
Engaging in Personal Business on the Job: Extending the Presenteeism Construct

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Presenteeism describes the situation when workers are on the job but, because of illness, injury, or other conditions, they are not functioning at peak levels. Although much of the research on presenteeism appears in the medical literature, we argue that presenteeism also occurs when employees go to work but spend a portion of the workday engaging in personal business while on the job, such as e-mailing friends, paying personal bills, or making personal appointments. Results of a Web-based survey of 115 individuals suggest that employees spend approximately one hour and twenty minutes in a typical workday engaged in personal activities, costing their employers an average \$8,875 each year in lost productivity per employee. Results suggest that engagement in personal business on the job is not related to self-reported measures of performance, efficiency, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, or intentions to stay, only to procrastination. Implications of these findings for practice and research are discussed.

Presenteeism describes the situation when employees are at work but, because of illness, injury, or other conditions, they are not functioning at peak levels (Hemp, 2004; Zengerle, 2004). Thus, the term *presenteeism* combines the ideas of the “present” employee and “absenteeism” where the employee is present on the job but somewhat absent in mind or behavior. The *New York Times Magazine* has hailed presenteeism as one of the top discoveries of 2004 (Zengerle, 2004), a sentiment fostered to some degree by the surge of research on the prevalence and business-related costs of employees who are present at work when suffering from medical conditions or illnesses (Hemp, 2004). What results from illness-related presenteeism, experts argue, is lower productivity on the job (for example, lower quantity of output, working more slowly,

repeated tasks, lower quality of work, mistakes on the job; Hemp, 2004) as well as the risk of contagion to healthy employees (CCH Incorporated, 2004).

Much of the research on presenteeism appears in the medical literature (Aronsson, Gustafsson, & Dallner, 2000; Berger, Howell, Nicholson, & Sharda, 2003; Goetzel, Long, Ozminkowski, Hawkins, Wang, & Lynch, 2004; Koopman et al., 2002; Stewart, Ricci, Chee, Morganstein, & Lipton, 2003; Wang et al., 2003). This research suggests that being at work but unable to be fully productive due to sickness or medical conditions (Chatterji & Tilley, 2002; Goetzel et al., 2004; Hemp, 2004) may cut work productivity by more than a third (Hemp, 2004). Experts argue that coming to work when sick may be more costly and more harmful to productivity and performance than choosing to just stay home for the day (Berger et al., 2003; Hemp, 2004; Stewart et al., 2003; Wang et al., 2003). For example, Bank One looked at its health-related costs and found that presenteeism cost \$311.8 million per year, while medical treatments and prescriptions, absenteeism, and disability costs combined were just \$176.2 million per year (Hemp, 2004). These findings suggest that a less than fully functioning employee on the job can have a dramatic impact on company profitability.

The majority of research focuses on illness-related presenteeism. Simpson (1998), however, describes another form of presenteeism: an employee who is present at work but is no longer performing effectively on the job due, for example, to lack of concentration. We also suspect that presenteeism is a broader construct than “sick workers.” We argue that presenteeism also occurs when employees go to work but spend a portion of the workday engaging in personal business on the job. Calling this behavior *nonwork-related presenteeism*, we suggest that activities such as e-mailing friends and family, surfing the Internet, paying personal bills, and making doctor or hairstylist appointments while on the job are some ways that employees are at work but may not be performing at peak levels.

This behavior may have serious implications for both individuals and organizations. For example, engaging in nonwork-related presenteeism on the job may affect human resource development (HRD). HRD is traditionally seen as a means of boosting individual and organizational effectiveness through a unified approach to training and development, career development, and organization development; it is a field that advocates for human capital development, the meaning of work in people's lives, and corporate social responsibility (Torraco, 2005). Yet the role of HRD is broadening to include the work-life issues that face today's organizations and the workforce (Polach, 2003). Thus, the traditional view of HRD could argue that if individuals are present at work but engaging in personal business on the job, they may be spending less time developing work-related skills or enhancing their professional knowledge and are therefore less prepared for promotion. In addition, this behavior could have a negative effect on the global competitive arena that demands a highly productive and efficient workforce—one that is

not distracted by personal interests during work hours. Because work-life integration is increasingly seen as an HRD function, helping employees manage their time at work and how much of it they are spending on nonwork-related activities is an HRD priority.

Clearly, these scenarios make nonwork-related presenteeism an HRD issue; however, there is a considerable gap in the HRD literature. As Bing, Kehrhahn, and Short (2003) argue, a key challenge that remains for HRD professionals and researchers is to demonstrate how specific variables of interest may affect productivity and the welfare of the firm. Ignoring the existence of nonwork-related presenteeism neglects a behavior that may have far-reaching implications for individual productivity and firm competitiveness. As experts point out, there is a need for HRD professionals to help employees find ways to integrate their work life with their personal life (Polach, 2003), but also ways that are not detrimental to the firm's strategic welfare.

Examination of the implications of presenteeism from an HRD perspective is lacking. Despite a brief mention in *Personnel Journal* fifty years ago (see Canfield & Soash, 1955), presenteeism is a relatively new area of interest for scholars, researchers, and businesses (Aronsson et al., 2000; Hemp, 2004), and there are only a few management-related publications (Canfield & Soash, 1955; Chatterji & Tilley, 2002; Hemp, 2004; Sheridan, 2004; Simpson, 1998). Furthermore, work-life integration issues have received little to no attention in the HRD literature, despite being viewed as a critical force in organizational effectiveness and HRD (Polach, 2003). One qualitative exploratory study attempted to identify the full range of personal activities people engage in during the workday, as well as the reasons behind the behavior (D'Abate, 2005); however, there is a need for quantitative research to measure the frequency and duration of this form of presenteeism. Furthermore, since presenteeism in its traditional illness-related form is tied to work-related outcomes such as productivity losses, there is a need to determine if nonwork-related presenteeism is related to performance outcomes.

