

# Factors Influencing Student Absenteeism in School

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**Abstract:** Attendance in classrooms ensures continuity in the student's learning process. When a student is absent from class, it has an adverse effect on their academic performance. There are many factors like family health or financial concerns, poor school environment, transportation problems, and differing community attitudes towards education that affect student absenteeism directly and indirectly. The main purpose of this study was to investigate the factors that influence student absenteeism in schools.

**Keywords:** Student Absenteeism, Absenteeism in school

## 1. Introduction

Absenteeism in school is the habit of staying away from school without providing a genuine or any reason for not attending classes. Absenteeism is a truant behaviour that negatively affects the performance among students (Keter, 2013). Student absenteeism and truancy have become a large problem with students today and received lesser attention due to the abundance of other issues and priorities that social workers and other service agencies are faced with (Teasley, 2004).

Family health or financial concerns, poor school environment, drug and alcohol use, transportation problems, and differing community attitudes towards education are all conditions that can cause a child not to attend school. This kind of situation is not conducive for a child's study (Mervilde, 1981). Absenteeism can be defined as persistent, habitual, and unexplained absence from school (Brooks, 1997). Absenteeism occurs when a student is absent without reason 20% or more of school time, this is consistently identified regardless of the specific circumstances of the absenteeism (Bond, 2004).

Students feel less connected to school due to harsh or punitive discipline policies (Neely, 2004). Students start truanting in primary school, and often continue through secondary school and so on (Reid, 2005). When a student does not come to school for a lengthy period of time, one may assume these students are learning elsewhere, but unfortunately in most circumstances this is not the case (RI Kids Count, 2007). The magnitude of irregular attendance at school and classes does not only affect the absent students, but also impacts on teachers' ability to articulate the curriculum requirements, and to plan and present instructional activities in an organized and meaningful way.

## 2. Objectives of the Study

- To analyse the factors influencing student absenteeism in schools.
- To analyse the demographic profile and socio-economic profile of the students in schools.
- To analyse the relationship between demographic profile, socio-economic profile of the respondents and factors influencing student absenteeism.

## 3. Limitations of the Study

The results of the study are bound to be affected by the following limitations:

- The results and the findings are based on the opinion of the respondents, so it cannot be generalized.
- The sample size of the study is limited to 159 respondents due to time constraint.

## 4. Review of Literature

**Komakech and Osuu (2014)** investigated the major cause for student absenteeism and the possible solutions to the cause in Universal Secondary Education Schools in Uganda. The findings showed that the lack of scholastic requirements, household work, lack of interest in education, hunger at school or lack of mid-day meals, sexual harassment at school, long distance to school, illness or disease, loss of parent or close relative, peer influence, and harsh punishment at school were the top ten causes of students' absenteeism in schools.

**Cook and Ezenne (2010)** determined the root cause of absenteeism in selected primary schools in Jamaica by investigating the influence of personal, educational, and community factors on student absenteeism from school. The findings suggest that the causal factors of absenteeism do not find their genesis in the family only, but also in the schools, the communities, and the students themselves. These factors combine to accentuate absenteeism in primary school in the rural areas of Jamaica.

**Phillips (2010)**, analyzed the factors affecting student attendance and determined whether proposed incentive program would motivate students to come to school more regularly at high school level. The use of an incentive program to encourage student attendance improved student attendance during the third grading period at this school. Student beliefs about the importance of school attendance were identified and academic and environmental factors were defined by the administration and teachers.

## 5. Research Methodology

- a) **Type of research:** The present study is a descriptive research.
- b) **Period of study:** The study was conducted for a period of 3 months (December 2016 to February 2017).
- c) **Area of the study:** The study was conducted regarding the analysis of factors influencing student absenteeism in schools.
- d) **Sample size:** A sample size of 159 respondents is selected using stratified random sampling technique.
- e) **Sampling techniques:** Stratified random sampling. It is a type of probability sampling which is a random sample of a population in which the population is first divided into distinct sub-populations, or strata, and random sample are then taken separately from each stratum.
- f) **Tools used for analysis:** Percentage analysis, descriptive statistics and correlation have been used to analyze and draw conclusion.

