Absenteeism among High School Students in Relation to School Climate

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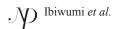
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Abstract

There is a strong relationship between school, teacher and student. Schools and teachers are meant for the development of students. Absenteeism of students occur due to such as school climate, motivation, lack of parental support etc. the higher the absenteeism, the lower the academics of students. The tool used in the present study is School refusal assessment scale standardized by Kearnel A. Christoper. The survey method was selected as it was found relevant for the present study. Stratified random sampling technique is followed in this study. The sample of the study consists of 300 high school students from Coimbatore city. The present study reveals that there exists a positive relationship between school climate and students absenteeism. Hence there exists a moderate correlation relation between absenteeism and school climate. In order to reduce the level of absenteeism with regard to school climate, necessary measures should be taken by the school authorities.

Keywords: Absenteeism, school climate, school refusal, school drop-out and school climate.

Education is the most powerful instrument for all round development of individual, social, economic and cultural transformation in the life of the people. School is the place where we can get education to the maximum extent. Education is for both the acquisition of knowledge and experience as well as the development of skill, habits and attitudes which will help a person to lead a full and worthwhile life in this world. Education should certainly prepare the individual for a full life. It is one of the most powerful tools in shaping our future.

School climate reflects the physical and psychological aspects of the school that are more susceptive to change and that provide the preconditions necessary for teaching and learning to take place. School climate is evident in the feelings and attitudes about a school expressed by students, teachers, staff and parents-the way students and staff "feels" about being at school each day.

Students spend most of their time in school. Normally students spend around 6-8 hours in schools. School life is much more important for an individual than anything else which covers around 30% of his/her life span. Schools play a vital role in building one's character and all round development. Hence school life plays a key role in the life of every individual.

Need for the Study

Children after the completion of 3 years are admitted to schools naturally. School is the apt place for the students to develop physically, mentally, morally, emotionally and socially and also where their cognitive, affective and psycho-motor domains grow. In the present trends school- going is a difficult task for the students. As they feel difficult to go to school, their absence to school rises automatically. Owing to this, their academic progress will go down. Not only the academic side, but also the school management will be affected without students.

On considering this, the investigator tried to find out the reason for their absenteeism towards school climate. Hence the present study.

Definition of the key terms

Absenteeism: Absenteeism towards school means lack of attendance due to various reasons.

School climate: School climate is the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual atmosphere provided to the children with in the school premises during the period of study.

High school students: The students studying their 9th standard of age 14 in Government, Government-Aided and Matriculation schools.

Objectives

1. To find out the relationship between absenteeism and school climate.

2. To identify the reason for absenteeism among students.

3. To know the influence of locality, gender, parent's qualification and income towards absenteeism.

4. To make them realize that higher the absenteeism lower the academic achievement.

5. To suggest remedial measures to avoid absenteeism among the students.

Hypothesis of the Study

1. There is no significance difference between absenteeism and school climate.

2. There is no significance difference between absenteeism and academic achievement.

3. There is no significance difference between Gender and absenteeism.

4. There is no significance difference between locale and absenteeism.

5. There is no significance difference between family type and absenteeism.

6. There is no significance difference between absenteeism and distance from school.

7. There is no significance difference between absenteeism and school type.

Methodology in Brief

Method	:	Survey method
Sampling Technique	:	Stratified random sampling
Tool	:	School Refusal Assessment Scale
Sample size of the study	:	300
Statistical Treatment	:	Test of significance, Analysis of Variance- F test

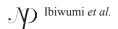**Limitations and Scope of the Study**

Among the high school students only IX standard students were taken for the study owing to the constraint of time. The subjects for the study are drawn only from three schools in and around Coimbatore city. The sample drawn is restricted to 300 students.

The present study has the scope of finding out the reason for absenteeism among the students. The study will enhance the school climate as per the students and their learning to lessen their absenteeism and improve the academics of the absentees in the class. The study is helpful to identify the latent abilities of the absentees in the class and to enhance the level of self confidence, attitude and personality of the absentees.

