-value = 0.006											
Group	Count	Average	SD	SE	Lower	Upper	Min	Q1	Median	Q3	Max
No	20	9.16	10.81	2.42	4.1	14.22	0	1	6.5	13	44
Yes	325	18.67	21.87	1.21	16.28	21.06	0	6	12	22	126

Table 4.4 shows that the average absent days for respondents with family members in their care are 18.67 days per year, compared to 9.16 days per year for respondents who do not have a family member in their care. The Kruskal-Wallis p-value for the relationship between years of employment and the rate of absenteeism was 0.006, indicating a statistically significant relationship between family responsibility and absenteeism. A p-value of 0.006 indicates that if the null hypothesis tested were indeed true, there would be a six in 1 000 chance of finding extreme results.

Figure 4.4 below provides an illustration of the average days of absenteeism for individuals with and without family members in their care. It also illustrates extreme cases of absenteeism of individuals shown by the circles on the plot.

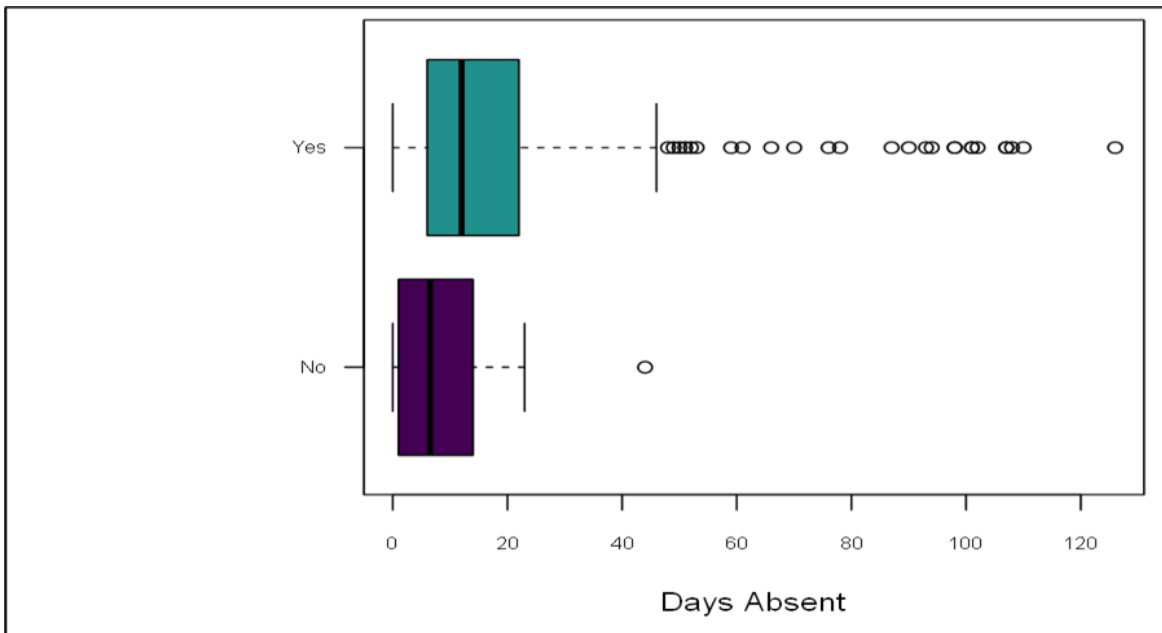


Figure 4.4 The days absent for employees with and without family members in their care

From figure 4.4, it is evident that employees with family members in their care are absent from work more frequently. It also shows more severe cases of absenteeism for employees with a family member in their care. From the literature, it was found that family responsibility is associated with unplanned absenteeism, which is more disruptive to processes in a factory than planned absenteeism. This is also the case at Grain Field Chickens where operations are affected due to the loss of labour.

4.4.2 Years of employment

In the following section, years of employment will be discussed. When analysing years of employment compared to the rate of absenteeism, a p-value of less than 0.001 was obtained, which means the null hypothesis can be rejected, making years of employment statistically significant when compared to the rate of absenteeism. This concludes that a relationship between years of employment and absenteeism does exist.

