

THE FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO ABSENTEEISM IN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS: THE CASE OF AN UNDER-PRIVILEGED PUBLIC SECTOR UNIVERSITY, GILGIT-BALTISTAN OF PAKISTAN

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ABSTRACT

The study aimed to assess the factors contributing to absenteeism among university undergraduates in a public sector university from an underprivileged region of Gilgit-Baltistan, the administrative province of Pakistan. Using quantitative approaches, a mix of stratified and simple random sampling techniques were used. A sample of 134 undergraduates from various faculties of social sciences and natural sciences were selected, keeping in view of the ratio of students in each faculty-departments as strata of the population. Various factors of absenteeism as indicated in literature were enlisted in the questionnaire for rating by participants in a scale of 1-10, measuring less relevant to highly relevant factor in their cases. It was found that "assignments" related factor was the most influential factors causing absenteeism. Students remained absent in order to complete heavy and lengthy assignments in due time. Whereas, the factor "children's look after" was least indicated factor for absenteeism. University level students mostly have no kids of their own so it was understandable that this factor received the least rating, however they reported that they needed to attend to their old or sick parents at home which caused them remain absent from university classes. No statistically significant differences in the ratings were found between males and females. Likewise, no significant differences between students of Social science and Natural science were found. The study recommends university administrations for guidance and counselling, in addition to providing them alternative options of study.

Keywords: Absenteeism; Higher education; Factors; Undergraduates, Truancy, Variations

INTRODUCTION

Absenteeism has been defined by previous researchers in many ways. Absenteeism or "school non-attendance" (Wilkins, 2008 p. 2) is characterized as a student's absence from class for any reason, whether lawful or illegitimate (Kearney & Bensaheb 2006). A high rate of absenteeism, defined as missing 10% or more of the academic year, has long been a predictor of student failure (Allenworth, et al., 2007).

Epstein and Sheldon (2002) reported that higher attendance was linked to higher academic achievement for students from all backgrounds, especially those from lower socioeconomic ones. Chronic truancy, also known as repeated unexcused absences, was found to be a predictor of negative adolescent outcomes such as academic failure, school dropout, substance addiction, gang engagement, and criminal activity (McCluskey, et

al., 2004; Sahibul and Paul, 2006). Learners who miss school have the highest risk of dropping out early and becoming long-term unemployed, as finding a suitable job without a proper educational background is difficult, if not impossible (Bond, 2004). Electronic registration systems, truancy sweeps, interaction with parents, and help for students with poor attendance, as well as competent school management by administrators are all examples of effective school administration (Davidson et al., 2003). Bailey and Morais (2005) pointed out one of the implications that educators face a tremendous challenge in creating a good learning environment in the classroom in the hopes of increasing student engagement, reducing absenteeism, and improving student accomplishment. A study conducted by Ali (2009), and Rodgers (2001), found that attendance has a small but statistically significant effect on student performance.

Absenteeism among students is linked to a number of factors, including familial history, behavioral disorders, and a lack of motivation, as well as institutional, social, and environmental constraints (Balkis, Arslan, & Duru, 2016). Literature suggest the following main factors commonly reported from around the world and as well as in the context of the study: lack of interest of students (Komakech & Osuu, 2014); Domestic activities (Balkis, et al., 2016; Latif, et al., 2015); poverty (Latif, et al., 2015), method of teaching (Stoner & Fincham, 2012), health issues (Latif, et al., 2015).

Absenteeism can also be the result peer pressure (Komakech & Osuu, 2014). In addition, students from low-income families have a greater prevalence of absence (Latif, Choudhary, & Hammayun, 2015). The impact of teaching styles on student attendance is also studied as a significant factor. One of the most significant issues in teaching factuality is changing teaching methods in order to reduce student absenteeism (Stoner & Fincham, 2012).

Absenteeism not only disrupts a student's academic development, but it also has an impact on the teachers in-class room effective planning. With the increasing developments in technology and the subsequent result of which, such as the availability of online sources, students' attitude may have changed towards classroom attendances. Hence, there is a

need of investigation of such factors among university level students to inform university administration, parents and students themselves to take preventive measures to overcome such factors in advance as per their need. Additionally, Gilgit-Balistan has unique and multi-cultural and multi-linguistics and a multi challenging area for university students, due to being an underprivileged area of Pakistan, which is suffering from the lack of basic facilities and necessary level of income required for educational expenses. Therefore, the present study aims to explore the level of impact of these indicated factors which may be contributing to the university students' absenteeism behavior in Gilgit-Balistan, Pakistan, with the following specific objectives for the current study.

