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Does Fear of Covid-19 Effect Presenteeism? A Research in the Context of Perception of Job Insecurity

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Abstract

There has caused a significant increase in the perception of job insecurity in the labor market, especially due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Increasing precarization, self-employment or working from home practices has become the new normal with the catalyst effect of the pandemic. In this period, when employers are experiencing financial difficulties, especially under pandemic conditions, the behavior of presenteeism (so-called presence at work) has become widespread in workplaces due to the increased possibility of economic and employment losses for employees. This research aims to test the relationship between participants' fears of COVID-19 and presenteeism behavior and the mediating role of job insecurity in this assumed relationship. For this purpose, the questionnaire containing the research scales and research questions prepared by the authors using the quantitative research method was delivered electronically to the participants working in the private sector. Research analyzes were carried out with 471 data collected using the convenience sampling method. According to the research findings, the fear of COVID-19 directly and indirectly affects the behavior of presenteeism. Despite the predictive relationships between the variables, it was seen that qualitative job insecurity did not have any statistical interaction with COVID-19 and presenteeism behavior.

Keywords: *Perception of Job Insecurity, Presenteeism, Fear of COVID-19*

Covid-19 Korkusu Presenteizmi Etkiler mi? İş Güvencesizliği Algısı Bağlamında Bir Araştırma

Öz

COVID-19 pandemisi, iş gücü piyasasında süregelen iş güvencesizliği algısını perçinlemiştir. Son dönemlerde artan prekarizasyon, serbest çalışma veya evden çalışma uygulamaları pandeminin katalizör etkisiyle yeni normal olmuştur. İşverenlerin özellikle pandemi şartlarında finansal zorluk yaşadığı bu dönemde, çalışanların ekonomik ve istihdam kayıpları yaşama ihtimalinin artması nedeniyle işyerlerinde presenteizm (işte sözde var olma) davranışı yaygınlaşmıştır. Bu kapsamda araştırma, katılımcıların COVID-19 korkuları ile presenteizm davranışı arasındaki ilişkiyi ve varsayılan bu ilişkide iş güvencesizliğinin aracılık rolünü sınamayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu amaç doğrultusunda nicel araştırma yöntemi kullanılarak araştırma ölçekleri ve yazarların hazırladığı araştırma sorularını içeren anket, katılımcılara elektronik ortamda ulaştırılmıştır. Araştırma analizleri, kolayda örneklem yöntemi kullanılarak toplanan 471 veri ile gerçekleştirilmiştir. Araştırma bulgularına göre COVID-19 korkusu presenteizm davranışını doğrudan ve dolaylı olarak etkilemektedir. Değişkenler arasındaki yordayıcı ilişkilere rağmen nitel iş güvencesizliğinin COVID-19 ve presentezim davranışı ile istatistiksel açıdan herhangi bir etkileşim içerisinde olmadığı görülmüştür.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *İş güvencesizlği algısı, Presenteizm, COVID-19 korkusu*

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1. Introduction

Growing evidence has reported that perceived job insecurity may negatively impact employees' health (Ferrie et al., 2005; Cottini & Ghinetti, 2017; Kim & Kim, 2017). When examined from a theoretical point of view, it is seen that the concept of job insecurity is handled in two dimensions: quantitative and qualitative. Quantitative job insecurity relates to an employee's general concern about future employment (Vander Elst et al., 2014). Qualitative job insecurity is defined as the threat/perception of losing some important variables that affect continuity in the workplace, such as the deterioration of working and financial conditions and the decreasing opportunities in terms of career (Witte, 1999). In recent years, the concept of presenteeism has emerged as an essential organizational phenomenon. Presenteeism, emphasized by individual and organizational effects, has become a crucial concept due to increased employees and decreased organizational productivity. Presenteeism is defined as employees being physically there but working less than full productivity owing to disease or other health conditions (Turpin et al., 2004). With accumulated evidence that not being able to exist at work today can pose more significant risks than absenteeism, few organizations measure the loss of productivity associated with people who are at workplace but underperform owing to disease (Garrow, 2016). Hansen and Andersen (2008) found that presenteeism reduced productivity from job insecurity by 16%. The COVID-19 pandemic has had profound psychological effects on all individuals worldwide. In addition to the deep traumas caused by losses, fear is also a psychological aspect of the COVID-19 pandemic that has had a negative impact on people (Pakpour & Griffiths, 2020). Gündoğan (2021) found that psychological resilience would negatively indicate COVID-19 fear. Fear of Covid-19 can increase the intention to leave while reducing job satisfaction. However, this situation turns into a positive trend through social and organizational support(Labrague & de Los Santos, 2020).

Similarly, doctors with severe COVID-19 fears faced a number of avoidance movements and panic concerns, significantly due to both the transmission of the disease and the perception of losing their job (Malik et al., 2021). Frone (2018) states that even employees who remain in employment during periods of economic downturn may experience job insecurity because of low wages and irregular working hours, poor physical and mental health, long-term leave and difficult conditions. Khan and his colleagues (2021) found that when

employees' fear of COVID-19 is high, it will significantly impact job insecurity perceived to fear of economic crisis (Khan et al., 2021). Similarly, among the 797 people who resided in the U.S. and became unemployed between April 6-12, 2020, it is significantly associated with job insecurity and economic fears owing to the COVID-19 pandemic (Wilson et al., 2020). Based on the relevant literature, this research investigates the relationship and interaction of job insecurity and COVID-19 fear with presenteeism behavior in qualitative and quantitative.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Presenteeism

The concept of presenteeism is derived from employees being at work but not fully productive. Presenteeism is also "the antithesis of absenteeism" (Smith, 1970; Prater and Smith, 2011). There are many definitions of presenteeism made by different people.

