

# A Study of Absenteeism in Context of Student's Discontent with the Classrooms Learning Environment

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**Keyword:** *Student's absenteeism, Skill, Personality. Discontent.*

## ABSTRACT

The study of absenteeism is very important for any school/college. The word absenteeism means the absence of student from class when he is scheduled to be present at school/college. When teacher has no information in advance, that the student will not be present for class if he has taken leave to which he/she is entitled or on ground of sickness or in case of accident. Thus absence may be authorized or unauthorized, wilful or caused by circumstance beyond teacher's control. There are many factors involved in motivating students to attend school. Students, who are not motivated, hence will usually decide not to be present in school. Based on several researches conducted, the rate of absenteeism among students increases annually. As a result, this problem will more or less adversely affect the school's reputation. Thus, this study is conducted to identify factors that cause students' discontent with the classroom learning environment. For this purpose a survey was carried out using questionnaire tool for student's absenteeism.

## INTRODUCTION

Education is regarded as the richest and highest treasure of man. Human life has two aspects, biological and social. The biological needs like food, shelter and sex can easily be supplemented by external bodies. Man does not live by bread alone. He wants something more to be called as man – civilization, culture and social norms. Hence education is treated as a basic need for human being in this changing world. *Aristotle says, 'Educated men are as much superior to uneducated as living are to dead'.*

Every society in the world aims to give efficient education, to present educational facilities based on equality and justice and to prepare people efficiently for their future lives. India too provides equal educational opportunities for all its citizens. But in spite of all efforts of the government there is still a population which lacks all educational facilities due to several reasons. It is well known that a most important key to children's academic success is having them attend college on a regular basis. In today's scenario, knowledge is very important to succeed and to get a good job. In this era of competition a person needs a good academic qualification. So it is imperative that students must attend classes regularly in order

to benefit the maximum information from the lectures. A key ingredient for ensuring success in college is helping students at the beginning of their academic careers and get into the habit of attending college every day. Poor college attendance can be linked to a number of related short and long-term adverse outcomes for students including lower academic outcomes, early college leaving, substance use, poverty, unemployment and negative health outcomes. However these factors may be interrelated in complex ways and factors that lead to low levels of attendance may also independently lead to some of these adverse outcomes. A student's regular absence from college may be a critical indicator in disengagement, leading directly to some of these adverse outcomes. Regardless of the nature of the relationship, poor college attendance, particularly with a high number of unexplained or unauthorized absences, is a readily observable warning sign for potential longer-term adverse outcomes.

Almost every year Delhi University prepares a list of all the students who have less than 40% attendance and they are liable to repeat the year. Those who have 40% to 67% attendance are forced to sign bonds. In 2011 more than 350 DU students were detained from writing semester exams due to less attendance. Students protested complaining about the disparity among the colleges as some of the colleges allowed the students with same attendance to write the exams. Recently Amity students protested against university attendance rules which resulted in suspension of 50 students. They opposed the system of marking a student absent for morning class even if there is a minute's delay. Due to this stringent rule even genuine students get held up and for this the chronic late comers are mainly to be blamed.

In 2013 we came to know how attendance shortage proved costly for many students in Osmania University as well as Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University in Hyderabad. Dozens of students were forced to pay 500-1000 for getting pardon for attendance shortage. Also undergraduate students in city colleges complained about not being given any receipt for the money they paid to the college and hence it was illegal.

In Dec 2015 we come to know about how the Mangaluru University had decided not to condone shortage of attendance in the Bachelor degree programme offered by it. As many as 230 students were barred from exams for not fulfilling attendance criteria.

Even the judiciary has been taking a stringent stance on the question of mandatory attendance. In 2002 the Bombay High Court upheld the decision of G. Ramchandran Principal of Kandivli Education Society's College of Arts and Commerce not to allow 46 students who had less than 75 percent attendance to appear in March 2002 final examination. The high court had set aside the lower courts order permitting students who approached it for allowing appearing for the examination and for declaration of their results.