Method of the present study

The survey method was selected as it was found relevant for the present study. It is employed for conducting studies on large and small populations by selecting and studying samples chosen from the populations to discover the relative incidence, distribution and inter-relations of sociological and psychological of variables.

Survey is conducted to find reasons for absenteeism. Data were collected from 300 high school students (IX) in six different schools in and around Coimbatore city. The investigator visited the school individually after seeking permission from the heads of the concerned school. The investigator first asked the students in each school to fill the personal data sheet individually, after collecting filled in personal data sheet the investigator distributed the questionnaire to students of each school and collected the filled in questionnaire. After the data collection, the investigator started analyzing the collected data.

The investigator adopted stratified random sampling method for her study for the selection of the sample. In this method, the population is sub-divided into homogeneous groups or strata, and from each stratum, random sample is drawn.

Variables

Variables are concepts which serve a particular purpose in educational research. For an educational researcher those concepts are of particular interests which have some systematic relationship with any other concepts. They help in such relationship in making explanations as well as prediction.

The independent variables are the conditions or characteristics that the experimenter manipulates in his or her attempt to ascertain their relationship to observed phenomena. The dependent variables are the conditions or characteristics that appear, disappear or change as the experimenter introduces, removes or changes independent variables (Best and Khan, 1993)

The variables taken for the present study are absenteeism and school climate.

Dependent variable   : Absenteeism

Independent Variable   : Parent's Qualification, Parent's occupation,

Distance from school, Type of school, Gender, School climate.

Selection Of The Sample

Stratified random sampling technique is followed in this study. The sample of the study consists of 300 high school students from Coimbatore city, which comprises of, School management type: government/ government aided/ matriculation, School type: unisex/ co-education and School locality: rural/ urban.

Tools Used In The Present Study

Personal Data Sheet: The personal data sheet is prepared to collect data regarding variables such as gender, family type, parental qualification, income, distance from school and attendance. The students are asked to read the items and make response and marking their responses in the space provided in the data sheet.

School Refusal Assessment Scale: The tool used in the present study is School refusal assessment scale standardized by Kearnel A. Christoper. The tool consists of 25 items which asked about the reasons for the absenteeism related to school climate of the subject. The investigator translated all the 25 questions of the tool in Tamil, which would be easy for the students to fill the questionnaire.

Reliability and Validity

As the tool used for the study is standardized tool, it is already reliable and valid.

Scoring and Tabulation

The test was administrated to 300 high school students from six different schools. The students were asked to make the responses according to the numbers provided in the boxes. The scoring was given in the scale as 0=never,1=seldom, 2=some times, 3=half the time,4= usually, 5=almost always, 6=always. The scoring was given for the students who marked 0 is 6, for 1 is 5, for 2 is 4, for 3 is 3, for 4 is 2, for 5 is 1, for 6 is 0. All the sheets were scored in such a way.

Data Collection Procedure

The test was administrated to 300 IX STD Students in various schools. They were asked to fill up their names and other information on the personal data sheet given. Specific instructions were given to the students to record the response. The test was administered by the investigator she was vigilant to prevent the children from consulting each other. The answer sheets of school refusal assessment were collected back from the students.
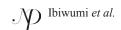
Statistical Techniques

The following statistical techniques were used by the investigator to analysis the data: Differential Analysis, Test of Significance (t-Test) and ANOVA test.

Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive analysis gives an overall idea about the sample distributed in the given population. It limits generalization to the particular group of individuals observed. No conclusions are extended beyond this group and any similarity to those outside the group cannot be assumed. The data describe one group and that group only. Descriptive analysis provides valuable information about the nature of a particular group of individuals.