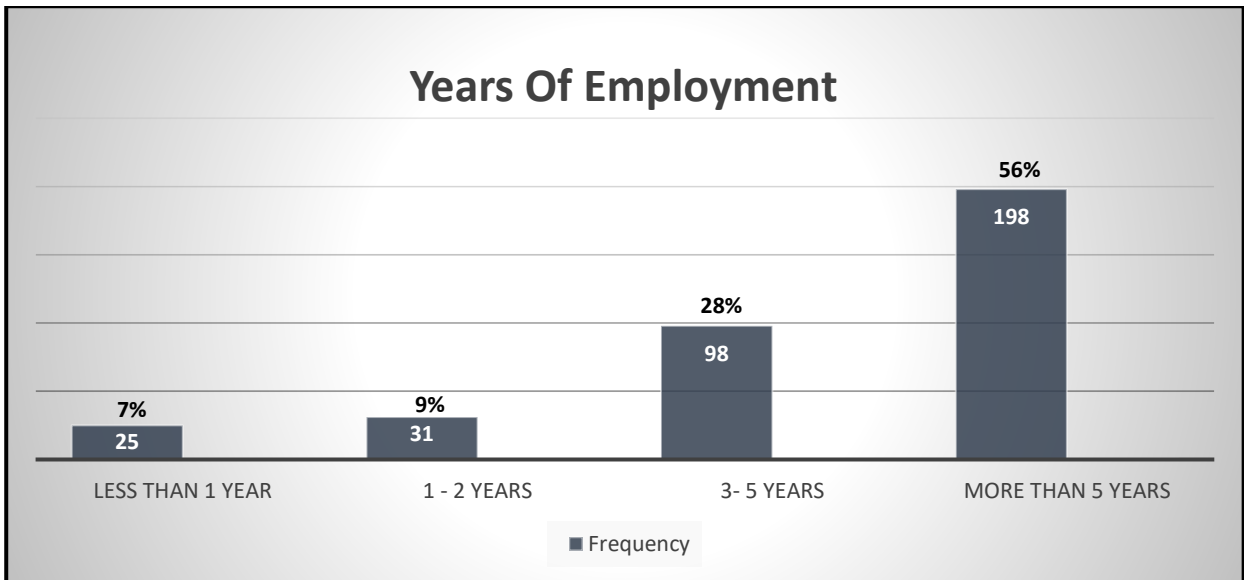


Figure 4.5 *The years of employment of the various employees that completed the questionnaire*

Figure 4.5 shows that 56% of employees that participated in the study have been employed at the Grain Field Chickens Abattoir for more than 5 years; 28% of employees have been employed between 3 and 5 years, while only 7% of employees have been employed at Grain Field Chickens for less than one year.

Table 4.5 below shows the Kruskal-Wallis analysis of absenteeism when evaluating the relationship between years of employment and absenteeism at the Grain Field Chickens Abattoir.

Table 4.5 The Kruskal-Wallis analysis between the years of employment and the rate of absenteeism

Kruskal-Wallis p-value = 0												
Group	Count	Average	Combined Average	SD	SE	Lower	Upper	Min	Q1	Median	Q3	Max
Less than 1 year	25	8.73	8.93	18.8	3.8	0.99	16.47	0	1	4.11	7	94
1 - 2 years	31	9.1		8.04	1.4	6.15	12.05	0	2	9	13	29
3- 5 years	98	19.97	20.39	22.8	2.3	15.4	24.54	0	7	13.5	22	110
More than 5 years	198	20.6		23.1	1.6	17.36	23.84	0	7	13	23.8	126

From table 4.5, it is evident that as the years of employment increase, the rate of absenteeism increases. The average absent days for employees that were employed for less than three years is 8.93 days per year, while employees employed for longer than three years were absent on an average of 20.39 days per year.

Figure 4.6 below provides an illustration of the average days of absenteeism as years of employment increase. It also illustrates extreme cases of absenteeism of individuals shown by the circles on the plot.

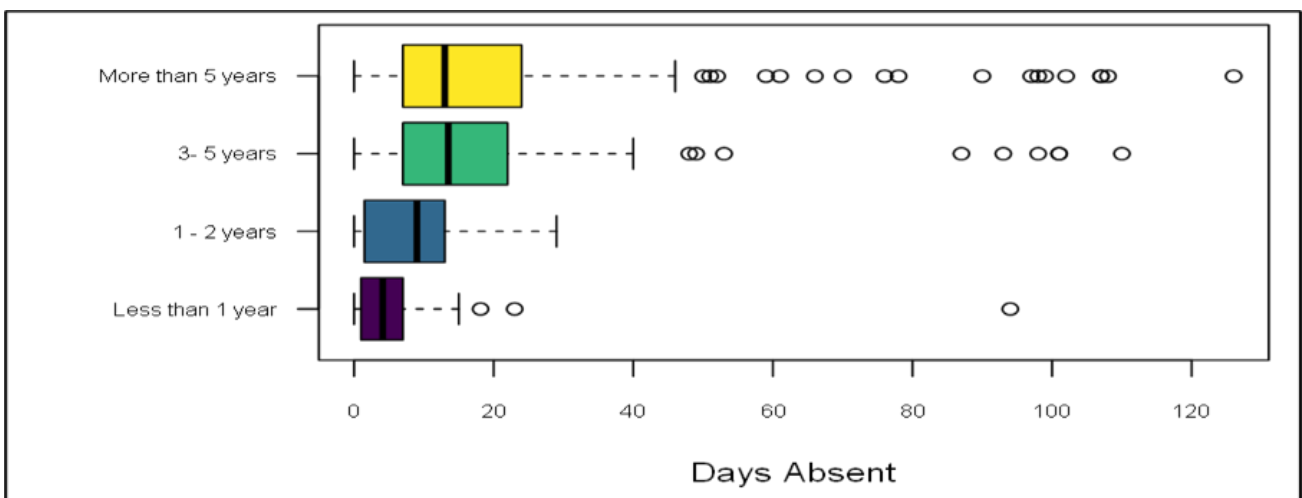


Figure 4.6 The absenteeism days when compared to years of employment

Figure 4.6 illustrates the days that the different employee groups are absent based on years of employment. From the box plot, it is evident that as the years of employment increase, more severe cases of absenteeism become present.