The concept of presenteeism, which is defined as the (non-existence) state, is compared with the concept of absenteeism, which is generally expressed as not being at work in terms of the negativities it creates in the organization. Presenteeism, a groundbreaking concept in the literature on organizational behavior, refers to the result of productivity losses and lack of total capacity when employees underperform for physical and psychological reasons when they come to work (Burton et al., 1999; Burton et al., 2004; Sanderson et al., 2007; Ferreira & Martinez, 2012). Medstat and Cornell University's Health and Productivity Research Institute estimate that the hidden cost of so-called work presence for businesses as lost productivity is approximately U.S. $255 per employee per year (Goetzel et al., 2004).

Many different qualitative and quantitative studies identify the factors that "drive" presenteeism. The differences in these studies are that they set out from the hypothesis that certain elements will be necessary. Garrow (2016), in his research, dealt with two groups organizational factors (culture, politics, job design) and individual factors (influencing) 'being at work' decisions. Hansen and Andersen (2008) stated that the influence of organizational factors has slightly more explanatory power than individual factors.

Baker-McClearn and his colleagues (2010) state that the threat posed by the reinstatement of sick pay in terms of organizational factors, the triggering of policies implying disciplinary punishment, and the threat in reinstatement interviews, however supportive it may not be, it is actually seen as punitive, fuels Presenteeism. McKevitt and his colleagues (1997) also state that absenteeism of employees increases in terms of individual factors when it is seen. They think that it will eventually affect their employment. Even if they are sick or likely

to transmit, there is no case of not coming to work due to some individual factors (McKevitt et al., 1997).

Pelletier et al. (2004) state that there is a direct connection among the number of risk factors owned by a person and the risks they may face in the workplace. Whether in social life or in the organizational environment, the greater the risk factor of an individual, the less productive he is, especially in the organizational context.At the same time, presenteeism is considered a risky behavior for employees themselves. While it can effectively solve minor diseases, delaying sick leave may lead to more severe conditions. The research conducted by Aronsson and his colleagues (2000) on 3801 Swedish workers found that employees experience musculoskeletal pain, fatigue, and depression because they went to work two or more times the previous year, even though they thought they should take sick leave (Aronsson et al., 2000).

Roe (2003) states that presenteeism can negatively affect organizations in two different ways. First, it is likely that those who come to the organization in a sick state will only spend more time or effort and achieve a similar degree of efficiency as similar colleagues who are not sick, but there will be decreases in their individual performance due to this efficiency effort. Another, mass performance declines can also occur because non-sick employees can be infected from sick colleagues as they will be dealing with helping their sick colleagues. Niven and Ciborowska (2015) consider the tendency of presenteeism that emerges in organizations as a disturbing situation since people consider it more challenging to get rid of the disease and can develop complications or pass their diseases on to others (Niven &Ciborowska, 2015). On the other hand, it has been determined that the dismissal of employees who were physically or psychologically disturbed in the workplace increases their productivity during their days of existence at work (Sanderson et al., 2007).

From an employee's point of view, presenteeism, productivity, quality of work environment, and the deterioration of medical conditions are important elements to give rise to impressions of ineffectiveness in that organization (John, 2019). The presenteeism level is also higher when there is no possibility to replace it when the degree of interchangeability is low, and the necessary work accumulates until the patient returns (Aronsson, 2000).

However, presenteeism is also associated with business pressure and perception of commitment to their work. In other words, if absence due to illness is a less appropriate

option, employees will apply to work, preferring to be there rather than not come to work (Miraglia &Johns, 2016).

Presenteeism is the risk of professional transmission created by the majority of employees who are infected with acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus, which is rapidly contagious today, by continuing to work, although some of them are symptomatic.Existing in this type of work can be a common problem for the labor sector.

Since diseases circulate in workplaces and educational environments, the inability to exist at work can even contribute to epidemics (Webster et al., 2019).

The epidemic can exacerbate the presenteeism in the workplace, as it can lead to situations of fear and panic with the control measures implemented. In cases of outbreaks of respiratory contagiousillness such as COVID 19 and MERS, it is inevitable that there are reports among nurses that their continuity in the organization is an important factor in making decisions. For example, the detection that the Ebola outbreak in West Africa has give rise tonegative effects such as fear, terror between nurses on the front lines is likely to cause employees to think about their own safety first according to their working life (Kollie et al., 2017).

In order to understand the impact on those who are engaged in medical intervention as part of the fight against COVID-19 and those who work under similar challenging conditions, and to assess the impact of the personnel working in the operations unit on mental health when they do not have sufficient safety equipment to protect themselves; Healthcare workers have been found to be at risk of presenteeism related to infectious diseases with severe acute respiratory infection such as COVID 19 (Simms et al., 2020). Similarly, Oh and colleagues (2017) found that during the MERS outbreak in South Korea, nurses' stress was strongly associated with low work intentions within the organization.

