

## AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE IMPACT OF ABSENTEEISM ON THE ORGANISATIONAL PERFORMANCE OF A PRIVATE SECURITY COMPANY IN DURBAN, KWAZULU-NATAL

**Tamara Singh**

*Graduate of the Regent Business School, Durban, Republic of South Africa*

**Nishika Chetty**

*External Dissertation Supervisor Attached to the Regent Business School, Durban, Republic of South Africa*

**Anis Mahomed Karodia**

[akarodia@regent.ac.za](mailto:akarodia@regent.ac.za)

*Professor, Senior Academic and Researcher, Regent Business School, Durban, Republic of South Africa*

### ABSTRACT

In the increasingly competitive and challenging environment within which organisations operate today, absenteeism is a complex issue. Resulting from absenteeism, businesses are faced with impeded productivity, inefficient service delivery, and reduced performance, thereby negatively affecting sustainability. Absenteeism is, therefore, a significant concern in the field of human resource management. The prevalence of absenteeism in the security sector necessitates investigation so that valuable contributions may be made that will, ultimately, empower management and positively contribute to the discipline being studied. The aim of this study was to investigate the impact of absenteeism and the extent to which it negatively affects organisational performance. For the purpose of this study, a quantitative research approach was employed. The total population of forty-five respondents was targeted, with a 95% response rate achieved. A questionnaire was utilised to gather data from the target population.

**Key Words:** Absenteeism, Performance, Organizational, Human Resource Management, Competitive, Sustainability, Prevalence, Management, Private, Company, Security

### Introduction

The business environment has evolved to the extent that every area of organisational performance is significantly important to achieve competitiveness. Employee attendance at work, productivity, service delivery, and organisational commitment are critical components of optimal human resource performance and efficient human resource management. The management of absenteeism in the workplace has, therefore, become a focus in the field of human resources and an area of importance. The ability of security companies to deliver efficient services is inhibited by employees who do not present themselves for duty and who individually and collectively raise absenteeism levels in small to medium sized businesses. This study will focus on absenteeism in the workplace and extensively seek to provide insight into the causes of absenteeism, the negative impact on the performance of the organisation, and the strategies that may be employed by management in order to reduce absenteeism and promote attendance in the workplace.

### **Aim of the Study**

The aim of this study is to investigate the impact of absenteeism and the extent to which absenteeism affects the organisational performance of a small to medium sized private security company operating in Durban, KZN.

### **Objectives of the Study**

- To determine the primary causes of absenteeism amongst security guards;
- To establish the effects of absenteeism on organisational performance, and, in particular, client retention;
- To identify if management currently utilises any strategies to combat high levels of absenteeism;
- To determine whether the effective management of absenteeism may enhance organisational performance; and
- To make recommendations to management to implement policies and strategies that will reduce high levels of absenteeism and promote a commitment to reducing absenteeism in the workplace.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Introduction**

Absenteeism is a problem faced by businesses around the world (Johnson, 2006:1; Mudaly and Nkosi, 2015:624). Today, organisations are required to operate at the most optimum level while decreasing expenses and ensuring sustainability in an ever-increasing competitive environment. Over the years, organisations have sought the means of improving human resource management, with a particular interest in reducing absenteeism, a phenomenon that reached alarmingly high levels, both locally and internationally. This literature review endeavours to provide valuable insight into the multiple and complex causes of absenteeism and the effects of absenteeism on the organisational performance of businesses. Furthermore, various strategies are highlighted in an attempt to provide a valuable framework that businesses can utilise and implement to address human resource challenges.

### **The Concept of Absenteeism**

Previous research has highlighted various definitions of absenteeism. Cascio and Boudreau (2010:52) define absenteeism as the failure to report for work as scheduled, regardless of the reason. Jackson (2003:1) and Johnson, Croghan, and Crawford (2003:337) define absenteeism as an unplanned, unjustifiable, and disruptive incident, which is further characterised by a lack of physical presence of the employee at work, such as scheduled, extended breaks, late coming or leaving his/her workstation. Absenteeism has also been defined as an absence of workers from the regular work without prior permission (Tiwari, 2014:9). Nel et al. (2004:549) define absenteeism as withdrawal behaviour when it is used as a means to escape an undesirable working environment. This definition is further elaborated upon by introducing the element of motivational levels. In particular, the minimum level of motivation involves doing less than required, the expected level of motivation involves doing just what is required, and the maximum level of motivation involves doing more than necessary. Nel et al. (2004:549) explain that when an employee is functioning at the minimum or maximum level, it may be a cause of absenteeism.

### **Types of Absenteeism**

Most schools of thought convey that absenteeism occurs when employees are not present at work when they are scheduled to be there, and it is measured by the frequency or duration of work days missed (Davey, Cummings, Newburn-Cook and Lo, 2009:313; Martocchio and Jimeno,

2003:230). The Basic Conditions of Employment Act 75 of 1997 (BCEA), as amended, does not include annual leave, sick leave, maternity leave, family responsibility leave, and, in some cases, chronic illnesses as absenteeism. Nielsen (2008:1330) differentiates between involuntary absence and voluntary absence, where involuntary absence relates to certified sickness or funeral attendance and is beyond the employee's immediate control, whereas voluntary absence relates to uncertified sickness and shirking that is under the direct control of the employee and is often based on the employee's personal aims. Nel et al. (2004:549) argue for three main categories of absence, which may be classified as sick leave, authorised absence, and unauthorised absence. Sick leave is granted when an employee is absent due to a reported illness, whether the illness is genuine or feigned. Company policy will usually state at what stage a medical certificate is required, such as being absent from work for more than two consecutive days or more than two occasions in an eight-week period, as stated in the BCEA. Authorised absence occurs when the employee is absent for a reason other than illness, such as annual leave, paternity leave, and such reasons as may be deemed acceptable to management and for which permission is granted. Unauthorised absence occurs when an employee is absent without permission, no explanation is generally given, and the absence is deemed to be unexcused.

### **Causes of Absenteeism**

#### **Organisational Factors**

##### **Job Satisfaction**

Employees are considered one of the most important assets in an organisation. One can then deduce that job satisfaction is a crucial factor to the success of an organisation. Motivation is a key component of the behaviour and the performance of an employee, which has a direct effect on whether an organisation is successful or not. Job satisfaction has been defined as the attitude that employees may have towards their jobs and the organisations in which they work. Though there are various factors that affect job satisfaction, the level of job satisfaction will differ from individual to individual (Chen, 2008:107). Managers must strive to maintain an acceptable or high level of job satisfaction amongst the workforce, as job dissatisfaction may increase the rate of absenteeism, and may then negatively impact on the organisation's ability to perform in order to successfully meet its organisational goals (Cohen and Golan, 2007:427). Low morale and hindered productivity may result from the increased pressure, increased workload, and frustration from a shortage of staff. However, Goldberg and Waldman (2000:673) find no correlation between job satisfaction and absenteeism. Instead, it remains the responsibility of management to motivate the workforce. Therefore, managers need to determine how to achieve the level of motivation they wish to see in their employees.

According to Herzberg's Motivator-Hygiene theory, a lack of extrinsic factors (hygiene factors) such as company policy, supervision, physical working conditions, salary, and job security may affect an employee's attitude towards work. Herzberg suggests that although hygiene factors are needed to ensure job satisfaction, they do not necessarily lead to increased motivation. Nevertheless, hygiene factors are essential to ensure motivation when pursuing the goals of the organisation. The presence of intrinsic factors (motivation factors), such as achievement, recognition, responsibility, and growth spur an employee to deliver better performance. Against this background, satisfied employees inevitably have low absenteeism rates and vice versa (Netshidzati, 2012:17). If employees are highly motivated, they are more likely to be satisfied with their jobs and deliver higher quality services, which may lead to lower rates of absenteeism (Friday and Friday, 2003:427). Nel et al. (2004:549) linked performance to absenteeism by giving meaning to the levels of motivation. When not managed appropriately and effectively, lower levels of motivation may cause employees to behave in an unacceptable manner. However, it is also the expectation of the job, which is an additional factor to be taken into consideration.

Employees tend to remain motivated if their expectations relating to equal treatment, receiving respect or enjoying satisfactory working conditions, and the opportunities to apply their skills and abilities are met and their needs satisfied. Nel et al. (2004:549) further assert that employees commence employment with expectations based on earlier experiences, and, when these expectations are not met, employees become dissatisfied, possibly resulting in absenteeism.

To prevent employees' dissatisfaction with unmet expectations, upon recruitment, managers should carefully match employees' values and job characteristics to enhance job satisfaction. This can be achieved by carefully recruiting and selecting employees who best fit into the organisation and have realistic expectations of what the job has to offer (Snipes, Oswald, LaTour, and Armenakis, 2005:1337). If these matches are done well, higher morale, commitment, productivity, job satisfaction, quality performance, and lower absenteeism can be achieved (Netshidzati, 2012:18). While guards and companies must comply with the registration regulations of the Private Security Industry Regulatory Authority (PSIRA), many prospective employees do not seek employment in the security industry because of passion and skill. It is simply a job to satisfy basic needs that the security guard may require to be met. Furthermore, the working conditions are generally sub-standard, with few companies paying above minimum wage requirements. When personality and skills do not match the job, an employee may become bored or stressed, therefore withdrawing from an unsatisfactory situation by being absent. This occurs when security guards with higher-ranking grades, who are desperate for employment, accept a job requiring a lower ranking grade, rendering the job boring and monotonous. If there is a good match between the job characteristics and the skill level of the employee, the employee is more likely to stay committed to the job and attend work regularly (Chaucer, 2007:26-27).

### **Morale**

Rosenblatt and Shirom (2005:209) assert that absenteeism may lead to low morale within the organisation, particularly amongst the employees who do regularly attend work, as they are then faced with taking over the workload of the employee who is regularly absent. Morale determines the spirit of a person or group, and, as such, low employee morale is likely to have a negative impact on the delivery of the service provided (Netshidzati, 2012:19). Makawatsakul and Kleiner (2003:55) suggest that low employee morale can be destructive in the organisation and lead to dissatisfaction, poor productivity, and absenteeism. Security guards who may have worked a 12-hour shift and require rest may then be called to work a double shift in order to cover a particular post or site that the absent employee was required to cover in terms of his/her duty. Work overload may lead to inefficient service delivery, which may result in the occurrence of on-site theft. If an employee gets paid overtime for extra hours worked, this is an extra cost to the company. Poor management could also leave employees feeling undervalued, and this in turn could affect employee morale and lead to excessive absenteeism (Gill and Smith, 2007:35). Employee involvement in the decision-making process and the commitment of the organisation to the training and development of its employees are considered to have a positive effect on employee morale (McHugh, 2001:54). Therefore, it is imperative to make employees aware of the causes of absenteeism and its resultant negative impact on the employee, the organisation, and the client. Failure to do so may result in aggravating the problem of absenteeism, which may contribute to the business failing to meet its organisational goals.

### **Organisational Culture and Leadership**

Robbins et al. (2009:424) define organisational culture as a system of shared meaning across organisational members and are different between organisations. It includes the values, norms, customs, and beliefs commonly held among a group of people that guide the behaviour of the particular group of people, giving the group its unique characteristics. Furthermore, Robbins

(2003:3) sees organisational culture as a social phenomenon, which has to be impacted into the minds of workers so that they melt into the culture of the organisation with a commitment that will minimise absenteeism and increase performance. Leadership is a critical component in the pursuit of organisational goals and leaders convey the organisation's culture through their actions and behaviour (Kefela, 2010:1). A leadership style can be viewed as the ability of a leader to influence employees to accomplish an objective and direct the organisation in a way that makes it efficient. Therefore, leaders can play an important role in shaping and maintaining a specific culture in an organisation (Sharma and Sharma, 2010:97). When the workforce has a good relationship with their supervisors or managers and receives support from them, they become more satisfied with their jobs, and, as a result, are more likely to attend work regularly.

The organisational culture and style of leadership play a crucial role in the management of absenteeism. Some organisations have what is deemed to be a permissive culture, and, if this exists, employees will consider sick leave as a benefit that needs to be utilised regularly. However, if unnecessary absenteeism is managed appropriately and effectively, employees will think twice before being absent regularly and for inappropriate reasoning. An organisational culture that lacks focus is considered the most significant reason for increased employee absenteeism (Netshidzati, 2012:20). A strong productive organisational culture allows for high financial performance, employee satisfaction, and the achievement of organisational goals (Netshidzati, 2012:20). This can result in lower absenteeism.

Organisational culture is influenced by the extent to which a leader is supportive of employees and includes them in decision-making processes. Poor leadership skills may negatively impact employee functioning and organisational performance, possibly resulting in absenteeism. Managers with poor management skills could create a dysfunctional organisational culture by failing to address incidents of absenteeism effectively (Sheikha and Younis, 2006:83). Managers should communicate the reasoning behind the implementation of absenteeism policies. If employees observe the behaviour displayed by other employees who are regularly absent from work without any repercussions, they will more than likely follow such behaviour because management fails to take action (Kwantes and Boglarsky, 2007:206). When there is high tolerance within an organisation towards absenteeism, employees will regard absenteeism as being acceptable, resulting in a high absenteeism rates and a failure to meet organisational goals (Rosenblatt and Shirom, 2005:218).

### **Working Conditions**

Employers must strive to ensure that working conditions are satisfactory so that the physical and mental health of employees is assured (Cronje, 1995:381-382). Poor health conditions at the workplace can lead to absenteeism, low productivity, loss of income, loss of contracts, and, in extreme cases, the loss of employees who are difficult to replace due to their skills, experience, and expertise. Chauke (2007:27) states that the health of employees and job satisfaction may be affected by a number of factors related to working conditions, such as:

- The number of working hours per day;
- Sufficient paid leave entitlements;
- Medical benefits;
- Clean rest rooms and recreational facilities;
- The provision of a working atmosphere in which stress, conflict, and strain are reduced;
- The provision of a healthy workplace with sufficient fresh air and space; and
- Being paid minimum wages with few benefits may lead to frustration and higher levels of absenteeism (Chauke, 2007:27).

Basner et al. (2008:1251-1259) and Gerber (2001:306) highlight that poor employee health, caused by working night shifts for long periods of time, result in security guards failing to get sufficient sleep, which could lead to high absenteeism. Security guards are often posted at sites that do not have guard “huts”, requiring the security officer to perform their duties under unsatisfactory conditions. Management, to a great extent, can protect the company against the losses caused by poor and/or unhealthy working conditions by regularly investigating the wellbeing of employees, changing or improving working conditions, or limiting the length of consecutive night shift duties (Chauke, 2007:28). Suitable uniforms may be provided to protect employees from inclement weather that may cause illness or dissatisfaction with working conditions.

### **Stress**

Erkutlu and Chafra (2006:287) state that stress occurs when an employee feels that the demand imposed exceeds his/her ability to function. Stress is an inevitable part of our lives, and, therefore, cannot be avoided. However, one can attempt to control and minimise stress. Conti, Angelis, Cooper, Faragher, and Gill (2006:1015) assert that stress is a cause for concern in an organisation, as it can have varying effects on individuals, and the resulting absenteeism can impact on the organisation’s performance. However, Nel et al. (2004:289) state that stress is not necessarily bad because a modest amount of stress is needed to be productive and creative in the workplace. Stress is caused by both personal and work-related factors, such as work overload, irregular work hours, boredom, and lack of autonomy, conflict, and unrealistic objectives. These factors can have an impact on each other, and, together, can lead to absenteeism (Subbulaxmi, 2002:27). Employees may experience stress at home due to financial problems, personal circumstances, and other family-related problems. Employees tend to carry this stress to work, which impacts on their work performance and results in low productivity and absenteeism (Netshidzati, 2012:20). In the workplace, demands relating to changes and transformation, such as new technologies, company mergers, and the impact of downsizing create stress in the workplace, as the level of job security decreases (Conner and Douglas, 2005:210-224). Change in the workplace may lead to an increased number of working hours and greater demands, as there is increasing pressure on organisations to remain competitive in order to survive and satisfy the demands of customers (De Klerk and Mostert, 2010:1).

Long working hours can also be a result of employees having to compensate for time lost by their absent co-workers. Due to a lack of resources, support, and increased demands, stress levels are aggravated, which may lead to burnout, and, therefore absenteeism. This, in turn, affects service delivery and impacts on the organisational performance of the business. The nature of private security services requires long working hours from security guards. Furthermore, the duties required from security guards often involve dealing with criminal activity, which could be dangerous and extremely stressful. When co-workers are absent, this places more pressure on the employee who has attended work and who is, therefore, required to provide effective security services with limited capabilities.

