
Teacher - Student Relationship and Problem of Absenteeism among Students

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Abstract

Since decades our government is talking and planning of uplifting our education system to the top of the world ranking but the reality is that our education system is still struggling with the basic problems such as organisational facilities, classroom problems and the problems relating to the students background and their individual adjustments to the school climate. Our academicians are trying to deal with some very complex problems of our education system but the irony is that we have till now not dealt with some very 'seeming simple problems' which in reality are not so simple, one of which is the attendance problem of the students. Real India resides in the villages; students here go to the government schools not to the high profile private schools. We can say that government schools are the heart of Indian schooling system and represent it. So the problems faced by these schools are the real problems of Indian schooling system. Through interviews and literatures, it has been reported that attendance problem is the main problem faced by the teachers here.

Student attendance, socioeconomic status, parent involvement, curriculum and testing climate are some of the factors effecting learning (Gottfried, 2009, King, 2000, Ramai et al, 2007). The main goal of any education system is to make a student socially well adjusted and self reliant. One of the main components of any education system is student-teacher relationship. Relationships are defined as "strong, frequent, and diverse interdependence that lasts over a considerable period of time" (Kelley et al., 1983.). The teacher-student relationship has been identified as a significant influence on overall school and behavioural adjustment (Baker, Terry, Bridger, & Winsor, 1997). Liu (1997) attests to the importance of the student-teacher relationship stating, "The close emotional bond between teachers and students led students to recognize the school as a home away from home". So the role of a teacher in students' life is very broad and not limited to the teaching of subject matters. Rollins (1995) found that positive teacher-student relationships, "warm, close, communicative,". If the teachers are supportive and friendly to the students, the climate of the school is congenial and the students like coming to school

and this helps in solving the attendance problem of students to a great extent. This paper deals with attendance factor of pupils in school and the impact of teacher-student relationship on absenteeism of students.

Key words - student-teacher relationship, attendance, pupils, teacher etc.

INTRODUCTION

Since decades our government is discussing and planning for uplifting our education system to the top ranking of the world but in reality our education system is still struggling with the basic problems such as organisational facilities, classroom problems and the problems relating to the students background and their individual adjustments to the school climate. Our academicians are trying to deal with some very complex problems of our education system but the irony is that we have till now not dealt with some very 'seeming simple problems' which actually are not so simple, of which one is the attendance problem of the students. Absenteeism is defined as the lack of presence of an employee for a planned work. According to Bhatia (1980). Real India resides in the villages; students here go to the government schools, not to the high profile private schools. We can say that government schools are the heart of Indian schooling system and represent it.

So the problems faced by these schools are the real problems of our Indian schooling system. Through interviews and literatures, it has been reported that attendance problem is the main problem faced by the teachers here. Students' attendance, socioeconomic status, parent involvement, curriculum and testing climate are some of the factors effecting learning (Gottfried, 2009, King, 2000, Ramai et al, 2007). The main goal of any education system is to make a student socially well adjusted and self reliant. One of the main components of any education system is student-teacher relationship. Relationships are defined as "strong, frequent, and diverse interdependence that lasts over a considerable period of time" (Kelley et al., 1983.). The teacher-student relationship has been identified as a significant influence on overall school and behavioural adjustment (Baker, Terry, Bridger, & Winsor, 1997). Liu (1997) attests to the importance of the student-teacher relationship stating, "The close emotional bond between teachers and students led students to recognize the school as a home away from home".

So the role of a teacher in students' life is very broad and not limited to the teaching of subject matters. Rollins (1995) found that positive teacher-student relationships, "warm, close, communicative,". On the other hand it was found that conflict and dependency in teacher-student relationships are related to

unfavourable outcomes such as a negative school attitude, school avoidance (Birch & Ladd, 1997). If the teachers are supportive and friendly to the students, the climate of the school is congenial and the students like coming to school and this helps in solving the attendance problem of students to a great extent. We can thus say that the student- teacher relationship plays a major role in attendance factor of the students. This paper deals with the factors and problems of attendance of pupils in school and its relation with student- teacher relationship.

OBJECTIVES

1. To study the factors of absenteeism among students.
2. To study the impact of teacher-student relationship on absenteeism among students.