The study described in this article seeks to extend the presenteeism construct to include additional forms of productivity loss on the job beyond losses due to illness and injury. It explores the extent to which engagement in personal business on the job, such as taking personal telephone calls, surfing the Net, or engaging in other home- or leisure-based activities, may result in on-the-job productivity loss. Given the lack of empirical research on this topic, an exploratory approach is used to address research questions rather than test directional hypotheses.

Literature Review

In order to extend presenteeism to include taking care of personal business at work, it is important to have an understanding of how presenteeism is traditionally viewed, its impact on the workplace, and the continuing stream of

research on work-life balance and life realm interdependency that we are building on. In this literature review, we connect the concept of presenteeism to research findings on personal business at work, life realm boundary-crossing behaviors, work-life balance literatures, and the HRD field. From this review, three gaps in the literature will become evident: (1) there is a need to extend presenteeism to other forms of being present at work but not really working, (2) there is a need to quantify the extent to which personal business is attended to on work time, and (3) there is a need to empirically examine the relationship between this behavior and workplace outcomes.

Theoretical Background of Nonwork-Related Presenteeism. The main argument in the presenteeism literature is, “when people don’t feel good, they simply don’t do their best work” (Hemp, 2004, p. 55). Our research extends that sentiment by arguing that when people are distracted by personal interests and demands, their performance may also be affected. We follow Kabanoff’s (1980) sentiment that “a person’s nonwork experiences can contribute to an understanding of his or her work behavior” (p. 74) and are responding to a call for more research on how nonwork-life realms can affect the work-life realm (Crouter, 1984; Kirchmeyer, 1993; Near, Rice, & Hunt, 1980).

There is considerable opinion and evidence in the literature that work does not exist separate from personal life realms (Champoux, 1978, 1980; Clark, 2000; Cohen, 1997a, 1997b; Crooker, Smith, & Tabak, 2002; Crouter, 1984; Fredriksen-Goldsen & Scharlach, 2001; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Hochschild, 1997; Kanter, 1977; Kelly & Kelly, 1994; Kirchmeyer, 1993, 1995; Lance & Richardson, 1988; Lewis, Rapoport, & Gambles, 2003; Near et al., 1980; Watkins & Subich, 1995; Wilensky, 1960). This relationship of work, home, and leisure has been described by the crossing of life realm boundaries where individuals balance life realms and life roles by crossing the permeable, flexible borders between them (Ashforth, Kreiner, & Fugate, 2000; Clark, 2000; Hall & Richter, 1988). It has also been described by the concept of integration (Kanter, 1977; Kirchmeyer, 1995; Nippert-Eng, 1996), where the boundaries between life realms can exist on a continuum from completely indistinguishable to fully distinctive and separate (Ashforth et al., 2000; Nippert-Eng, 1996). A surge of interest in work-life issues is apparent in the human resource literature. For example, Marques (2006) notes the transition of many former personnel departments into cross-functional units that are able to address workers’ needs and the organization’s needs, and provide opportunities for work-life balance.

On a microlevel, work, home, and leisure life realm interdependency is evidenced in employee behavior on the job. Using the telephone for personal reasons, surfing the Internet, sending and receiving personal e-mail, having social conversations, making appointments, reading for leisure, placing bets or engaging in betting pools, watching TV, playing computer games, downloading music, paying bills, shopping online, and getting visits from family and friends during work hours are all examples of how home and leisure can cross

the boundaries of work and enter into the workday (Abueva, 2000; Center for On-Line Addiction, 1998; Conlin, 2000; D'Abate, 2005; Everton, Mastrangelo, & Jolton, 2003; Lim, 2002; Vault.com, 2000). A number of factors explain why individuals may engage in these forms of personal business on the job (D'Abate, 2005). One key reason is to achieve work-life balance (Clark, 2000; D'Abate, 2005).

Since 41 percent of workplace absences are caused by family issues and personal needs and only 38 percent of absences are caused by illness, helping employees find ways to balance their work and personal lives is becoming increasingly important (CCH Incorporated, 2004). Various work-life programs have been described in the literature, including alternative work arrangements, telecommuting, flextime, job sharing, leave for school functions, compressed workweeks, on-site or emergency child care, elder care, employee assistance and wellness programs, on-site health services, fitness facilities, on-site subsidized cafeteria, personal valet services, and satellite work spaces (CCH Incorporated, 2004; Hobson, Delunas, & Kesic, 2001; Hochschild, 1997; Kirchmeyer, 1995; Kossek & Ozeki, 1999; Nord, Fox, Phoenix, & Viano, 2002). In addition, the HR and HRD fields are becoming more attuned to work-life balance (Marques, 2006; Polach, 2003). However, crossing or loosening the boundaries between work and personal life realms, for example, by making phone calls pertaining to one life realm while in another, has been overlooked as an informal means of integrating life roles (Kossek, Noe, & DeMarr, 1999). Personal business on the job has also been ignored in the time use literature that examines how employees spend their workday and the amount of time they spend engaged in various activities (Perlow, 1999; U.S. Department of Labor, n.d.).