The general public strongly accepts problems with presenteeism: a representative survey by Canada Life Group found that 82% of employees in the United Kingdom reported getting sick due to a colleague who works in the same organization who encountered the disease.

In his research, Grigore (2020) observed that 71% of the participants experienced the stress of being infected at work and the fear of infecting their families (63%) due to the workplace. In the current state of research, unemployment is inevitable because the organization does not provide the necessary protective, preventive and anti-transmission

equipment for its employees, especially those who are in the focus of production, and the senior management does not control this situation as much as it should.

Although the respiratory viral disease is quite common in winter, information about the inability of employees to come to work and not be available at work in a viral disease (COVID-19), which is characterized as a global epidemic and has a high infectious feature, remains limited.

The scarcity of studies in this area necessitated research on the situation ofprivate sector employees' in the field;From this point, it ishypothesized as:

H_1: Fear of COVID-19 has a statistically positive effect on presenteeism.

2.2. Workplace Insecurity Perception

Over the past decade, organizations have been implementing strategies such as downsizing, restructuring, and merging to survive in an increasingly competitive environment. Ashford and his colleagues (1989) found that the greater the number of expected organizational changes to a competitive environment in an organization, the greater the perceived job insecurity. This perceived job insecurity would reduce trust and organizational commitment to the organization to the extent that it would. This situation may cause the employee to perform more to maintain their current job and cause the employee to seek different jobs due to the possibility of losing their job (Ashford et al., 1989; Lim, 1996).

When we look at the descriptions of job insecurity in the literature; The employee feels powerless to achieve desired continuity in a work environment (Greenhalgh and Rosenblatt, 1984) and "a latent threat perception to continuity in their existing job" (Heaney et al., 1994). Job insecurity is most common among employees who do not have permanent employment contracts (Kinnunen &Nätti, 1994; Hesselink & van Vuuren, 1999). Therewithal, job insecurity is higher in men than in women (Janssens et al., 2016; Kim et al., 2020; Cheng et al., 2005).

When the variables in which job insecurity is most frequently investigated are examined, it is seen that psychological well-being levels decrease in all kinds of indicators and that work stress is one of them (Klandermans et al., 2010). Likewise, studies show that job insecurity negatively affects various organizational situations and psychological moods (Roskies & Louis-Guerin, 1990; Hellgren et al., 1999; Dekker & Schaufeli, 1995; Sverke et al., 2004).

The problem of not being present at work is one of the main consequences of job insecurity.Job factors such as job insecurity, downsizing, or staff shortages should be more associated with the issue of presence at work (Caverley et al., 2007). The intercourse among perceived job insecurity and the problem of existence at work has been found in many studies in the literature that are statistically significant (Charkhabi, 2018; Mokhtar et al., 2019; Sharkawi et al., 2020; Schmidt & Pförtner, 2020; Mohtar et al., 2020). Similarly, Janssens and his colleagues (2016) found that workers who perceived job insecurity had a significantly higher risk of being in work than those who did not perceive job insecurity.

In their study of 19,720 full-time wage workers in South Korea, Kim et al. (2020) found that job insecurity is related with the inability to exist in the workplace.Similarly, Etyemez and Aslan (2018) found that job insecurity positively affects presenteeism (the problem of not being presenteeism) due to its research on people working in both 4 and 5 star hotels and boutique hotels in Nevsehir province.The results show that employees with job insecurity are more inclined to workplacein spite of feeling bad about securing their jobs. Therefore, job insecurity can be implied as pressure to continue work, even when it is not good. From this point, it is hypothesized as:

H_2: Job insecurity has a statistically positive effect on presenteeism.

The COVID-19 pandemic has a negative effect on individuals in economic and social terms, besides the loss of many various resources that organizations have.Therefore, the financial difficulties experienced by employers during the pandemic increase the likelihood that employees will face job insecurity (Meyer et al., 2021). Hansen and Andersen (2008) point out that job insecurity maycause an increased frequency of a behavior by employees due to fear of losing their jobs. From this point, it is hypothesized as:

H_3: Fear of COVID-19 has a statistically positive effect on job insecurity.

In a study on the impact of COVID-19 on working in a workplace, it was found that 21.1% of employees felt fear of losing their job and 51.9% thought that it would negatively affect their ability to find new jobs when faced with the possibility of losing their job (Baert et al., 2020).Employees who are fearing or thinking about losing their job are likely to face many more negative outcomes, such as depression, anxiety, and emotional exhaustion (Kessler et al., 1988: 73), Piccoli and De Witte (2015) state that there is a positive impact on the relation among employees' feeling of job insecurity and emotional exhaustion.

Since employees who contract COVID-19 think that they will face fear of facing many negative outcomes, such as job loss, this can be considered as COVID-19 fear, potentially causing economic uncertainty and job loss in employees. In such negative situations, the perceptions of job insecurity in employees will intensify even more (Chen & Eyoun, 2021).