### **Personal Factors**

#### **Illness**

Genuine illness is regarded as one of the main reasons for employee absenteeism in the workplace. Illness is very costly as it increases the rate of absenteeism with the accompanying financial cost to the company, whereby employees are paid for not being productive (Lokke, Eskildsen, and Jensen, 2007:16). Sick leave is a right afforded to employees, which allows them to recover from illness. Unfortunately, having sick leave available can increase the absenteeism

rate when employees tend to abuse their sick leave entitlements. Employees may believe that sick leave is a right that they are entitled to use, irrespective of whether illness is genuine or feigned (Chauke, 2007:18). Taking sick leave has a negative impact on the organisation, as the organisation cannot function efficiently if employees do not report for duty. However, if the organisation wishes to reduce work-related illnesses, it can provide a safe and healthy workplace that will reduce absenteeism, thereby enhancing job satisfaction and productivity (Josias, 2005:28). Company policy should clearly state the rules regarding sick leave and the requirement of medical certificates so that there can be no confusion on the part of the employee (Paul, 2008:24). According to Schultz and Schultz (2006:242), absenteeism is higher in a company that does not require proof of illness. Therefore, the abuse of sick leave is costly to an organisation, as employers have to hire additional staff to fill in for absent colleagues. Failing to manage absenteeism in this manner is likely to hinder the ability of the company to perform efficiently and effectively, thereby having a negative impact on service delivery and client retention.

### **HIV/AIDS**

The Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome pandemic poses a significant social challenge and has a detrimental effect on businesses in South Africa (Werner, 2005:55). Employees affected by this disease have both personal and professional problems to contend with. Employees receiving treatment need to take time away from work in order to collect medication or recuperate from treatment. Productivity is affected, as employees are not able to function optimally, which subsequently affects service delivery. Johnson (2004:1074) indicates that people living with HIV/AIDS are absent three times more often than people who are not HIV positive. Uninfected employees take additional days off to take care for infected family members or to attend the funerals of co-workers or loved ones, resulting in their absence (Netshidzati, 2012:32). Clients tend to request consistency in terms of guards posted at their properties, and, when there is no consistency, they question the ability of the company to perform in terms of service delivery. This type of social challenge requires management to be proactive to ensure effective service delivery in spite of challenging circumstances.

### **Personal Problems and Uncontrollable Events**

Personal problems may be encountered by security officers, which hinder them from reporting to work (Levy and Associates, 2004:16). These problems may range from a sick child who has to be taken to a hospital, an urgent financial crisis where a security officer does not have money for transport to go to work, or the death of a close relative or domestic crisis whereby the security officer has to stay at home to address the situation. Uncontrollable events, as identified by Levy and Associates (2004:16), are events in which a security officer fails to go to work due to heavy rain and/or the road to work might have been washed away, family matters, and a lack of transport to get to work, such as taxi drivers being on strike or train cables that have been stolen (Levy and Associates, 2004:13).

### **Level of Education**

Langenhoff (2011:15) asserts that employees with tertiary qualifications, or at least secondary level education, have less chance of being absent than employees with a lower level of education. Cristofoli, Turrini, and Valotti (2011:77) argue that educated employees are more involved in their jobs and experience more job satisfaction. However, Lam, Zhang, and Baum (2001:159) state that employees with higher education are more likely to experience job dissatisfaction, as they have higher expectations of salaries, incentives, and recognition (Netshidzati, 2012:35). According to Silman (2011:1), an individual with a degree tends to earn more income over the lifespan of their career because of post-secondary qualifications, which shape individuals into being more ambitious, motivated, and self-confident, as compared to their associates who may be

less qualified. Most security officers do not have the resources to pursue tertiary education. As the security industry is a considerable source of employment, many underprivileged individuals seek employment in this sector without completing secondary level education.

### **Age**

Cohen and Golan (2007:419) state that age is one of the most studied demographic factors relating to absenteeism. It has been found that young employees tend to take short periods of sick leave when compared to those periods of sick leave taken by older employees (Lau et al., 2003:92). This can be due to the fact that older employees are usually in responsible positions, have greater work ethic, and are more committed to their work. They, therefore, are less likely to be absent. Younger employees have greater family responsibilities, and, therefore, may be absent from work more often.

However, Lambert, Edwards, Camp, and Saylor (2005:173) conclude that older employees are absent more often due to illness. Older employees tend to have higher levels of commitment to their organisations and identify with their organisations to a greater extent than younger employees. Older employees also have more favourable attitudes towards their jobs. Furthermore, older employees also tend to have better attitudes toward co-employees in the workplace and are less likely to engage in conflict.

### **Tenure**

Length of service may be a contributing factor to the rate of employee absenteeism (Sheikha and Younis, 2006:70). Josias (2005:32) states that longer periods of service with an organisation may result in less absenteeism, as the loyalty of employees to an organisation may strengthen over time. Barmby, Ercolani, and Treble (2002:323) report that employees with longer tenure have high absenteeism rates. These employees believe that their jobs are secure. Lambert et al. (2005:173) add that this can also be due to boredom, emotional problems, and burnout.

### **Substance Abuse**

Absenteeism, as a result of excessive intake of alcohol, is a common occurrence in the security industry. Alcohol abuse is a major contributing factor in the area of absenteeism (Fisher, 1994:18). High alcohol consumption can manifest in absenteeism, with cost implications and a negative impact on productivity (Osilla et al., 2010:194). Often, security guards are required to undergo random breathalyser tests and drug testing as part of site requirements. Security guards test positive, and, as a result, clients insist on their removal from a site. This may bring the company name into disrepute or result in the termination of the contract with the client. Business is lost, which has a ripple effect on the sustainability of the company.

### **General Causes of Absenteeism in the Security Industry**

According to Cortese (2003:19), security officers gave the following reasons for being absent from work and poor service delivery:

- Poor working conditions - night work, isolation, poor safety;
- Serious accidents and illness;
- Few opportunities for promotion;
- Unattractive salaries;
- Lack of job satisfaction and low morale;
- Inadequate leadership and poor supervision;
- Personal problems (financial, marital, substance abuse, and child care problems);
- Transportation problems; and
- Stress and workload (Cortese, 2003:20).

### **Impact of Absenteeism on Organisational Performance Organisational Performance**

Improving human resource management of absenteeism improves organisational performance, though this remains a contentious issue amongst researchers in the field of management. Jones (2006:20-42) states that organisational performance is the equivalent of three E's: economy, efficiency, and effectiveness. It is the ability of the organisation to achieve its goals in an efficient and effective manner. In the competitive business environment, organisations are burdened with the pressure of satisfying many stakeholders, and it is important to measure organisational effectiveness regularly so that a proactive approach may be adopted to adapt to changing circumstances. In reducing organisational productivity and causing inefficient service delivery, organisational performance will undoubtedly be negatively affected by absenteeism.

Onikoyi, Awolusi, and Ayodeji (2015:68) conducted a study on the effect of absenteeism on corporate performance and found that absenteeism reduces the level of an organisation's productivity, profitability, quality service delivery, and promptness of satisfying the customers' needs. It was found that the effective management of labour reduced absenteeism in the organisation and led to an improvement in the level of productivity, organisational effectiveness, efficient service delivery, effective service delivery, profitability, and overall organisational performance. Therefore, it appears as though a negative relationship exists between absenteeism and organisational performance (Onikoyi et al., 2015:68; Tiwari, 2014:14).

### **Cost of Absenteeism**

Organisations incur direct and indirect costs that result from unscheduled absences, which are disruptive to business. Maclean (2008:394) lists direct costs to the organisation as lost days, sick pay, lost productivity, and reduced service provision. Indirect costs include disruptions, management's time to revise work schedules, administrative costs to monitor and administer the leave policy, loss of expertise and experience, training costs for replacement workers, resentment and lowered morale of other employees, reduced productivity, staff turnover, terminations of contracts, and loss of income (Lambert et al., 2005:166).

Productive time is lost due to time spent by management on securing replacement employees and/or reassigning the remaining employees. Additional management effort is required to maintain administrative systems dealing with control measures for absenteeism. There may also be costs associated with the payment of overtime to those tasked to absorb the absent employee's work and payment for the induction of the replacement employee for that particular post (Netshidzati, 2012:36).

Robbins, Judge, Odendaal, and Roodt (2009:512) assert that various researches that have conducted on absenteeism in South Africa outlines many negative connotations associated with absenteeism, including economic loss, which is estimated to be in the region of approximately R12 billion per year. When employees fail to attend work when scheduled, the revenue of the business is threatened through insufficient productivity and inefficient service delivery. Absenteeism causes stress to co-workers who do attend work regularly, which, in turn, may have a ripple effect on such employees' level of motivation and likely truancy.

The private security industry has grown exponentially over the last two decades. There is an increasing demand for security services, as individuals and companies go to great lengths to protect themselves and their properties through the use of security equipment or manned guards (Chauke, 2007:1-2). However, absenteeism has become a significant concern for private security

companies. Naidoo (2005:10) asserts that South African security companies are losing more than R23 million annually due to absenteeism in the work place. Corporate Absenteeism Management Solutions (CAMS; 2007:1) conducted a study on absenteeism and reported that it is a significant problem costing the South African economy billions in direct costs annually. If these estimations are accurate, it represents a definite indication that absenteeism is a significant problem in the workplace (Chauke, 2007:15).

The 2013/2014 annual report issued by PSIRA confirms that there are 1385 registered private security companies in KZN. In a space of one year, this number has declined, demonstrating that the number of businesses in the industry is decreasing. The security industry in South Africa accounts for the employment of 487, 058 security officers, which is a huge source of employment. Private security companies are facing the challenge of sustainability, because the cost of absenteeism has become so detrimental to the business. Companies must consider reviewing their sick leave policies and their absenteeism regulations if they want to decrease the cost of absenteeism (Netshidzati, 2012:37). The cost of absenteeism is a contributory factor of the failure of businesses to meet performance targets and organisational goals.

### **Impact on Productivity**

Absenteeism negatively impacts the productivity of an employee who may be required to perform their duties when tired. This may lead to inefficient service delivery, customer dissatisfaction, and loss of revenue (Munro, 2007:21). Those employees who are at work may have to carry the extra workload, which may impact on their overall productivity and capabilities. Employees at work may be required to spend extra time training new, temporary replacements, which often happen in the security industry when new guards are deployed to sites that they may not have worked at before (Chauke, 2007:24). As a result of overtime worked, staff morale may be negatively affected and service delivery compromised. Clients may become dissatisfied and threaten to cancel contracts. This will undoubtedly negatively impact the organisation.

### **Impact on the Workforce**

It has been explained that a loss of morale is a cause of absenteeism, but, similarly, absenteeism in the workplace may cause a loss in morale among co-workers who have to temporarily replace the absent employee and may need more supervision if they are unfamiliar with the work or task assigned. The employee, upon returning to work, may face resentment from co-workers who had to accept responsibility for the work while he/she was away (McHugh, 2001:51). Absenteeism may, therefore, lead to conflict amongst staff and could further increase absenteeism rates.

### **Recording and Measurement of Absenteeism**

Werner (2005:118) states that the measurement of absenteeism can assist in determining the extent and nature of absenteeism in an organisation. Lambert et al. (2005:168) add that the measurement of absenteeism can assist certain organisations in distinguishing between voluntary and involuntary absenteeism. Two commonly used measures for measuring absenteeism are the total time lost and absence frequency (Werner, 2005:118). The time lost is the percentage of work time lost due to absenteeism. Absenteeism frequency provides an indication of the number of absenteeism incidences per employee (Steel, 2003:244).

CAMS (2007:1) reports that the majority of South African companies have an overall absenteeism rate of between 3.5% and 6%, which is higher than the acceptable norm of 3%. A similar study found that South African organisations have an absenteeism rate of about 18%, which is higher than the acceptable international absence rate of 3% (Sieberhagen, Rothmann, and Pienaar, 2009:20).

Howarth (2005:3-4) states that introducing interviews when employees return to work, post-absence, may help to reduce absenteeism, as this helps to identify and address any working conditions that may be contributory factors to absenteeism. Nel et al. (2004:157) state that employee assistance programmes could also be implemented to determine the reasons for absenteeism. Implementing policies and monitoring sickness patterns remain the responsibility of line managers (Hayday, 2008:28-33). Accurate record keeping provides a basis for the management of absenteeism and the analysis of absenteeism levels within the organisation (Werner, 2005:109).

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

### **Introduction**

Research methodology is a critical component in the research process, as it details each step that is taken in conducting a study. The research may then be seen as a catalyst for expanding the influence in the discipline being studied. Brynard and Hanekom (2006:36) state that research methodology focuses on the process of research and the decisions made by the researcher to successfully execute a study. The research paradigm, approach, and method are examined in this chapter, which explains the rationale behind choosing the appropriate methods, procedures, and statistical techniques that were used in order to achieve the objectives of the study.

### **Target Population**

De Vos, Strydom, Fouche, and Delport (2007:194), along with Burns and Grove (2005:40) state that a population includes the entire population that the researcher is interested in for a particular study that is being conducted. For the purpose of this study, the target population was 45 and comprised all security guards employed by MPS, including supervisors/managers as all these categories of staff that were either directly or indirectly affected by absenteeism in the workplace.

### **Data Analysis**

Burns and Grove (2003:536) state that data analysis is a technique utilised to minimise, organise, and provide meaning to data. Whatever data may be collected and however accurate and comprehensive it may be, if it is not analysed appropriately it will not assist in resolving the research question (Tichapondwa, 2013:209). According to Creswell (2009:184), analysis may be defined as the deconstruction and ordering of data into meaningful groups, which includes the search for possible patterns and relationships that may exist. The questionnaire was analysed through the use of the SPSS and Microsoft Excel statistical software packages. Total responses for each item were captured into an Excel spread sheet, subsequently transferred to SPSS, coded according to the questionnaire response categories, and, thereafter, the statistics were computed.

Brink (2002:179) states that statistics are a powerful tool available to the researcher when engaging in the analysis of quantitative data. Agresti and Franklin (2009:10) distinguish between descriptive and inferential statistics, explaining that descriptive statistics concern methods employed for summarising the data, which primarily consist of graphs and numbers, such as averages and percentages. Inferential statistics pertain to methods for making predictions or decisions about a population based on data obtained from a sample of that particular population. For the purpose of this study, both descriptive and inferential statistics were utilised in the analysis of the data.

The chi-squared test of significance is commonly applied in three settings, namely: the test for independence of association, the test for equality of proportions in two/more populations, and the goodness-of-fit test (Wegner, 2012:338-339). Wegner (2012:340) further states that management and business often requires the chi-squared statistic to test for independence of association, which

establishes whether response profiles between two random variables are statistically related. For the purposes of this study, the chi-square analysis was used to determine whether the perceptions of the participants regarding specific items depended on whether the respondents were security officers or members of management.

### Limitations and Delimitations of the Study

Limitations may be described as restrictions that are beyond the control of a researcher, which may include aspects of the design, the availability of data, threats affecting validity, low responses from the respondents, and obstacles regarding the recruitment of a sample (Grant and Tomal, 2013:77). One of the main limitations experienced was the geographical restriction, as the researcher was located in Australia at the time of data collection. As a result, the researcher had no option but to appoint a research assistant to aid with the administration, collection, and storage of the research instrument. Furthermore, due to the decrease in the staff compliment at MPS over the past six months, the sample was limited in size, which may have restricted the generalisation of the findings.

This study was further limited by resource and time constraints, as the research was limited to a small organisation in Durban, KZN. Therefore, it cannot be representative of a wider population of similar companies. Limitations also originated from the research instrument, as the use of a closed-ended questionnaire restricted the ability of further probing into the answers provided by the respondents. An additional concern arose when assessing the negative impact of absenteeism on organisational performance and client retention, specifically, as there is a lack of related literature in the area. Delimitations in a study refer to those characteristics that limit the scope of and define boundaries for the study (Ledez, 2008:120). Furthermore, the delimitations of this particular study were created with the use of a singular research design, qualitative or quantitative, as opposed to triangulation and a mixed methods approach. The research instrument and the number of test items were also limited, as the construction of two questionnaires allowed for a maximum of 22 questions in each questionnaire. A discussion of limitations/delimitations demonstrates that the researcher understands that any research project conducted will not be perfect in its design, and, therefore, the researcher will not be presumptuous to claim generalisability or conclusiveness about what has been learned (Marshall and Rossman, 2011:76).