1. To assess the level of influence of major factors contributing to the absenteeism among university students.
2. To identify the most and the least influencing factors contributing to university students' absenteeism behaviors in the context of Gilgit-Balistan.
3. To assess variation in the level of influence of various factors based on gender and the nature of academic disciplines the selected university students.

2. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

2.1 Conceptualizing absenteeism as a behavior

When a student fails to show up in class or in the clinical learning area for a variety of reasons, such as a lack of sufficient resources, academic personnel, or any equipment is known as absenteeism. According to Obeng-Dentech, Asiamah Sam, Monkah, and Jane (2011), absenteeism as when someone gets absent from school due to any disturbing reason is known as absenteeism. Another definition given by Bensaheb & Kearney (2006), to absenteeism is "school non-attendance"; the absence from school for any legitimate or illegitimate reason. The view of Khaild and Mehmood (2017) is that students who are unable to attend school, college, or university classes, are called absent students. The term "absenteeism" refers to the number of students who miss more than a certain number or percentage of university days each year (Gottfried & Hutt, 2019). There are, however,

some limitation of such a way of defining absenteeism as it seemingly only covers a physical absenteeism while it could be more psychological, for, instance a students' may be present in class in terms of physical presence yet somewhere else mentally having similar consequences as those of physical absence. However, for practical purposes, the study of being 'absent' or missing a class or session by not being physically present has its own significance as we adopt in the present study.

2.2 Categorizing the factors contributing to absenteeism

According to Obrador (2014), absenteeism can be caused by a variety of factors, depending on the circumstances in which students find themselves. Other sources report various causes, which can be classified into several categories based on the reasons for their occurrence; Student-centered, family-related, institution-related, and societal factors are all important considerations.

Eastman et al. (2007), divided learner absenteeism into three categories: (1) Extra factor absenteeism, which entails being absent for some or all of the educational hours or for the entire university day; (2) Simple absenteeism, which refers to a single day absence, and (3) Typical absenteeism: covers five times of absence in a semester and is considered a fault not an incidental or accidental absenteeism (Baloyi 2014).

Wadesango and Machingambi (2011), recently discovered that absenteeism is widespread among students at three South African universities, owing to factors such as a lack of subject interest, poor lecturers' teaching strategies, an unfavorable learning environment, excessive socialization, part-time jobs to supplement meager bursaries from various sponsors, and poor relations with lecturers.

The general determinants of absenteeism among students, according to Schmulian and Coetzee (2011) they differ by country and local culture. According to the findings of a study conducted by Kottasz (2005), factors contributing to absenteeism at London Metropolitan University included the student's ability to obtain lecture materials in other ways, time constraints, transportation issues, poor lecturer or tutorial content, poor lecturer, illness, and the need to work on other assignments.

2.2.1. Personal factors.

According to a study by Wadesango and Machingambi (2011), a key factor related to students' personal background is their socioeconomic status, as poor economic status causes them to seek part-time work, general upkeep, tuition expenses, and rental payments rather than focusing totally on their education. According to Yamani, et al. (2016), married students and those who have part time jobs are more susceptible to absenteeism due to non-academic workloads. Another factor characterizing students' personality is their health factor (Kearney 2008). Health factor, according to Kearney (2008) reflects both physical and mental health.

According to Kearney (2008), despair, anxiety, introversion, fear, and a need to receive attention from significant others are all psychological characteristics that contribute to absenteeism. Disengagement from school has also been linked to anxiety and sadness (Wickrama & Vazsonyi 2011;). This is the area where institution can collaborate with healthcare providers and public health organizations to reduce absence due to illness. Some institutes now a days have health treatment centers, mobile clinics, or mobile dental buses to provide healthcare to students on campus. A third category of factors related is Lack of interest in studies by learners due to unknown or unknown reasons. According to Komakech and Osuu (2014), points out the following psychological related factors as have been established to be influencing students' absenteeism is the lack of interest in learning, domestic chores, or peer pressure, lack of subject matter interest, bad teaching tactics, an unsuitable learning environment, excessive socialization among students, part-time employment, illness, sleepiness, and poor relations with lecturers, according to a large body of literature (Kottasz 2005; Wadesango & Machingambi , 2011).