In addition, since especially private sector employees are likely to leave their jobs and experience job losses, it is evaluated that the perception of fear of COVID-19 will trigger the perception of job insecurity as it will pose a potential threat to both financial and working life continuity.In such a case, employees may need to make more efforts to maintain their existing status in the organization and even to avoid loss of position. These efforts of employees can cause them to experience negative emotions, both psychologically and behaviorally, and further trigger their absence from being present at work. Given the relationship between COVID-19 fear and presenteeism, it is likely to suppose that fear of COVID-19 has an indirect impact on the presenteeism of private sector employees, who are particularly likely to experience employment losses through job insecurity.Thus, the mediating role of the perception of job insecurity in the impact of Covid 19 fear on presenteeism is assumed as follows:

H_4: Job insecurity plays mediating role in the effect of fear of COVID-19 on presenteeism.

3. Method

In this section, we will talk about the sample, the universe, the sample, the data collection tools, and the analysis and findings used to test the proposed theoretical model shown in Figure 1.

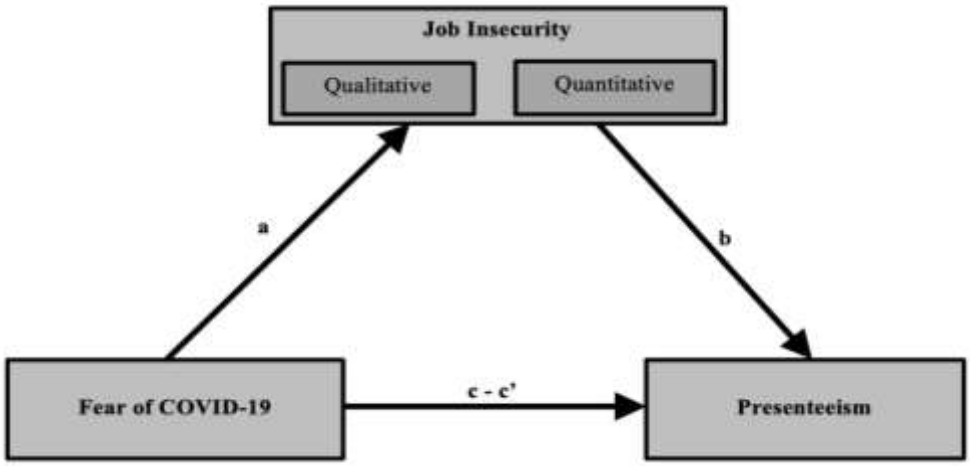
3.1.Ethical Approval

Ethical approval of the research was obtained with the decision of Süleyman Demirel University Social and Human Sciences Research and Publication Ethics Committee (14.10.2021-112/3).

3.2. Purpose and Model of the Study

In the light of the information obtained from the literature reviews, this study aims to measure the relation among the fear of COVID-19 and presenteeism and determine the mediating role of job insecurity in this assumed relationship. The research model established in this context is presented below.

Figure 1. Research Model



As seen in Figure 1, job insecurity in the research model established on the mediating effect has been confirmed by its two-factor structure as qualitative and quantitative job insecurity and the major scale. According to the model, fear of COVID-19 predicts the phenomenon of presenteeism, which is the expression of inefficiency. At the same time, job insecurity has mediating effect in this assumed relation among the two variants. In other words, the total impact expressed by the coefficient c between the fear of COVID-19 and presenteeism will turn into an indirect effect, which occurs as a partial or complete intermediary through a.b, with the inclusion of job insecurity in the model. The coefficient c' is the expression of the direct effect claimed to exist in the mediating model.

Structural equation modeling, including measurement errors, was used instead of Baron and Kenny's (1986) four-stage regression model, expressed as the traditional approach for mediating tests. In Baron and Kenny's method, whether the indirect effect is statistically significant is determined by the Sobel test (Sobel, 1982), which is claimed to be a strict and low-reliability test (MacKinnon et al., 2004). In addition, in this method, it is possible to reject each hypothesis regarding a, b, and c paths when they are true (α: Type I error) or to be accepted when they are wrong (β: Type II error) (Hayes, 2018). One of the essential advantages of the structural equation model, which is preferred today over the traditional method, is the bootstrap confidence interval instead of the Sobel test. The bootstrap technique (Preacher and Hayes, 2008a, 2008b; Hayes, 2018), in which stronger and more valid results are produced than the Sobel test, is based on the creation of a new set of observations, different from each other, as a consequence of repeating the observations in the original data

set (Efron, 1987). Therefore, using the bootstrap technique, more reliable results can be obtained by correcting the bias and skewness in the distribution.

3.3. Population and Sample

The research population consists of private-sector employees with widespread job insecurity. According to the data, by 2020, 28 million people will be employed in Turkey. While nearly 5 million are public employees, 23 million are employed in the private sector. The concern of job loss is greater in the private sector, which lacks public security than the public (TUIK, 2021). Another factor is considered in selecting the population in terms of proportional representation.