	Private	33.3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>
Annual House-hold Income	Below Rs.60000	42.8
	Rs.60001-Rs.200000	51.6
	Rs.200001-Rs.300000	5.7
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>
Family Job Category	Lower level	10.7
	Middle level	76.1
	Upper-middle level	13.2
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100</b>

Demographic Factors	Classification	Percentage (%)
Fathers Education level	Secondary	54.7
	Higher secondary	23.9
	College	21.4
	Total	100
Mothers Educational Level	Secondary	57.9
	Higher secondary	25.8
	College	16.4
	Total	100

## 6. Analysis and Interpretation

### 6.1 Simple Percentage Analysis

The below table represents the demographic distribution of the respondents taken in the study

**Table 1:** Demographic Profile of the Respondents

Demographic Factors	Classification	Percentage (%)
Grade	VI-VIII	35.2
	IX-X	30.8
	XI-XII	34.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>
Area of Residence	Urban area	44.0
	Semi-urban area	26.4
	Rural area	29.6
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>
Gender	Female	52.8
	Male	47.2
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100</b>
Family Job Status	Government	32.1
	Government aided	34.6

### 6.2 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics is done to analyse the influence of personal factor, school climate, family, peers, teachers, community, disease, and electronic media towards student absenteeism in schools. The average mean score of towards respondents agreeing upon their opinion towards student's personal factors influencing absenteeism is (3.54), school climate influencing absenteeism is (3.22), family influencing absenteeism is (3.31), peers influencing absenteeism is (3.41), teachers influencing absenteeism is (3.32), community influencing absenteeism is (3.52), disease influencing absenteeism is (3.32), and electronic media influencing student absenteeism is (3.61).

The result shows that electronic media has the highest impact on the factors influencing student absenteeism in schools.

## 7. Correlation

**Table 2:** The table shows the relation between the socio-economic profile and factors influencing student absenteeism in schools

		Student's personal factors	School climate Factors	Family factors	Peer factors	Teacher factors	Community factors	Disease factors	Electronic factors
Family annual income of the students	Pearson Correlation	-.132	-.180*	-.073	-.002	.016	.050	.003	.049
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.097	.023	.358	.979	.846	.534	.971	.539
	N	159	159	159	159	159	159	159	159
Family job status	Pearson Correlation	-.114	-.043	-.076	.038	-.023	.113	.035	-.032
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.153	.587	.343	.632	.773	.155	.661	.689
	N	159	159	159	159	159	159	159	159
Father's educational level of the students	Pearson Correlation	.090	-.111	-.026	-.110	.112	.035	.095	.133
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.261	.163	.748	.169	.159	.661	.236	.094
	N	159	159	159	159	159	159	159	159
Mother's educational level of the students	Pearson Correlation	-.101	-.141	-.068	-.038	-.073	-.072	.006	-.065
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.207	.076	.397	.631	.363	.365	.936	.416
	N	159	159	159	159	159	159	159	159

\*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

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

### **Inference**

- Gender of the students has positive relationship with teacher factors in student absenteeism.
- Home location of the students has negative relationship with disease factors in student absenteeism.
- Family annual income of the respondents has negative relationship with school climate factors in student absenteeism.

### **8.Suggestions**

- 1) The schools must reach out to the reality of their communities and their families and should have a greater level of coordination with the different government agencies within their areas to enable a better understanding of the extent of the problem in the area.
- 2) Electronic media has a huge impact on the attendance among the school students, so the institutions should make sure that students are made aware about the ill effects of using electronic media.
- 3) The school should engage in a one-on-one discussion with the student in order to identify the causes of absenteeism. This information helps to address the issues.
- 4) The schools need to educate the students regarding the importance of attendance and the adverse effects of absenteeism and school rules should be made stringent concerning the same.
- 5) Parents should be made aware of the classes missed by their child. This can be done by arranging regular meetings and working with parents to plan out strategies best suited for their child.
- 6) The school should organize various clubs and class activities (festival celebration) and encourage students to participate in the same. This helps break the monotony of every day classes and livens up the classroom.
- 7) The schools need to try to create an environment of fun and learning and in still in our students a positive feel towards studies and class activities, which will in turn reduce absenteeism.

### **9.Conclusion**

Attendance in classrooms ensures continuity in the student's learning process. When a student is absent from class, it has an adverse effect on their academic performance. This is because frequent absences may lead to missing out on vital information, facts and instructions that result in partial understanding of a topic, submission of incomplete work and poor participation in class activities.

There are various factors that influence the student absenteeism in schools. Among these various factors, eight factors have been taken into account for research purpose of the study. These factors play major role in student's attendance in schools. The study analysed the factors influencing student absenteeism in schools and found that most of the respondents belong to the grade of VI-VIII, were female. It is concluded from the analysis that the electronic media factors are ranked first, the student's personal factors are considered as next important factor and community

factors are ranked as third important factor in student absenteeism in schools.

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