2.2.2. Parental factor

Class attendance has also been proven to be influenced by parent and family characteristics (such as whether the student lives in a single-parent household, family socioeconomic level, parental educational status, homeownership (Gottfried, 2011). In assessing the school attendance further, Gottfried

(2011) emphasized that it has generally been difficult for researchers to disentangle student's personal factors to that of their family factors. Indeed, he discovered in his examination of data acquired from Philadelphia that earlier studies may have underestimated the significance of parent and family variables in previous research. Despite this claim, research reveals that particular family-related factors influence student performance. There are many factors related to parents / family causing students' absenteeism, among which factors is parents own economic status. The most commonly reported one is parents' education level as Henry (2007) noted that students with a college-educated mother or father had a decreased likelihood of skipping class. Positive parental participation is linked to a student's academic achievement, but low parental involvement may imply that some parents are uninterested in their children's academic success (Henry, 2007; Orfield 2004). According to a local study by Latif et al., (2015), students from low-income families have a greater prevalence of absence. Studies from international context (e.g., Attwood & Croll, 2006; Kearney, 2008) have already indicated that the family socioeconomic and ethnic background, are significant predictors of students' performance in learning (Attwood and Croll 2006; Kearney 2008). Family structures and the environment including familial history, behavioral disorders, and a lack of motivation, as well as institutional, social, and environmental constraints (Balkis, Arslan, & Duru 2016), all are the contributing factors to students' behavior of absenteeism as reflected that "parentally approved absence, not valuing schooling, household problems, inconsistent to poor parenting, and economic distress" (Reid 2005 p. 38).

2.2.3. Academic factors

The factors related to the school academic environments is also reported to be of high significance, for instance teaching styles of teachers (Stoner & Fincham, 2012). One of the most difficult tasks facing the teaching staff is to adapt teaching methods in order to reduce student absenteeism (Stoner & Fincham, 2012). Teachers with strong teaching abilities offer well-organized and structured lectures; they also have strong communication skills,

which attract students and result in better attendance rates (Hafeez, 2014; Ahmed & Qureshi, 2019).

2.3 Habitual absenteeism and its multi-faceted consequences

Absenteeism, according to Wiiliam (2010), is a powerful indication of impaired social and personal success in addition to low academic achievement. According to Pehlivan (2006), absenteeism makes it difficult to establish a strong foundation of discipline and accountability, as a result, it causes problems at work and leads to poor work habits in the future. This has the potential to result in negative repercussions such as unemployment, low income, and incapacity to work at a normal job (Eastman et al. 2007; Gentle-Genitty 2008).

Furthermore, as absence rises, students are more likely to develop psychological issues like depression or behavioral disorders. They may also demonstrate behavioral patterns such as participating in violence both inside and outside of school, teen pregnancy, dropping out, and developing destructive habits (Casserly et al., 2001; Eastman et al. 2007; Gentle-Genitty 2008; Gottfried 2009; Lannegrand-Willems et al. 2012).

The correlation between student attendance and performance is considerable, and this fact should not be overlooked. According to Bradley (2015), student's absence has an impact on the teacher's attitude toward students, class performance, and course characteristics. The effects and repercussions of student absence for individual students, university instructors, and institutions have piqued the international literature's interest (Barlow & Fleischer, 2011).

Many experts have acknowledged the importance of class attendance in boosting student performance. Kamla-Raj quoted in his article in 2011, students who have a history of absenteeism or low academic performance are more likely to drop out of university. According to one author, absence is a crime that is more likely among students who have had low grades, have spotted attendance, and have dropped out of class (Robbins & Coulter 2007). As Bailey and Morais (2005) pointed out the challenges for the educators in creating a good learning environment in the classroom in the hopes of increasing student engagement, reducing

absenteeism, and improving student accomplishment.