## RESULTS, DISCUSSION AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

### Response Rate

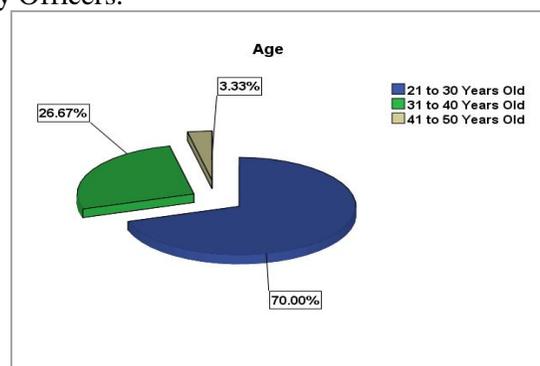
Thirty-eight out of forty (95%) respondents participated in the survey. The total population was 45 individuals and the sample comprised 40 participants.

### Security Officers

#### Demographics

#### Age

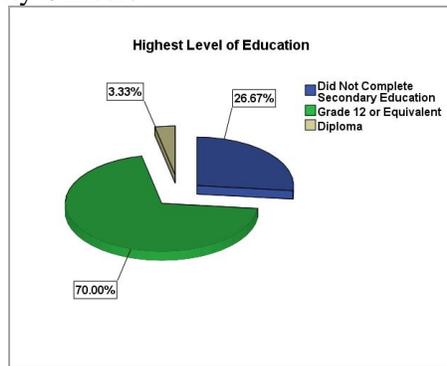
Figure 4.1: Age – Security Officers.



A collective 70% of security officers are between the ages of 21 to 30 years old. The next age group comprises of security officers who are between 31 to 40 years of age. Less than 5% of security officers (3.33%) are between the ages of 41 to 50 years of age. This indicates that the majority of security officers employed is fairly young. According to Lau et al. (2003:92), young employees could be absent more regularly and for shorter periods of time due to greater family responsibilities. This demographic illustrates that the high level of absenteeism may be a result of the younger employees forming the majority of the workforce. Older employees have greater work ethic and are more committed to their work, further indicating that 70% of the staff may be contributing to high absenteeism rates because of their age (Lambert et al., 2005:173).

### Education

Figure 4.2: Education – Security Officers.

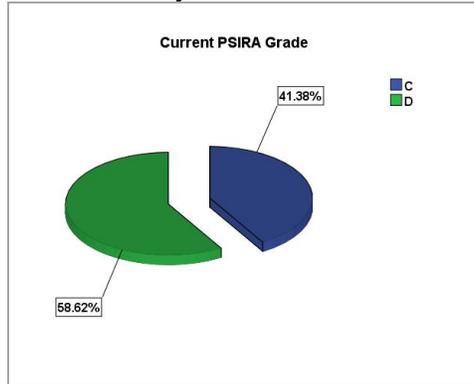


Having a collective 70% of staff in possession of Grade 12 or equivalent does not promise many benefits for the organisation. The results illustrate that 26.67% of the security officers did not complete secondary education, leaving a very small percentage (3.33%) in possession of a diploma. Langenhoff (2011:15) confirms that employees with higher qualifications have less chance of being absent than employees with a lower level of education. Cristofoli et al. (2011:77) assert that educated employees are more involved in their jobs and experience more job satisfaction. This indicates that most security officers may in fact be less involved with their jobs, less ambitious, and less motivated, and, as a result, more likely to be absent (Silman, 2011:1). The large percentage of employees without qualifications could be due to the fact that South Africa has a high percentage of unskilled workers due to poverty and limited access to higher education. Many employees resort to dropping out of secondary education to seek employment. This minimises their opportunities to further their studies (Netshidzati, 2012: 81-90).

Employees without qualifications are less skilled, are not well paid, and have a lower chance of being promoted or gaining the opportunity to obtain a higher-ranking grade as a security officer. These factors will result in lower levels of job satisfaction and the rate of absenteeism amongst these employees is likely to be high.

### Current PSIRA Grade

Figure 4.3: Current PSIRA Grade – Security Officers.

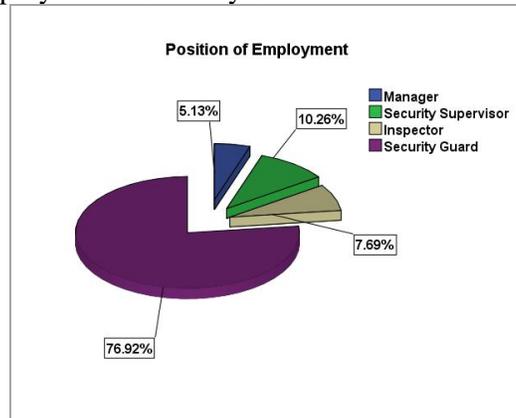


Note.  $N = 29$ .

All security officers are registered with PSIRA. Collectively, 58.62% of security officers are registered with PSIRA on the lowest grade, being grade D. Grade C security officers amount to 41.38%. PSIRA regulates the minimum wages for the security industry and security officers registered as grades C and D earn below R3500 per month (Sectoral Determination 6: Private Security Sector). Being paid minimum wages with few benefits may lead to frustration and higher levels of absenteeism (Chauke, 2007:27). Therefore, unsatisfactory salary may contribute to job dissatisfaction, which increases absenteeism amongst employees.

### Position of Employment

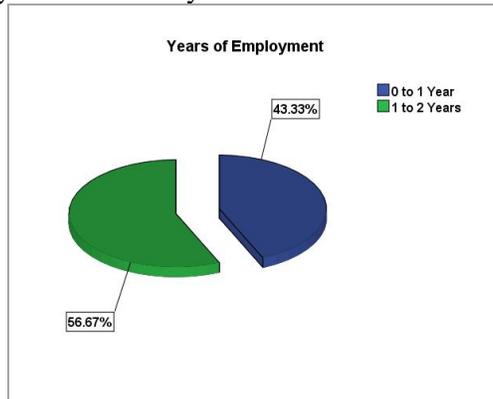
Figure 4.4: Position of Employment – Security Officers.



All the respondents to the security officer questionnaire are employed as security officers, comprising 76.92% of the workforce. Given the nature of the job, prospective employees do not seek employment in the security industry because of passion and skill. It is simply a job to satisfy basic needs, such as earning an income. This may inevitably lead to dissatisfaction amongst employees. To prevent employees' dissatisfaction, managers should carefully match employees' values and job characteristics. This may be achieved through careful recruitment of employees who best fit into the organisation and have realistic expectations of what the job has to offer (Snipes et al., 2005:1337). If these matches are done well, higher morale, commitment, productivity, job satisfaction, quality performance, and lower absenteeism can be achieved (Netshidzati, 2012:18).

### Years of Employment

Figure 4.5: Years of Employment – Security Officers.



A collective 56.67% of the workforce has been employed in the organisation for a period of 1 to 2 years, whereas the remainder of security officers (43.33%) are employed for a period of less than one year. Length of service may be a contributing factor to the rate of employee absenteeism (Sheikha and Younis, 2006:70). Josias (2005:32) confirms that longer periods of service in an organisation may result in less absenteeism, as the loyalty of employees to an organisation would generally strengthen over time. Given that a considerable number of security officers are employed for 1 to 2 years or less, this could indicate that tenure has contributed to the high absenteeism within the organisation. Employees are not very loyal to the organisation, and, therefore, are more likely to be absent.

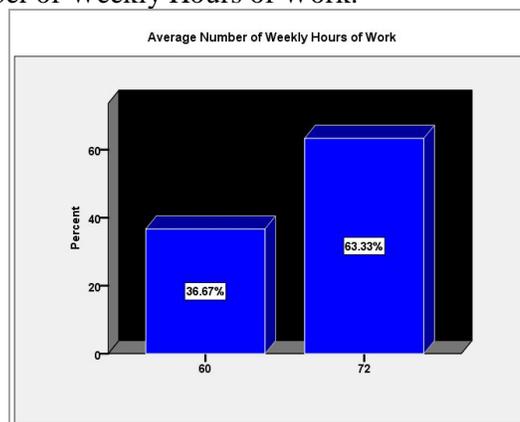
### Descriptive Statistics

#### Section B

This section provides an analysis of the factors contributing to employee absenteeism and attempts to assess company protocols pertaining to absenteeism and whether such protocols are adhered to or not.

#### 4.3.2.1.1 Hours of Work

Figure 4.6: Average Number of Weekly Hours of Work.

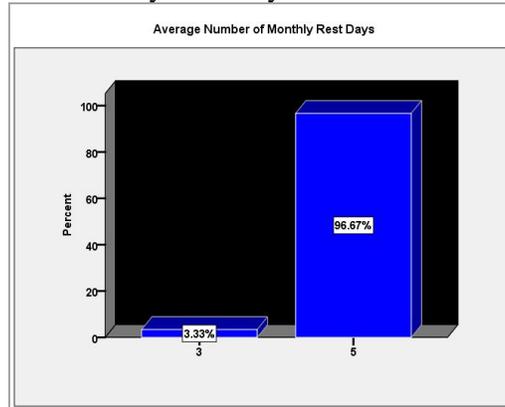


Like the majority of security companies, most security officers (63.33%) work an average of 72 hours per week, with the remainder of security officers (36.67%) working an average of 60 hours per week. On the basis of 12-hour shifts, security officers would either work 5 or 6 days per week, which is within the ambit of PSIRA regulations, subject to the payment of overtime after 48 ordinary hours a week has been reached (Sectoral Determination 6: Private Security Sector). If overtime regulations are not adhered to, absenteeism may ensue. Onikoyi et al. (2015:69) confirm

that ensuring that workers are remunerated in accordance with regulations may discourage absenteeism. The assertion by Gerber (2001:306) and Basner et al. (2008:1251-1259) is that poor employee health caused by working consistently for long periods results in security guards failing to get sufficient sleep and lead to high absenteeism, further supports the above results. Subbulaxmi (2002:27) further confirms that irregular work hours may have an impact on the employee, which could lead to stress, and, in turn, result in absenteeism.

### Rest Periods

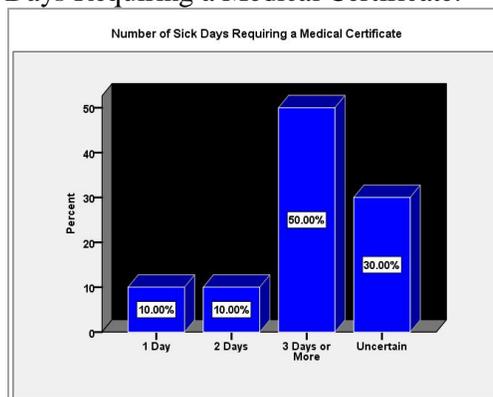
Figure 4.7: Average Number of Monthly Rest Days.



A collective 96.67% of security officers are given 5 rest days per month, whereas the remaining 3.33% of security officers are afforded 3 rest days per month. PSIRA stipulates that there must be a 12-hour rest period between each shift, and at least 36 hours consecutive rest in a week (Sectoral Determination 6: Private Security Sector). This implies that the organisation should be affording security officers at least 6 rest days in the average work month. Should this not be adhered to, it is likely that security officers are being given insufficient rest periods, which may cause fatigue and result in higher rates of absenteeism. Rest periods may be compromised with security officers failing to report for duty when scheduled to do so, forcing the company to utilise employees on double shifts. When there is a shortage of staff and heavy workloads, physical and mental fatigue may ensue and result in employees' being absent from work (Subbulaxmi, 2002:27). This, in turn, affects service delivery and impacts on the organisational performance of the business. Security officers work long ordinary hours and many hours of overtime, which is often unpaid, and these results in absenteeism since employees become too physically tired to attend work without appropriate and regular rest periods (Chauke, 2007:117).

### Medical Certificates

Figure 4.8: Number of Sick Days Requiring a Medical Certificate.

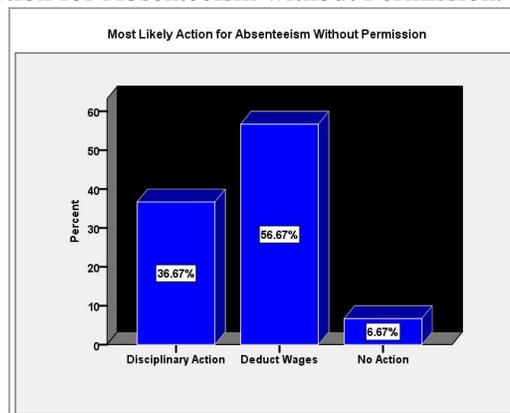


Fifty percent of the security officers responded that the organisation requires a medical certificate after being absent for a period of three days or more. Ten percent of the security officers believe that a medical certificate is required after one day of absence and a further 10% responded that a medical certificate is required after two days of absenteeism. A considerable number of security officers (30%) stated that they were uncertain what the requirement was. This is a cause for concern, as it indicates that security officers are not knowledgeable about the company policy in terms of medical certificate requirements. If security officers are not aware of company protocols, they are more likely to fail to adhere to such protocols.

Company policy should clearly state the rules regarding sick leave and the requirement of medical certificates so that there can be no confusion on the part of the employee (Paul, 2008:24). Schultz and Schultz (2006:242) confirm that absenteeism is higher in a company that does not require proof of illness. Therefore, sick leave is costly to the organisation, as employers have to hire additional staff to fill in for absent colleagues. Failing to manage absenteeism may then impede the ability of the company to perform efficiently and effectively, thereby having a negative impact on service delivery and client retention.

### Current Unauthorised Absenteeism Measures

Figure 4.9: Most Likely Action for Absenteeism without Permission.

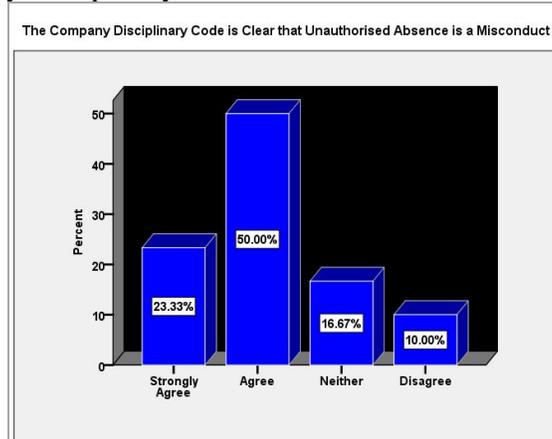


A collective 56.67% of security officers indicated that the organisation would deduct wages in cases of unauthorised absence. Disciplinary action was the response provided by 36.67% of security officers, whereas 6.67% indicated that no action would be taken. While many companies have a “no work no pay” policy in terms of absenteeism, this is contrary to the BCEA and other governing regulations. Furthermore, these responses indicate that there is inconsistency in company protocols. If only 36.67% believe that disciplinary action is the most likely action, then a large portion of the population are not being dealt with accordingly when incidents of absenteeism take place. If security officers are absent without permission, 56.67% are of the opinion that the consequence is a deduction of wages, which may very well be acceptable for some. Such action has no impact on the absent employee’s disciplinary record, and failure to discipline could result in habitual and wilful absenteeism (Chauke, 2007:22).

Sheikha and Younis (2006:83) confirm that managers with poor management skills could create a dysfunctional organisational culture by failing to address incidents of absenteeism effectively. Absenteeism may be addressed by a number of measures, such as disciplinary action and counselling. Deducting wages is a punitive measure that may be ineffective in the long-term if not coupled with other forms of action that fall within the ambit of labour legislation (Chauke, 2007:22).

### The Company Disciplinary Code

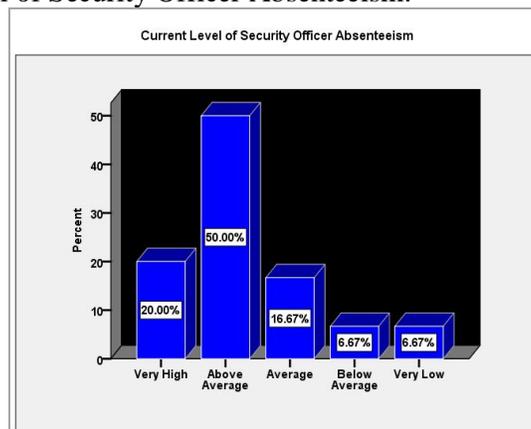
Figure 4.10: The Company Disciplinary Code is clear that Unauthorised Absence is Misconduct.