HYPOTHESIS

“Favourable Teacher-Student Relationship has Positive Impact on Absenteeism among Students”.

DATA COLLECTION

1. For this paper researcher opted for document analysis as the method of data collection. The researcher went through many materials available online and offline to study the factors of absenteeism among students and the impact of Teacher-Student Relationship on Absenteeism among Students.

RESEARCH REVIEWS

Romer (1993) found that students who attended only a quarter of the required lectures earned an average of C-- grade, while student who attended all of the required lectures earned an average of a B+. Grabe, Christopherson, and Douglas (2005) argue that this significant decline in student grades are a result of poor performance on course examinations due to missed class. This correlation has been clearly shown within quantitative studies of absenteeism. Many studies have found a negative relationship between teacher absences and student achievement Bayard (2003); Beavers (1981); Boswell (1993); Cantrell (2003); (2005); Lewis, (1981); Madden & et al., (1991); Manatt (1987); Pitkoff (1989); Smith (1984); Summers & Raivetz (1982); Womble (2001); Woods (1990). Devadoss and Foltz (1996) sought to study whether or not requiring and rewarding attendance improved class attendance, and if student absenteeism resulted in lower grades. They found that a student who attends all classes is likely to achieve, on average, a 0.45 point higher grade than a student who attends only half of the classes (Devadoss & Foltz, 1996, p. 505). A fundamental limitation in each of these studies however, remains uncertainty in the cause-and-effect relationship between absenteeism and performance. Marburger

(2001) questions, “do students who miss a lot of class perform poorly on exams because they were not present when the material was covered? Or, alternatively, are students with high levels of absenteeism less committed to academics in general” (p. 100)? To address this limitation, Marburger (2001) conducted a study where records were kept of the specific class periods each student missed over the entire semester. Additionally, the absences were recorded alongside the material corresponding to the test question was covered. In doing so, Marburger found evidence that illustrated clearly that absenteeism during the relevant class could significantly determine whether or not the student would answer correctly on a multiple-choice exam

FACTORS AFFECTING ABSENTEEISM AMONG STUDENTS

The deficiency behind student non-appearance has been put in numerous zones: individual delinquency, poor child rearing, degenerate companion impact, risky school conditions, school maladjustment, educator and executive mentality, disciplinary systems, passionate states, work designs, family strife, money related assets, accessibility of employments, absence of inspiration, and lower insight (Goldberg, 1999; Kearney, 2003; Marburger, 2001; Haslinger, Kelly, O'Lare, 1996; Cooper, 1986; Bos and Ruijters, 1992; Voelkel, Welte and Wiecezorek, 1999; Taylor and McKean, and Schachter, 2006).

Terrible evaluations can lead to demoralisation among students. Battling in class can be discouraging for students, and leaves them pondering whether it merits going to class in any case. In any case, a smidgen of exertion at home can go far. Regardless of whether it's free coaching, tutoring, or afterschool learning programs, there are large numbers of approaches to rouse trust in students, and help them feel that increasingly welcome in the study hall.

Students need to attend school daily to succeed. 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 background, but particularly for the students of lower socioeconomic status. Poverty plays a big role through such factors as lack of healthcare, unreliable transportation and frequent moves or homelessness. In India where poverty is a big problem in every sector, it is a challenging issue especially in education field, giving birth to various types of problems, still waiting to be dealt with vigorous zeal. Many absences are not about students wilfully missing schools, but are excused absences. We may use three categories to explain absences: discretion, aversion and barriers. With discretion parents and students do not understand how much attendance is compulsory, school also lacks a strong culture of attendance or students simply have something else they would rather do. With aversion, a child could be struggling academically, victimised by bullying or dealing with anxiety. Barriers deals

with students' lack of access to health care have no safe path to school, lack of effective transportation or facing family responsibilities etc. All these categories are playing prominent role in acting as causes for the students' poor attendance in schools. In spite of the fact that scholarly challenges are dangerous, for some, students, tormenting can make school feel perilous, both physically and inwardly. Perceiving the indications of tormenting is a significant advance for instructors and guardians alike. And keeping in mind that youngsters can be hesitant to discuss harassing they're encountering, there are a lot of assets, even applications that offer tips on the best way to have these sorts of discussions.

