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A Study of Absenteeism among Secondary School Students in relation to Home Environment

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Abstract

Education is a continuous and life long process. The main aim of education is to develop innate powers of students. In present system formal education is imparted in schools where students find the classroom unattractive and thus avoid the classroom without any justified reason. Absenteeism actually shows an expression of conflicts and anxiety. Today absenteeism is one of the most baffling problems of education. There are many factors responsible for the absenteeism among secondary school students which needs a vast and descriptive study. This paper is an effort to enlighten the effective role of Home Environment in absenteeism of secondary school students. Descriptive survey method was employed. A sample of 257 boys and 243 girls was taken up by cluster sampling method. On the basis of attendance recorded in attendance register the students were divided into four groups on the basis of absentees and regulars. These groups of absentees and regulars were compared. The result indicated Absentee boys were lower on facilities, parental approval, sharing ideas & decision making and harmony in comparison to Regular Boys and girls. Significant relation was found between absentee and regular girls in Facility dimension of home environment. Regular boys were higher on harmony scores than regular girls.

Key words: Truancy, Absenteeism, Drop Out, Home Environment, Family Environment.

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Introduction

Development and regular progress of any country is totally dependent upon the techniques, strategies and contents of education. Educated people of a country lead their state to highest peak of progress. We all are familiar of the fact that the 21st century is an era of scientific progress and cybernetics. Even at this stage the majority of people are yet very far from modern technology and education. The present system and process of education is facing many problems such as student unrest, dropout, stagnation, examination walk out etc. At the same time finance and administrative problems in education are also very vast. These days, only formal education is imparted in schools where there is no intimacy between the teacher and the taught. Life has become very stressful. Students find the classrooms unattractive. As a result they avoid the classrooms without any justified reason. Most of the schools are facing the problems such as dropout, wastage & stagnation, absenteeism, truancy, non-attendance etc. In all of these problems, absenteeism is common and essential to deal with.

According to Good (1959) attendance is the act of being present, particularly at school while absenteeism is vice-versa i.e. the failure of pupil to be present at school. School attempt to control these problems in its own way. Efforts by school to restrain the rising tide of absenteeism are to enforce compulsory attendance.

Deighton (1971) found that one of the common characteristics of the potential school dropout is poor or irregular attendance. The absent pupil is first identified in the classroom by report of daily absence made by the teacher. Strict discipline has proved ineffective. Punishment like use of cane, imposition of fine, striking of names from the rolls of class and detention from examination, to control the growing number of absentees are not effective. Munjal (1979) stated truancy occurred more in private educational institution than in government institution. The discipline in family had a positive relationship with the frequency of truancy. Absenteeism required detailed investigation.

Meaning and nature of absenteeism

Absenteeism is a morale problem. Absenteeism actually shows an expression of conflicts and anxiety in the mind. It may be resulted from any point, school, home, neighborhood or family. Any one or more factors may be responsible for truancy among students. Various researchers have studied the responsible factors like socio-cultural environment, school climate, emotional – temperamental levels socio-economic status, type of school, management of school, ill health, mental disturbances, domestic responsibilities, strict discipline in home or school etc. Thakore (1972) stated that a comparatively large number of parents of truants had insufficient education unsatisfactory mutual relationship, discriminating attitude toward the child. Absenteeism may be related to both causes and manifestation in the individual's behavior. Some studies have shown a moderate relation between morale and absenteeism. Harvell (1958) found that, there are situations, in which it has been shown that some absenteeism is traceable to low morale. Healy (1915) produced evidence to link truancy with social and unlawful conduct. Manroe (1952) investigated that academically poor students are more liable to absenteeism. Jain (1969) found that the incidence of truancy was significantly higher in privately managed institution than government student. Moier (1976) stated that absenteeism is a behavior which is instigated and situational. It represents a dynamic interaction between an individual and a situation.

Absenteeism indicates an expression of conflict, a symptom of anxiety and rebellion against suppressed activity, and denial of free outdoors life in home, school and society. It has come as a technique for reducing tension but an immature behavior pattern of class does not reduce his trouble. But it still increases it. Absentees feel home as inadequate and incomplete and find school a compulsion or full of boredom when rejected at home and rebuked by school, enjoy company of other absentees usually exploits their immaturity. Absenteeism is a problem related to the behavioral adjustment. The maladjustive pattern of behavior includes transient personality disorders, character disorders, alcoholism drug addiction etc. Such view emphasis the study of distressing problem of individual, faulty patterns of adjustment and then to provide the person concern necessary preventive measures. So, the absenteeism may be regarded as behavioral and psychological problem.

