

Understanding Causes of Absenteeism of Secondary Level Students-A Study

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ABSTRACT

The present study attempts to analyze the causes of absenteeism of secondary level students with special reference to class IX students of Udalguri District B.T.A.D. Assam. It also tries to provide suggestions to overcome the same. Stratified Random Sampling has been used by the investigator to collect the reliable data. A sample of 50 students (25- Boys and 25 Girls) has been taken. The collected data was analyzed and interpreted with the help of statistical techniques like percentage and mean. The study reveals that there is significant difference in the extent of absenteeism between Boys and Girls. The mean score of boys was higher than that of the girls which reveals that boys remain more prone to absenteeism than the girls.

Keywords

Absenteeism, Secondary Students, Boys and Girls

Introduction

Education is not merely limited to the delivery of knowledge, skills and information from teachers to students. Creating and becoming educated morally is the ultimate aim of education. Regardless of the situation, an educated person is always able to access to optimal states of mind. Education is the strongest weapon that acts as the medium to achieve our goals and aspirations effectively. Accurate perception, clear thoughts, logical thinking and reasoning are the outcomes of education. Thus education at all levels i.e. primary, secondary, higher level is very important for the students to have a well developed personality. Secondary education as we know is the intermediate state of education between primary and higher level of education. Secondary education is the key between primary and higher level of education. It provides a better facility to prepare quality and experienced teachers for the primary schools and also prepares good students for higher or university education. Mention may be made of many important commissions like Mudaliar Commission of 1952-53 and Kothari Commission of 1964-66. These Commissions have given many important suggestions for the improvement and upliftment of secondary education. But the Secondary level of education faces a lot of problems among which **Absenteeism** is the most important ones. This has put a great hindrance to the progress and development of Secondary education. Therefore the study of absenteeism is very important for any school.

For the present study, absenteeism refers to absence from the school and stay away from engaging in classroom activities on a working day. The word absenteeism means the absence of students from class when he is scheduled to be present at school. Absence in school means when the teacher has no information in advance, that the student will not report for class if he has taken leave to which he is entitled or on ground of sickness or in case of accident. Thus absence may be authorized or unauthorized, willful or caused by circumstances beyond teacher's control.

Attendance is an important factor in school success among children and youth. Studies show that better attendance is related to higher academic achievement for students of all backgrounds, but particularly for children with lower socio-economic status. Many factors contribute to student absenteeism. Family health or financial concerns, poor school climate, drug and alcohol use, transportation problems, and differing community attitudes towards education are among the conditions that are often associated with a child's frequent absence from school.

Significance of the study

Student absenteeism is a serious issue to be focused on. Concerted efforts have been framed and aimed at engaging students and promoting active learning. Many secondary level school students regularly skip classes. Absences create a dead, tiresome, unpleasant classroom environment that makes students who come to class uncomfortable and the teacher irritable. Absenteeism disturbs the dynamic teaching-

learning environment and adversely affects the overall well-being of classes. In quality terms, absenteeism is a waste of educational resources, time and human potential. Student absenteeism also causes rework and wasted time for teachers. Teachers who spend class time re-teaching lessons take instructional time away from students who attend class regularly, and the extra time spent going over absentee homework and class assignments takes time away from teacher planning periods and time needed to provide individual assistance. When students are absent from class, they miss valuable information resulting from peer-teacher interaction and the benefits of the specific examples teachers use to clarify difficult concepts. Therefore it is the urgent duty of teachers, parents and the persons concerned with education to put a stop to the problem of absenteeism. As we know that attendance of students in the class helps them to cope with everyday classroom knowledge or instruction, we must strive towards making the students more regular and interested in the class by providing facilities according to their needs.

Objectives of the study

1. To find out the causes for students' Absenteeism.

2. To provide suggestions to overcome the problem of absenteeism.

Hypothesis

Boys are more prone to absenteeism than the girls.

Method

To conduct the study Descriptive Survey Method has been used.

Population and Sample

Population of the study includes 300 students out of which 50 sample students (25-boys and 25-girls) have been taken.

Tool of data collection

A self-structured Questionnaire has been used to achieve the objectives of the present study. The investigator has constructed a questionnaire to study the reasons of absenteeism from school. The investigator included 24 closed questions in the questionnaire and asked the students to tick in the option marked "YES" if they agree with the statement and tick in the option marked "NO" if they disagree with it.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Table-1

Sl. No.	Reasons	Gender		Percentage	
		Boys	Girls	Boys	Girls
i	Due to engagement in household chores	12	13	48%	52%
ii	Seasonal Migration	9	11	36%	44%
iii	Family Poverty	18	16	72%	64%
iv	Fear of Strict Teachers	8	7	32%	28%
v	Lack of friends and friendly school environment	5	5	20%	20%
vi	Absence of teachers	6	12	24%	48%
vii	Medical/Health Problems	9	17	36%	68%
viii	Transportation Problems	3	5	12%	20%
ix	Lack of Parental Awareness	11	14	44%	56%
x	Broken family Problems	4	3	16%	12%
xi	Lack of interesting teaching methods	15	12	60%	48%
xii	Financial problems	12	12	48%	48%
xiii	Inferiority complex	11	6	44%	24%
xiv	High use of mobile phones	20	3	80%	12%
xv	Fear of excess homework	16	9	64%	36%
xvi	Preparation for examination	3	4	12%	16%
xvii	Poor infrastructure facilities in school	6	9	24%	36%

xviii	Poor food of canteen	5	5	20%	20%
xix	Lack of co-curricular activities	8	6	32%	24%
xx	Lack of confidence	4	5	16%	20%
xxi	Lack of match between the mental capacity and the course opted	13	9	52%	36%
xxii	Lack of subject interest	18	10	72%	40%
xxiii	Lack of personal interest in studies	20	6	80%	24%
xxiv	Lack of conducive classroom atmosphere	7	5	28%	20%