J.m. Golding is apt when he makes clear that there is no research mandate for attendance policies. He strongly believes that the individual faculty should be assessing the impact of their policies on classroom climate and learning outcomes. To quote him, “The ideal, of course is classrooms with students present not because some policy requires them to be there but because they understand that what happens in class is essential to their endeavors to learn course material. The design of classroom experience that expedite that insight is a challenging task but the outcomes may be better than what attendance policies can achieve.”

Judith Levine discussed in her research paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Eastern Psychological Association in 1992 as to how students response to a variety of attendance policies. When attendance was explicitly required 80% of the students missed 4 times or less and less than 1% missed 8 times or more. When the attendance policy was non-required and implicit 73% of the students missed 4 times or less and almost 7% missed 8 times or more. When the attendance policy was explicitly non required only 52% of the students missed 4 or fewer times while 18% missed 8 times or more.

When students are absent from class, they miss valuable information resulting from peer-lecturer interaction and the benefits of the specific examples lecturers use to clarify difficult concepts. Many factors can 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 student frequent absence from college.

**India** – In India in almost all universities and colleges 75% attendance is mandatory failing which can either affect the grade of the student or even end in his failure.

In Delhi University prior to Aug 2014 students in professional courses required a minimum attendance of 75% while those in the regular course required a minimum attendance of 66.6%. On failure to meet these requirement students were barred from sitting for the examinations and their promotions held. However now under the new rules no student can be detained on the basis of attendance. Although DU has common guidelines of 67% attendance, colleges end up making their individual rules for attendance requirement for example some will let you collect your admit card whatever your attendance, some will make you sign a bond asking you to maintain the required attendance marks in the coming semester and some will debar you from exams inviting protests and sometimes involvement of parents. In the internal assessment of 25 marks 2 marks are for 70% and five marks for full attendance.

In almost all the Indian universities and colleges the rule on paper i.e. their ordinances spells out that a student shall not be eligible to appear in the examination if his attendance is less than 75%. Apart from this in many institutes marks are allotted for attendance above 75%. For example in the BA LLB (Hons) Five year Integrated Course of Allahabad University the students whose attendance in the prescribed subjects of study, seminar classes and computer training or any other course prescribed in the semester falls short of the

required 75% shall not be allowed to appear at the examination. Also if the student absents himself from the classes continuously for seven days his name shall be struck off from the register. Here in this course there are graded marks for attendance above 75% going up to 100% so students who attend all the classes in a subject get 5 marks out of 50 marks allotted in internal assessment of a subject. The reality check shows that even if students are chronic absentees they are allowed to sit at the exams. In some colleges in India even if students fail to show up for even once in the classes still they are allowed to sit in the final exams. In such colleges there is may be a simultaneous catastrophe of professors being absent from classes too. So this leads to a vicious cycle and who leads who is lead to find out? In such a system there are less oblivious hardships for teachers and students but only outwardly. The philosophy of education is stifled and the higher purpose or wholesome growth of both stakeholders i.e. teacher and the taught is thwarted.

On this problem many people feel that time is ripe for implementing biometric attendance system in India to curb the monetary loss to the government due to corruption and mismanagement in the education sector by large-scale absenteeism of teachers in schools as well as colleges. In May 2015 Rajasthan decided to implement biometric attendance system in universities and colleges ensuring that teaching/nonteaching staff will be regular and reach on time

### **AIM OF THE STUDY**

Education has a huge impact on any human society and it can safely be assumed that no society is optimally functional until it is properly educated. In the global perspective, it is an undeniable fact that the progress of a nation is very much dependent on the education of its youth. One of the great aspects of being an educator of young minds is the ability to make a connection with those students and watch them mature over their collegiate career. i have had the privilege of working as a teacher educator in B.Ed. department of S.S.Khanna Girls Degree College .unfortunately I found that many of the students are not attend the class regularly. what was the reason behind this absenteeism that problem is not only related to school level or college level but also related to IIT and all other engineering and academic courses. Allahabad City is a small city in Uttar Pradesh where students remain absent from college frequently. Very less number of researches has been done especially on educational issues. That's why researcher selected this area and this topic for the research. So this research will address very important issue i.e. student's absenteeism. So in order to get the clear picture of causes of absenteeism the researcher done the“ *A study of absenteeism in context of student's discontent with the classrooms learning environment*

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

- Balkis and Arslan (2016) School Attitude Assessment Survey-Revised (SAAS-R). investigated psychometric characteristics of SAAS-R in Turkish sample. They reported that the SAAS-R Turkish Version consists 28 items with five factors.