The sample size is the minimum amount of data found by including the incidence of the investigated event, the sampling error related to it, and the theoretical value found in the t-table according to a certain level of significance. There are various opinions about the minimum sample size that should be determined to generalize the research results. Considering the views on the number of subjects; Comrey and Lee (1992) advocate a sample size of 50 "very poor," 100 "poor," 200 "moderate," 300 "good," 500 "very good," 1000 "excellent," while Gorsuch (1983) and Kline (1994) states that at least 100 subjects should be studied. Another view on the sample size is that the most appropriate method should be calculated according to the data-item ratio. According to this view of proportional computation, Cattell (1978) points out that the collected data-item ratio should be 3/1 to 6/1, while Ewerit (1975) points out that data should be collected at a minimum ratio of 10/1. In this direction, Alpar (2013) stated in his study that the data-item ratio could be between 5/1 and 10/1. A widely accepted approach in recent years is the process of determining the sample size related to the power (1-β) and effect size (δ, delta) that occur with the consideration of Type I (α) and Type II (β) errors. In this context, the minimum sample size calculated based on a 5% error level and 95% confidence level in the research is 385. To increase the generalizability of the research results, it was tried to collect more data than the minimum sample size. 536 participants, mainly from the service sector, were reached in this context.

To collect the research data, the convenience sampling method, which aims to obtain the maximum amount of data by considering time and cost savings, was used, and the questionnaires were filled online between June and September 2021 due to COVID-19 restrictions.

3.4. Data Collection Tools

This research consists of three scales and a data collection tool by preparing an information form. In order to reach as much data as possible, online technique was used to collect data, taking into account the difficulties experienced in reaching employees during the pandemic period. Of the 652 questionnaires distributed, 536 were collected because some respondents refused to fill them out. As a result of the elimination of outliers based on the calculation of the square Mahalanobis distance with the forms containing missing data, a total of 471 complete forms were reached (72% response rate).

Responses to the research scales were rated on a 5-point Likert scale (from 1-Strongly Disagree to 5-Totally Agree). The validity and reliability of the scales were carried out with Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 23.0) and Analysis of Moment Structures (AMOS 26.0) statistical package programs. Before factor analysis, research scales were evaluated using descriptive statistics based on questions. The skewness and kurtosis values within the ±2 limits, generally accepted in the literature, show that the data set exhibits a normal distribution (George & Mallery, 2010). The item distribution statistics with mean values between 1.64 and 4.29 range from -1,588 to 1,729. These statistics show that the research scales exhibited normal distribution before the factor analysis.

Job Insecurity Scale: The scale developed by Hellgren, Sverke, and Isaksson (1999: 195) was used to measure employees' perception of job insecurity. It consists of 2 dimensions and seven qualitative job insecurity (4 statements) and quantitative job insecurity (3 statements). At the same time, four statements of qualitative job insecurity were coded in reverse. Şeker (2011: 90) finds the internal consistency coefficients of job insecurity subscales (Cronbach Alpha); the qualitative job insecurity subscale was 0.67; the quantitative job insecurity subscale was calculated as 0.82. This study calculated quantitative job insecurity as 0.78 and qualitative job insecurity as 0.80. Goodness of fit indexes obtained from first-order confirmatory factor analysis $\chi 2=987.023$ $p=0.000$; $\chi 2/sd=2.922$; RMSEA=0.078; CFI=0.91; GFI=0.90; SRMR=0.03 (Browne & Cudeck, 1993; Marsh & Hocevar, 1985; Tanaka & Huba, 1985; Bentler & Bonett, 1980; McDonald & Marsh, 1990) shows that the proposed two-factor model is compatible with the data and at an acceptable level.

Presenteeism Scale: The scale developed by Koopman et al. (2002: 20) was used to measure employees' ostensible presence at work. It consists of 6 statements and one dimension. Baysal's (2012: 73) 5-point Likert-type scale calculated the internal consistency

coefficient (Cronbach Alpha) as 0.87. In this study, the scale's reliability coefficient (Cronbach's Alpha) was calculated as 0.81. Goodness of fit indexes obtained from first-order confirmatory factor analysis $\chi 2$=1890,023 p=0,000; $\chi 2$/sd=2,522; RMSEA=0.088; CFI=0.91; GFI=0.89; SRMR=0.04 shows that the proposed single-factor model is compatible with the data and at an acceptable level.

COVID-19 Fear Scale: The scale developed by Ahorsu et al. (2020) was used to measure the fear of COVID-19. It consists of 7 statements and one dimension. The 5-point Likert-type scale by Ahorsu et al. (2020) has acceptable internal consistency and retest reliability (α=.82 and ICC=.72). In this study, the scale's reliability coefficient (Cronbach's Alpha) was calculated as 0.88. The goodness of fit indexes obtained from first-order confirmatory factor analysis $\chi 2$=2430.023 p=0.000; $\chi 2$/sd=3.122; RMSEA=0.077; CFI=0.94; GFI=0.95; SRMR=0.03 shows that the proposed single-factor model is compatible with the data and at an acceptable level.

Finally, convergent validity tests were conducted for data collection tools with a maximum two-factor structure. Mean Explained Variance (AVE) and Composite Reliability (CR) coefficients were calculated. AVE statistics are expected to be 0.40 and above (Hair et al., 2017) and CR statistics to be 0.70 and above, which will be higher than AVE statistics (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). The calculated convergent validity coefficients are presented below.