Table-2: Mean comparison for absenteeism of Boys and Girls

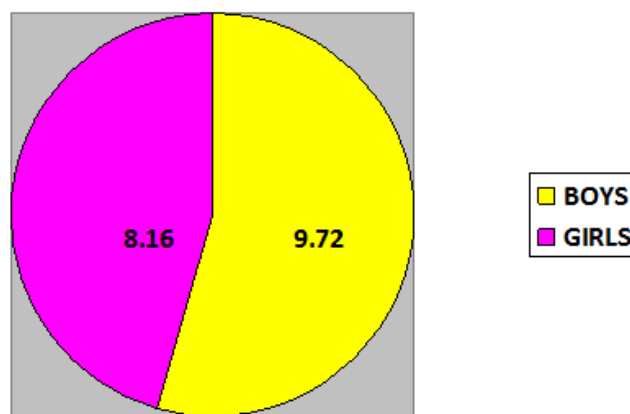
Sl. No.	N (50)	Mean
1	Boys (25)	9.72
2	Girls (25)	8.16

Interpretation

The **Table-1** above indicates that due to engagement in household chores, seasonal migration, absence of teachers, medical/health problems, transportation problems, lack of parental awareness, preparation for examination, poor infrastructure facilities in school, lack of confidence, girls showed more percentage in remaining absent from school than the boys. Boys show more absenteeism due to family poverty, fear of strict teachers, broken family problems, lack of interesting teaching methods, inferiority complex, high use of mobile phones, fear of excess homework, lack of co-curricular activities, lack of match between the mental capacity and the course opted, lack of subject interest, lack of personal interest in studies, lack of conducive classroom atmosphere than the girls. Due to lack of friends and friendly school environment, poor food of canteen both the boys and girls showed equal percentage to remain absent in school.

Again the **Table-2** shows the comparative mean between the boys and girls revealing that with regard to the samples, the boys show more absenteeism in school than the girls.

Figure 1 represents the pie diagram for mean comparison of absenteeism between boys and girls.



From the above tables of analysis and graphical representation, it is found that the **Hypothesis**-“Boys are more prone to absenteeism than the girls” is **accepted**. Higher mean indicates higher absenteeism. This clearly indicates that boys remain more absent in school than the girls.

Findings regarding reasons of Absenteeism of students

- The study reveals that students mostly remain absent in school as the teacher’s teaching skills are not up to mark.
- From the collected data it can be seen that seasonal migration like attending marriage, funeral, festivals, social activities, heavy rainfall, flood affecting the region and other events also lead to student absenteeism
- As the most of the students belong to rural areas, they are likely to help their family members with the household chores. This results in absenteeism of students. Most of the students find that their interest does not match with the course opted.
- Most of the students feel lack of confidence and so they avoid school.
- Ragging and lack of allied activities, lack of proper library and laboratory also causes absenteeism sometimes.

- In days of examination students prefer to study at friend's home or their own home which tends the students to remain absent from school.
- Most of the times students form groups to freak out and bunk classes that causes absenteeism.
- Students are not interested in studies and feel school is boring.
- Due to irregularities students cannot complete their homework and class work thereby leading them to remain absent.
- Lack of proper canteen facilities, lack of proper co-curricular activities in school causes absenteeism.

Remedial measures

1. Value education should be included in syllabus to avoid absenteeism among students.
2. Guidance on punctuality and regularity of each student must be taken care of by the teachers.
3. Teaching methods should be improved by teachers, so that students feel interested to attend the classes.
4. Students should be given the choice to choose their subject according to their interest.
5. Canteen facilities should be improved. Nutritious food should be provided.
6. Library sitting arrangement should be improved.
7. There should be system of conveying the message to the parents of the students, if any student is found absent for 7-10 days without prior information.
8. There should be award in internal mark weightage for regular students.
9. Activities should be arranged by making the groups of students who are friends as G.K. competitions, Group Discussions etc.
10. There should be seminars or guest lecturers to boost the confidence of the students.
11. Parents should understand the value of the study and should not pamper their children for not attending the school.
12. Teachers need to understand the problems and arrange the special classes for the students who do not easily understand or grasp any subjects.
13. Co-curricular activities should be arranged by the school at regular intervals.

Conclusion

This study addresses an analysis of current situation on student absenteeism and seeks to provide key recommendations that may yield higher levels of attendance and student achievement in schools. It hones on the idea that educational leaders must be cognizant of the factors relating to absenteeism and its cost to the educational community at large. Additionally, examples elements of effective student truancy plans are recommended that they may aide in curtailing student and teacher absenteeism rate for the district.

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