Role of home environment in absenteeism

The first institution which has responsibilities for the education of child is home. According to chambers 21st century dictionary edited by Robinson, M. & Davidson, G (1999) the meaning of home is “dwelling place or a place of rest.” This shows that the home is that specialized place where one can get both mental and physical rest. The Webster dictionary of English language provided the meaning of environment as “All the physical, social and cultural factors and conditions influencing the existence or development of and organism assemblage of organisms; the act of surrounding; the state of being surrounded; that which surrounds; surroundings”. The term home environment refers to the surroundings of the dwelling place. Home environment is one of the important cause for the development of problematic behavior. In a Cambridge clinic study, by Bannisher and Ravder (1944) it was found that out of 112 problem children who referred to the clinic, in the home of 77% there was improper discipline. Healy (1915) reported that parents kept the child at their home for their own convenience. A major responsible factor for absenteeism was lack of home discipline. (Dayton 1928). Evidence of child neglect by their parents (Wilson, 1962) and more siblings in family (Sommeear & Nagel 1991). Douglas et.al (1964) noted that school attendance is more satisfactory among the children whose parent take an active interest in their school work than among those who have uninterested parents.

Hypotheses

On the basis of available literature and the objectives set for the present investigation the following hypothesis were formulated.

1. *The absentee and regular do not differ significantly in their home environment.*
2. *The absentee boys and girls do not differ significantly in their home environment.*
3. *The regular boys and girls do not differ significantly in their home environment.*

Methodology

The focus of present investigation was to analyze the relationship of Home Environment variable with the absenteeism among high school students. This study required the analysis of absenteeism in desired context. Therefore descriptive survey method was used. The absenteeism was the dependent variable. The school, home and personality variables were taken up as independent variable. The sex of student was taken up as moderator variable.

Sample

The objective of present investigation was to study absenteeism among high school students. So a sample of high school students was taken up. In the present investigation cluster random sampling was used. So, 10 senior secondary and secondary schools were selected randomly. A sample of 500 students (257 boys, 243 girls) was chosen up.

Tools used in the study

The investigator used two tools for data collection.

- A- *School attendance register was used for identifying absentee and regular students.*
- B- *Home environment scale by Vijaya Dhoundiyal.*

Procedure

A sample of 500 high school students was selected for administration of tool. The desired sample size was calculated by using formulae $n/1+n(e)^2$ (Ahuja, R. 2003). By the help of concerned class teacher the tools were administered. The numbers of absentees of each student were considered. Since the number of total attendance was different in each school, the percentage of absences was taken up. The percentage of their absence was arranged in descending order. The median of the absence scores of total 500 students was calculated. It was found to be 11.44. The student having absences score above the median were considered as absentees and the students having the absence score below the median point were considered as regulars. Thus, 128 boys & 125 girls were found regular and 129 boys & 118 girls found absentees. Regular and Absentee boys & girls were further divided into four groups i.e. Abs.Boys ~ Reg.Boys, Abs.Girls ~ Reg.Girls, Abs.Boys ~ Abs.Girls and Reg.Boys ~ Reg.Girls. These groups were considered in analysis of data. The scores of seven dimensions of Home Environment scale were taken up and analysed by using 't' test.

Findings

The scores of seven dimensions of home environment scale (D1) affection & care, (D2) facilities, (D3) Parental approval of adolescent activities, (D4) impartialities, (D5) sharing of ideas, trust, confidence and decision making, (D6) parental support, encouragement and (D7) harmony among family member of absentees and regulars were analysed by 't' test and obtained mean and t-value had been provided in Table 1 to Table 7.

Table 1. Significance of Difference between Means Of Affection & Care Score Of Absentees And Regulars

S.No.	Groups	Mean	S _{ED}	df	t-value
1	ABS.BOYS ~ REG.BOYS	12.15 ~ 13.95	0.94	255	1.914
2.	ABS.GIRLS ~ REG.GIRLS	11.75 ~ 12.61	0.48	241	1.791
3.	ABS.BOYS ~ ABS.GIRLS	12.15 ~ 11.75	0.42	245	0.952
4.	REG.BOYS ~ REG.GIRLS	13.95 ~ 12.61	0.98	251	1.367

It may be noted from table-1 that absentees and regulars were not significantly different on affection & care aspect of home environment irrespective of their sex.