It is important to note that balancing work with personal life is not simply about work-family balance, but also about work-leisure balance (Warren, 2004). As Eby, Casper, Lockwood, Bordeaux, and Brinley (2005) note, there has been a "virtual omission of nonwork domain variables such as leisure activities" from the body of work-family research (p. 185). Therefore, nonwork-related presenteeism incorporates three life realms: work issues that pertain to an individual's career or job, family issues that have to do with home life or residence, and leisure issues that surround personal interests, social life, or recreational activities (D'Abate, 2005). Imbalance among life realms can result in conflict about time pressures, the preoccupation with home or leisure while at work, and emotional strain (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Such life realm conflict can have detrimental consequences for individuals (among them are psychological problems, physical health problems, stress, lower life satisfaction, familial problems, substance abuse, and burnout) and for organizations (such as lower job satisfaction, greater turnover intentions, increased absenteeism, less productivity, less career success and satisfaction, lower organizational commitment and loyalty, and increased health care costs; Eby et al., 2005; Hobson et al., 2001; Kossek & Ozeki, 1999), while helping

employees balance their work and personal lives can lead to greater organizational commitment, organizational trust and loyalty, work effort, and performance (Friedman, Christensen, & DeGroot, 2000; Kossek & Ozeki, 1999).

Since work, home, and leisure are interrelated, there is a need for greater understanding of this relationship, particularly in terms of employee behavior (Fredriksen-Goldsen & Scharlach, 2001; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Hall & Richter, 1988; Near et al., 1980; Snir & Harpaz, 2002). D'Abate's qualitative research (2002, 2005) identified the broad domain of activities that employees may be engaging in on work time. Yet it failed to provide a quantitative assessment of the extent to which this is occurring. Hence, the current research sought to answer the following research question: *What types of home and leisure activities are employees engaging in during work hours, and to what extent are employees engaging in these behaviors?*

Nonwork-Related Presenteeism and Work Outcomes. Work-life balance may be one of the key reasons why individuals engage in nonwork-related presenteeism, but understanding what results from personal business on the job is a critical question. As Berger et al. (2003) note, a CEO's key question for illness-related presenteeism is, "How much am I losing due to employee health problems?" (p. 1214). The illness-related literature suggests that there are many individual- and organizational-level outcomes of presenteeism, including work impairment; changes in communication and concentration levels; variations in work quality and quantity, overall productivity, and performance; repeating a job; working at a slower pace; not doing anything at work or not able to accomplish tasks; and less active employee engagement (Goetzel et al., 2004; Koopman et al., 2002; Wang et al., 2003). Given these outcomes, extending presenteeism to include being present at work but engaging in personal business on the job leads us to the question, "How much are employers losing due to nonwork-related demands and interests?" In fact, an article in the *New York Times* has suggested that nonwork-oriented conversations about the Super Bowl during work hours could cost firms over \$800 million in lost productivity (Herring, 2004), and *Workforce* reported that the annual cost to employers of nonwork-related Internet use was in the range of billions of dollars (Greengard, 2000).

The potential cost of nonwork-related presenteeism makes this an important issue for HRD. It can be explained as an opportunity cost. Consider, for example, that several ways individuals might engage in nonwork-related presenteeism (such as phone use, e-mail use, surfing the Internet) rely on the use of technology in the workplace. Yet technology is a main resource for e-learning, performance enhancement, and other applications that develop human resources and make the workplace a digital one (Benson, Johnson, & Kuchinke, 2002; Bing et al., 2003). Thus, when employees are using this technology to engage in personal business on the job, firms may be losing time and the opportunity to train their employees, develop their skills for current job performance, improve their skill sets for career development and promotion

purposes, and improve productivity for the firm's competitiveness. Furthermore, the HRD field has been calling for greater research attention to how technology and e-learning can be applied and used to arm HRD professionals better for the future (Bing et al., 2003). Nonwork-related presenteeism is one overlooked area that may result in the misuse of this technology and a cost against what firms have invested in technology for training and development, promotion, and organizational development and effectiveness purposes.

Nevertheless, instead of asking what nonwork-related presenteeism costs firms, we might also ask, "How much are firms gaining due to nonwork-related presenteeism?" In other words, it is possible that engaging in personal business on the job improves job satisfaction, organizational commitment, productivity, organizational effectiveness, and other work outcomes. There is some preliminary evidence that work outcomes may be benefited by better managing the work-nonwork relationship (Kirchmeyer & Cohen, 1999; Polach, 2003). For example, traditional work-life balance initiatives—family-friendly programs, flextime, job sharing, and child or elder care initiatives—can improve recruitment, absenteeism, tardiness, turnover, job satisfaction, stress, productivity, organizational commitment and loyalty, performance, and health care costs (Hobson et al., 2001; Nord et al., 2002). What emerges from these findings is a need to examine how less traditional ways of providing work-life balance, such as allowing personal business on the job, are related to key work outcomes.

In fact, the HRD field is giving increasing attention to work-life balance and integration issues as matters of performance, organizational effectiveness, and career development (McDonald & Hite, 2005; Polach, 2003). As Polach (2003) argues, HRD is about "developing the workforce" and is therefore responsible not only for skill development but for creating a way for employees to integrate their work life with their personal life. So, "work-life integration is not strictly a human resource management issue; it is an organizational effectiveness issue and HRD has the opportunity to play a key role" (p. 64).