4.4.3 Workload

In the following section, the workload will be discussed. Employees were asked if they were satisfied with their workload. When analysing the data, a Kruskal-Wallis p-value of 0.038 was obtained, making workload satisfaction significant when comparing the relationship it has to the rate of absenteeism of employees. A p-value of 0.038 indicates that if the null hypothesis tested were indeed true, there would be a 38 in 1 000 chance of finding extreme results.

Figure 4.7 below illustrates the breakdown of how the various employees of Grain Field Chickens perceive their workload.

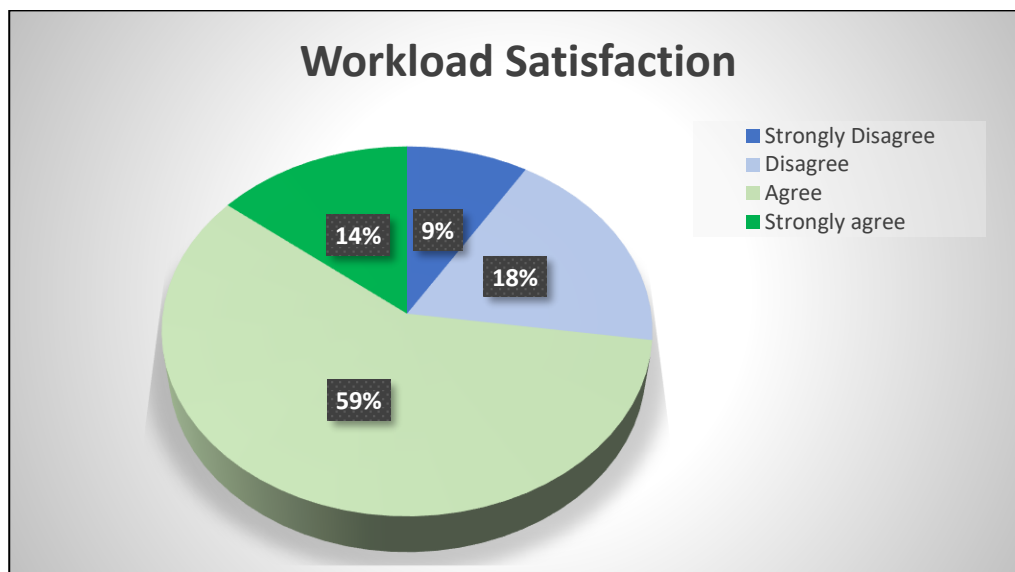


Figure 4.7 The breakdown of how employees perceive their workload

In figure 4.7, it can be seen that 59% of employees agreed that they were satisfied with their workload and 14% strongly agreed that they were satisfied; 18% of employees indicated that they did not agree that their workload was satisfactory, while 9% strongly disagreed. By analysing the data, a statistically significant relationship was found between workload and absenteeism indicating that people that perceived their workload as manageable were absent from work less frequently.

Table 4.6 below shows the Kruskal-Wallis analysis of absenteeism when evaluating the relationship between workload satisfaction and absenteeism at the Grain Field Chickens Abattoir.

Table 4.6 The data of the Kruskal-Wallis analysis of workload compared to absenteeism

Kruskal-Wallis p-value = 0.038												
Group	Count	Average	Combined average	SD	SE	Lower	Upper	Min	Q1	Median	Q3	Max
Strongly Disagree	31	13.65	20.72	10.44	1.87	9.82	17.47	2	5	11	22	46
Disagree	65	24.09		26.8	3.32	17.45	30.73	0	10	17	24	126
Agree	206	18.01	17.76	22.19	1.55	14.96	21.06	0	6	10.5	19	110
Strongly agree	50	16.76		19.72	2.79	11.16	22.36	0	6.3	12	21	101

From table 4.6, it is evident that employees who are satisfied with their workload were absent from work an average of 17.76 days per year, compared to 20.72 days per year for employees that were not satisfied with their workload. The Kruskal-Wallis p-value for the relationship between workload and absentee rate was 0.038, indicating a statistically significant relationship between workload and absenteeism at the Grain Field Chickens Abattoir. The study found a positive relationship between workload and the rate of absenteeism and supports the findings of Frick (2020), who found a positive relationship between workload and absenteeism.

4.4.4 Number of Members in family

Employees were asked about the number of members in their family to determine if this impacted the rate of absenteeism.

Table 4.7 below shows the Kruskal-Wallis analysis when evaluating the relationship between the number of members in a family and absenteeism at the Grain Field Chickens Abattoir.

Table 4.7 A comparison of the number of members in a family in relation to the rate of absenteeism

Kruskall-Wallis p-value = 0.276											
Group	Count	Average	SD	SE	Lower	Upper	Min	Q1	Median	Q3	Max
One	12	16.67	16.2	4.7	6.38	26.95	0	3.8	12	23.8	50
Two	29	12.83	9.96	1.9	9.04	16.62	0	6	8	18.1	43
Three	54	24.39	28.3	3.9	16.67	32.12	1	7	16	24	126
Four	81	15.71	17	1.9	11.94	19.47	0	6	11	18	107
Five	90	22.66	27.6	2.9	16.88	28.43	0	8	13	23.8	110
More than five.	86	15.53	18	1.9	11.69	19.38	0	5	11	20	107

In Table 4.7, it can be seen that the Kruskal-Wallis p-value for the relationship between the number of members in a family and the rate of absenteeism was 0.276, indicating little statistical significance. Although there is not a clear relationship between the number of family members and the rate of absenteeism, it can be seen that there are more extreme cases of absenteeism as the size of the family increases.