Table 1. CR and AVE Statistics for Scales

Fear of COVID-19			
	Number of Items	**AVE**	**CR**
	7	0,50	0,87
Presenteeism			
	Number of Items	**AVE**	**CR**
	6	0,41	0,71
Job Insecurity			
Factors	**Number of Items**	**AVE**	**CR**
Qualitative	4	0,57	0,83
Quantitative	3	0,59	0,81

3.5. Analysis and Findings

In this part, following the validity and reliability analyses for the data model fit, the hypotheses established within the framework of the research model were tested. In this context, correlation analyses between the variables were made, and then the simple and mediating effects were tested with the help of the structural regression model.

Table 2. Correlation Coefficients Between Variables

Scale	Mean	S.S.	1	2	3	3a
1.Fear of COVID-19	2.72	0,95	1			
2. Presenteeism	3,74	0,78	,303*			
3. Job Insecurity	3,12	0,70	,188**	,298*		
3a. Qualitative	2,75	0,99	-,041*	-,112*	,731*	
3b. Quantitative	3,61	1,12	,323*	,566*	,584*	-,127*

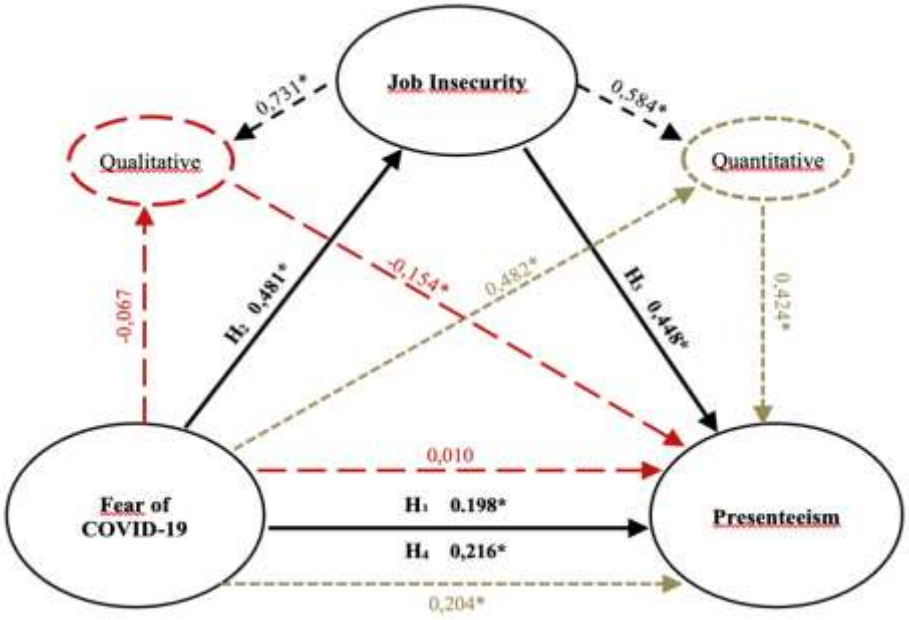
* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

The relations between the variables are examined.

It is observed that there are correlations among fear of COVID-19 and presenteeism at the level r: 0.303 (p<0.01), job insecurity, r: 0.188 (p<0.01); qualitative job insecurity, r: -0.041 (p<0.01); quantitative job insecurity, r: 0.323 (p<0.01); between presenteeism and job insecurity at the level 0.298 (p<0.01); qualitative job insecurity, r: -0. 112 (p<0.01); quantitative job insecurity, r: 0.566 (p<0.01); between job insecurity and qualitative job insecurity at the level r: 0.731 (p<0.01); quantitative job insecurity, r: 0.584 (p<0.01); between qualitative job insecurity and quantitative job insecurity at the level r: -0.127 (p<0.01).

The structural equation model tested the research hypotheses established to determine the simple and mediating effect following the correlation analysis. The interaction structure presented with the research model is shown in the figure below.

Figure 2. Regression Coefficients for the Research Model



*p<0,001

Before the mediating analysis, the total effect of fear of COVID-19, defined as the exogenous variable on the endogenous variable, presenteeism, was examined. In structural equation models, the recalculated standardized estimates with the relationships among the variables should not show a high deviation (0.05 or less) from the standardized estimates in the measurement model. In order to fulfill this condition, the p-value of the research hypotheses should be less than 0.05. In addition, the hypotheses were tested using the bootstrap confidence interval, and in this context, the 95% confidence interval was taken as a basis with 5000 resamples. Accordingly, fear of COVID-19 may predict presenteeism statistically significant and positive. Despite the significant predictive effect with a beta coefficient of 0.198, only 13% of the variance in presenteeism can be explained by fear of COVID-19. Goodness of fit indexes of model are $\chi2$=871.129 p=0.000; $\chi2$/sd=2.615; RMSEA=0.073; CFI=0.90; GFI=0.89; SRMR=0.03. Accordingly, the hypothesis "H_1: Fear of COVID-19 has a statistically positive effect on presenteeism" was supported. Since the total effect of the independent (external) variable on the dependent (endogenous) variable is also a prerequisite for the mediation model, the result found in the study shows that this condition is fulfilled.