Caring for another family member may also be one of the reasons of students being absent from school. Regardless of whether it's a more youthful kin, a grandparent, or somebody with exceptional human services needs, frequently students are investing energy helping their family as opposed to being at school. It's an intense decision students and families shouldn't need to make, however there are methods for facilitating the weight providing care puts on families. There are assets to help find eldercare administrations, reasonable or even free childcare, and even arranged or crisis care.

One of the causes of poor attendance is the health problems of students. Teachers should educate the students to take care of their wellbeing. They should teach the students the value of sanitation and good health. Students should be made aware of the various diseases due to unhealthy habits and unclean environment. Teachers should act as role model and follow good and healthy habits themselves. At the point when the vast majority consider unlucky deficiencies, phoning in debilitated is most likely what rings a bell. At times it's unavoidable, however there are ways families can limit ailment related nonappearances and guarantee their youngster still gets the instruction they merit. Great wellbeing is fundamental to a youngster's prosperity, so promising great eating regimen and exercise. At the point when students do feel unwell, it's justified, despite all the trouble for families to ask whether their youngster is too wiped out to even consider going to class.

Mental and emotional medical problems can be a splendidly legitimate purpose behind missing school. Be that as it may, it's significant for families to work with schools so students can push ahead, as broadened unlucky deficiencies can fuel both scholastic and passionate issues. Families ought to comprehend the scope of a tyke's feelings and practices that probably won't involve missing school, and see how to recognize and help kids through increasingly genuine emotional wellness issues when they do emerge.

In India students come from different background to school, having different outlook, habits, behaviour, tolerance limits etc. There are students who have a difficult time in school. We all must have

noticed in our school days that timid children usually become victim of bullying and teasing. This scares them off from school. It may also have long lasting impact on their innocent mind. A teacher should be very alert and strict towards such sensitive issues and deal with them urgently. The relation between a teacher and student should be based on faith. A student in need should first think and come to their teachers for help. A teacher needs to understand the value of the students' senses of belonging, which can be of greater value and build self worth for students. If the teacher demonstrates an understanding of the student's culture, it will provide a better understanding between the teacher and the student.

IMPACT OF TEACHER-STUDENT RELATIONSHIP ON ABSENTEESIM AMONG STUDENTS

Students' problem behaviours such as inattention, internalizing, attendance and conduct problems are negatively correlated with the quality of teacher-student relationships (Pianta & Nimetz, 1991). Teachers prepare their lesson plans with the perception that 100% attendance of students will be there in the classroom to ensure maximum learning. Neild and Balfanz (2006) reported that, student absences early in the academic term predict whether the student will graduate (at high school level) or encounter academic challenges at elementary or middle school level. It is really dissatisfying for them if they find students being absent. Though it is really difficult to have 100% attendance in classroom but a teacher can minimise the attendance problem by preparing interesting lesson plans and teaching aids, by having supportive attitude and flexible approach towards students. A teacher should try to reach out his students and let the students to approach him with their problems. A teacher should never be an epitome of fear for their students. Researches and literatures have always supported that students like to attend the classes of a teacher who is a figure of love, care and warmth. Changing instructional practices and emphasising greater personalization and student engagement might improve attendance as it will result in increased level of student involvement.

Teachers should promote learning that is relevant to students in their real life. Teachers can improve students' engagement by introducing various forms of instructional technologies such as computers, scientific equipments, multimedia, internet resources etc. Here teachers are more in role of 'facilitators' for the students, maintaining friendly and caring relation with them. Ramaley and Zia (2005) suggest that students are most engaged in the classrooms that are positive, challenging and open. They refer to these classrooms as transparent learning climate. Teachers can facilitate student engagement by modelling as 'learning' in front of their students i.e showing them that they too are learners, students relate easily with such type of teacher as they seem 'one of their kind' to them.

It has been found in researches that pupils like to be engaged all the time and be active. They feel bored being passive listeners to the lectures of their teachers. Such boredom may also be a cause of pupils avoiding the school. Conducting group discussions, workshops for students on various topics and the teachers participating in them, instead of delivering lectures, will also rejuvenate both, the students and the teacher, making the classroom environment lively and interesting. Organising debates and essay competition in various areas can also be a useful way in this field. While teachers do not need to develop deep friendships with students, they may interact on a friendly level. Such positive interactions will encourage students to learn and succeed and in turn will lessen the attendance problem of the students.