4.4.5 Single Parent

The respondents were asked if they were single parents. The findings from this question will be discussed in this section.

Table 4.8 below shows the Kruskal-Wallis analysis when evaluating the relationship between single and non-single parents and absenteeism at the Grain Field Chickens Abattoir.

Table 4.8 The Kruskal-Wallis analysis for the relationship between single and non-single parents and absenteeism

Kruskal-Wallis p-value = 0.18											
Group	Count	Average	SD	SE	Lower	Upper	Min	Q1	Median	Q3	Max
No	101	16.89	20.84	2.07	12.78	21.01	0	5	11	19	101
Yes	251	19.24	22.66	1.43	16.43	22.06	0	6	12	22	126

Table 4.8 shows that single parents are absent from work on average 19.24 days per year, while non-single parents are only absent from work 16.89 days per year on average. The Kruskal-Wallis p-value for the relationship between single parents and absentee rate was 0.18, not indicating a statistically significant relationship between single and non-single parents and the rate of absenteeism.

The study found visible differences between the rate of absenteeism of non-single and single parents. Still, it could not conclusively determine the presence of a relationship between single parents and the rate of absenteeism.

4.4.6 People that indicated that they felt stressed at work

Employees were asked if they experienced stress at work to determine if this impacted the rate of absenteeism. The results will be discussed in this section.

Table 4.9 below shows the Kruskal-Wallis analysis of absenteeism when evaluating the relationship between people who indicated that they feel stressed at work and absenteeism at the Grain Field Chickens Abattoir.

Table 4.9 The breakdown of employees that indicated that they felt stressed at work

Kruskall-Wallis p-value = 0.24											
Group	Count	Average	SD	SE	Lower	Upper	Min	Q1	Median	Q3	Max
Strongly Disagree	55	17.4	20.81	2.81	11.78	23.02	0	5	11	20.5	110
Disagree	139	17.2	20.68	1.75	13.73	20.67	0	6	11	19.5	107
Agree	132	20.46	23.7	2.06	16.38	24.54	0	7	13.5	23.25	126
Strongly agree	26	18.73	24.83	4.87	8.7	28.76	1	4	15	18.75	101

From table 4.9, it can be seen that there are no significant differences between the level of stress experienced and the rate of absenteeism. The Kruskal-Wallis p-value for the relationship between people who indicated that they felt stressed at work and the rate of absenteeism was 0.24, not indicating a statistically significant relationship between work stress and absenteeism.

The study could not find any visible differences between the rate of absenteeism and people who indicated that they felt stressed out at work and those who did not feel stressed.

4.4.7 Bullying

Employees were asked if they were bullied at work to determine if this impacted the rate of absenteeism. The results will be discussed in this section.

Table 4.10 below shows the Kruskal-Wallis analysis when evaluating the relationship between workplace bullying and absenteeism at the Grain Field Chickens Abattoir.

Table 4.10 The breakdown of employees who indicated that they felt bullied at work

Kruskall-Wallis p-value = 0.763											
Group	Count	Average	SD	SE	Lower	Upper	Min	Q1	Median	Q3	Max
Strongly Disagree	83	20.1	25.9	2.8	14.44	25.75	0	6.5	12	22	126
Disagree	183	17.35	19.5	1.4	14.5	20.2	0	6	11	21	107
Agree	72	21	25.2	3	15.08	26.93	0	7	13	23	108
Strongly agree	14	12.93	10.4	2.8	6.91	18.94	0	6.3	11	16	38

From table 4.10, it can be seen that there are no significant differences between the rate of absenteeism and employees who indicated that they were bullied at work. The Kruskal-Wallis p-value for the relationship between people who indicated that they were bullied at work and the rate of absenteeism was 0.763, not indicating a statistically significant relationship between workplace bullying and absenteeism.

The study could not find any visible differences between the rate of absenteeism and people who indicated that they got bullied at work and those who did not get bullied at work.

4.5 Additional Analysis

In this section, the response to question 3 with regard to family responsibility is compared with the other responses. Tests of independence, similar to the classical Chi-squared test of independence, were done but using simulated p-values to account for the imbalance in groups.

Table 4.11 below show the results of the test done for independence to determine if the variables have a relationship with each other and with absenteeism.