The study's second hypothesis was established on the relationship between fear of COVID-19 and job insecurity. According to the results of the hypothesis tested with the structural equation model, the fear of COVID-19 affects job insecurity (β: 0.481; p<0.01; R^2: 0.232) and quantitative job insecurity (β: 0.482; p<0.01; R^2: 0. 232) is statistically significant and positive but did not affect the qualitative job insecurity (β: -0.067; p=0.74; R^2: 0.004). Goodness of fit indexes of model are $\chi2$=788.017 p=0.000; $\chi2$/sd=2.899; RMSEA=0.075; CFI=0.89; GFI=0.90; SRMR=0.03. Accordingly, the hypothesis "H_2: Fear of COVID-19 has a statistically positive effect on job insecurity" was partly supported.

Another hypothesis tested with the structural equation model is the relationship between job insecurity and presenteeism. The results of the analysis show that job insecurity and its sub-dimensions affect the presenteeism statistically with the β: 0.448 (p<0.01; R^2: 0.285) for job insecurity; (β: -0.154; p<0.01; R^2: 0.058) for qualitative job insecurity and (β: 0,424; p<0.01; R^2: 0. 272) for quantitative job insecurity. Accordingly, "H_3: Job insecurity has a statistically positive effect on presenteeism" was supported.

Finally, the mediating role of job insecurity in the relationship between fear of COVID-19 and Presenteeism was examined within the framework of the research model. The mediation effect model was tested using the bootstrap confidence interval and the p-value, as in other hypothesis tests. In this context, a 95% confidence interval was taken as a basis with 5000 resamples. Structural equation model statistics in which the job insecurity scale is used with its single-factor structure are presented in the table below.

Table 3. Mediating Model Established for Hypothesis 4

Structural Model	Job Insecurity		Presenteeism	
	β/Std.Reg.Coef.	**SE**	**β/Std.Reg.Coef.**	**SE**
Fear of COVID-19 (path c)			0,198*	0,101
R^2			0,126	
Fear of COVID-19 (path a)	0,481*	0,147		
R^2	0,232			
Fear of COVID-19 (path c')			-0,017	0,105
Job Insecurity (path b)			0,448*	0,051
R^2			0,285	
Indirect Effect			0,216*	
Bootstrap Confidence	Lower Bounds		0,253	
	Upper Bounds		0,736	

*p<0,001

The results obtained from the analysis show that when all variables are included in the model, the direct effect (c') on the dependent variable loses its significance (β: -0.017), and the fear of COVID-19 indirectly affects the presenteeism through job insecurity (β: 0.216). Bootstrap confidence interval values between 0.253 lower bound and 0.736 upper bounds indicate the significance of the mediating effect model. The increase in the coefficient of determination of the model (R^2: 0.126→0.285) is another factor confirming the existence of the mediating effect. Accordingly, the hypothesis "H_4: Job insecurity plays mediating role in the effect of fear of COVID-19 on presenteeism" was supported.

In order to support the mediation hypothesis, a mediation effect analysis was carried out for the qualitative sub-dimension of the job insecurity scale. Research statistics regarding the structural equation model are presented in the table below.

Table 4. Mediating Model Established with Qualitative Job Insecurity

Structural Model	Qualitative Job Insecurity		Presenteeism	
	β/Std.Reg.Coef.	**SE**	**β/Std.Reg.Coef.**	**SE**
Fear of COVID-19 (path c)			0,198*	0,101
R^2			0,126	
Fear of COVID-19 (path a)	-0,067	0,098		
R^2	0,004			
Fear of COVID-19 (path c')			0,188*	0,100
Qualitative Job Insecurity (path b)			-0,154*	0,051
R^2			0,058	
Indirect Effect			0,010	
Bootstrap Confidence	Lower Bounds		-0,010	
	Upper Bounds		0,073	

*p<0,001

The results obtained from the analysis show that the direct effect (c') of the independent variable on the dependent variable continues significantly (β: 0.188) when all factors are included in the model. It also shows that the qualitative job insecurity factor does not have a mediating role in the effect of fear of COVID-19 on Presenteeism (β: 0.010). Bootstrap confidence interval values between -0.010 lower bound and 0.073 upper bounds indicate that the mediating effect model has lost significance. The increase in the coefficient of determination of the model (R^2: 0.126→0.058) is not sufficient for the presence of a mediating effect.

Finally, within the framework of the research model, a mediating effect analysis was conducted for the quantitative sub-dimension of the job insecurity scale. Research statistics regarding the structural equation model are presented in the table below.

Table 5. Mediating Model Established with Quantitative Job Insecurity

Structural Model	Quantitative Job Insecurity		Presenteeism	
	β/Std.Reg.Coef.	**SE**	**β/Std.Reg.Coef.**	**SE**
Fear of COVID-19 (path c)			0,198*	0,101
R^2			0,126	
Fear of COVID-19 (path a)	0,482*	0,148		
R^2	0,232			
Fear of COVID-19 (path c')			-0,006	0,106
Quantitative Job Insecurity (path b)			0,424*	0,051
R^2			0,272	
Indirect Effect			0,204*	
Bootstrap Confidence	Lower Bounds		0,246	
	Upper Bounds		0,675	

*p<0,001

The results obtained from the analysis show that when all factors are included in the model, the direct impact (c') on the dependent variable in the context of quantitative job insecurity loses its significance (β: -0.006). Fear of COVID-19 indirectly affects presenteeism through quantitative job insecurity (β: 0.204). Bootstrap confidence interval values between 0.246 lower bound and 0.675 upper bounds indicate the significance of the mediating effect model. The increase in the coefficient of determination of the model (R^2: 0.126→0.272) is another factor confirming the existence of the mediating effect.