As a result of these competing perspectives regarding the costs or benefits of nonwork-related presenteeism, our research sought to explore this second question: *What are the individual and organizational implications of engaging in personal activities on the job?* Specifically, we explore such outcomes as job performance, job efficiency, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, intent to stay, procrastination, and cost to business.

Method

This study used a quantitative approach by surveying individuals who work in office settings with fixed work hours (for example, a nine-to-five job) regarding their engagement in nonwork-related presenteeism.

Sampling and Data Collection. The nature of the research demanded that we gather data from individuals who were supposed to be at work during the

workday performing work-related tasks. Therefore, we chose to apply purposive (Stone, 1978) and snowball (that is, referral; Welch, 1975) approaches to sampling. These methods allowed us to (1) select individuals who work in office settings and are expected to be doing work during work hours and (2) avoid gathering data from individuals who have more autonomy in their workday or are not expected to be at work at certain times engaging in work activities to the exclusion of personal activities. Telecommuters and salespeople fit this latter category. Purposive sampling also allowed us to focus on individuals who have access to media (phone, e-mail, Internet) often used to engage in personal business on the job; factory floor workers, for example, do not have such access. In addition, we asked potential participants to identify others who also work in office settings who may be willing to complete the survey and refer them to the same Web survey. We chose to avoid sampling from one or two company-specific populations to avoid biased data, such as underreporting of personal business on the job, and ethical concerns, such as employers becoming aware of their employees' extracurricular activities and punishing them for it.

An online survey format was chosen for data collection for several reasons. Aside from its ease of use, cost savings, and convenience in generating electronic data (Best, Krueger, Hubbard, & Smith, 2001; Kaplowitz, Hadlock, & Levine, 2004; Roster, Rogers, Albaum, & Klein, 2004), research has shown that Web surveys have several other benefits. They have resulted in larger response rates than mailed or traditional paper-and pencil surveys (Hill, Ferris, & Mårtinson, 2003; McCabe, 2004), provided more reliable data than telephone surveys (Roster et al., 2004), and resulted in minimal differences between the data and results gathered using Web surveys and those gathered through mail (Ballard & Prine, 2002; McCabe, 2004) or telephone (Best et al., 2001) surveys. Furthermore, little sociodemographic difference has been found between individuals completing mailed surveys versus Web surveys (Ballard & Prine, 2002). Finally, researchers have suggested that they are quite useful for collecting data pertaining to sensitive issues, such as this study's emphasis on using work time for personal activities. For example, McCabe (2004) found few differences in participants' reports of illicit drug use between a mailed survey versus a Web survey format, and Knapp and Kirk (2003) found no differences among mail, telephone, or Web surveys for collecting data on honesty, prejudice, illegal behavior, alcohol and substance use, violence, and sexual behavior. This may be due to a high degree of confidence in the anonymity and confidentiality of Internet surveys (Hill et al., 2003).

Participants. Prospective participants who work in office-type settings were contacted by e-mail with a brief explanation of the study one week before the Web survey was distributed. One week later, an e-mail with a link to the survey was distributed to these same individuals. This e-mail explained the research in more detail, addressed issues of informed consent, and asked participants to forward the e-mail and Web survey to other prospective participants.

The respondents were 148 individuals who completed the Web survey. Twenty-three of these respondents were identified as not meeting the sampling criterion: working in an office in a nine-to-five job. The resulting sample of 115 individuals was 36.5 percent male and 63.5 percent female. The mean age range was forty to forty-four years, with 39 percent of respondents between thirty and thirty-four years old. Respondents were spread across sixteen states in the United States and worked in a variety of companies: 12 percent of respondents worked in small companies with fewer than twenty-five employees, and 13 percent worked in large companies with more than five thousand employees. Twenty-eight percent of respondents were single, 54 percent married, 11 percent divorced or widowed, and 5 percent in domestic partnerships.

Measures

The Web survey began by offering additional information regarding informed consent and a clear explanation of the study's purpose: to examine the extent to which people engage in personal activities during the workday and on work time (not during lunch hours or break time). It defined these personal activities as falling into two categories: (1) home-related activities that pertain to taking care of matters having to do with one's family, children, spouse, parents, siblings, roommates, housekeeping, errands, or home or apartment maintenance while at work, and (2) leisure-related activities that pertain to taking care of matters having to do with one's social life, recreation, relaxation, amusement, entertainment, personal interests, hobbies, sports, arts, or friendships while at work. The survey examined these issues along with work-related outcomes such as job performance, job efficiency, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, intent to stay, and procrastination. We relied on existing multi-item measures as well as several measures written specifically for this study to assess these outcomes.

Extent of Nonwork-Related Presenteeism. To estimate the extent of nonwork-related presenteeism, we gathered data on frequency and duration of home-related and leisure-related activities (see Table 1 for a complete listing of activities). The activities were derived from D'Abate's qualitative research (2002, 2005) and were presented to participants in survey form asking them to report the number of times they had engaged in each personal activity in the past workweek on work time (that is, the frequency). Next, participants were asked to report the approximate number of minutes it takes to do this activity each time they do it at work (the duration). We used this information to compute the extent of personal business on the job by multiplying frequency times duration for each activity, providing an estimate of total weekly time spent for each activity. A summation of time spent on all activities provided an estimate of the total weekly time spent on all forms of nonwork-related presenteeism.