Fifty percent of the security officers agree that the company disciplinary code is clear that unauthorised absence is considered misconduct. A further 23.33% indicated that they strongly agree with this. Ten percent of the security officers responded that the disciplinary code is not clear that unauthorised absence is misconduct, whereas 16.67% responded that they neither agree nor disagree. This indicates that the organisation does have a disciplinary code indicating that unauthorised absence is considered misconduct, and, therefore, such code would detail the appropriate course of action that would ensue in cases of unauthorised absenteeism. A concern arises in the lack of action taken by management. Even though it is stipulated in the disciplinary code, a small percentage of security officers believe that such code is unclear. All employees should be well aware of the disciplinary code of conduct in the workplace. If they are not aware of the code or are unclear about it, they are more likely to commit the misconduct. Pretorius (2006:1-2) confirms this by asserting that organisations must implement a clear and easily comprehensible policy, which must include legitimate reasons for being absent, repercussions, and lines of support. Furthermore, all employees must be informed about policy so that they know what support there is and how to gain access to it as well as the repercussions that may ensue from unauthorised absence.

### Level of Absenteeism by Security Officers

Figure 4.11: Current Level of Security Officer Absenteeism.

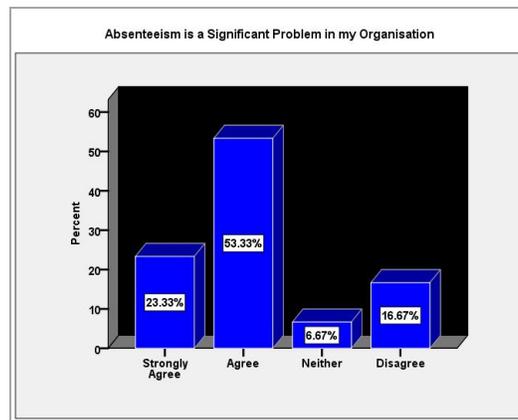


The current level of absenteeism, as perceived by 20% of security officers, is very high. The majority of security officers (50%) indicated that the level of absenteeism is above average, whereas 16.67% stated that it is average. A small percentage of security officers (6.67%) responded that the current level of absenteeism is either below average or very low, respectively.

This demonstrates that most security officers are aware that levels of absenteeism are at least above average in the organisation. As a means to promote attendance in the workplace, management may commit to regularly informing the workforce of absenteeism rates and the resultant number of contracts lost. This approach is supported by Tylczak (1990:13), who suggests that companies should not only measure and track absenteeism but also discuss absenteeism with the workforce.

### Absenteeism as a Problem in the Organisation

Figure 4.12: Absenteeism is a Significant Problem in my Organisation.



A collective 53.33% of the security officers agree that absenteeism is a significant problem in the organisation and 23.33% strongly agree with this. A minimum number of security officers (6.67%) neither agreed nor disagreed and 16.67% responded that they disagreed that absenteeism is a significant problem in the organisation. These responses are promising in that they illustrate that majority of security officers (76.66%) acknowledge there is a considerable problem in the organisation pertaining to absenteeism. However, the results indicate that despite awareness of the significance of the problem, absenteeism levels continue to escalate. This is indicative of a permissive culture that has been created by management failing to take appropriate and efficient action in response to absenteeism (Sheikha and Younis, 2006:83). The awareness of the problem in the organisation is negated by the company's organisational culture, which lacks focus, and this is evident from the high levels of absenteeism that occur despite agreement and acknowledgement of the above statement (Netshidzati, 2012:20). Oniyoki et al. (2015:69) recommend ensuring an organisational culture that is strong and committed to reducing absenteeism. If this can be done, employees will not only be aware of the problem of absenteeism, but be more likely to contribute to the eradication it.

### Section C

This section provides an analysis of the results aimed at determining the impact of absenteeism on service delivery and organisational performance.

### Impact of Absenteeism on Service Delivery

Figure 4.13: Absenteeism has a Negative Impact on the Company's Ability to Deliver Efficient Service to Clients.

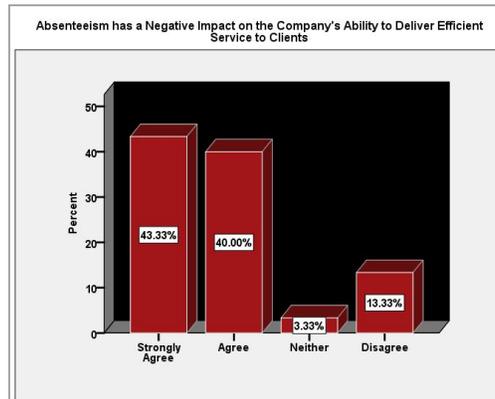
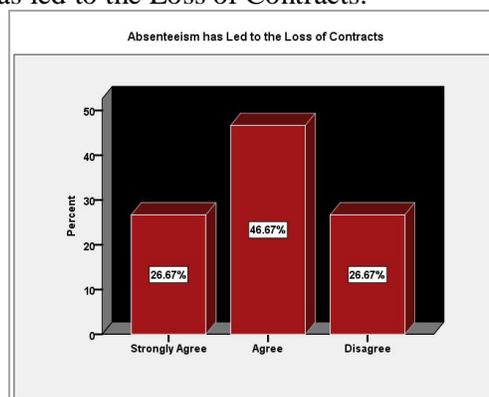


Figure 4.13 illustrates that 43.33% of security officers strongly agree that absenteeism has a negative effect on the company's ability to deliver efficient service to clients, whereas 40% agreed with this statement. A minimum number of security officers neither agreed nor disagreed in response to this statement, and 13.33% disagreed. This indicates that the majority of security officers (83.33%) acknowledge, understand, and agree that absenteeism does have a negative impact on the organisation's ability to efficiently deliver services to clients. However, 3.33% of the workforce does not acknowledge this and may be unaware of the negative impact on service delivery arising from absenteeism. If the workforce is unaware, they will more likely be absent. Onikoyi et al. (2015:68) confirm that absenteeism negatively affects quality service delivery and the promptness of satisfying the customers' needs, but recommend that effective management of labour reduced absenteeism in the organisation leads to an improvement in the level of productivity and service delivery. This assertion is consistent with the above results. The effective management of labour includes ensuring that the workforce is aware of the negative impact on service delivery as a result of absenteeism, which will reduce absenteeism.

### Impact of Absenteeism on Client Retention

Figure 4.14: Absenteeism has led to the Loss of Contracts.



The majority of security officers (46.67%) agreed that absenteeism has led to the loss of contracts, whereas 26.67% strongly agreed with this statement. There were, however, security officers who disagreed with this, as indicated by the 26.67% who responded in this manner. Therefore, the majority of security officers acknowledge and agree that absenteeism has led to the loss of business, as they have seen the effects of absenteeism on the organisation due to a number of contracts being lost. The 2013/2014 annual report issued by PSIRA confirms that, since 2014, the

number of registered private security companies in KZN has decreased, demonstrating business in the private security industry is declining instead of growing. Business is, therefore, more competitive and more challenging to sustain. Private security companies are facing the challenge of sustainability because the cost of absenteeism has become extremely detrimental to the business. The loss of clients, as a result of continuous absenteeism of security guards, is inevitable and a reality that is illustrated by the above results. The cost of absenteeism is, therefore, large in most organisations, as it is a contributory factor to the failure of businesses to meet performance targets and organisational goals (Netshidzati, 2012:37). The above results confirm that the biggest cost of absenteeism to the organisation in this study is the loss of business.

**Frequency of the Loss of Contracts due to Absenteeism**

Figure 4.15: Frequency Absenteeism has led to Loss of Contracts.

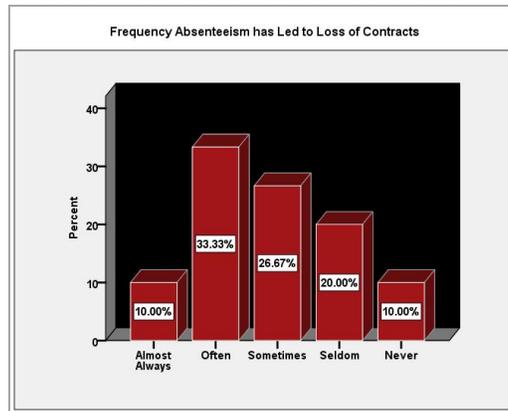
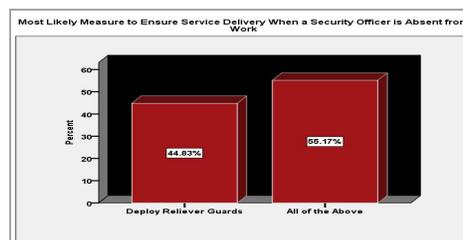


Figure 4.15 illustrates the frequency that absenteeism has led to the loss of contracts. Ten percent of the security officers stated that absenteeism almost always leads to the loss of contracts. The majority of the respondents (33.33%) indicated that absenteeism often leads to the loss of contracts, whereas 26.67% stated that this occurs sometimes. Twenty percent of the security officers responded that it is seldom that absenteeism leads to the loss of contracts and 10% of the security officers stated that this never occurs. The results illustrate that it is more often than not that absenteeism is the reason for the loss of contracts with clients. Absenteeism, therefore, has impacted the company’s ability to retain clients. Absenteeism negatively impacts on the productivity of the employee who may be required to perform their duties when tired. As a result of overtime worked, staff morale may be negatively affected. Munro (2007:21) confirms that this may lead to inefficient service delivery, customer dissatisfaction, and loss of revenue. The extra workload engaged in by employees may impact on their overall productivity and capabilities (Chauke, 2007:24). Clients may become dissatisfied and threaten to cancel contracts, which, undoubtedly negatively impacts an organisation. Given the above results, it is evident that service delivery is compromised to a great extent due to absence, and, as a result, clients terminate their contracts and business is lost.

**Measures Ensuring Service Delivery when Absenteeism Occurs**

Figure 4.16: Most Likely Measure to Ensure Service Delivery When a Security Officer is absent from Work.

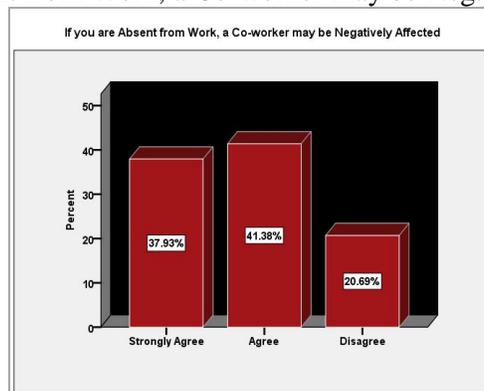


Note. The response option “All of the above” refers to deploy reliever guards, utilise security officers on double shifts, and leave sites unmanned.

In order to ensure service delivery, the company will most likely employ all the measures that are highlighted in Figure 4.16. This is illustrated in the responses of 55.17% of the security officers who selected the option of “All of the above”. A considerable 44.83% of the security officers listed the most likely measure to ensure service delivery to clients in cases of absence to be deploying reliever guards. Organisations incur many costs that are disruptive to business. This is evident from the above results, which confirm the number of measures the company must take to deal with incidents of absenteeism to ensure appropriate service delivery. Maclean (2008:394) supports the above results by listing direct costs to the organisation, including the loss of productivity and reduced service provision. Indirect costs include disruptions, management’s time to revise work schedules, administrative costs, and training costs for replacement workers, resentment and lowered morale of other employees, terminations of contracts, and loss in income (Lambert et al., 2005:166). There may be additional costs associated with the payment of overtime to those security guards being called in to relieve a guard who is absent from work by working double shifts (Netshidzati, 2012:36). The above results confirm the costs incurred by the company in employing these measures.

### Impact of Absenteeism on Co-Workers

Figure 4.17: If you are absent from Work, a Co-worker may be Negatively Affected.



A total of 37.93% strongly agreed that if one is absent from work, a co-worker might be negatively affected, whereas 41.38% agreed with this statement. A total of 20.60% of the participants disagreed with this statement. The results indicate that the majority of security officers (79.31%) acknowledge and agree that absenteeism negatively affects co-workers who report for duty. The negative impact on a co-worker may range from low morale and hindered productivity those results from the increased pressure, increased workload, and frustration based on the shortage of staff.

Rosenblatt and Shirom (2005:209) assert that absenteeism may lead to low morale within the organisation and the employees who do regularly attend work and are faced with taking over the workload of the employee who is regularly absent. Morale determines the spirit of a person or group, and, as such, low employee morale is likely to have a negative impact on the delivery of the service provided (Netshidzati, 2012:19). Security guards who may have worked a 12-hour shift and require rest may then be called to work overtime in order to cover a particular post or site that the absent employee was required to perform in terms of his/her duty. Work overload may lead to inefficient service delivery, which may result in the occurrence of theft on site, and the employee may be deemed negligent.

**Likelihood of Dismissal in Cases of Habitual Absenteeism**

Figure 4.18: Security Officers may be Dismissed if Regularly Absent from Work without Permission.

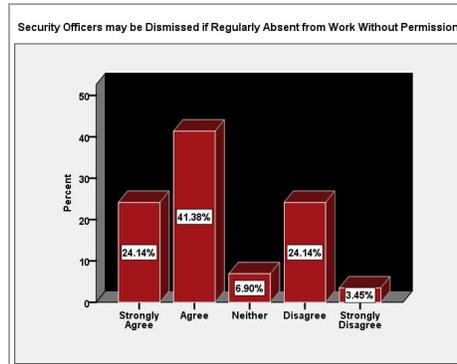
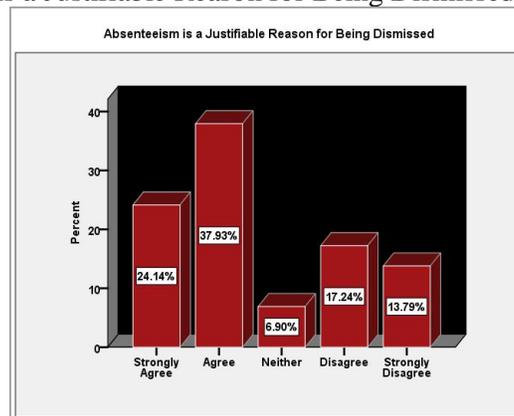


Figure 4.18 illustrates that 24.14% of the security officers strongly agree that employees may be dismissed if regularly absent from work without permission, whereas 41.38% agreed with this statement. A minimal 6.90% neither agreed nor disagreed, 24.14% of security officer disagreed, and 3.45% strongly disagreed with this statement. The results indicate that the majority of the security officers acknowledge and understand that dismissal is a possible repercussion of habitual absenteeism. This could be a deterrent to absenteeism. However, in contrast to Figure 4.9, the majority of security officers view the most likely action to be taken by the company in response to unauthorised absenteeism is wage deduction as opposed to disciplinary measures. Absenteeism should be managed by clear and sound company policies, and the implementation of fair disciplinary measures is imperative to set an example to staff and promote a culture that is committed to curbing absenteeism in the workplace (Netshidzati, 2012:42). Cortese (2003:19) conducted a study confirming that absenteeism, on the part of some guards, quickly encourages the employer to resort to dismissal out of concern for the reliability in the delivery of services to the customer. There must be consistency in the implementation of disciplinary measures so that the entire workforce becomes aware that habitual absenteeism may result in dismissals.

**Does Absenteeism Warrant Dismissal?**

Figure 4.19: Absenteeism is a Justifiable Reason for Being Dismissed.



A collective 24.14% of security officers strongly agreed that absenteeism is a justifiable reason for being dismissed, whereas 37.93% agreed with this statement. Security officers, comprising 6.90% of the sample, neither agreed nor disagreed, 17.24% disagreed, and 13.79% strongly disagreed that absenteeism is a justifiable reason for being dismissed. The majority of the security officers (62.07%), therefore, acknowledge and agree that absenteeism warrants the loss of jobs.