All hypothesis results obtained within the framework of the research model are presented in the summary table below.

Table 6. Statistics on Research Hypothesis Results

Hypotheses	β Std.Reg.Coef.	SE	Bootstrap %95 CI UB	LB	Result
H_1Fear of COVID-19 → Presenteeism	0,198*	0,101	0,052	0,490	Accept
H_2Fear of COVID-19 → Job Insecurity	0,481*	0,147	0,258	0,762	Accept
H_3Job Insecurity→ Presenteeism	0,448*	0,051	0,382	0,570	Accept
H_4Fear of COVID-19 → Job Insecurity →Presenteeism	0,216*	0,054	0,253	0,736	Accept

*p<0,001

According to the table, it is seen that all the research hypotheses are supported. The positive interactions indicated by the β coefficients were interpreted using the p values and the bootstrap confidence interval method.

4. Results And Discussion

In this study, the effect of fear of COVID-19 on presenteeism and the mediating role of job insecurity in this interaction were examined. For this purpose, questions were asked to the participants by using the fear of COVID-19, presenteeism, and job insecurity scale to represent the variables related to the research model. The research was conducted in the private sector where job insecurity is high. The collected data were analyzed using SPSS 23.0 and AMOS 26.0 statistical package programs. Research findings revealed that fear of COVID-19 has a positive effect on presenteeism, and that job insecurity has a partial mediating role in this interaction. In addition, within the scope of the research model, it is seen that the fear of COVID-19 has a positive effect on job insecurity, and job insecurity has a positive effect on presenteeism. Job insecurity was evaluated with two sub-factors, quantitative and qualitative, and these sub-factors supported the results obtained from the main scale.

COVID-19 has left a deep impact on business life in Turkey as well as all over the world. Working life has changed and remote working has become widespread. It has been seen that the remote working process, which seems to be an advantage at first, brings with it a kind of irregularity. The disease caused shrinkage in business life and businesses tried to stand instead of profitability. Businesses that earn less compared to the past have had to follow downsizing policies to survive. Except for the health sector, all other sectors have revised their structures and operations. While there was no problem for those working in the public sector, some new risks such as presenteeism emerged for the employees of the private sector.

COVID-19, which almost everyone is caught at least once, is a disease that requires compulsory rest, and this has to be reported by official institutions. There have been many private-sector employees who could not go to work because they caught COVID-19 during the pandemic period. However, bosses or managers of the organizations argue that this situation hinders the work and slows down production. They attributed the decrease in jobs to the low performance of employees who are sick and who cannot come to work. Employees, on the other hand, had to hide their illnesses to cope with this situation, and they risked the lives of others by continuing their work despite being sick. The already existing fear of unemployment has caused labor relations to continue in an unhealthier way with the emergence of COVID-19 (Hadjisolomou et al., 2021). The situation of being absent from work due to COVID-19 has increased rapidly all over the world, and this situation has often been triggered by job insecurity. In fact, in the study titled "COVID-19: Possible Effects on Employees and Work-Life" published by Deloitte (2020), it is stated that the demotivation virus can spread even faster than the coronavirus if the anxiety experienced by the employees in the sectors where the risk of contamination is high, and this turns into panic. In this context, it is seen that the fear of COVID-19 has some psychological consequences as well as physical consequences. Employees' hiding their situations will lead to problems related to both personal and business life. As a consequence of the fear of COVID-19, firstly job insecurity, then motivational decline, and finally, problems in productivity will occur. Employees who do not feel comfortable cannot contribute to production. In this context, it has been determined that the fear of COVID-19, which is the independent variable of the research, has a low effect on the dependent variable, presenteeism. However, it is seen that only 13% of the change in

presenteeism behavior is explained by the fear of COVID-19. This result shows that the dependent variable can be explained by different variables other than the fear of COVID-19.

Another question from the research concerns the effect of fear of COVID-19 on job insecurity. The concept of job insecurity, which can also be explained as the fear of losing one's job, has been handled in two ways, quantitative and qualitative. Qualitative job insecurity, which has a direct impact on employment relationships such as wage growth, career opportunities and working conditions (Sverke and Hellgren, 2002; Niesen et al., 2018) supports the holistic relationship between key variables, while quantitative job insecurity related to the future in your existing job (Hellgren et al., 1999) same result was not obtained. Accordingly, it can be said that the perceived threat to work attendance produced by COVID-19 is high. It is possible to say that this threat may occur with the internal elements of the business, but it does not pose a problem for possible job loss in the future. Because quantitative job insecurity is an important factor that triggers fear of job loss in the future. Similar results are also observed in the impact of job insecurity and its sub-dimensions on presenteeism. Quantitative job insecurity remained low in effect size, as in the previous results, but continued to affect presenteeism.

The research has some limitations. The fact that the data were collected in a limited time, with a convenience sampling technique, and only within the private sector limits the generalizability of the results. Cross-sectional data may reflect respondents' biases. Employees may have avoided expressing their true thoughts due to the pressure of the pandemic period conditions in which the data were collected.

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