Work Outcomes. The illness-related literature suggests that there are many individual- and organizational-level outcomes of presenteeism. Accordingly, this

Table 1. Frequency of Home-Related and Leisure-Related Personal Behaviors Performed on the Job

	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Home-related activities				
1. Send or receive e-mail messages about home-related issues	0	51	6.71	8.30
2. Use the phone for home-related calls	0	31	5.82	4.52
3. Have discussions with coworkers, clients, or work acquaintances about home-related issues	0	22	5.00	3.69
4. Use the Internet for home-related issues	0	41	3.91	5.18
5. Organize or plan for personal time	0	11	2.35	2.09
6. Pay personal bills	0	11	1.94	1.44
7. Make personal appointments (for example, with a doctor)	0	6	1.92	0.97
8. Shop from work by catalogue, phone, or Internet for home-related items	0	11	1.63	1.31
9. Visits at work from family for home-related issues	0	6	1.13	0.62
Leisure-related activities				
1. Send or receive e-mail messages about leisure-related issues	0	102	10.23	13.65
2. Use the Internet for leisure-related issues	0	71	7.53	11.49
3. Have discussions with coworkers, clients, or work acquaintances about leisure-related issues	0	50	5.60	5.19
4. Use the phone for leisure-related calls	0	41	4.43	4.75
5. Daydream	0	21	2.96	3.11
6. Shop from work by catalogue, phone, or Internet for leisure-related items	0	8	1.65	1.21
7. Leisure reading (books, magazines)	0	11	1.64	2.01
8. Play computer games	0	11	1.30	1.29
9. Participate in betting pools	0	6	1.27	0.96
10. Visits at work from family, friends, or others for leisure-related issues	0	6	1.21	0.83
11. Watch TV	0	8	1.20	1.22
12. View pornography on the Internet	0	6	1.05	0.56

Notes: $N = 115$. Frequency indicates average number of times respondents reported engaging in the activity in the past workweek on worktime. Activities reported on a weekly basis. Items are presented in order of descending means.

study focused on seven key outcome variables of nonwork-related presenteeism: job performance, job efficiency, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, intent to stay, procrastination, and cost to business.

Job Performance. Job performance was measured using a three-item, five-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree). Items included, "Handling personal business at work decreases my job performance" and "In general, handling personal business at work decreases job performance" and resulted in a coefficient alpha estimate of reliability of .85.

Job Efficiency. Job efficiency was measured using a three-item, five-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree). Items included, "In general, handling personal business at work decreases how efficient a person is on the job" and "Handling personal business at work decreases how efficient I am on the job" and resulted in a coefficient alpha estimate of reliability of .85.

Job Satisfaction. Job satisfaction was measured using items from Hackman and Oldham's (1975) five-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree). Items included, "I am generally satisfied with the kind of work I do in my job" and "Most people on this job are very satisfied with the job" and resulted in a coefficient alpha estimate of reliability of .80.

Organizational Commitment. Organizational commitment was measured using Porter and Smith's (1970) fifteen-item, five-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree). Items included, "For me, this is the best of all possible organizations for which to work" and "I would accept almost any type of job assignment in order to keep working for this organization" and resulted in a coefficient alpha estimate of reliability of .86.

Intent to Stay. Intent to stay in the organization was measured using a five-item, five-point Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree; 5 = strongly agree). Items included, "I intend to stay with this organization" and the reverse-coded, "I am always looking for different jobs outside this organization" and resulted in a coefficient alpha estimate of reliability of .90.

Procrastination. Tuckman's sixteen-item measure (1991) of a participant's inclination to procrastinate was used. Items included, "I promise myself I'll do something and then drag my feet" and "I needlessly delay finishing jobs, even when they're important." Since Tuckman used a four-point Likert-type scale and we inserted these items in a section with other items based on a five-point Likert-type scale, we used a five-point scale to measure procrastination. Adjusting these response alternatives appears not to have affected the reliability of the survey, with the current data showing a coefficient alpha estimate of reliability of .91 while Tuckman's findings (1991) resulted in a .86 level.

Cost to the Business. Although some question the best way to measure presenteeism-related losses in productivity (Hemp, 2004), there are examples of calculating productivity losses of illness-related presenteeism as employee salary and dollars lost to sickness-related reductions in productivity (Hemp, 2004) or

as costs per employee per year assuming an average annual salary and benefit figure (for example, \$44,448; Goetzel et al., 2004). Given this precedent, we measured the cost of nonwork-related presenteeism as the extent of engagement in personal business on the job multiplied by the respondent's salary. After asking participants to indicate a salary range (for example, \$50,000–52,499), we used the lower number (\$50,000 in this example) in our calculations to be conservative.

Results

The purpose of this research was to explore two questions: (1) what types of home- and leisure-activities employees are engaging in during work hours and to what extent employees are engaging in these behaviors, and (2) what are the individual and organizational implications of engaging in personal activities on the job. Following, we explain the results for these questions in detail.

Extent of Nonwork-Related Presenteeism. Tables 1 through 3 provide information on the frequency, duration, and extent of engagement in personal activities on the job and divide these into categories of home-related activities and leisure-related activities.

Sending and receiving e-mail messages and using the phone for home-related calls were the two most frequently reported home-related activities engaged in on the job. As shown in Table 1, individuals reported sending and receiving e-mail messages an average of 6.71 times per week and using the telephone for home-related calls an average of 5.82 times per week.

Sending or receiving e-mail messages and accessing the Internet were the two most frequently reported leisure-related activities engaged in on the job. As shown in Table 1, individuals reported sending or receiving e-mail messages an average of 10.23 times per week and accessing the Internet an average of 7.53 times per week.