Students always look up to their teachers for appreciation and encouragement. For any student, especially till secondary school, appreciation and praises coming from a teacher is similar to winning a trophy. We all must have had similar feelings in our past. Praises coming from a teacher acts as a refreshment for a student, filling a new life in them and encouraging them to come to school the next day and for many days to come with a new zeal. On the contrary, when the students are scolded for their bad behaviour or performance by their teachers, may lead to absenteeism. According to David Thomas essay, "The Mind of Man" states, "children who are yelled at, feel rejected and frightened because a teacher shouts at them", tend to avoid coming to school. Teachers should refrain from scolding the children. Appreciating and awarding the students for their good attendance and conduct will not only encourage those particular students but also the other students as well. Activities like declaring 'students of the week' based on their attendance should be done. This will definitely encourage other students to follow, which will ultimately turn into positive habits in them.

Teachers are the role model for their students. The theory of Bandura (1997), social learning theory, stipulates that 'people learn from one another via observation, imitation and modelling'. This means that students often learn a lot by observing their teachers conduct and performance at work. A teacher should set an ideal for their students by being regular and timely to school. The communication between the student and the teacher serves as a connection between the two, which provides a better atmosphere for a classroom environment. The more the teacher connects or communicates with his or her students, the more likely they will be able to help students learn at a high level and accomplish quickly. For teachers conducting a classroom and shaping the minds of the young students, teachers who communicate effectively with their students will give appropriate and helpful feedback to their students. Interaction between the student and teacher becomes extremely important for a successful relationship through the entire time of a school year. A close, but limited relationship between the student and teacher can be helpful for those students who are shy, and find speaking in front of the classroom difficult or children

who have low self-esteem. These students in the classroom will have the confidence they had always wanted, but never achieved due to not having a good relationship with the teacher. . According to Zehm and Kottler (1993), students will never trust us or open themselves up to hear what we have to say unless they sense that we value and respect them. “Students have felt what mattered most was the relationship of teachers established with their students providing guidance to students who have felt inadequate or threatened” (Rose, 2000). The key is, teachers need to continuously monitor the student in order for him or her to be aware of any difficulties the student is having.

Understanding the child’s problem, fear, or confusion will give the teacher a better understanding of the child’s difficulties and minimise the chances of the child bunking the school because of such reasons. Once the teacher becomes aware of the problems, he or she will have more patience with the student, thus making the child feel secure or less confused when learning is taking place in the classroom. Teacher should come out as a helping hand for his students and maintain a relation of ‘second parent’ with them.

For a teacher taking care of their students is not enough, the students should know that their teachers care for them. Demonstrating caring is one of the most powerful ways to build positive relationships with your students (Kerman et al., 1980).). When your actions and words communicate that you sincerely care for your students, they are more likely to want to perform well for you and enjoy coming to school. Caring also fosters a positive approach in students towards attending the school, as students who feel cared for are more likely to want to please you by complying with your wishes and policies. It is a tragedy when a student mistakenly believes that his teacher does not care for or like him. In most cases, teachers do care but fail to do the things that directly communicate this valuable message. The approach used by teacher may not be understood by the student and this could lead them to lose interest in school. Student could be lacking interest in study, which could be the result of content not being understood by them hence pushing them away from school. A teacher should adopt flexible approach and leave space for the students to clear their queries. Teachers should ensure that the classroom atmosphere is conducive to learning. Definitely children learn when they enjoy learning, but also they need some control over the teacher (s) decisions. “Authoritarian control is often destructive to students who are in the primary grades, and eventually upper grades teachers have difficulty dealing with children who were taught with an authoritarian teacher” (Jones, 1981). A teacher should have a cooperative type relationship with their students. Children in primary grades feel the urge to talk about their problems, fears, or even show their knowledge, but at the same time they want to be listened too. Students feel flattered when the teacher eventually gives them the option of contributing, or in other words the teacher

asks for an opinion, which is usually not offered to the students. The teacher(s) does not have to give up all their control, rather teachers share control with students and encourage interactions that are determined by mutual agreement. This will encourage students to come to school and attend their classes.