- Ogichi, & Thinguri, 2014 In addition some authors believed that level of academic achievement lead school absenteeism.
- Balfanz& Byrnes, (2012) stated that; family obligations also make some students not go to college. As children enter early adolescence, family responsibilities can keep them from college.
- R.L.N.Pradeepkumar et al. (2012) suggested three major reasons why students stayed away from their respective institutions. They were poor infrastructure, involvement of parents and peer pressure
- Newman Wadesango, and SeverinoMachingamb (2011) concluded from their study that the factors that give rise to absenteeism are poor teaching strategies by lecturers, unfavorable learning environment or poor socio-economic background.this is social and political issue with huge social cost therefore, this study advocates that in order to address the problem in any meaningful way, effort should be directed not only at the student or university but also at the broader socio-economic and political environments in which universities are located.
- Hoking (2008) stated various methods to solve the problems related to absenteeism. He suggested that there should be parents and faculty interaction in colleges and colleges so that parents come to know why his/her child is not attending the classes in college. This research study examined whether the implementation of a perfect attendance award incentive would increase college attendance, and it was found that the perfect attendance award showed an increase in student's motivation to attend college every day of the month in order to receive the certificate.
- Reid, (2005) agrees that; when students are absent from school, there are a wide range of short term educational consequences that they face; first and foremost, students miss out on assignments and as a result, they are more likely to underachieve or perform poorly.
- P.kousalya (2006) stated in their study about the absenteeism of students in engineering college. Here the author prefers punishment for absenteeism , less peer pressure , awards for, more attendance, involvement of parents, better infrastructure and making teaching more attractive as measures to attract students to educational institutional.
- Christopherson, and Douglas (2005) argue that this significant decline in students grade is a result of poor performance on course examinations due to missed class.,
- Durden& Ellis, (2003) found that class attendance and motivation were related; and they notes that if motivation is not controlled for, the effect of absence from class on performance may be overstated.

### **STATEMENT OF PROBLEM:**

Student absenteeism is an acknowledged problem in many colleges. Long run of student's absence has impact in their future performance. So, in order to deal with this problem the causes of student's absenteeism should be find out in order to resolve this existing problem. Keeping this in view the following

study is proposed: *“A study of absenteeism in context of student’s discontent with the classrooms learning environment”*

### **OBJECTIVE:**

To examine the absenteeism in context of student’s discontent with the classrooms learning environment.

### **DEFINITION OF ABSENTEEISM:**

Absenteeism as defined by the online [business dictionary](#) is “Voluntary non attendance at work, without valid reason. Absenteeism also means either habitual evasion of work, or willful absence as in a strike action. It does not include involuntary or occasional absence due to valid causes, or reasons beyond one’s control, such as accidents or sickness”. Merriam-Webster dictionary defines it as:

1. prolonged absence of an owner from his or her property
2. chronic absence (as from work or school); also : the rate of such absence.

### **CONCEPT OF STUDENTS’ ABSENTEEISM:**

The students have to attend the classes regularly during an academic year. The students’ absenteeism may be defined as the temporary cessation of the students, when their presence is expected or the absence of the students from class during regularly working hours or the failure to report for study on the part of the students. The total number of days, a student attends the regular classes and the total number of day classes is held during the academic year/ semester is to be noted in order to calculate the percentage of attendance for each student:

Percentage of attendance:  $\frac{\text{Number of days the student attended the college}}{\text{Number of day’s regular classes was held at college}} \times 100$

From the percentage of attendance, a student’s percentage of absence may be calculated as follows:

Percentage of absence:  $100 - \text{Percentage of attendance}$ .