Tylczak (1990:13) confirms that utilising fair and justifiable discipline is an effective measure to reduce absenteeism in the workplace. The Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995, as amended, makes provision for employers to dismiss employees in accordance with The Code of Good Practice contained in Schedule 8 of the Act. Onikoyi et al. (2015:69) further confirm that implementing adequate disciplinary measures to curbing absenteeism in the workplace is an effective method to deter employees from committing acts of unauthorised absence. By communicating the company policy on dismissals in the workplace, all employees will be aware that habitual absenteeism may result in the loss of employment.

**Who is Responsible for Curbing Absenteeism in the Workplace?**

Figure 4.20: All Organisational Members have a Responsibility towards Curbing Absenteeism in the Workplace.

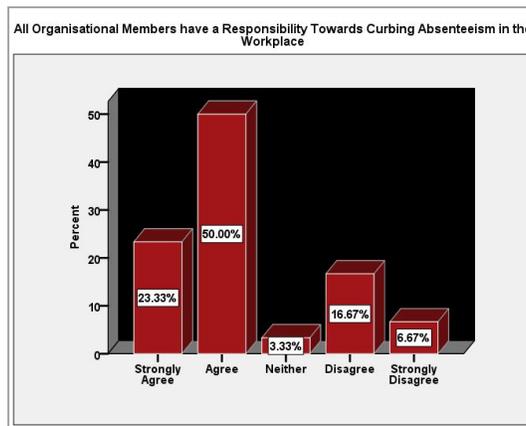
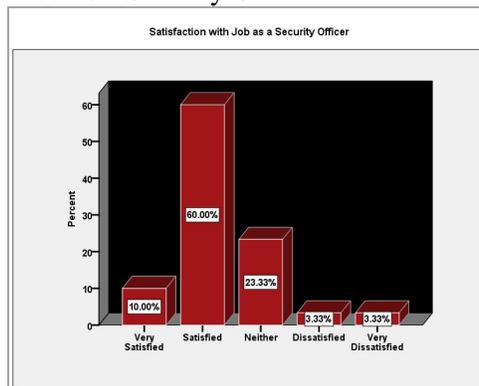


Figure 4.20 illustrates that majority of security officers (73.33%) acknowledge and agree that all organisational members have a responsibility towards curbing absenteeism in the workplace, as 23.33% strongly agreed and 50% agreed with this statement. Just over 3% of the employees (3.33%) neither agreed nor disagreed, 16% disagreed, and 6.67% strongly disagreed that all organisational members have a responsibility towards curbing absenteeism in the workplace. Pretorius (2006:1-2) further supports this statement by determining that all relevant parties must be included in managing absenteeism to ensure it is a standard of working in the organisation and that the absence of management should be a team effort, as it should not be the responsibility of just one person. Involving relevant parties in the solution will relieve the burden of dealing with the issue.

**Job Satisfaction**

Figure 4.21: Satisfaction with Job as a Security Officer.



Sixty percent of the security officers agreed that they were satisfied with their jobs, whereas 10% strongly agreed with this statement. Approximately 23.33% neither agreed nor disagreed, which indicated a reluctance to indicate their level of job satisfaction. A small number (3.33%) of security officers responded as being dissatisfied with their job, whereas 3.33% were very dissatisfied. Although there are various factors that affect job satisfaction, the level of job satisfaction will differ from individual to individual due to differing expectations (Chen, 2008:107). Managers must strive to maintain an acceptable or high level of job satisfaction amongst the workforce, as job dissatisfaction may increase the rate of absenteeism, and, in turn, negatively impact on the organisation's ability to perform in order to successfully meet its organisational goals (Cohen and Golan, 2007:427). The organisation continues to have a problem with high absenteeism rates, despite the majority of the security officers (70%) indicating an acceptable level of job satisfaction. This coincides with Goldberg and Waldman's (2000:673) findings, which evidenced no correlation between job satisfaction and absenteeism. Management must regularly seek ways to improve the job satisfaction in the workforce in order to curb absenteeism in the workplace.

### Causes of Absenteeism

Figure 4.22: Reasons for Incidents of Absenteeism.

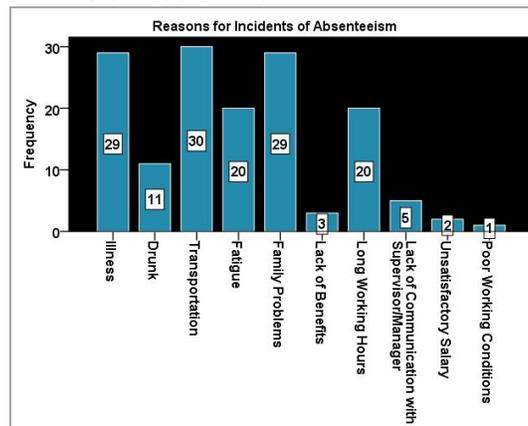


Figure 4.22 illustrates the reasons put forward by security officers for incidents of absenteeism. Amongst the top five reasons for absenteeism were illness, transportation, fatigue, family problems, and long working hours. Other reasons for absenteeism were listed as being drunk (37.93%), lack of communication with supervisor/manager (17.24%), and lack of benefits (10.34%), unsatisfactory salary (6.90%), and poor working conditions (3.45%).

Literature confirms that genuine illness is regarded as one of the main reasons for employee absenteeism. Illness is very costly, as employees are paid for not being productive (Lokke et al., 2007:16). Taking sick leave has a negative impact on the organisation, because the organisation cannot function efficiently if employees do not report for duty. However, if the organisation wishes to reduce work-related illnesses, it can provide a safe and healthy workplace, a factor that may reduce absenteeism (Josias, 2005:28).

Family problems may include a sick child who has to be taken to hospital to the death of a close relative or domestic crisis in which a security officer has to stay at home to handle the situation. Uncontrollable events identified in the Levy and Associates Report support the results illustrated in Figure 4.22 (Levy and Associates, 2004:13). Employees may experience stress at home due to these circumstances. Stress impacts on their work performance, possibly resulting in low productivity and absenteeism (Netshidzati, 2012:20).

Fatigue and long working hours can also result from employees having to compensate for time lost through their absent co-workers, which could lead to burnout and absenteeism. This, in turn, affects service delivery and impacts on the organisational performance of the business. The nature of private security services requires long working hours from security guards. Furthermore, the duties required from security guards often involve dealing with criminal activity, which could be dangerous and extremely stressful.

Kefela (2012:1) asserts that leadership is a critical component in the pursuit of organisational goals and leaders convey the organisation's culture through their actions and behaviour. Incidents of absenteeism, arising from a lack of communication, could result in an impaired relationship between the employee and the supervisor, which could be detrimental to the organisation. Sharma and Sharma (2010:97) confirm that when the workforce has good relationships with supervisors or managers and receive support, they become more satisfied with their jobs, and, therefore, attend work more regularly.

Fisher (1994:18) asserts that alcohol abuse is a major contributing factor in the area of absenteeism, and, therefore, corroborates the result illustrated above. High alcohol consumption can manifest in a negative impact on productivity (Osilla et al., 2010:194). Security guards are required to undergo random breathalyser tests and drug testing as part of site requirements. When they test positive, clients insist on their removal from sites. Therefore, security officers may not report for duty when intoxicated.

**Reliability - Cronbach's Coefficient Alpha**

Cronbach's alpha was computed for Section B items 4, 5, 6, and 7, as well as Section C items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, and 9. Therefore, a total of 13 items were tested. The finding indicated excellent internal consistency and reliability for the questionnaire,  $\alpha = 0.923$ . Hence, the questionnaire possessed strong reliability and appropriate use of each of the items tested and included in the questionnaire.

**Management Demographics**  
**Age**

Figure 4.23: Age – Management.

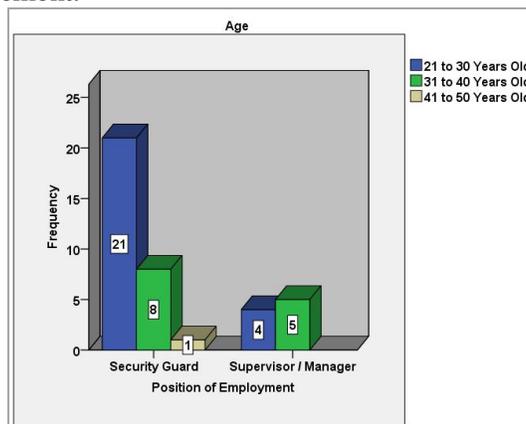
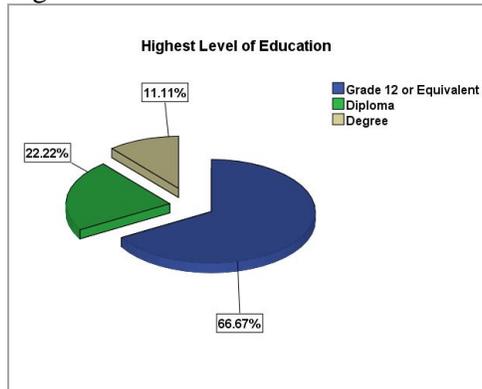


Figure 4.23 illustrates that 55.56% of management are between the ages of 31 to 40 years old and the remainder (44.44%) fall within the age group of 21 to 30 years of age. Cohen and Golan (2007:419) confirm that age is one of the most studied demographic factors relating to absenteeism. The results indicate a fairly young age grouping that management is comprised of.

Lau et al. (2003:92) find that young employees tend to take short periods of sick leave, as compared to those periods of sick leave taken by older employees. Management are in responsible positions, have greater work ethic and are more committed to their work, and, are therefore, less likely to be absent.

### Education

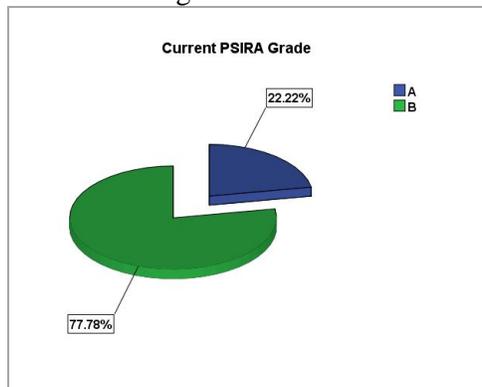
Figure 4.24: Education – Management.



A collective 66.67% of security officers forming part of management possess Grade 12 or an equivalent qualification, whereas 22.22% have a diploma, and 11.11% have a tertiary level qualification or a degree. Level of education has a direct impact on the way in which people work. Langenhoff (2011:15) reported that employees with qualifications or secondary levels of education are less likely to be absent than employees with less than a secondary level of education. According to Cristofoli et al. (2011:77), educated employees are more involved in their jobs. As a result, job satisfaction will be evident and absenteeism is less likely to occur. The above results are indicative that unauthorised absenteeism is less likely to occur by members of management.

### Current PSIRA Grade

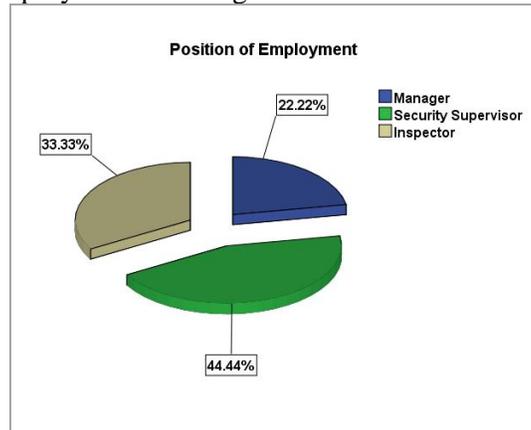
Figure 4.25: Current PSIRA Grade – Management.



The majority of management (77.78%) have a Grade B registration with PSIRA and the remainder (22.22%) are registered with the highest Grade, which is Grade A. PSIRA regulates the minimum wages for the security industry and the minimum wage regulated by PSIRA for guards registered in accordance with higher ranking grades is higher than security officers of a lesser ranking (Sectoral Determination 6: Private Security Sector). This could contribute to enhanced job satisfaction amongst members forming part of management who are then less likely to be absent. Onikoyi et al. (2015:69) confirm that ensuring that workers are remunerated in accordance with regulations discourages absenteeism.

### Position of Employment

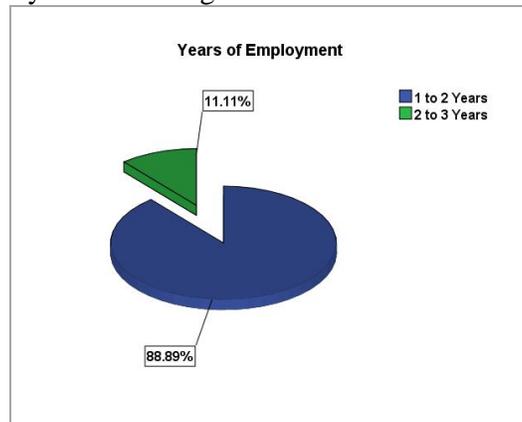
Figure 4.26: Position of Employment – Management.



Managers in the organisation form 22.22% of the sample. Supervisors form the majority of management, with 44.44% and the remainder (33.33%) employed as inspectors. Being part of management comes with great responsibility. Kaye (1999:13) confirms this and states that management must strive to understand the dynamics of absenteeism. Absenteeism can be controlled to a certain extent if the physical and emotional needs of employees are sufficiently addressed. The designation of absenteeism, its causes, effects on productivity, and cost in terms of finances and administrative effectiveness need to be absolutely clear and understood by management.

### Years of Employment

Figure 4.27: Years of Employment – Management.



A collective 88.89% of management have been employed within the organisation for a period of 1 to 2 years, whereas 11.11% have been employed for a period of 2 to 3 years, demonstrating that only a small percentage of management have been employed within the organisation for a longer period of time and most members of management have been employed longer than the majority of security guards. Sheikha and Younis (2006:70) confirmed that tenure is a contributing factor to high absenteeism levels. Josias (2005:32) supports the above results by asserting that longer periods of service may result in higher levels of loyalty towards the organisation, which may then result in less absenteeism. The results are aligned to this assertion, as it indicates that members of management may display higher levels of loyalty toward the organisation, as they have been employed for longer periods of time than a substantial number of security guards that have been employed for less than one year. Therefore, this may result in lower levels of absenteeism amongst members of management.

### Descriptive Statistics Section B

This section provides an analysis of the responses to the questions aimed at assessing company protocols pertaining to absenteeism and whether such protocols are adhered to or not. The data analysed will indicate whether there are strategies being utilised by management to reduce absenteeism in the workplace or highlight whether a failure to manage absenteeism is aggravating the problem in the workplace.

#### Medical Certificates

Figure 4.28: Number of Sick Days Requiring a Medical Certificate – Management.

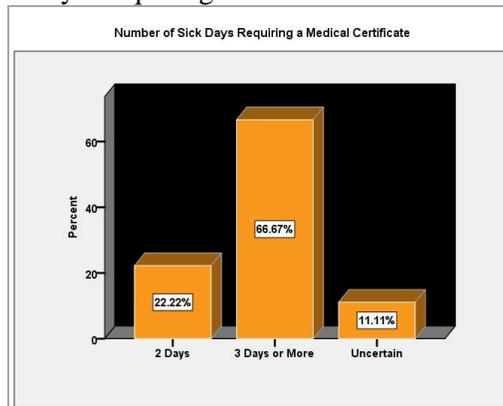
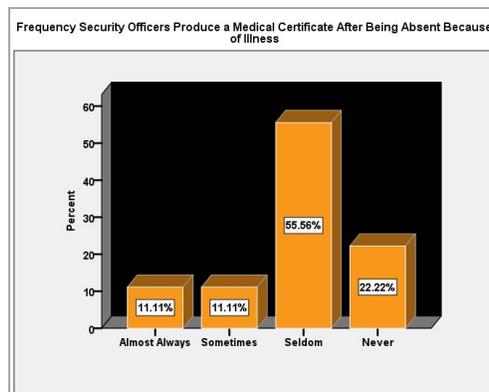


Figure 4.28 illustrates that 66.67% of management responded that the organisation requires a medical certificate after being absent for a period of three days or more. The results indicate that 22.22% of management believes that a medical certificate is required after 2 days of absenteeism, whereas 11.11% were uncertain. This is a cause for concern, as it indicates that management is not knowledgeable about the company's policy in terms of medical certificate requirements. If management personnel are not aware of company protocols, they are not able to identify when misconduct occurs. Company policy should clearly state the rules regarding sick leave and the requirement of medical certificates so that there can be no confusion (Paul, 2008:24). Schultz and Schultz (2006:242) confirm that absenteeism is higher in a company that does not require proof of illness. Therefore, the abuse of sick leave may occur, which is costly to an organisation. Management must be fully aware of the policy to ensure compliance.