Personal Data of the Students

S.NO	Variables	Category	N=300	Percentage
1	Gender	boys	122	41
		Girls	178	59
2	Family Type	Joint	57	19
		Nuclear	243	81
3	Father's occupation	Monthly Salary	107	36
		Daily Income	193	64

4	Mother's occupation	employed	184	61
		Unemployed	116	39
5	Monthly Income	Economically low (<2100)	38	13
		Low income (2101-4500)	69	23
		Moderate income(4501-7500)	60	20
		>7501	133	44
6	School Type	Government	100	33.3
		Government- Aided	100	33.3
		Matriculation	100	33.3
7	Distance to school	< 2 km	214	71
		>2 km	86	29
8	Percentage of absent	<10	247	82
		10--20	50	17
		>20	3	1
9	percentage of academic achievement	<20	18	6
		20-40	69	23
		40-60	116	39
		60-80	97	32

Differential Analysis

Differential analysis helps in the inference and prediction of results. Generalizations are done by using differences in means, standard deviations and standard errors. Among the various techniques, t-test and ANOVA are used for the present study.

Test of significance difference between means

The test of significance of the difference between two means is known as t-test. The t-test was used to study the variation in absenteeism among high school students on the basis of various factors like gender, family type, school type, school climate and distance from school.

Absenteeism with Respect To Gender

	Number	Mean	Standard Deviation	t value
Boys	122	4.68	5.16	-3.38
Girls	178	6.77	5.39	**

** Significant at 0.01 level

The calculated 't' value is -3.38 which is found to be significant at 0.01 level. The hypothesis stated as "There is no significance difference between the gender and absenteeism" was rejected. This indicates that there is a significance difference between the gender and absenteeism. And also found that the absenteeism of female students was higher than male students.

Absenteeism with Respect to Family Type

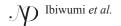|	Number	Mean	Standard Deviation	t value
Joint	57	7.30	5.15	2.24
Nuclear	243	5.60	5.16	*

 * Significant at 0.05 level

The 't' test was applied. The calculated 't' value is 2.24 which is found to be significant at 0.05 level.. This indicates that there is a significance difference between the family type and absenteeism. And also found that the absenteeism of joint family students was higher than nuclear family students. The hypothesis stated as "There is no significance difference between the family type and absenteeism" was rejected.

Absenteeism with Respect to Mother's Occupation

	Number	Mean DS	Standard Deviation	t
Employed	184	4.50	4.39	-6.09
Home maker	116	8.18	5.49	**

** Significant at 0.01 level

The calculated 't' value is -6.09 which is found to be significant at 0.01 level. The hypothesis stated as "There is no significance difference between mother's occupation and absenteeism" was rejected. This indicates that there is a significance difference between mother's occupation and absenteeism. And also found that the absenteeism of not working mother's children was higher than working mother's children.

Absenteeism with Respect to Monthly Income

	Number	Mean	SD	F
Economically low (<2100)	38	6.75	5.07	
Low income (2101-4500)	69	6.41	5.04	
Moderate income(4501-7500)	60	5.23	5.01	1.007NS
>7501	133	5.69	5.15	

NS - Not Significant.

ANOVA test was applied to find whether there is a significance difference in absenteeism with respect to monthly income.

The calculated ANOVA value is 1.007 which is found to be not significant. The hypothesis stated as, "There is no significance difference in absenteeism with respect to monthly income" was accepted. This indicates that the absenteeism of all economic level was more or less the same.

There may be slight variation in absenteeism with regard to the respective economic level. The level of absenteeism is higher at the low income. There won't be much significant difference of absenteeism between the low income and the high income.

Absenteeism with Respect to School Distance

	Number	Mean DS	Standard Deviation	t
<=2 KM]	214	5.98	5.16	0.3
>2 KM	86	5.78	5.16	NS

NS - Not Significant.

From the table it is found that the calculated 't' value is 0.3 which is found to be not significant. The hypothesis stated that "There is no significance difference between the school distance and absenteeism" was accepted. This indicates that there is no significance difference between school distance and absenteeism.

Absenteeism with Respect to School Type

	Number	Mean	Standard Deviation	F
Government	100	7.99	5.04	
Government- Aided	100	5.12	5.18	12.91
Matriculation	100	4.65	4.87	**

** Significant at 0.01 level

ANOVA test was applied to find whether there is a significance difference between the school type and absenteeism.