### **Categorizing Students on Attendance Basis:**

For the purpose of categorizing the students on attendance basis, absenteeism may be regarded as a situation where a student is not at school/ college for an entire day (Weideman, Goga& Lopez, 2007). As such the students may be divided into three categories according to the percentage of absence:

1. Absentee college students
2. Moderately regular college students and
3. Regular college students.

According to Balfanz& Byrnes, (2012); chronic absenteeism is typically based on total days of school missed, including both excused and unexcused absences.

In this study absenteeism acts as a dependent variable which is affected by few factors. Absenteeism in this study is about the university failure to attend to the lecture

## **TOOLS USED IN THE STUDY:**

Discontent with the classrooms learning environment experienced by the students will be measured with the help of self constructed questioner on attendance.

## **METHODOLOGY:**

This paper is an attempt to find out the various reasons for students of not attending the college or classes during Primary as well as secondary source. The method of research is purposive survey method which is probably the best method .The population for this study was 200 students from S.S.Khanna girls degree college Allahabad .Sample size will comprise of 200 students from each faculty i.e. from art, science, commerce. Data were collected through a self constructed questioner on Attendance for examine student's Discontent with the classrooms learning environment The Questions contains 20 questions related to a factor that causes pupils to be absent from college .The alternate responses were given for each item viz: never sometime and often a score of 1, 2 or 3 was awarded for these three responses respectively for positive item, A Score of 3,2 or 1 was awarded for never ,some time and often responses to negative item.

## **Statistical Techniques Used:**

Percentage analysis were used.

## **Data Analysis & Interpretation:**

I am Discontent with the classrooms learning environment because of

S.No	Items	Groups	Often%	Sometimes%	Never%
1	Lack of interest in studies	Arts	3.6	23.4	9
		Science	1.8	23.4	10.8
		Commerce	0	23.4	12.6
2	Lack of personal aspiration in studies	Arts	0	12.6	23.4
		Science	1.8	12.6	21.6
		Commerce	5.4	7.2	23.6
3	Available entertainment services like malls,picture halls etc.	Arts	0	7.2	28.8
		Science	1.8	16.2	18
		Commerce	5.4	7.2	23.6
4	subjects are not according to his /her mental level	Arts	5.4	7.2	23.4
		Science	1.8	7.2	27
		Commerce	0	12.6	23.6
5	Over protection of family	Arts	7.2	19.8	9
		Science	3.6	12.6	19.8

		Commerce	5.4	7.2	23.6
6	Lack of teaching competency in teaching	Arts	0	12.6	23.4
		Science	1.8	12.6	21.6
		Commerce	0	7.2	55.8
7	Lack of self confidence	Arts	1.8	18	16.2
		Science	1.8	16.2	18
		Commerce	1.8	21.6	12.6
8	Inappropriate environment of the class	Arts	0	7.2	28.8
		Science	5.4	14.4	16.2
		Commerce	5.4	12.6	18
9	Lack of co-curricular activities in the college	Arts	7.2	10.8	18
		Science	1.8	14.4	19.8
		Commerce	3.6	16.2	16.2
10	Absence of canteen in the college	Arts	3.6	5.4	27
		Science	3.6	12.6	19.8
		Commerce	3.6	16.2	16.2

S.No	Items	Group	Often	Sometimes	Never
11	Lack of students related services in the college like health services ,bookbank counseling and remedial classes	Arts	9	1.8	25.2
		Science	9	1.8	25.2
		Commerce	0	16.2	23.6
12	Coaching classes for competitive examination	Arts	0	18	18
		Science	0	18	18
		Commerce	1.8	10.8	23.6
13	Excessive learning burden	Arts	0	27	9
		Science	0	27	9
		Commerce	7.2	12.6	16.2
14	Taking parts in co-curricular competitions like sports, cultural at district state and national level	Arts	18	25.2	9
		Science	18	25.2	9
		Commerce	3.6	19.8	12.6
15	Preparation of examination	Arts	12.6	21.6	1.8
		Science	12.6	21.6	1.8
		Commerce	16.2	19.8	0
16	Lack of conveyance for the college	Arts	3.6	14.4	18
		Science	3.6	14.4	18
		Commerce	7.2	10.8	18
17	High aspiration level of the parents	Arts	1.8	16.2	18
		Science	1.8	16.2	18
		Commerce	3.6	14.4	18
18	Involvement in social work	Arts	1.8	23.4	10.8