Table 4.11 The results of the test done to determine independence

Question	raw_p_value	adj_p_value	Description
Q4	0.18	1.00	How many members are in your family?
Q5	0.039	0.63	Are you a single parent?
Q6	0	0.01	How long have you been working at GFC?
Q7	0.547	1.00	What do you think are two main reasons for the absenteeism of employees?
Q8	0.02	0.41	If you chose "other", please specify below
Q9	0.817	1.00	The following two rewards are most likely to reduce absenteeism
Q10	0.032	0.55	If you chose "other", please specify below2
Q11	0.001	0.02	How do you commute to work?
Q12	0.984	1.00	In a typical week, I often feel stressed at work
Q13	0.879	1.00	I would be less absent if I was rewarded for not being absent
Q14	0.029	0.55	I am satisfied with the current absenteeism policy
Q15	0.706	1.00	I am clear about my work/job responsibilities
Q16	1	1.00	I am Satisfied with my work and workload
Q17	0.411	1.00	I have opportunities for promotions or career advancement with our company
Q18	0.894	1.00	My organisation pays attention to employees' health and welfare
Q19	0.886	1.00	I have very good relationships with my superiors
Q20	0.029	0.55	I have very good relationships with my Co-workers
Q21	0.42	1.00	Do you ever get bullied at your workplace?
Q22	0.471	1.00	My Superior is very attentive to my needs and problems
Q23	0.634	1.00	My annual Leave is always approved when requested
Q24	0.532	1.00	I am more likely to be absent on Public Holidays
Q25	0.488	1.00	I am more likely to be absent during the night shift

Table 4.11 shows a relationship between Question 3 and Question 6. Since both are related to absenteeism and each other, a 3-way investigation of the relationship was done and will be discussed in the following section.

4.5.1 Reduced Regression

In the following section, the 3-way relationships are investigated as identified above.

Responsibility and experience as a continuous predictor, without interaction, was used to test the 3-way relationship, which is shown in table 4.12 below.

Table 4.12 The test for Responsibility and experience as a continuous predictor, without interaction

Call: lm(formula = DaysAbsent ~ `Family responsibility` + Experience, data = rd)					
Residuals:	Min	1Q	Median	3Q	Max
	-20.627	-11.627	-5.747	3.373	105.373
Residual standard error: 21.25 on 342 degrees of freedom					
Multiple R-squared: 0.02816, Adjusted R-squared: 0.					
F-statistic: 4.956 on 2 and 342 DF, p-value: 0.007557					
term	estimate	std.error	statistic	p.value	
(Intercept)	10.149	4.769	2.128	0.034	
Family responsibilityYes	5.538	5.152	1.075	0.283	
Experience	4.94	1.994	2.478	0.014	

From table 4.12, it can be seen that when an employee starts employment, the average absenteeism is 10.149 days per year. When family responsibility becomes present, an additional 5.538 days of absenteeism is observed, and once the experience level goes beyond two years, an additional 4.94 days of absenteeism is observed on average. This model suggests that it is the work experience that is the primary explanatory factor. Family responsibility is not significant in the presence of experience and does not contribute additional information once the experience level is established.

4.5.2 Correlations

In quantitative research, variables are examined to determine if they are related and if so, the direction and strength of those relationship are often assessed. Correlation analysis serves to determine the pattern and strength of association between variables (Webster, 2019). Figure 48 below illustrates how the different variables impacted each other.