The calculated ANOVA value is 12.91 which are found to be significant at 0.01 levels. The hypothesis stated as, "There is no significance difference between the school type and absenteeism "was rejected. This indicates that there is a significant difference between type of school and absenteeism.

This infers that the Government school has more absenteeism.

Difference between the Academic Achievement and Absenteeism

	Number	Mean	Standard Deviation	t
Absenteeism	300	5.92	5.16	-37
Academic achievement	300	50.99	18.73	**

The 't' test was applied. The calculated 't' value is -37 which is found to be significant at 0.01 level. The hypothesis stated as "There is no significance difference between the academic achievement and absenteeism" was rejected. This indicates that there is a significance difference between the academic achievement and absenteeism.
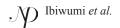
Difference between Absenteeism and School Climate

	Number	Mean DS	SD	t
Absenteeism	300	5.92	5.16	-31.81
School climate	300	34.31	14.83	**

From the table it is depicted that the calculated 't' value is -31.81 which is found to be significant at 0.01 level. The hypothesis stated as "There is no significant difference between absenteeism and school climate" was rejected. This indicates that there is significant difference between absenteeism and school climate.

Absenteeism with Respect to Government School Boys and Girls

	Number	Mean	Standard Deviation	t
Boys	40	4.73	5.74	-2.84
Girls	60	8.80	5.71	**

From the table it is found that the calculated 't' value is -2.84 which is found to be significant at 0.01 level. The hypothesis stated as "There is no significant difference in absenteeism with respect to government school boys and girls" was rejected. This indicates that there is significant difference in

absenteeism with respect to government school boys and girls. And also found that the absenteeism of Government School girls was higher than Government School boys.

Absenteeism with Respect to Government-Aided School Boys and Girls

	Number	Mean DS	Standard Deviation	t
Boys	39	4.24	4.35	-1.16
Girls	61	5.41	4.39	NS

The 't' test was applied to find whether There is significant difference in absenteeism with respect to government-aided boys and girls, The calculated 't' value is -1.16 which is found to be not significant. The hypothesis stated that "There is no significant difference in absenteeism with respect to government-aided boys and girls" was accepted.

Absenteeism with Respect to Matriculation School Boys and Girls

	Number	Mean	Standard Deviation	t
Boys	43	4.81	4.68	0.53
Girls	57	4.14	5.48	NS

From the table the calculated 't' value is 0.53 which is found to be not significant and hence the hypothesis stated that "There is no significant difference in absenteeism with respect to matriculation school boys and girls" was accepted. Hence no significant difference in absenteeism with respect to matriculation school boys and girls.

School Climate With Respect To Gender

	Number	Mean	Standard Deviation	t
Boys	122	41.18	14.83	6.54
Girls	178	29.60	15.40	**

From the table it is found that the calculated 't' value is 6.54 which is found to be significant at 0.01 level. The hypothesis stated as "There is no significant difference in school climate with respect to gender" was rejected. This indicates that there is significant difference in school climate with respect to gender.

School Climate with Respect to School Type

	Number	Mean DS	Standard Deviation	F
Government	100	34.33	17.20	
Gov-Aided	100	27.79	12.66	23.69**
Matriculation	100	20.81	11.08	

ANOVA test was applied to find whether there is significant difference in school climate with respect to type of schools

The calculated ANOVA value is 23.69 which are found to be significant at 0.01 level. The hypothesis stated as, "There is no significant difference in school climate with respect to type of schools" was rejected. This indicates that there is a significant difference between type of school and school climate.

This infers that the Government school has more school climate.
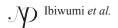
School Climate with Respect to Academic Achievement

	Number	Mean	Standard Deviation	t
School climate	300	34.31	14.83	-13.81
Academic achievement	300	50.98	18.73	**

The 't' test was applied. The calculated 't' - test value is -13.81 which is found to be significant at 0.01 level. This indicates that there is significant difference in school climate with respect to academic achievement. The hypothesis stated as "There is no significant difference in school climate with respect to academic achievement" was rejected.