Having discussions with coworkers, clients, or work acquaintances took the most time in both home-related and leisure-related findings. As shown in Table 2, individuals reported having discussions an average of 7.43 minutes each time they discussed home-related issues at work and 7.6 minutes each time they discussed leisure-related issues at work.

The extent of home- and leisure-related activities performed on the job was determined by multiplying the frequency of each activity by the duration of that activity. Interestingly, individuals seemed to engage in leisure-related activities slightly more than home-related activities on the job. For instance, as shown in Table 3, individuals reported using the Internet for leisure an average of 55.76 minutes per week and an average of 25.73 minutes per week for home purposes.

Individual and Organizational Implications. Table 4 presents the correlations between the extent to which individuals engage in personal activities on the job and important individual and organizational outcomes. We find it

Table 2. Duration of Home-Related and Leisure-Related Personal Behaviors Performed on the Job

	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Home-related activities				
1. Have discussions with coworkers, clients, or work acquaintances about home-related issues	0	31	7.43	6.20
2. Use the phone for home-related calls	0	36	5.36	4.22
3. Use the Internet for home-related issues	0	21	5.23	4.83
4. Organize and plan for personal time	0	21	3.60	3.79
5. Make personal appointments (for example, a doctor)	0	31	3.50	4.29
6. Send or receive e-mail messages about home-related issues	0	16	3.37	2.92
7. Shop from work by catalogue, phone, or Internet for home-related items	0	21	3.33	4.38
8. Pay personal bills	0	16	3.20	3.59
9. Visits at work from family for home-related issues	0	16	1.53	3.03
Leisure-related activities				
1. Have discussions with coworkers, clients, or work acquaintances about leisure-related issues	0	31	7.60	5.86
2. Use the phone for leisure-related calls	0	26	6.19	4.39
3. Use the Internet for leisure-related issues	0	24	5.60	4.87
4. Send or receive e-mail messages about leisure-related issues	0	31	4.34	4.63
5. Shop from work by catalogue, phone, or Internet for leisure-related items	0	16	3.36	4.26
6. Daydream	0	16	3.02	3.25
7. Leisure reading (books, magazines)	0	21	2.39	4.28
8. Visits at work from family, friends, or others for leisure-related issues	0	32	1.54	3.58
9. Participate in betting pools	0	11	1.50	2.53
10. Watch TV	0	31	1.37	4.06
11. Play computer games	0	16	1.32	2.32
12. View pornography on the Internet	0	6	0.80	0.77

Notes: $N = 115$. Duration indicates average number of minutes spent engaging in the activity each time. Activities reported in minutes on a weekly basis. Items are presented in order of descending means.

Table 3. Extent of Home-Related and Leisure-Related Personal Behaviors Performed on the Job

	<i>Minimum</i>	<i>Maximum</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Home-related activities				
1. Have discussions with coworkers, clients, or work acquaintances about home-related issues	0	231	40.26	40.10
2. Use the phone for home-related calls	0	144	30.86	26.75
3. Send or receive e-mail messages about home-related issues	0	176	25.86	33.75
4. Use the Internet for home-related issues	0	246	25.73	37.43
5. Organize and plan for personal time	0	121	12.05	17.84
6. Pay personal bills	0	176	9.21	18.40
7. Shop from work by catalogue, phone, or Internet for home-related items	0	66	8.44	13.53
8. Make personal appointments (for example, a doctor)	0	66	8.00	10.54
9. Visits at work from family for home-related issues	0	32	2.65	6.59
Leisure-related activities				
1. Use the Internet for leisure-related issues	0	781	55.76	122.68
2. Send or receive e-mail messages about leisure-related issues	0	961	47.43	100.70
3. Have discussions with coworkers, clients, or work acquaintances about leisure-related issues	0	231	42.80	40.99
4. Use the phone for leisure-related calls	0	168	30.04	32.22
5. Daydream	0	99	13.53	20.06
6. Leisure reading (books, magazines)	0	168	9.00	25.15
7. Shop from work by catalogue, phone, or Internet for leisure-related items	0	66	8.30	12.71
8. Watch TV	0	248	5.93	32.68
9. Play computer games	0	176	4.32	18.19
10. Visits at work from family, friends, or others for leisure-related issues	0	192	4.03	18.78
11. Participate in betting pools	0	66	3.53	9.61
12. View pornography on the Internet	0	36	1.14	3.44

Notes: $N = 115$. Extent was determined by multiplying frequency by duration in minutes for a total weekly time spent (in minutes). Items are presented in order of descending means.

Table 4. Relationship Between Extent of Personal Activities on the Job and Individual and Organizational Implications

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Extent of Personal Work	1.0						
2. Job Performance	0.099	1.0					
3. Job Efficiency	0.077	.911**	1.0				
4. Job Satisfaction	-0.033	-0.125	-0.118	1.0			
5. Organizational Commitment	-0.054	-0.131	-0.140	.812**	1.0		
6. Intent to Stay	-0.132	-0.051	-0.023	.721**	.689**	1.0	
7. Procrastination	.217**	0.141	.236**	-.209*	-.311**	-0.101	1.0

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed).

*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (two-tailed).

interesting that engaging in personal business was not related to self-reported measures of job performance, job efficiency, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, or intentions to stay. The only variable related to engagement in personal business on the job was procrastination ($r = .217, p < .01$). Not surprisingly, individuals who engage in personal activities on the job tended to procrastinate more.