Table 2. Significance of Difference between Means Of Facilities Scores Of Absentees & Regulars

S.No.	Groups	Mean	S _{ED}	df	t-value
1	ABS.BOYS ~ REG.BOYS	7.16 ~ 8.02	0.27	255	3.185**
2.	ABS.GIRLS ~ REG.GIRLS	7.04 ~ 7.64	0.29	241	2.068*
3.	ABS.BOYS ~ ABS.GIRLS	7.16 ~ 7.04	0.30	245	0.400
4.	REG.BOYS ~ REG.GIRLS	8.02 ~ 7.64	0.26	251	1.461

*Significant at the level of (0.05), ** Significant at the level of (0.01)

Table – 2 reveals absentee and regular boys differed significantly on facilities scores. The mean of absentee boys was lower than mean of regular boys on facilities. Regular girls were significantly higher than the absentee girls on facilities aspect of home environment. It may be interpreted on the basis of means scores that the absentee boys and girls were significantly lower on facilities than the regular students.

Table 3. Significance of Difference between Means Of Parental Approval Scores of Absentees & Regulars

S.No.	Groups	Mean	S _{ED}	df	t-value
1	ABS.BOYS ~ REG.BOYS	4.86 ~ 5.20	0.16	255	2.125*
2.	ABS.GIRLS ~ REG.GIRLS	4.80 ~ 5.11	0.16	241	1.937
3.	ABS.BOYS ~ ABS.GIRLS	4.86 ~ 4.80	0.17	245	0.352
4.	REG.BOYS ~ REG.GIRLS	5.20 ~ 5.11	0.15	251	0.600

*Significant at the level of (0.05), ** Significant at the level of (0.01)

It may be noted from table – 3 that the t-value for the significance of difference between means of parental approval scores of absentees & regulars boys was found significant at 0.05 levels. The mean of parental approval scores for regular boys was higher than the mean of absentee boys.

Table 4. Significance of Difference between Means Of Impartiality Scores of Absentees & Regulars

S.No.	Groups	Mean	S _{ED}	df	t-value
1	ABS.BOYS ~ REG.BOYS	5.54 ~ 5.61	0.17	255	0.352
2.	ABS.GIRLS ~ REG.GIRLS	5.36 ~ 5.60	0.17	241	1.411
3.	ABS.BOYS ~ ABS.GIRLS	5.54 ~ 5.36	0.18	245	1.000
4.	REG.BOYS ~ REG.GIRLS	5.61 ~ 5.60	0.16	251	0.58

*Significant at the level of (0.05), ** Significant at the level of (0.01)

Table – 4 revealed that the obtained t-value for impartiality scores of absentee and regular was not significant at any level. It may be said that absentees and regulars were not significantly different on impartiality dimensions of home environment irrespective of their sex.

Table 5. Significance of Difference between Means Of Sharing Idea And Decision Making Scores of Absentees & Regulars

S.No.	Groups	Mean	S _{ED}	df	t-value
1	ABS.BOYS ~ REG.BOYS	9.21 ~ 9.77	0.28	255	2.000*
2.	ABS.GIRLS ~ REG.GIRLS	9.27 ~ 9.52	0.29	241	0.862
3.	ABS.BOYS ~ ABS.GIRLS	9.21 ~ 9.27	0.30	245	0.200
4.	REG.BOYS ~ REG.GIRLS	9.77 ~ 9.52	0.27	251	1.080

*Significant at the level of (0.05), ** Significant at the level of (0.01).

It may be observed from Table – 5 that ‘t-value’ for significance of difference between the means of absentee boys and regular boys was found significant at 0.05 level. The mean of absentee boys group was lower than the mean of regular boys on sharing idea & decision making dimensions.

Table 6. Significance of Difference between Means Of Parental Encouragement Scores of Absentees & Regulars

S.No.	Groups	Mean	S _{ED}	df	t-value
1	ABS.BOYS ~ REG.BOYS	5.42 ~ 5.63	0.18	255	1.166
2.	ABS.GIRLS ~ REG.GIRLS	5.64 ~ 5.82	0.17	241	1.058
3.	ABS.BOYS ~ ABS.GIRLS	5.42 ~ 5.64	0.18	245	1.222
4.	REG.BOYS ~ REG.GIRLS	5.63 ~ 5.82	0.17	251	1.117

*Significant at the level of (0.05), ** Significant at the level of (0.01).