School Climate with Respect to Government Boys and Girls

	Number	Mean	Standard Deviation	t
Boys	40	42.92	17.15	2.5
Girls	60	32.18	17.22	*

From the table it is inferred that the calculated 't' value is 2.5 which is found to be significant at 0.05 level. The hypothesis stated as "There is no significant difference in school climate with respect to government boys and girls" was rejected. This indicates that there is significant difference in school climate with respect to government boys and girls. And also found that the school climate of Government School boys was higher than Government School girls.

School Climate with Respect to Government-Aided Boys and Girls

	Number	Mean DS	Standard Deviation	t
Boys	39	35.07	12.66	3.32
Girls	61	25.37	12.66	**

The calculated 't' value is 3.32 which is found to be significant at 0.01 level. This indicates that there is a significant difference in school climate with respect to government-aided boys and girls. And also found that the school climate of Government-aided School boys was higher than Government-aided School girls. The hypothesis stated as "There is no significant difference in school climate with respect to government-aided boys and girls" was rejected.

School Climate with Respect to Matriculation School Boys and Girls

	Number	Mean	Standard Deviation	t
Boys	43	42.71	10.93	2.67
Girls	57	34.45	13.58	**

From the table it is found that the calculated 't' value is 2.67 which is found to be significant at 0.01 level. The hypothesis stated as "There is no significant difference in school climate with respect to Matriculation boys and girls" was rejected. This indicates that there is significant difference in school climate with respect to Matriculation boys and girls. And also found that the school climate of Matriculation t School boys was higher than Matriculation School girls.

School Climate and Academic Achievement in Government Schools

	Number	Mean DS	Standard Deviation	t
School climate	100	34.33	17.20	-2.91
Academic achievement	100	40.91	15.58	**

The 't' test was applied. The calculated 't' value is -2.91 which is found to be significant at 0.01 level. The hypothesis stated as "There is no significant difference between school climate and academic achievement in government schools" was rejected. This indicates that there is significant difference between school climate and academic achievement in government schools.

School Climate and Academic Achievement in Government-Aided Schools

	Number	Mean	Standard Deviation	t
School climate	100	27.79	12.66	-11.93
Academic achievement	100	49.56	18.80	**

From the table it is inferred that the calculated 't' - test value is -11.93 which is found to be significant at 0.01 level. The hypothesis stated as "There is no significant difference between school climate and academic achievement in government-Aided schools" was rejected. This indicates that there is significant difference between school climate and academic achievement in government-Aided schools.

School Climate and Academic Achievement in Matriculation Schools

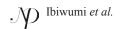|	Number	Mean	Standard Deviation	t
School climate	100	40.81	11.08	-11.92
Academic achievement	100	62.50	15.00	**

The 't' test was applied. The calculated 't' - test value is -11.92 which is found to be significant at 0.01 level. The hypothesis stated as "There is no significant difference between school climate and academic achievement in Matriculation schools" was rejected. This indicates that there is significant difference between school climate and academic achievement in Matriculation schools.

Absenteeeism Find Out Through The Analysis Of School Refusal Assessment Scale

1. Fear of test, teachers and school bus.

2. Difficulty to speak with other kids.

3. Lack of fun in school.

4. Sad feeling or depresses ion of the students.

5. Embarrass in front of other people at school.

6. Feeling worse at school i.e., scared, nervous or sad without friends.

7. Do not have many friends in school.

8. Enjoying doing different things i.e. being with friends and going places during the week days (Monday to Friday).

9. Bad feelings about school when they are think about school on Saturday and Sunday.

10. Bad feelings about school compared to other kids in our age.

Summary and Conclusion

The present study was conducted to find out study of absenteeism among high school students. "School Refusal Assessment Scale" was used for this study. Besides the major findings the investigator offers suggestions and recommendations for further research based on the present experiences. A sample of 300 students studying in high school were drawn from three types of schools in Coimbatore was selected for the study.