Finally, we explored the cost to organizations of individuals' engaging in personal activities on the job. Specifically, for each individual, we multiplied the extent to which he or she engaged in these behaviors by reported salary to find a yearly cost. Calculating the mean across participants suggested that, on average, our sample's engagement in personal activities on the job costs organizations \$8,875 per person per year ($SD = \$7,059$). It is important to note, however, that we chose to use the lower number indicated in each individual's salary range as his or her annual salary. Therefore, the average of \$8,875 per person per year due to nonwork-related presenteeism is a conservative estimate of cost to business.

Discussion

The goal of this research was to provide initial insight into two questions. First, we wanted to explore the types of personal activities employees engage in at work and the extent to which they were engaging in personal business on the job. Findings suggested that individuals are engaging in personal business during work hours by paying personal bills, making personal appointments, shopping by phone, and playing computer games. On average, they spend 6.48 hours per week on nonwork-related items in a standard workweek (the sum of mean extent of all activities engaged in on work time; see Table 3).

This equates to approximately one hour and twenty minutes in a typical workday spent on nonwork-related activities. In the end, this is costing organizations in our sample an average of \$8,875 per year per employee in lost productivity. These findings suggest that engaging in personal business on the job is widespread and nontrivial in nature. Employees engage in a wide variety of nonwork-related activities, and, when taken together, these activities greatly reduce the amount of time spent focused on the employee's work-related tasks.

Second, we wanted to explore the individual and organizational implications of these behaviors. Individuals who engage in personal business on the job were found to be more likely to procrastinate. However, there was no relationship between engagement in personal business on the job and self-reported levels of performance, efficiency, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, or intentions to stay. For a field such as human resource development that needs to examine key issues such as "striking a balance between work life and personal life," the finding that these activities are not related to performance and other work-related outcomes creates a unique situation for managers (Short, Brandenburg, May, & Bierema, 2002, p. 238): If the behavior does not help or hinder these work-related outcomes, should managers address the behavior or ignore it?

Since there was no evidence that engaging in personal business on the job was related to these outcomes, the behavior may be harmless: surfing the Net and calling friends from work may not make employees worse performers, but it also may not make them better at (or more satisfied with) their jobs. In that case, allowing nonwork-related presenteeism may facilitate the work-life balancing act that Marques (2006) says has become a key role of human resource departments. But since engaging in personal business on the job was related to procrastination, the people who are spending more time on nonwork-related business are already procrastinating their work responsibilities. Considering also that nonwork-related presenteeism was not related to other work-related outcomes such as job satisfaction, performance, efficiency, organizational commitment, or turnover intentions, it is possible that restricting these nonwork-related activities to limit procrastination may not have negative implications for the organization in terms of performance, efficiency, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, or turnover. Managers might be able to limit the behavior as a means of reducing procrastination without repercussion.

Implications for Practice. The illness-related presenteeism literature may help clarify what managers should do given these findings. Hemp (2004) suggested that "the first step, clearly, is making your managers—and yourself—aware of the problem. . . . The next step involves getting to know the particular health issues facing your employees. This might entail a formal study, but to begin with, you could simply look at your workforce with health issues in mind" (p. 55). Employee education is also suggested, for example, teaching "employees how to better manage their illnesses" (Hemp, 2004, p. 55).

Showing employees through employee assistance programs and wellness programs that “your company cares about their well-being” is also helpful (Hemp, 2004, p. 56). The same suggestions may also apply to nonwork-related presenteeism and provide some fruitful suggestions for practice.

For instance, organizations might make managers and employees aware that personal business does have the potential to cross into the workday. Managers should get to know the home- and leisure-related issues (demands, conflicts, interests) of their staff and look at their employees with home- and leisure-related issues in mind; in other words, they should address work-life balance. Employers will be increasingly expected to help their employees with work-life balance issues (Crooker et al., 2002). This has been called a new function of human resources (Marques, 2006) and an action that HRD professionals should take to support work-life integration (Polach, 2003) because effective work-life initiatives begin with understanding worker, manager, and company needs and demands (Wentling & Palma-Rivas, 2000). Fitting those employee needs to the company’s situation and educating employees and managers on how to better manage their work responsibilities, their nonwork interests, and the demands from their personal life are ways to approach work-life balance in a cooperative, instead of competitive, manner. This may also enable managers to demonstrate that they trust their employees and want to encourage their freedom, two important issues for cross-functional HRD departments (Marques, 2006).

Since “men and women do not shed their family roles, relationships, and experiences the moment they don work shirts, hard hats, or business suits” (Crouter, 1984, p. 426), organizations need to develop policies and practices that to some degree acknowledge, accommodate, respect, and support an employee’s life outside the office and allow each one the autonomy to flexibly negotiate the boundaries between life realms (Ashforth et al., 2000; Friedman et al., 2000; Kirchmeyer, 1995; Kirchmeyer & Cohen, 1999). One way to enhance the flexibility between work and nonwork life realm boundaries may be allowing employees to engage in some degree of personal business on the job. While an organization’s culture or climate may distinguish one firm from another in terms of allowing such boundary crossing behaviors to occur (Kossek et al., 1999) and allowing personal business on the job may be a more informal policy than a formalized one (Kossek & Ozeki, 1999), endorsing work-life balance by helping employees meet the responsibilities and demands of work and their personal lives (Hobson et al., 2001; Nord et al., 2002) may prove beneficial.