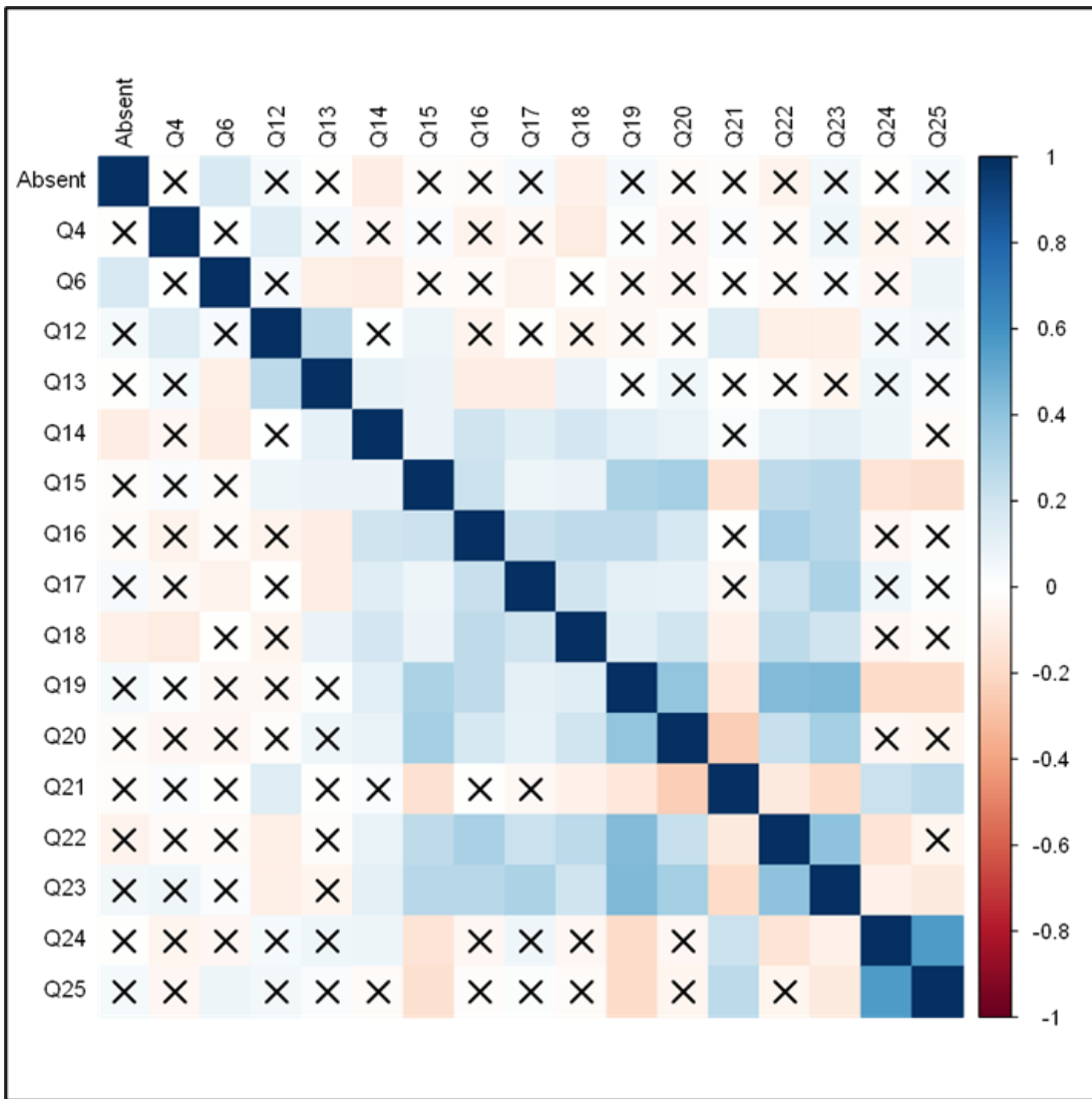


Figure 4.8 The different correlations that exist between the different variables

From figure 4.8, correlations can be drawn from the different variables to see how they interact with each other. The blue colors indicate a positive correlation between the variables, and the red ones indicate a negative correlation.

4.6 Discussion of the results

In the following section the results will be discussed that were found to impact the rate of absenteeism at the Grain Field Chickens Abattoir.

4.6.1 Family Responsibility

By analysing the data collected from the questionnaires, it was found that the average absent days for employees with family members in their care are 18.67 days per year, as opposed to 9.16 days per year for employees who do not have a family member in their care. This is an indication that family responsibility may be a contributing factor to absenteeism at the Grain Field Chickens Abattoir.

These findings support the findings of Kocakulah (2016) that older children have responsibility for the well-being of their elderly parents, which is a common issue among employees that leads to absenteeism. It also supports the findings of Tasie (2020), who found that family responsibility is one factor that leads to absenteeism as individuals may need to care for their family when they are ill, resulting in their absence from work.

4.6.2 Years of Employment

By analysing the data collected from the questionnaires, it was found that as the years of employment increase, the rate of absenteeism increases. The average absent days for employees who are employed less than three years is 8.93 days per year, while employees who are employed for longer than three years are absent on average 20.39 days per year.

When analysing years of employment with and without interaction of other variables, it was surprising to learn that it was the primary explanatory variable for absenteeism at the Grain Field Chickens Abattoir. This may be an indication that employees may have learned to “work the system,” which results in unnecessary absenteeism.

The findings of the study support the findings of Buzeti (2020), that found that years of service are an essential factor influencing absenteeism and have a relationship with absence behavior. Stander (2019) also found visible differences between the rate of absence of employees who are employed for less than two years compared to employees who were employed for two years or longer, which relates to the findings of this study.

4.6.2.1 Variables that have a correlation with the years of employment

The following section will discuss how years of employment correlate with absenteeism, financial rewards, and satisfaction with the absenteeism policy of Grain Field Chickens.

- What was surprising is that it was found that there was a positive correlation between years of employment and absenteeism. As the years of employment increase, the rate of absenteeism increases.
- A negative correlation was found between years of employment and financial rewards to reduce absenteeism. This indicated that employees who were absent felt that they would be less absent if they were rewarded for not being absent from work.
- A negative correlation was found between years of employment and employee satisfaction with the absenteeism policy.

4.6.3 Workload

By analysing the data collected from the questionnaires, it was found that employees who were satisfied with their workload were absent from work an average of 17.76 days per year, compared to 20.72 days per year for employees that were not satisfied with their workload.

These findings support the findings of Lee (2020), who found that excessive workload impacted the rate of absenteeism.

4.6.3.1 Variables that have a correlation with workload satisfaction

The following section will discuss how workload satisfaction correlates with the absenteeism policy, clarity of responsibilities, relationships with superiors, employees that indicate that their supervisor is attentive to their needs, and the approval of annual leave.

- A positive correlation was found between workload satisfaction and the current absenteeism policy, indicating that people who are satisfied with their workload are generally satisfied with the current absenteeism policy.
- A positive correlation was found between workload satisfaction and employees who indicated that they were clear about their responsibilities.
- A positive correlation was found between workload satisfaction and employees who indicated that they had a good relationship with their superiors.
- A positive correlation was found between workload satisfaction and employees that indicated that their superior was very attentive to their needs.
- A positive correlation was found between workload satisfaction and employees that indicated that their annual leave is always approved when requested.

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter examined the information gathered from the questionnaires to describe the study's findings. Three statistically significant relationships were found from analysing the data, including family responsibility, workload satisfaction, and years of employment. Years of employment at the Grain Field Chickens Abattoir was found to be the primary explanatory factor for absenteeism.

The findings from the study supported the literature and findings of previous research. Based on the findings in this chapter and the literature in Chapter 2, conclusions and recommendations of this study will be made in the following chapter.