		Science	1.8	23.4	10.8
		Commerce	7.2	12.6	16.2
19	luxurious things and lot of pocket money provided by his/her parents	Arts	1.8	23.4	10.8
		Science	1.8	23.4	10.8
		Commerce	0	3.6	32.4
20	Due to Inferiority complex	Arts	1.8	3.6	34.2
		Science	1.8	3.6	34.2
		Commerce	3.6	7.2	40.8

- Item 1 shows that students of Art (23.4%), Science (23.4%), Commerce (23.4%) are sometimes absent from the college because of lack of interest in studies.
- Item 2 shows that students of Art (23.6%), Science (21.6%), Commerce (23.6%) are never absent from the college because Lack of personal aspiration in studies.
- Item 3 shows that students of Art (28.8%), Science (18%), Commerce (23.6%) are never absent from the college because of available entertainment services like malls, picture halls.
- Item 4 shows that students of Art (23.4%), Science (27%), Commerce (23.6%) are never absent from the college because of subjects are not according to his /her mental level.
- Item 5 shows that students of Art (9%), Science (19.8%), Commerce (23.6%) are never absent from the college because of Over protection of family.
- Item 6 shows that students of Art (23.4%), Science (21.6%), Commerce (55.8%) are never absent from the college because of Lack of teaching competency in teaching.
- Item 7 shows that students of Art (18%), Science (16.2%), Commerce (21.6%) are sometimes absent from the college because of Lack of self confidence.
- Item 8 shows that students of Art (28.8%), Science (16.2%), Commerce (18%) are never absent from the college because of Inappropriate environment of the class.
- Item 9 shows that students of Art (18%), Science (19.8%), Commerce (16.2%) are never absent from the college because of Lack of co-curricular activities in the college.
- Item 10 shows that students of Art (27%), Science (19.8%), Commerce (16.2 %) are never absent from the college because of absence of canteen in the college.
- Item 11 shows that students of Art (23.4%), Science (21.6%), Commerce (55.8%) are never absent from the college because of Lack of students related services in the college like health services ,book bank counseling and remedial classes.
- Item 12 shows that students of Art (18%), Science (18%), Commerce (23.6%) are never absent from the college because of Coaching classes for competitive examination.
- Item 13 shows that students of Art (27%), Science (27%), Commerce (12.6%) are sometimes absent from the college because of Excessive learning burden.

14. Item 14 shows that students of Art (25.2%), Science (25.2%), Commerce (19.8%) are sometimes absent from the college because of Taking parts in co-curricular competitions like sports, cultural at district state and national level.
15. Item 15 shows that students of Art (21.6%), Science (21.6%), Commerce (19.8%) are sometimes absent from the college because of preparation of examination.
16. Item 16 shows that students of Art (18%), Science (18%), Commerce (18%) are never absent from the college because of Lack of conveyance for the college.
17. Item 17 shows that students of Art (18%), Science (18%), Commerce (18%) are never absent from the college because of High aspiration level of the parents.
18. Item 18 shows that students of Art (23.4%), Science (23.4%), Commerce (12.6%) are sometimes absent from the college because of Involvement in social work.
19. Item 19 shows that students of Art (23.4%), Science (23.4%), Commerce (3.6%) are sometimes absent from the college because of luxurious things and lot of pocket money provided by his/her parents.
20. Item 20 shows that students of Art (34.2%), Science (34.2%), Commerce (40.8%) are never absent from the college because of Due to Inferiority complex.

### **Conclusion**

Though factors related to the school (such as teachers, peers and students themselves) are relatively not very strong in causing students to be absent from school, the school's authority must still address that improving the school environment (such as class size and reasonable school rules) so that it is conducive for learning should be given priority in addressing the truancy problem. Expansion of the guidance and counseling services and promotion of activities that will bring truant students to like schooling must also be considered in the attempt to minimize this truancy problem. Besides, this truancy problem will lead to other social ills. It is therefore not only a school problem but also a problem for society. To reiterate, in addressing this problem many parties and authorities must cooperate to address this problem of truancy among students.

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