#### Frequency of Submission of Medical Certificates

Figure 4.29: Frequency Security Officers Produce a Medical Certificate After Being Absent Because of Illness.



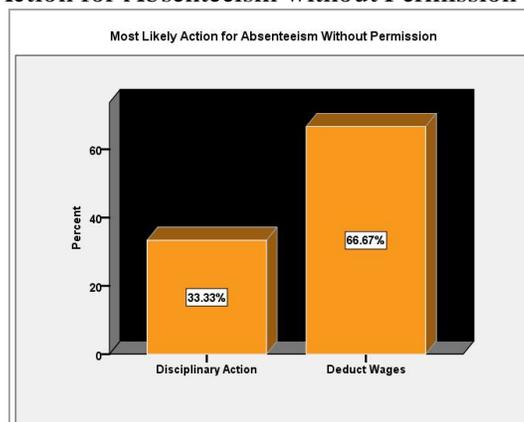
The majority of management (55.56%) acknowledge that security officers seldom produce medical certificates after being absent due to illness. The management, which comprises 22.22% of the sample, responded that security officers never produce a medical certificate after being

absent because of illness. However, 11.11% stated that medical certificates are produced almost always, and a further 11.11% responded that this sometimes occurs. The results are indicative of poor management of the problem of absenteeism in the workplace.

If security officers are not producing medical certificates after being absent from work due to illness, there is non-compliance with company regulations. Failure to address issues of non-compliance results in the creation of a permissive culture. If employees observe the behaviour displayed by other employees who are regularly absent from work without repercussions, they will more than likely follow such behaviour because management took no action. Employees will regard absenteeism as being acceptable, resulting in a high rate of absenteeism (Rosenblatt and Shirom, 2005:218). A permissive culture will result in sick leave being seen as a benefit that needs to be utilised regularly (Sheikha and Younis, 2006:83). However, if unnecessary absenteeism is managed appropriately and effectively, employees will think twice before being absent regularly and for inappropriate reasons.

### Current Unauthorised Absenteeism Measures

Figure 4.30: Most Likely Action for Absenteeism without Permission – Management.



A collective 66.67% of management indicated that the organisation would deduct wages in cases of unauthorised absence. Disciplinary action was the response provided by 33.33%. Though many companies have a “no work no pay” policy in terms of absenteeism, this is indeed frowned upon as management are urged to put fair disciplinary measures in place to address incidents of absenteeism (Tylczak, 1990:13).

Furthermore, these responses indicate that there is inconsistency in the company protocols. If only 33.33% believe that disciplinary action is the most likely action, then a large portion of the population is not being dealt with accordingly when incidents of absenteeism occur. If unauthorised absence occurs, 66.67% of management suggest that the consequence is a deduction of wages, which security officers may not deem to be a deterrent. Such action has no impact on the absent employees’ disciplinary records and the failure to discipline could result in habitual and wilful absenteeism (Chauke, 2007:22). If the disciplinary code lists unauthorised absenteeism as misconduct, then disciplinary action must be taken to correct the behaviour of security officers who commit acts of unauthorised absence. Absenteeism may be addressed by a number of measures, such as disciplinary action and counselling. Deducting wages is a punitive measure that may be ineffective in the long-term if not coupled with other forms of action that fall within the ambit of labour legislation (Chauke, 2007:22).

### Importance of Addressing Unauthorised Absenteeism

Figure 4.31: Importance of Taking Action in Response to Absenteeism which is Unauthorised – Management.

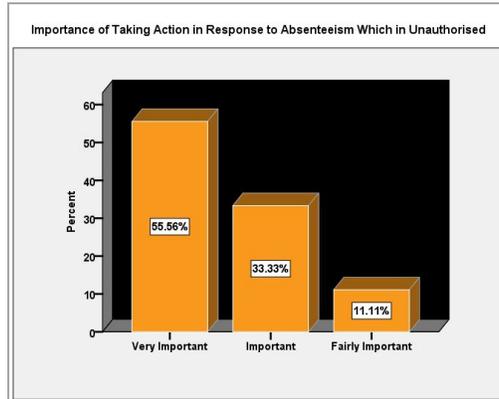
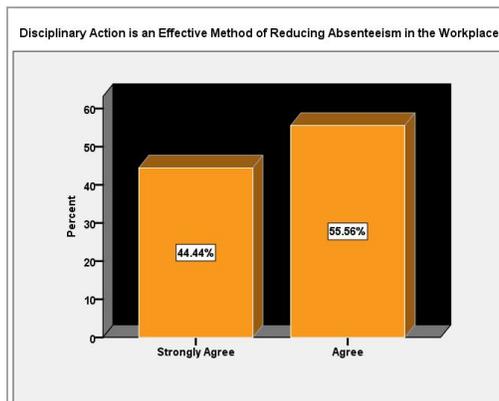


Figure 4.31 illustrates the level of importance, ranked by management, of taking action as a response to unauthorised absenteeism. Approximately 55% believe it is very important to take action in response to unauthorised absence, whereas 33.33% responded that it is important. There is a concern, however, as 11.11% of management responded that it is fairly important to take action in response to unauthorised absence.

All employees forming part of management need to view unauthorised absence in the same manner. If it is a significant problem in the company, then taking action in response to it is very important. If members of management do not view this as important, the level of commitment to solving this problem will be compromised, which will have a negative impact on the organisation's strategy to reduce absenteeism in the workplace. Kaye (1999:13) confirms this by stating that management must strive to understand the dynamics of absenteeism. The designation of absenteeism, its causes, effects on productivity, and cost in terms of finances and administrative effectiveness need to be absolutely clear and understood by management.

### Possible Measure to Reduce Absenteeism – Disciplinary Action

Figure 4.32: Disciplinary Action is an Effective Method of Reducing Absenteeism in the Workplace.

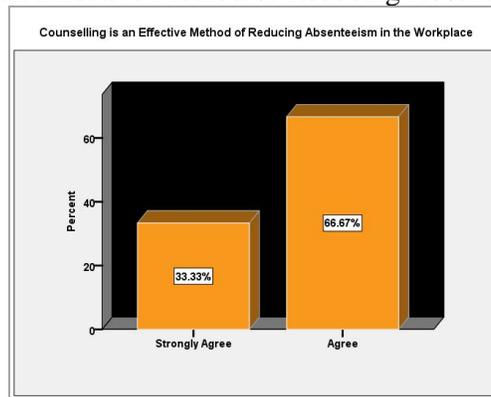


A collective 44.44% of management strongly agree that disciplinary action is an effective method for reducing absenteeism in the workplace, whereas the majority of management (55.56%) agree with this statement. Though management may agree that it is an effective method for reducing absenteeism in the workplace, the necessary disciplinary measure is not being effectively implemented in the workplace.

Onikoyi et al. (2015:69) confirms that it is necessary to implement adequate disciplinary measures to deter absenteeism in the workplace. The strategies employed by management to reduce absenteeism in the workplace must be aligned to the above results in order to improve workplace attendance rates and enhance organisational performance. Managers need to be empowered to effectively manage absenteeism within the boundaries of the law by placing an emphasis on progressively correcting deviant behaviour and effectively disciplining employees who do not want to comply with rules and regulations, with the aim of promoting a culture of attendance in the workplace to ensure optimal organisational performance.

### Possible Measure to Reduce Absenteeism – Counselling

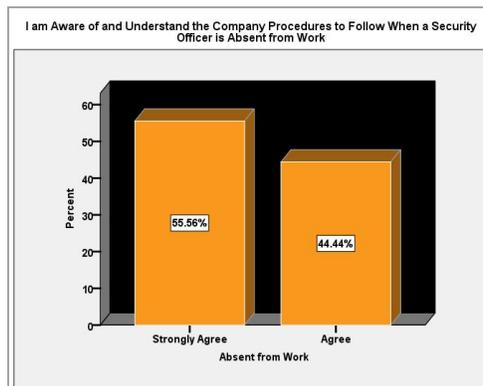
Figure 4.33: Counselling is an Effective Method of Reducing Absenteeism in the Workplace.



The results above reveal that 33.33% of management strongly agree that counselling is an effective method for reducing absenteeism in the workplace, whereas the majority of management (66.67%) agree with this statement. Though management may agree that it is an effective method of reducing absenteeism in the workplace, counselling is not being implemented in the workplace and should be a measure taken by management to address and reduce incidences of absenteeism. Grundemann and Van Vuuren (2004:95) and Chauke (2007:40) confirm that counselling sessions may be provided to employees before disciplinary action is taken to show employees that management wants to correct the action rather than to simply punish the employee. The strategies employed by management to reduce absenteeism in the workplace must be aligned to the above results in order to improve workplace attendance rates and enhance organisational performance of the business.

### Management Awareness of Company Protocols

Figure 4.34: I am Aware of and Understand the Company Procedures to Follow When a Security Officer is absent from Work.



A collective 55.56% of management strongly agree that they are aware of and understand company procedures to follow when a security officer is absent from work, whereas 44.44% agree with this statement. Although the results reveal this, it does not necessarily translate to effective implementation of such steps. Onikoyi et al. (2015:69) confirm that management should follow company protocols when faced with absenteeism levels that are hindering organisational performance, such as identifying the causes of absenteeism and seeking appropriate means to reduce absenteeism to enhance organisational performance, adequately motivating the workforce so they are encouraged to attend work, ensuring an organisational culture that is strong and committed to curbing absenteeism, improving service delivery to enhance organisational performance, and implement adequate disciplinary measures to deter absenteeism in the workplace.

### Frequency of Absence beyond the Control of Security Officers

Figure 4.35: Frequency Security Officers Claim Their Absence was Beyond Their Control.

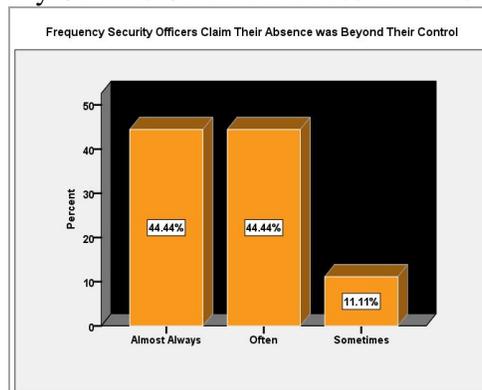
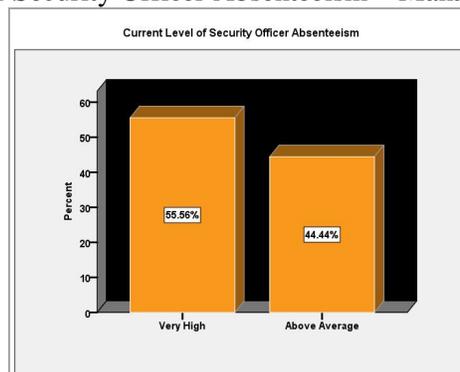


Figure 4.35 reveals that 44.44% of management believe that it is almost always that security officers claim their absence is beyond their control, whereas a further 44.44% state that security officers often claim their absence was beyond their control. A small number (11.11%) of management responded that this sometimes occurs. Although absence may be beyond the control of the security officer, management must formulate a clear policy on how to investigate the incidences of absenteeism and further commit to adhering to company policies on unauthorised absenteeism, irrespective of whether the absence is beyond the control of the employee or not. Leniency may be given to the employee once investigation reveals that the employee had a genuine and legitimate reason for being absent without permission and authority to do so. Chauke (2007:115-116) confirms that incidents of absenteeism must be investigated and the records of leave and unauthorised absenteeism of security officers should be consulted as a prerequisite to determining proper courses of action.

### Level of Absenteeism by Security Officers

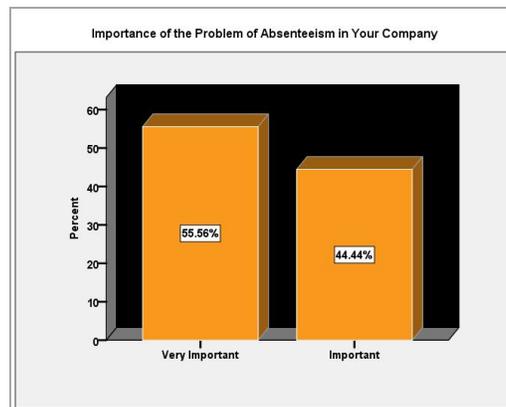
Figure 4.36: Current Level of Security Officer Absenteeism – Management.



The current level of absenteeism, as perceived by 55.56% of management, is very high, whereas 44.44% responded that it is above average. This demonstrates that management are aware that levels of absenteeism are at least above average in the organisation. The new human resources environment has seen opportunities to amend conditions of employment to better meet the needs of both the employer and the employee. Employee motivation, teamwork, incentive programmes, and other means for enhancing employee job satisfaction have been implemented to reduce absenteeism in the workplace and improve overall organisational performance. However, despite the increasing awareness of the adverse and detrimental effects of absenteeism on productivity and performance, the level of absenteeism remains high in the security industry, rendering it even more challenging to private security companies to operate optimally and meet their organisational goals. As a means of promoting attendance in the workplace, management may commit to regularly informing organisational members of absenteeism rates and the resultant number of contracts lost. This approach is supported by Tylczak (1990:13), who suggests that companies should not only measure and track absenteeism but also discuss absenteeism with the workforce. Given the responsibility of management in respect of absenteeism, it is imperative to ensure that all members of management are aware of the current issues surrounding absenteeism.

### Absenteeism as a Problem in the Organisation

Figure 4.37: Importance of the Problem of Absenteeism in Your Company – Management.



A collective 55.56% of management consider the problem of absenteeism in the organisation to be very important, whereas 44.44% responded that it is an important problem. These responses are promising in that they illustrate that management acknowledge there is a considerable problem in the organisation pertaining to absenteeism. Oniyoki et al. (2015:69) recommend that management strive to ensure an organisational culture that is strong and committed to curbing absenteeism, improving service delivery, and enhancing organisational performance. Management must be committed to dealing with the problem. If this can be done, employees will not only be aware of the problem of absenteeism, but be more likely to contribute to the eradication of it.

The management are at the forefront of having the responsibility of proactively dealing with the effects of absenteeism. This results in an acknowledgement of the importance of the problem in the organisation, which is evident from the above results.

### Frequency of Disciplinary Hearings in Cases of Habitual Absenteeism

Figure 4.38: Frequency Disciplinary Hearings are Held in Cases When a Security Officer is Regularly Absent from Work.

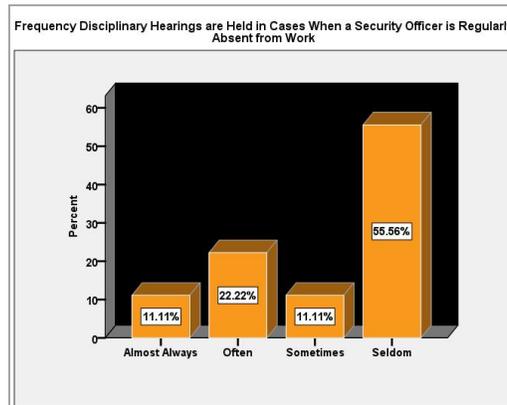
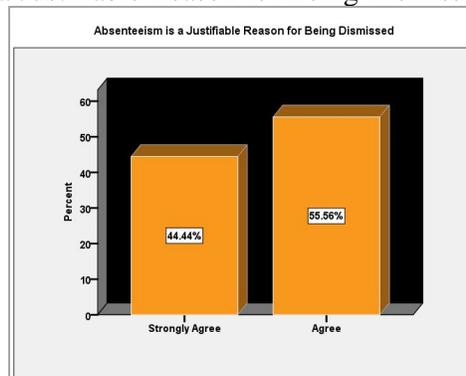


Figure 4.38 reveals that 11.11% of management believes that disciplinary hearings are almost always held in cases of regular absenteeism, whereas 22.22% noted that this occurs often. About 11.11% stated that disciplinary hearings are sometimes held in cases when a security officer is regularly absent from work. However, the majority of management (55.56%) acknowledged and responded that this seldom occurs. The results are a cause for concern, because disciplinary hearings should be held for habitual absenteeism, especially as a consequence of disciplinary action that has not progressively corrected employee behaviour in the workplace. The distribution of responses indicates that management are not aware of the action that may be taken by other members of management, and are failing to act on the measures afforded to employers by the South African labour legislation. Netshidzati (2012:42) confirms that absenteeism should be managed by clear and sound company policies and the implementation of fair disciplinary measures, which may include disciplinary hearings, and it is imperative to set an example to staff and promote a culture that is committed to curbing absenteeism in the workplace.