Chapter 5 Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1 Introduction

In Chapter 1 of this study, data supplied by the Human Resources Department of Grain Field Chickens were discussed. It was evident that productivity and efficiency were affected due to a large loss of labour due to unplanned absenteeism. The literature review in Chapter 2 of this study provided information regarding the different forms of absenteeism, leading causes, and different strategies to reduce absenteeism. Chapter 3 and 4 presented a thorough quantitative analysis of the study's sample and the results of the calculations and analyses conducted.

This chapter comprises four sections. It will be to conclude the findings of the study, indicate whether any limitations could be found and to make recommendations based on the conclusions and results of the study, and achievement of the research objectives.

5.2 Achievement of the study Objectives

5.2.1 *Primary Objective*

To analyse absenteeism of factory workers at the Grain Field Chickens Abattoir.

5.2.2 *Secondary Objectives*

- i. To contextualize the different forms of absenteeism.
- ii. To identify the different types of absenteeism that exist among factory workers at the Grain Field Chickens Abattoir
- iii. To identify factors that contribute to the absenteeism of factory workers at the Grain Field Chickens Abattoir.

5.3 Conclusions from the study

In the following section, conclusions will be discussed as drawn from the study. The conclusions will include the existence or absence of trends that emerge from the examination of individual-level biographical, demographic, and organisational data with an emphasis on absenteeism rates.

5.3.1 Family Responsibility

The study found a positive relationship between family responsibility and the rate of absenteeism. This finding supports the findings of Kocakulah (2016) and Tasie (2020) that found family responsibility was one of the leading causes of absenteeism.

5.3.2 Single Parent

The study found visible differences between the rate of absenteeism of non-single and single parents. Still, it could not conclusively determine the presence of a relationship between single parents and the rate of absenteeism.

5.3.3 Years of Employment

The study found a positive relationship between years of employment and the rate of absenteeism and supports the findings of Buzeti (2020) that found the rate of absenteeism increased as the years of employment increased.

5.3.4 Employees indicating they feel stressed at work

The study could not find any visible differences between the rate of absenteeism and people who indicated that they felt stressed out at work and those who did not feel stressed. These findings do not contradict the findings of Schmidt (2019) and Howard (2020), who found a

positive relationship between stress and absenteeism. A relationship could just not be concluded with the information that was gathered.

5.3.5 Workload

The study found a positive relationship between workload and the rate of absenteeism and supports the findings of Frick (2020), who found a positive relationship between workload and absenteeism.

5.3.6 Bullying and harassment

The study could not find any visible differences between the rate of absenteeism and people who indicated that they got bullied at work and those who did not get bullied at work. These findings do not contradict the findings of Spiridon (2019) and Einarsen (2020), who found a positive relationship between bullying and absenteeism. It merely means that a relationship could not be concluded with the information gathered.

5.3.7 Shift Work

The study could not find any relationship between the rate of absenteeism and shift work. These findings do not contradict the findings of Merkus et al. (2017), who found a positive relationship between shift work and absenteeism. It merely means that a relationship could not be concluded with the information gathered.

5.4 Recommendations

On the basis of the study's findings and conclusions, recommendations were made in the section that follows regarding various strategies to reduce the rate of absenteeism.

5.4.1 Implementation of a wellness program

The organisation should strive to lower employee stress and healthcare expenditures while minimising absences due to illness by implementing a wellness program. In addition to boosting productivity, wellness initiatives can contribute to a more positive work environment and culture. By encouraging a work atmosphere where health and wellness are prioritised, it is possible to reduce employee absence.

5.4.2 Enhance workplace satisfaction and employee morale

Grain Field Chickens should strive to enhance workplace satisfaction and employee morale. Building morale can be achieved by participating in team-building exercises, organising friendly competitions between departments, or participating in community service programs. To combat employee absenteeism, it is imperative that employees feel proud and inspired by their team, as well as engage with one another. When coworkers appreciate and recognise an employee's efforts, they will feel motivated to come to work

From the findings, a correlation was found between workplace satisfaction and people that indicated that they are satisfied with their workload. Workload had a negative correlation to absenteeism. If management can increase workplace satisfaction, it would effectively decrease the rate of absenteeism.

5.4.3 Implement incentives to reduce absenteeism

The employees of Grain Field Chickens were asked what reward they felt would decrease the rate of absenteeism. It was found that the main reward for reducing absenteeism, as indicated by the employees, was additional leave, followed by a financial reward.

Scognamiglio (2020) found that implementing incentives would assist in reducing absenteeism. This is recommended for Grain Field Chickens, as the cost of the incentive would be a fraction of the cost compared to the cost of absenteeism. A budget of R150 000 should be approved to reduce absenteeism. All employees that were not absent from work

during the year due to unplanned reasons should be entered into a draw to win a cash prize of R50 000.00. Employees that were absent from work for less than five days per year should be entered into a draw where five employees will win a cash prize of R20 000. Employees that were not absent during the year due to unplanned reasons and did not the R50 000.00 draw, will automatically enter the second lucky draw to stand a chance to win one of the five R20 000.00 cash prizes. The cost of R150 000.00 is a fraction of the actual cost of absenteeism and will assist in drastically reducing absenteeism.