A teacher should be sensitive towards the need of their students. Lack of facilities such as library, sports facilities etc; is a hindrance to attendance factor of students. These lacks of facilities make the school life boring and monotonous, urging the students to remain away from school. Teachers should not only see to the fact that such facilities are made available to the pupils but also enjoy them along with the students, thus making the students realise that teachers are one among them, not an alien to them. Creating such an environment in school will make the school a fun place for the students, a place which they just cannot miss to be at.

Adolescence is a stage when a lot of fear develops as a result of physical and mental changes. As teachers, we are dealing with fragile beings. Adolescence brings insecurities. Individuals at this age are disentangling from adults. Being accepted by their peers is the key to their self-esteem. Being criticized by a teacher in front of their peers humiliates them. To avoid “losing face,” students may react by talking back, smirking, or walking out of schools. They will do whatever it takes to preserve their dignity; therefore a teacher needs to be extra careful at this stage. Supportive relationships with teachers may play an important developmental role during the transition to and through middle school. However, developing relationships with an early adolescent presents unique challenges to middle school teachers. A teacher needs to develop a relationship based on care, trust and friendliness with their adolescent students.

Teachers should inform the parents about the benefits of keeping their children in school. Remaining away from school having nothing of worth to do may inculcate bad habits in them and spoil their future. This can be done by the only if he has a good communication and relation with the parents of the student. Those teachers, who demonstrate respect towards their students, automatically win favour by having active and interested learners in their classroom. The arrogant or offensive teacher will lack these positive qualities due to his or her lack of control over the children. Teachers should assert that they should also be treated with respect and their responsibilities to ensure that students treat each other with kindness. According to the Jones, “teachers are encouraged to blend their warmth and firmness towards the students in their classroom, but with realistic limits”.

CONCLUSION

After going through the above research done by the researcher, the researcher has reached the conclusion that ““Favourable Teacher-Student Relationship has Positive Impact on Absenteeism among Students” stands true.

Teaching is considered a demanding and challenging social activity in our society with the ultimate goal of training students to acquire the ability, knowledge, social values and skills in order to apply and integrate them in the community. It is generally agreed that good teaching involves good communication between the teacher and students and also among students. The best productivity in a classroom comes from good attendance of students and whole hearted dedication of committed teachers towards their profession. As a responsible teacher one needs to resolve all the issues that are acting as hurdle and hampering his/her relation with the students. A good relationship between a teacher and a student is indispensable in order to achieve the overall academic goals and come out as a winning face, setting an example before the rest of the world. Our education system as a whole genuinely needs to strive towards it. The goal of every student-teacher relationship is to provide a stimulating learning environment for the students and keep the children in school for their all round development. The results show that teachers and students value a supportive and caring relationship between them and that interaction is essential to the teacher-student relationship (Fredson Soares dos Reis da Luz,2015).

In order to generate positive results, the relationships should be based on mutual respect, trust and discipline. Without these aspects, an ideal relationship would be nearly impossible to achieve and sustain. When students feel their teacher is a caring person, then the classroom becomes a happier place for everyone where both the students and teachers like to come and gain. In a less stressful situation, creative ideas are more likely to emerge. Maintaining good relationships between teachers and students is an all around winning proposition as it fosters an environment where pupils like to come and stay. Thompson (1998) says, “The most powerful weapon available to secondary teachers who want to foster a favourable learning climate is a positive relationship with our students”. Canter and Canter (1997) make the statement that we all can recall classes in which we did not try very hard because we didn't like our teachers. This should remind us how important it is to have strong, positive relationships with our students. Marzano (2003) states that students will resist rules and procedures along with the consequent disciplinary actions and coming to school if the foundation of a good relationship is lacking. Poor attendance is an alarming problem for administrators, teachers, principals etc. Absenteeism can lead to depression and also poor performance in school. It could also lead to moral degradation because of the time wasted in being away from school. No relationship is perfect; problems will arise in all

relationships. When difficulties occur, they should be addressed in a fair and justified way. Each person should have the opportunity to voice his or her opinion.

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