Findings of the Study

1. Gender wise analysis with regard to the absenteeism revealed that the absenteeism of female students is higher than male students. It shows that there is a significant difference in school climate with respect to gender.

2. It is found that the absenteeism among students from joint family is higher than the students from nuclear family.

3. It is also seen that the absenteeism of the students of unemployed mothers were higher than the student of employed mothers.

4. Absenteeism level of students coming from various economic levels shows no significance difference.

5. There is no significance difference between the distance of school and absenteeism.

6. Government, Government-Aided, Matriculation schools show significant differences in their student absenteeism. It is found that the rate of absenteeism is higher in Government schools comparatively with the other two schools.

7. It is found that academic achievement of students is always dependent on absenteeism of the students.

8. The rate of absenteeism seems to be higher in Government school girls than the Government school boys.

9. Government-Aided school girls' posses more absenteeism than the boys of Government-aided school.

10. The rate of absenteeism was found to be higher in the Matriculation school boys when compared to the girls.

11. The study revealed that there is a higher level of significance among Government-Aided and Matriculation schools in school climate than Government Schools.

12. It is seen that there is a significant difference in academic achievement of Government, Government-Aided and Matriculation schools in relation to school climate.

13. There is significant difference between Government, Government-Aided and Matriculation boys and girls with respect to school climate.

14. It is revealed clearly that the student absenteeism is related to school climate.

15. Following are the most intensified reasons find out through the analysis of school refusal assessment scale

   ✓ Fear of test, teachers and school bus.
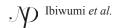   ✓ Difficulty to speak with other kids.

- ✓ Lack of fun in school.
- ✓ Sad feeling or depresses ion of the students.
- ✓ Embarrass in front of other people at school.
- ✓ Feeling worse at school i.e., scared, nervous or sad without friends.
- ✓ Do not have many friends in school.
- ✓ Enjoying doing different things i.e. being with friends and going places during the week days (Monday to Friday).
- ✓ Bad feelings about school when they are think about school on Saturday and Sunday.
- ✓ Bad feelings about school compared to other kids in our age.

Recommendations

1. Systematic efforts should be taken to identify the dropouts and to lessen their levels.

2. Activities and programs can be conducted to reduce absenteeism and also to kindle the interest for school going of students.

3. Awareness and educational activities for the parental mass can be conducted to avoid the absenteeism of students.

4. The inducing pupils to participate and organize vocational activities related to school.

5. Provision of adequate physical training can also be given to pupils to avoid absenteeism.

6. Scholarships and rewards can be awarded for students.

7. Impartial treatments over students will reduce absenteeism.

8. School should avoid week end class.

9. Peer relationship should be encouraged in school society.

10. There should be fun and lively interaction in teaching and learning.

11. Workshop and seminar should be conducted by the school in order to reduce anxiety, stress and disliking towards school attendance.

12. Provision of guidance and counseling program to the students to remove depression, fear of others and lack of interest.

Suggestion for Further Research

A study would be incomplete if it provides necessary guiding as well as potential research topics for further exploration. In the present study, an attempt was made to understand certain basic aspects relating to absenteeism. The following suggestions are made for further research in this area.

1. The study was conducted only in Coimbatore district. It also can be extended to other districts.

2. This study can be conducted in rural areas where the availability of adequate of sample is seen.

3. A comparative study can be made on absenteeism between rural and urban students.

Conclusion

Students play a vital role in classroom. Absenteeism of students occur due to such as school climate, motivation, lack of parental support etc. the higher the absenteeism, the lower the academics of students. It is seen that absenteeism has a major role in developing the academics of every pupil. The present study reveals that there exists a positive relationship between school climate and students absenteeism. Hence there exists a moderate correlation relation between absenteeism and school climate. In order to reduce the level of absenteeism with regard to school climate, necessary measures should be taken by the school authorities.

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