5.4.4 Return-to-work interviews

Return-to-work interviews aid in reducing lengthy periods of absenteeism. They provide a clear message that absenteeism at Grain Field Chickens is actively managed and evaluated. Return-to-work interviews discourage dishonesty by requiring employees to justify their absence in person.

The findings found that the rate of absenteeism increase as the years of employment increase. Management should do qualitative interviews with staff who have been employed for longer than two years, showing increased rates of absenteeism, to better understand the main cause behind the absence.

5.4.5 Focus on above-average absenteeism

From the data collected, it is evident that there are employees that are absent far more than the average. It should be the aim of Grain Field Chickens to reduce the extreme numbers of absenteeism. Absenteeism figures should be documented in such a way as to inform managers of any adverse trends that may exist.

5.4.6 Provide daycare

It was found that employees with a child in their care were more likely to be absent from work. Grain Field Chickens is a chicken abattoir with approximately 1 600 people in its service. The data from questionnaires found that 71% of employees indicated they were single parents. A majority of 94% of employees indicated that they had a family member in their care, while only 6% of employees indicated that they did not have a family member in their care.

From the literature and the findings in Chapter 4, it was found that family responsibility is one of the main causes of absenteeism. If daycare is provided at Grain Field Chickens, it could assist parents with a child in their care and reduce the rate of unnecessary absenteeism due to parents having to take leave from work to care for a child when care arrangements fall through.

5.5 Limitations of the investigation

Limitations are restrictions or restraints on the research, and it is useful to understand what those restrictions were for any future research that may be conducted in light of this study. The following was found to be limitations to the study of absenteeism at the Grain Field Chickens Abattoir:

Personal information was not requested from the respondents and was found to be a limitation to the study. This includes personal information like age and gender. By including personal information, it would have given the researcher a better understanding of absenteeism and if factors like age and gender impacted the rate of absenteeism.

The data was collected over a two week period that limited the amount of respondents in the study. Although the sample of 352 respondents were sufficient, a larger sample may have made the information more accurate. If more time was allocated for the data collection phase, the sample would have been larger.

5.6 Summary

The research objectives were achieved with the completion of the analysis of absenteeism at the Grain Field Chickens Abattoir. Given that they are based on the literature review in Chapter 2 and the findings in Chapter 4, the conclusions and suggestions in this chapter are sound and actionable. By validating previous findings and offering suggestions on how to deal with absenteeism at Grain Field Chickens, this study added to the body of knowledge.

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APPENDIXES

Appendix 1 Questionnaire

Question 1	Choose your department
Question 2	I am absent from work _____ days per year.
Question 3	Do you have kids or any family member in your care?
Question 4	How many members are in your family?
Question 5	Are you a single parent?
Question 6	How long have you been working at GFC?
Question 7	What do you think are two main reasons for the absenteeism of employees? (choose 2)
Question 8	If you chose "other", please specify below
Question 9	The following two rewards are most likely to reduce absenteeism (select two)
Question 10	If you chose "other", please specify below2
Question 11	How do you commute to work?
Question 12	In a typical week, I often feel stressed at work
Question 13	I would be less absent if I was rewarded for not being absent
Question 14	I am satisfied with the current absenteeism policy
Question 15	I am clear about my work/job responsibilities
Question 16	I am Satisfied with my work and workload
Question 17	I have opportunities for promotions or career advancement with our company
Question 18	My organisation pays attention to employees' health and welfare
Question 19	I have very good relationships with my superiors
Question 20	I have very good relationships with my Co-workers
Question 21	Do you ever get bullied at your workplace?
Question 22	My Superior is very attentive to my needs and problems
Question 23	My annual Leave is always approved when requested
Question 24	I am more likely to be absent on Public Holidays
Question 25	I am more likely to be absent during the night shift

Appendix 2 Permission to conduct research

GRAIN FIELD CHICKENS (PTY) LTD
Cnr/H.v. S51 and/en S589, REITZ, 9810
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gfc@vkb.co.za
www.grainfieldchickens.co.za



3 May 2022

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This letter serves to confirm that I Theo van Strijp gives permission to Kevin de Villiers to continue with his research project and will have full access to all information and systems within Grain Field Chickens.

He can also use the Company's name in his research.

Please feel free to contact me should you require any further information.

Regards



Theo van Strijp

0828269573

Registration Number/Registrasiensnommer: 2009/019339/07
VAT/BTW: 416 0256 501



Appendix 3 Ethical Clearance



GENERAL/HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (GHREC)

29-Aug-2022

Dear Mr Kevin De Villiers

Application Approved

Research Project Title:

Absenteeism of factory workers at the Grain Field Chickens abattoir.

Ethical Clearance number:

UFS-HSD2022/1041/22

We are pleased to inform you that your application for ethical clearance has been approved. Your ethical clearance is valid for twelve (12) months from the date of issue. We request that any changes that may take place during the course of your study/research project be submitted to the ethics office to ensure ethical transparency. Furthermore, you are requested to submit the final report of your study/research project to the ethics office. Should you require more time to complete this research, please apply for an extension. Thank you for submitting your proposal for ethical clearance; we wish you the best of luck and success with your research.

Yours sincerely

Dr Adri Du Plessis

Chairperson: General/Human Research Ethics Committee

Dr Adri
du
Plessis

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