Implications for Human Resource Development. The key role of HRD is to use training and development, career development, and organizational development to enhance individual and organizational effectiveness (Torraco, 2005). Yet HRD can be examined on multiple levels of analysis. On the individual level, the learning and development that occurs is, in essence, a voluntary activity in which “the individual is the decision maker” (Garavan,

McGuire, & O'Donnell, 2004, p. 427). Driving one's own development and learning means that one can make decisions about what learning takes place or whether it takes place. When HRD e-learning initiatives suffer from low participation and completion rates (Wang & Wang, 2004), there is a need to examine why employees choose not to fully participate and engage in e-learning that can benefit them, the work that they do, their careers, and their organizations. One factor in this decision-making process may be how focused an individual is on the job versus his or her personal life. Accordingly, Wang and Wang (2004) argue that this may predict participation in and completion of e-learning HRD initiatives; furthermore, D'Abate (2005) found that the meaning of work versus other life realms (home, leisure) was a key factor in why individuals chose to participate in personal business on the job. Thus, the significance individuals place on home, work, and leisure is related to their tendency to engage in nonwork-related presenteeism, thereby possibly limiting their tendency to voluntarily engage in e-learning or other voluntary developmental initiatives.

What HRD practitioners may need to do is recognize that getting employees to seek job-related learning and participate in company-sponsored training and development initiatives, though beneficial to the employee's own career development and the firm's organizational development, may not be a simple decision for the employee. The day-to-day pressures of their personal life, the draw of taking care of personal business during work hours, and the interests in leisure activities may force employees to be present at work but absent from HRD. That is, employees may be present at work but engaging in nonwork-related presenteeism. This presents a risk for HRD practitioners: they may not be able to get employees to focus on training and development, improve their knowledge set, enhance their skills for promotional purposes, and be more productive in the interest of the firm's competitive position.

Certainly the connection between work-life issues and HRD is not a new one. In fact, the relationship between work and nonwork concerns "needs to be on every organization's agenda, particularly when focusing on performance and career development" (McDonald & Hite, 2005, p. 426). Furthermore, the issue goes beyond clear solutions and interventions. HRD practitioners might limit nonwork-related presenteeism because it may be impeding the willingness of individual employees to focus on their own development. But Polach (2003) would argue that HRD professionals should be sensitive to the work, home, and leisure demands of their employees and assist in the transition of a workplace from one that has policies for work-life balance to one that truly integrates work-life interests. Certainly the HRD implications of nonwork-related presenteeism are complex.

Study Limitations. One potential limitation of this study is its reliance on self-reported data. However, self-reports are the convention in the body of research on presenteeism. With the exception of Bank One's Worker Productivity Index (Goetzl et al., 2004), the presenteeism literature has relied

mainly on self-reported data regarding illness and productivity. Admittedly, self-reported behaviors are often criticized for underestimating negative behavior and overestimating positive behavior; however, it is promising that one key issue being addressed in the literature on presenteeism is the validity of the self-reported data used for presenteeism studies. For example, Hemp (2004) describes numerous articles and studies that found strong correlations between self-reported data and objective measures, company-reported data, supervisor ratings, and past productivity rates. In addition, there is little alternative when a research question requires asking individuals what they do other than work during the workday. Since much of the personal business that individuals may attend to on work time is overlooked or missed by managers and coworkers, only the individual can provide reports of his or her own behavior.

Another potential limitation of this study is the use of a Web survey for data collection, which has the potential to result in biased samples. As Roster et al. (2004) report, one key concern in using Web surveys for data collection is that they are not representative of general populations and are limited to finite populations, such as Internet users, because not everyone has access to the Internet (Best et al., 2001). Similar concerns have been raised regarding purposive samples (Stone, 1978). However, in this study, we were interested in a finite sample of office workers. Therefore, this limitation was less of a concern because we were particularly interested in individuals who have access to the Internet and e-mail and use them for performing personal business on the job. Of course, the generalizability of our findings is restricted to those who work in office jobs and have access to this technology.

Future Research. As is the case with all other research, the answers to our questions bring additional questions. First and foremost, we wonder why people engage in nonwork behavior on the job. What might be the underlying rationale for spending one hour and twenty minutes in an eight-hour workday engaged in nonwork activities? Qualitative research suggests that nonwork-related presenteeism may be due to convenience, time constraints, timing, or boredom (D'Abate, 2005); however, these rationales have yet to be tested empirically. Furthermore, if individuals are engaging in these activities on work time because of boredom, then nonwork-related presenteeism is clearly an HRD issue. This finding would suggest that HRD practitioners could be doing more to offer their employees enticing opportunities for development, such as e-learning initiatives.

Furthermore, future research should explore the employer's perspective on how organizations should react to this productivity loss. Should it become an accepted cost of doing business? And is engaging in nonwork-related presenteeism a necessary evil for achieving work-life balance? What is HRD's role in helping employees integrate work and personal life (Polach, 2003)? Future research might address manager interpretations of this behavior and assess whether employees perceive more balance between their work and personal obligations when they may engage in nonwork-related presenteeism.

In addition, it is possible that the ethics of this behavior should be considered; in other words, does using work time for personal business constitute stealing company time? If managers perceive nonwork-related presenteeism to be a problem and attempt to eliminate these activities, the repercussions or employee responses that might result from managerial attempts to rein in behavior should also be examined. Finally, since organizations need to manage their human capital to compete, this becomes in many ways an issue of how well that human capital is used.

With employees engaging in a variety of nonwork-related activities on the job, the potential cost to organizations of this form of presenteeism is substantial. Future research should continue to explore the types of behaviors employees engage in on the job, the rationale for these behaviors, and the individual and organizational outcomes of engaging in personal business on the job.

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