### Does Absenteeism Warrant Dismissal?

Figure 4.39: Absenteeism is a Justifiable Reason for Being Dismissed – Management.



Although 44.44% of management strongly agree that absenteeism is a justifiable reason for being dismissed, 55.56% responded by agreeing with the statement. The results reveal that, although management believes absenteeism to be a justifiable reason for being dismissed, employees who are regularly absent from work are not being subject to disciplinary measures and, as a result, disciplinary hearings are not being held, and dismissals are not being effected. The strategies employed by management to curb absenteeism in the workplace and promote a culture of attendance must be aligned to the results in order to effectively manage absenteeism.

Cortese (2003:19) conducted a study confirming that absenteeism, on the part of some guards, quickly encourages the employer to resort to dismissal. However, protocols in effecting dismissals must be fair and in accordance with labour legislation. If not, dismissals resulting from absenteeism may be deemed unfair if not conducted in accordance with Schedule 8 of the Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995. There must be consistency in the implementation of disciplinary measures so that the entire workforce becomes aware that habitual absenteeism may result in dismissal. The management may agree that absenteeism is a justifiable reason for being dismissed, but this is futile if not acted upon in the correct manner following correct protocols.

### Who is Responsible for Curbing Absenteeism in the Workplace?

Figure 4.40: All Organisational Members have a Responsibility towards Curbing Absenteeism in the Workplace – Management.

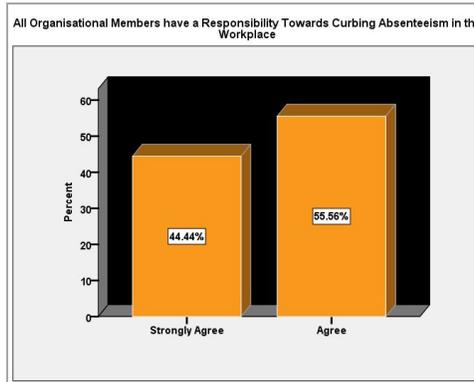


Figure 4.40 illustrates that 44.44% of management acknowledge and strongly agree that all organisational members have a responsibility towards curbing absenteeism in the workplace, whereas 55.56% agreed with this statement. Pretorius (2006:1-2) supports this statement by determining that all relevant parties must be included in managing absenteeism to ensure it is a standard set in the organisation and that such management should be a team effort and not just the responsibility of management. Absence management must be promoted as a team effort.

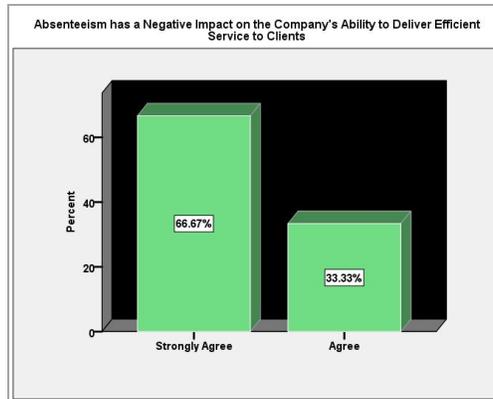
Pretorius (2006:1-2) further supports the above results by stating that all relevant parties should be involved in the solution to absenteeism. Security officers must be informed about the significance of the problem of absenteeism. A clear message must be sent to the workforce so they are aware that absenteeism will not be tolerated, that absenteeism affects all stakeholders in the organisation, and, more importantly, has the ability to severely compromise organisational performance, which must be optimal in order to survive in a competitive business environment. Security officers must be encouraged to contribute to the organisation in a positive manner by regularly attending work (Onikoyi et al., 2015:69).

### Section C

This section provides an analysis of the results to determine the impact of absenteeism on service delivery and organisational performance.

### Impact of Absenteeism on Service Delivery

Figure 4.41: Absenteeism has a Negative Impact on the Company's Ability to Deliver Efficient Service to Clients – Management.



The above results illustrate that 66.67% of management strongly agree that absenteeism has a negative effect on the company's ability to deliver efficient service to clients, whereas 33.33% agreed with this statement. This indicates that management acknowledge and agree that absenteeism does have a negative impact on service delivery. When incidents of absenteeism occur, management is faced with the task of ensuring services are rendered to clients. The organisation is placed under pressure trying to compensate for the lack of resources, which result from the shortage of staff. It is management who is at the forefront of the negative consequences to the organisation, which arise as a result of absenteeism. This is confirmed by the results outlined in Figure 4.41. Onikoyi et al. (2015:68) confirms that absenteeism negatively affects quality service delivery and found that effective management of the workforce reduced absenteeism in the organisation and led to an improvement in the level of service delivery, profitability, and overall organisational performance. This assertion is consistent with the above results. Effective management of labour may include ensuring that all organisational members are aware of the negative impact on service delivery as a result of absenteeism.

### Impact of Absenteeism on Client Retention

Figure 4.42: Absenteeism has led to the Loss of Contracts – Management.

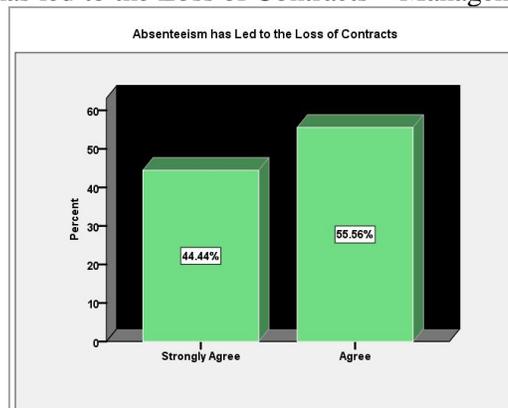
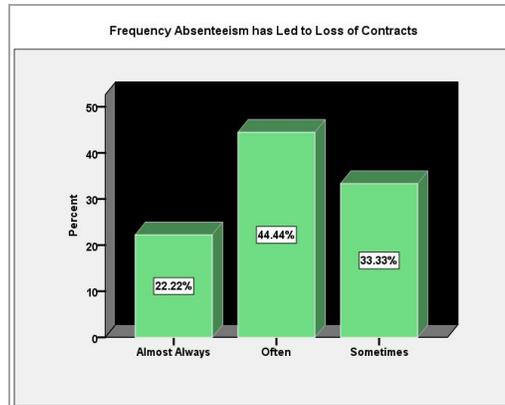


Figure 4.42 illustrates that 44.44% of management strongly agree that absenteeism has led to the loss of contracts, whereas 55.56% agreed with this statement. Absenteeism, therefore, has impacted the company's ability to retain clients. Clients are not prepared to pay for services that are not rendered with unmanned sites, nor rendered in an unsatisfactory manner where guards are deployed but are too tired from working excessive hours. When guards are absent or too tired on sites, assets and clients' property become vulnerable and susceptible to theft. Clients then threaten to terminate contracts for inefficient service delivery.

PSIRA, in its 2013/2014 annual report, confirms that there has been a decline in the number of security companies that are in operation in KZN, which is indicative of business being more competitive and more challenging to sustain. Private security companies are facing the challenge of sustainability because the cost of absenteeism has become extremely detrimental to the business. The loss of clients, as a result of continuous absenteeism of security guards, is inevitable and a reality, which is illustrated in the above results. Netshidzati (2012:37) confirms that absenteeism is a contributory factor to the failure of businesses to meet performance targets and organisational goals.

#### Frequency of the Loss of Contracts due to Absenteeism

Figure 4.43: Frequency Absenteeism has led to Loss of Contracts – Management.

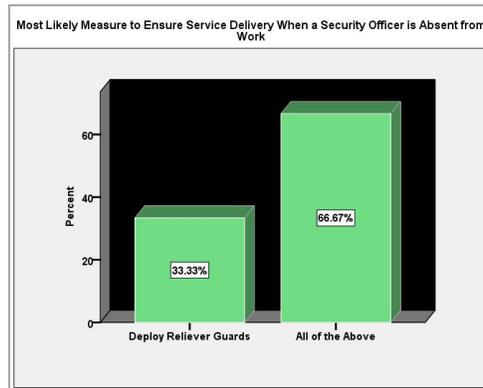


The above results illustrate the frequency that absenteeism has led to the loss of contracts. Approximately 22% of management stated that absenteeism almost always leads to the loss of contracts. The majority of the respondents (44.44%) indicated that absenteeism often leads to the loss of contracts, whereas 33.33% stated that this occurs sometimes. The results illustrate that, more often than not, absenteeism is the reason for loss of contracts with clients. Absenteeism, therefore, has impacted the company's ability to retain clients, which has negatively impacted on the organisational performance of the business.

Munro (2007:21) confirms that frequent absenteeism places more strain on the remainder of the workforce, which may lead to inefficient service delivery, customer dissatisfaction, and loss of revenue. The extra workload of employees may well impact on their overall productivity and capabilities (Chauke, 2007:24). As a result of overtime worked, staff morale may be negatively affected and service delivery compromised. This may occur on a regular basis if not dealt with appropriately, resulting in clients becoming dissatisfied and threatening to cancel contracts. Given the high levels of absenteeism within the organisation, it is evident that service delivery is compromised to the extent that clients terminate their contracts and business is lost.

### Measures Ensuring Service Delivery when Absenteeism Occurs

Figure 4.44: Most Likely Measure to Ensure Service Delivery When a Security Officer is absent from Work – Management.



In order to ensure appropriate service delivery, the company will most likely employ the following measures: deploy reliever guards, utilise security officers on double shifts, and leave sites unmanned. This is illustrated in the response of “All of the above” by 66.67% of management. A considerable 33.33% of management listed the most likely measure to ensure service delivery to clients in cases of absence to be deploying reliever guards.

Organisations incur many costs as a result of absence, which is evident from the above results that confirm the number of measures the company must take to deal with incidents of absenteeism in ensuring service delivery. Maclean (2008:394) and Lambert et al. (2005:166) confirm the abovementioned measures as direct and indirect costs incurred. Netshidzati (2012:36) confirms that organisations may incur further additional costs associated with the payment of overtime to security guards that are required to work double shifts. These costs compromise the organisation’s ability to perform optimally, as service delivery is compromised.

### Reliability - Cronbach’s Coefficient Alpha

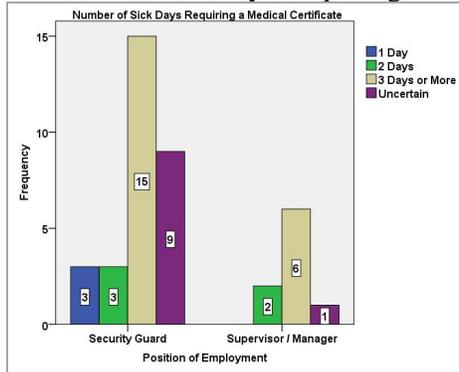
Cronbach’s alpha was computed for Section B and Section C items. The findings indicated excellent internal consistency and reliability for the questionnaire,  $\alpha = 0.884$ . Hence, the questionnaire possessed strong reliability and appropriate use of each of the items tested and included in the questionnaire.

### Inferential Statistics – Hypothesis Testing

In order to determine whether security guards possessed similar or different perceptions to management on selected aspects of absenteeism, chi-square tests of independence were conducted along the items that were included on both the security guard and management questionnaires. A total of nine items were subjected to chi-square analysis, separately. In each case, results indicated that there is no significant or meaningful difference between security guards’ and managements’ perceptions in respect of each item. These results corroborate the descriptive statistic findings that were presented initially.

### Medical Certificates

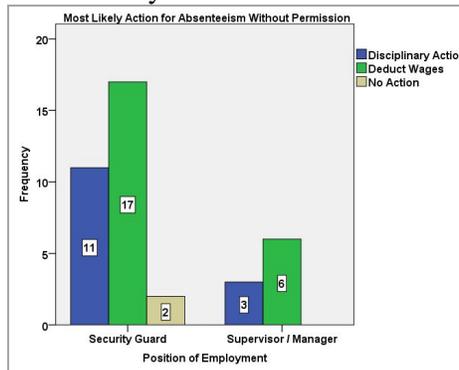
Figure 4.45: Perception of the Number of Sick Days Requiring a Medical Certificate.



The chi-square test of independence was not statistically significant,  $\chi^2 = 3.027$ ,  $p = 0.387$ .

### Current Unauthorised Absenteeism Measures

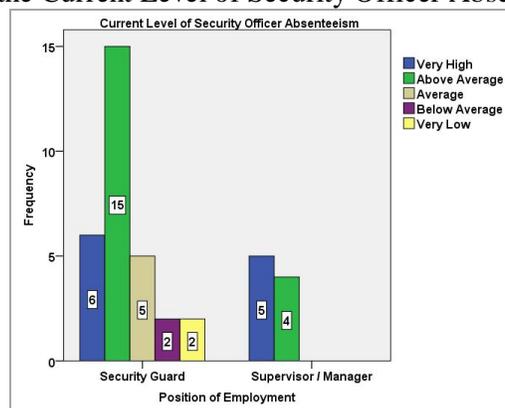
Figure 4.46: Perception of the Most Likely Action for Absenteeism without Permission.



The chi-square test of independence was not statistically significant,  $\chi^2 = 0.739$ ,  $p = 0.691$ .

### Level of Absenteeism by Security Officers

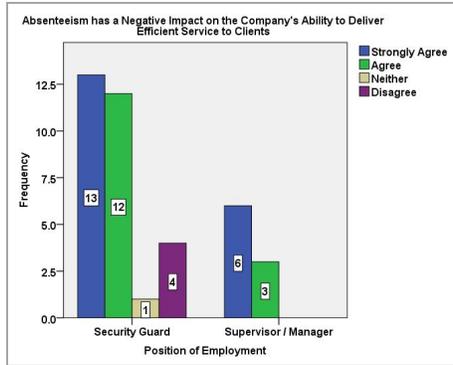
Figure 4.47: Perception of the Current Level of Security Officer Absenteeism.



The chi-square test of independence was not statistically significant,  $\chi^2 = 5.847$ ,  $p = 0.211$ .

### Impact of Absenteeism on Service Delivery

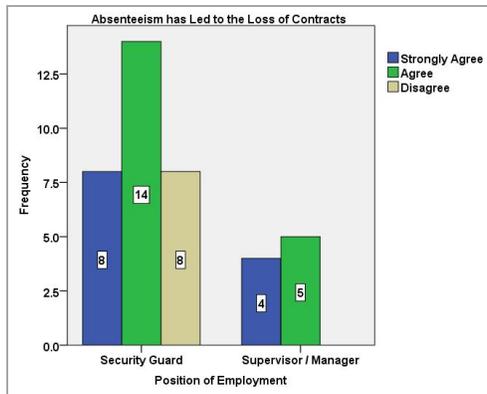
Figure 4.48: Perception of Whether Absenteeism has a Negative Impact on the Company's Ability to Deliver Efficient Service to Clients.



The chi-square test of independence was not statistically significant,  $\chi^2 = 2.354, p = 0.502$ .

**Impact of Absenteeism on Client Retention**

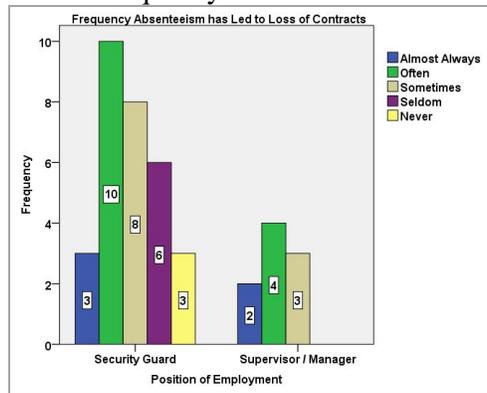
Figure 4.49: Perception of Whether Absenteeism has led to the Loss of Contracts.



The chi-square test of independence was not statistically significant,  $\chi^2 = 3.223, p = 0.200$ .