It may be noted from table- 6 that absentees and regulars were not significantly different on affection & care aspect of home environment irrespective of their sex. It may also be said that boys and girls were also not significantly different on parental encouragement of home environment.

Table 7. Significance Of Difference Between Means Of Harmony Scores of Absentees & Regulars

S.No.	Groups	Mean	S _{ED}	df	t-value
1	ABS.BOYS ~ REG.BOYS	7.48 ~ 8.21	0.23	255	3.173**
2.	ABS.GIRLS ~ REG.GIRLS	7.64 ~ 7.69	0.22	241	0.227
3.	ABS.BOYS ~ ABS.GIRLS	7.48 ~ 7.64	0.23	245	0.695
4.	REG.BOYS ~ REG.GIRLS	8.21 ~ 7.69	0.23	251	2.260*

*Significant at the level of (0.05), ** Significant at the level of (0.01).

It may be revealed from Table – 7 that ‘t-value’ for significance of difference between the means of absentee boys and regular boys was found significant at both levels of significance. It may be said that the t-value for the harmony in family members dimension of regular boys and girls was found significant. The t-test indicated that absentee boys were significantly lower than regular boys in harmony but the absentee and regular girls were not significantly different in harmony. This analysis revealed that absentees and regulars were not significantly different on affection & care, impartialities and parental encouragement dimensions. Absentee boys and girls were significantly lower on facilities dimension than the regular boys & girls. Absentee boys were significantly lower than the regular boys on parental approval, sharing idea & decision-making and harmony dimensions of home environment. Though, absentee girls and regular girls were not significantly different on these dimensions.

Thus, it may be interpreted that absentees and regulars were significantly different on some dimensions of home environment. Hence the first hypothesis was accepted partially. Further the affection & care, facility, parental approval, impartialities and sharing ideas & decision making, parental encouragement and harmony scores for the absentee boys and absentee girls groups were taken up and analyzed by t-test. The t-test revealed that the t-values for affection & care scores, facilities scores, parental approval score, impartiality scores, sharing ideas & decision making scores, parental encouragement scores and harmony scores for the significance of difference between these groups were not significant at any level. It may be interpreted that absentee boys and absentee girls do not differ significantly at any dimension of home environment. Thus the second hypothesis was accepted.

Again various scores for different dimensions of home environment for the regular boys and regular girls group were taken up and analyzed by t-test. The t-values pointed out and that the regular boys and regular girls were significantly different on harmony dimensions but not on other dimensions. It may be inferred that regular boys and regular girls were not significantly different except harmony dimension. Regular boys were higher in harmony than the regular girls. Hence the third hypothesis was accepted partially. In view of above discussion of results the following findings were summarized.

- *The absentees and regulars were not significantly different on affection & care, impartiality, and parental encouragement dimensions of home environment. Absentee boys were significantly lower than regular boys on parental approval, sharing ideas decision making, harmony whereas the absentee girls were not significantly different than regular girls on these dimensions of home environment. Absentee students were significantly lower than the regular students on facility in home.*
- *Absentee boys and absentee girls were not significantly different on any dimension of home environment.*
- *Regular boys and regular girls were not significantly different on environment except harmony. Regular boys were significantly higher than the regular girls on harmony scores.*

Discussion and Conclusion

The absentee boys were lower on facilities, parental approval, sharing ideas & decision making and harmony. Due to the poor performance in school absentee boys may not be getting approval by their parents. Absentee may not getting support from their parents due to which they were not interested to share their ideas with their parents and thus found themselves in a situation of dilemma and to come out from this situation they remain absent from the school. They may become misfit in their home. According to Burt (1925), mental dullness and vicious homes, undesirable friendship etc were the cause of absenteeism. On the other side absentee girls and boys students may not getting proper facilities at the home this may lead them to remain out of home and school. The girls generally remain in home whether they get facilities or not. Hence, the finding appears in this study.

Absentee boys and girls may perceive the home climate negatively and may not be better adjusted. Shah (1991) stated positive home climate is essential for better adjustment. Regular boys were higher than regular girls in harmony. Regular boys may be finding the harmony among family members as conducive to their learning. Hence the finding appeared in the study.

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