**Frequency of the Loss of Contracts due to Absenteeism**

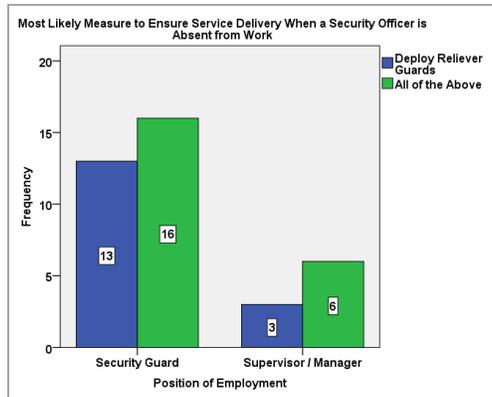
Figure 4.50: Perception of Whether Frequency Absenteeism has led to Loss of Contracts.



The chi-square test of independence was not statistically significant,  $\chi^2 = 3.854, p = 0.426$ .

**Measures Ensuring Service Delivery when Absenteeism Occurs**

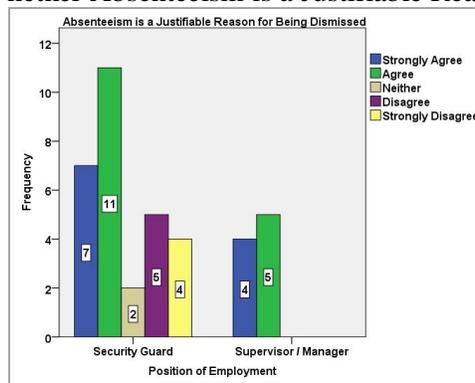
Figure 4.51: Perception of the Most Likely Measure to Ensure Service Delivery When a Security Officer is absent from Work.



The chi-square test of independence was not statistically significant,  $\chi^2 = 0.372, p = 0.542$ .

**Does Absenteeism Warrant Dismissal?**

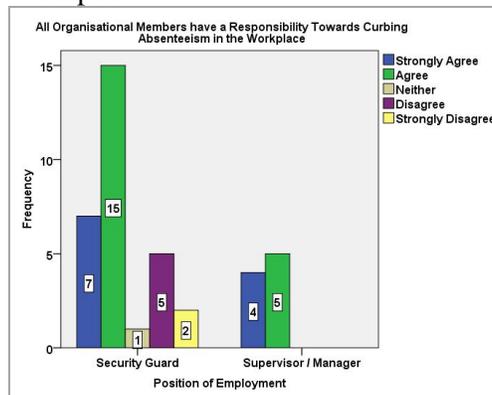
Figure 4.52: Perception of Whether Absenteeism is a Justifiable Reason for Being Dismissed.



The chi-square test of independence was not statistically significant,  $\chi^2 = 4.899, p = 0.298$ .

**Who is Responsible for Curbing Absenteeism in the Workplace?**

Figure 4.53: Perception of Whether All Organisational Members Have a Responsibility towards Curbing Absenteeism in the Workplace.



The chi-square test of independence was not statistically significant,  $\chi^2 = 3.536, p = 0.472$ .

**CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

## **5.1 Introduction**

### **Findings from the Study**

#### **Findings from the Literature Review**

##### **Primary Causes of Absenteeism amongst Security Guards**

The following causes have been listed in an attempt to highlight reasons submitted from various authors, experts, and studies, about that which contributes towards higher absenteeism rates in the workplace.

- Job satisfaction and motivation (Cohen and Golan, 2007:427; Netshidzati, 2012:17);
- Poor leadership and poor management skills (Sheikha and Younis, 2006:83);
- A weak and permissive organisational culture that lacks focus (Netshidzati, 2012:20);
- Poor working conditions, which can lead to stress (Cortese, 2003:19);
- The nature of the job of a security officer (Chauke, 2007:27);
- Genuine illness and alcohol consumption (Lokke et al., 2007:16; Osilla et al., 2010:94);
- Failure by management to require proof of illness (Schultz and Schultz, 2006:242);
- Uncontrollable events, family responsibilities, and transportation problems (Cortese, 2003:20; Levy and Associates, 2004:16);
- Education – employees with higher levels of education have less chance of being absent (Crisofoli et al., 2011:77; Langenhoff, 2011:15);
- Age – younger employees have greater family responsibilities and may therefore be absent from work more often (Lau et al., 2003:92); and
- Tenure – longer periods of service may result in less absenteeism (Josias, 2005:32; Sheikha and Younis, 2006:70).

##### **The Effect of Absenteeism on the Organisational Performance and Client Retention**

- Organisations incur excessive costs, the most costly of all being the loss of clients (Maclean, 2008:394; Robbins et al. 2009:512);
- Absenteeism impacts negatively on the productivity of the employee, leading to inefficient service delivery, customer dissatisfaction, and the loss of customers (Munro, 2007:21); and
- Absenteeism reduces profitability, quality service delivery, and promptness of satisfying the customers' needs. Therefore, organisational performance will undoubtedly be negatively affected by absenteeism, proving that a negative relationship between absenteeism and organisational performance exists (Onikoyi et al., 2015:68; Tiwari, 2014:14).

##### **Strategies Utilised by Management to Combat High Levels of Absenteeism**

- Organisations record and measure absenteeism and discuss it with employees (Werner, 2005:118);
- Organisations ensure that compensation is in accordance with labour legislation (Oniyoki et al., 2015:69);
- Organisations reward good attendance records by means of incentives (Prado and Chawla, 2006:99);
- Organisations utilise fair and justifiable disciplinary measures to address absenteeism (Oniyoki et al., 2015:69);
- Organisations promote health and safety of employees (Netshidzati, 2012:42); and
- Organisations train supervisors to deal with absenteeism (Chauke, 2007:115-116).

##### **Does the Effective Management of Absenteeism Enhance Organisational Performance?**

- Leadership is a critical component in the pursuit of organisational goals. When the workforce has a good relationship with management and receive support, they become more satisfied with their jobs and attend work regularly (Netshidzati, 2012:49);

- Improving the human resource management of absenteeism with effective strategies improves organisational performance, as productivity, job satisfaction, morale, motivation, and commitment is enhanced when managed appropriately (Oniyoki et al., 2015:69);
- Organisational culture plays a crucial role in the management of absenteeism. By creating a focused and non-tolerant culture regarding absenteeism, employees are less likely to commit acts of absenteeism, which will lead to enhanced productivity (Netshidzati, 2012:20);
- Striving to improve employee job satisfaction and working conditions shows a commitment by management to enhance the professional environment of the employee, thereby resulting in an improvement in productivity, service delivery, profitability, and overall organisational performance (Oniyoki et al., 2015:68).

### **Recommendations for the Implementation of Policies / Strategies in order to reduce the High Level of Absenteeism and Promote a Commitment Amongst Staff to Reduce Absenteeism in the Workplace**

- It is imperative that employees are made aware of the causes of absenteeism and its resultant negative impact on all stakeholders (Chauke, 2007:115-116);
- Creating a strong productive organisational culture that is committed to reducing absenteeism and improving service delivery must be a priority for management (Netshidzati, 2012:20);
- Management should regularly investigate the wellbeing of employees and change or improve working conditions (Chauke, 2007:28);
- Organisations must implement a clear and comprehensible absenteeism policy (Netshidzati, 2012:20);
- Employee assistance/wellness programmes could also be implemented in an attempt to assist employees with medical concerns (Nel et al., 2004:157);
- Managers must strive to maintain an acceptable level of job satisfaction and motivation amongst the workforce. Introducing interviews upon the employee returning to work helps to identify contributory factors to absenteeism, assess employee job satisfaction, and improve morale (Howarth, 2005:3-4);
- Timeous action is required in response to incidents of absenteeism where, upon returning to work, the employee is engaged by management. This will further allow management to identify excess absenteeism, patterns of absence, and abuse of sick leave (Pretorius, 2006:1-2);
- Managing absenteeism should be a team effort (Pretorius, 2006:1-2);
- A basic absenteeism management programme and accurate record keeping enables the analysis of absenteeism levels within the organisation (SAPA, 2005:9);
- Management must concentrate on building a committed workforce and cultivate a culture that is intolerable to excessive absenteeism. The use of appropriate and effective disciplinary measures may be utilised to achieve this. Counselling sessions may be provided to employees before disciplinary action is taken (Chauke, 2007:40; Grundemann and Van Vuuren, 2004:95);
- The implementation of attendance incentives may promote attendance in the workplace (Prado and Chawla, 2006:99); and
- Management must ensure that workers are remunerated in accordance with regulations (Oniyoki et al., 2015:69).

### **Findings from the Primary Research**

#### **Primary Causes of Absenteeism amongst Security Guards**

- A collective 70% of security officers are between the ages of 21 to 30 years old, illustrating that the high level of absenteeism may be the result of the younger employees that form the majority of the workforce;
- Having a collective 70% of staff in possession of Grade 12 or equivalent indicates that most

security officers may be less ambitious, less satisfied, and less motivated, perhaps increasing the likelihood of their absence;

- Collectively, 58.62% of the security officers are registered with PSIRA on the lowest grade, which is grade D. Therefore, unsatisfactory salary may have led to job dissatisfaction, which increases absenteeism;
- Length of service may be a contributing factor to the rate of employee absenteeism, and a collective 56.67% of the workforce have been employed in the organisation for a short period (i.e., 1 to 2 years), indicating that tenure may have contributed to the high absenteeism within the organisation;
- Illness is one of the main reasons for employee absenteeism in the organisation;
- Inconsistent responses regarding medical certificates indicate that security officers are not knowledgeable about the company policy, and, thus, are more likely to fail to adhere to such protocols, resulting in higher absenteeism;
- The majority of management (55.56%) acknowledged that security officers seldom produce medical certificates after being absent, which indicates poor management, as absenteeism is higher in organisations that do not require proof of illness;
- Though management may have a disciplinary code in place listing absenteeism as a misconduct, appropriate disciplinary measures are not being taken;
- Security officers may endure a number of family and transportation problems, which may require the security officer to resort to absenteeism;
- The majority of security officers (62.22%) work an average of 72 hours per week demonstrating that consistent long and/or irregular working hours may cause poor employee health, thereby resulting in more sick leave being utilised;
- A collective 96.67% of security officers are given 5 rest days per month, whereas 3 days of rest are afforded to 3.33% of security officers. This is insufficient and may be contributing to higher absenteeism rates resulting from fatigue; and
- Other reasons for being absent from work included being drunk, a lack of communication with a supervisor/manager, lack of benefits, unsatisfactory salary, and poor working conditions.

#### **The Effect of Absenteeism on the Organisational Performance and Client Retention**

- The majority of the workforce (83.33% of security officers and all of management) acknowledge and agree that absenteeism does have a negative impact on the organisation's ability to efficiently deliver services to clients;
- The majority of the workforce (73.34% of security officers and all of management) acknowledge and agree that compromised service delivery, resulting from absenteeism, has led to the loss of business;
- Absenteeism impacts negatively on the productivity of the employee who may be required to perform their duties when tired or with an additional workload, which may lead to inefficient service delivery. Clients become dissatisfied and threaten to cancel contracts, which undoubtedly negatively impacts the organisation; and
- Organisations incur many costs as a result of absence. This is evident from the results from the study, which confirm the number of measures the company must take to deal with incidences of absenteeism towards ensuring service delivery.

#### **Current Strategies Utilised by Management to Combat High Levels of Absenteeism**

- The organisation is consistent in imposing the punitive measure of deducting wages during instances of absenteeism; and
- Employees are remunerated in accordance with PSIRA regulations, and, therefore, the minimum wage is being adhered to.

### **Does Effective Management of Absenteeism Enhance Organisational Performance?**

- The study revealed that although there may be appropriate measures to manage absenteeism available to management, such measures are not being utilised. This may be negatively impacting the organisational performance of the business; and
- Should management adopt and consistently implement clear and sound strategies in an effort to reduce absenteeism, service delivery will be enhanced. There is no reason why this, in turn, could not enhance organisational performance.

### **Recommendations for the Implementation of Policies / Strategies in order to reduce the High Level of Absenteeism and Promote a Commitment Amongst Staff to Curb Absenteeism in the Workplace**

- Management must strive to understand absenteeism and its causes, effects on productivity, and cost in terms of finances and administrative effectiveness;
- Management must ensure that security officers are receiving sufficient rest periods to reduce levels of fatigue;
- An effort should be made to consider alternatives to the use of public transportation in order to provide relief to security officers who resort to absenteeism because of unreliable transportation;
- All employees forming part of management need to view unauthorised absence as a problem that is of the utmost importance so that the level of commitment to curbing this problem is not compromised;
- Absenteeism should be managed by clear and sound company policies, including the implementation of adequate and fair disciplinary measures, which are imperative to set an example to staff, deter employees, and promote a culture that is committed to reducing absenteeism in the workplace;
- Company policy should clearly state sick leave regulations and the requirement of medical certificates so that there is no confusion on the part of the employee or management and action can be taken if necessary;
- Counselling sessions may be provided to the employee as a prerequisite to disciplinary action;
- There must be consistency in the implementation of disciplinary measures so that the workforce becomes aware that habitual absenteeism may result in disciplinary hearings and the loss of employment in the form of dismissals;
- Though absence may be beyond the control of the security officer, management must formulate protocols on how to investigate such incidents. Employee records should be consulted as a prerequisite to determining proper course of action;
- Supervisors must be trained on managing absenteeism in the workplace in order to effectively, promptly, and consistently deal with incidents of absenteeism; and
- As a means to promote attendance, management may commit to regularly informing organisational members of absenteeism rates and the resultant number of contracts lost to create awareness in the workplace. Management should not only measure and track absenteeism, but also discuss absenteeism with the workforce and turn absence management into a team effort.

### **Conclusions**

The main causes of absenteeism amongst security officers within the organisation are attributed to illness, transportation, fatigue, family problems, and long working hours. In addition to this, the failure of management to adequately manage absenteeism in the workplace has contributed to the perpetuation of the problem. This has resulted in service delivery being compromised to the extent that a substantial number of clients have been lost. Excessive costs, low productivity, and inefficient service delivery have challenged the sustainability of the business. Currently, the

organisation is not utilising effective strategies to reduce absenteeism in the workplace. This translates into the need for management to review current human resource initiatives, adopt, and implement measures, which will not only reduce absenteeism, but also promote a commitment amongst the workforce to attend work regularly, enhance productivity and service delivery, and achieve the goals of the organisation.

### **Recommendations**

Management must endeavour to isolate regular and predominant causes of absenteeism in order to identify regular offenders, legitimate incidences of absenteeism, and unauthorised absenteeism, which will enable management to employ the necessary and effective measures to target specific causes. Effective absenteeism policies must be adopted and management must ensure that all organisational members are aware of and understand such policies, and the possible consequences that may ensue from a lack of adherence to such policies. A commitment must be made to engage with the workforce on a regular basis to address aspects surrounding absenteeism. Timely action must be a priority to ensure that attendance and disciplinary records are up to date, which will enable management to make the correct and appropriate decision in relation to each individual case of absenteeism. Attendance incentives may be employed so that employees associate a benefit with regularly reporting for duty.

### **Areas for Future Research**

- To conduct a comparative study on absenteeism using several organisations within the private security industry that possess similar or varying organisational characteristics;
- Conducting a qualitative study on the job satisfaction of security officers may provide valuable information to enhance job satisfaction and organisational performance, while simultaneously reducing absenteeism rates; and
- Research conducted subsequent to this study may act as a developmental tool for providing further valuable contributions on the effect of policies/strategies that were implemented to reduce absenteeism rates within the organisation.

### **Conclusion**

The challenge of absenteeism faced by the organisation included in this study is causing disruption to business, impacting negatively on productivity, eroding profits, and, ultimately, leading to the loss of business and unsatisfactory organisational performance. Absenteeism has compromised service delivery to the extent that contracts in the security industry are often lost, which is confirmed by the findings from this study. The subsequent negative impact on organisational performance has made business difficult to sustain. In any competitive environment, organisations are constantly developing strategies in order to attract and retain customers. However, human resources strategies are important for the successful management of the workforce, which will either accomplish quality service delivery or negatively impact on the organisation's ability to achieve this.

This chapter concluded this study. The key findings from the literature reviewed and primary research provided a basis for the conclusions drawn and recommendations proposed so that the organisation (and other similar organisations) may derive value from the submissions made. Accomplishing the delineated objectives and answering the research questions have achieved the purpose of this study and contributed to the field of management studies.

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