According to Ali, and Ayaz, (2010) absenteeism impacts not only students but also teachers in a variety of ways, including: (1) Teachers fail to give due attention to the students who remain absent, (2) teachers may feel low confidence in their teaching (3) Demotivate from teaching (4) fail to keep balance between the absenters and presenters to cover teaching content (5), inability of teachers to form a meaningful relationship with students (6), and effecting teaching plans and assessment

Absenteeism, however, is present at different level of intensity depending on the gender of students. In their research, Ocake, et al. (2017) discovered that male students have a higher absence rate than female students because they have more duty and pressure from their families. According to Dentech et al. (2011), female absenteeism is higher than male absenteeism. Because they have a lot of difficulty with returning home.

Absenteeism has been a common and much debated problem in university spheres for several years. Despite the fact that this issue has become a permanent part of academic studies in general, empirical study on it has received little attention. Thus, there is a room for more studies into the factors affecting students' absenteeism especially perpetually changing scenarios and modes of learning available to students other than classroom lectures.

3. Methods, participants and measures

Researchers employed a quantitative method to survey university students to obtain their attitudes which they expressed in rating the enlisted 18 factors causing university students to remain absent (these factors were selected from literature using the criteria of relevance to the cultural and social norms of the study population). The 18-items questionnaire reflected factors categorized in literature as either personal factors (7 items), family-related factors (5-items), and the institutional-related factors (6-items). Each item was assumed to be one independent variable on its own. The randomly selected university students from various academic disciplines of the select public sector university located in the underprivileged, administrative

province of Gilgit-Baltistan of Pakistan, rated the statements from 1-10 wherein 1 indicates that the factor causes the least contribution in absenteeism; while 10 indicated 'most contributing'.

The content of the instrument was assessed by a panel of specialists (university professors), experts on teaching education and research. The research goal was communicated to the experts, who were then requested to evaluate the instrument for clarity, conciseness, completeness, and utility in eliciting responses that were relevant to the study.

Some of the items were rephrased in the light of the suggestion. The scale had 17 items at first, but one was added afterwards, i.e., "selection of department, is not according to my choice" and other grammatical errors were noticed and removed. A results of pilot testing on 35 students showing an overall .766, Cornbach's reliability alpha value which was considerably acceptable value to rely on the scale's internal consistency.

4. Results

The actual questionnaires returned were assessed for their accuracy and suitability to include the data in analysis. From the returned questionnaires, valid questionnaire data were entered into SPSS. From an initial descriptive analysis, the demographic characteristics appeared to be: Male participants were greater in number as compared to female students (Male = 70; Female = 64). The percentage of male to female was 52.2% and 47.8 % respectively. Age-wise sample distribution was also assessed as it was expected that at university level age may explain the absenteeism behavior. Participants' age was grouped in three categories 17-20 (f = 17, 12.7%), 21 - 25 (f =105, 85.8%) and 26-30 (f =2, 1.5%). It is evident that the highest number of participants fall under the age range of 21-25 years. Whereas, the least number of participants fall under the age range of 17-20 years and there were only two students who fell under the age range of 26-30 years. Hence, the majority of the sample was young in age. Since students' Faculty type had two strata which was given a ratio based representation in sample, hence students from social sciences were higher in number (80) and the remaining 55 students were from the faculty of Natural sciences.

To explore students' response levels on factors contributing absenteeism among graduates' students' frequencies were run on SPSS-26. The results are

presented in table 4.4 to maintain originality of the data and for an overall scenario of responses.

Table 1: Descriptive Analysis

Factors contributing	Median	Mean	SD
1. I feel lacking interest	3	3.820	2.97
2. Health issues	2	3.597	2.96
3. Classmate behavior	1	2.418	2.44
4. University-home distance	2	3.485	2.91
5. No Transport facility	1	3.067	3.29
6. Selection of department,	1	3.641	3.39
7. Working/ doing job	1	2.821	3.01
8. Parents look after	3	4.492	3.84
9. Children's look after	1	1.783	2.22
10. Other family issues	1	2.843	2.64
11. Parents unwillingness	1	2.567	2.74
12. Financial support	1	2.209	2.7
13. Teachers lack of interest	2	2.947	2.73
14. Too many assignments were stressful	5	5.179	3.29
15. Mismanagement in time table	3	3.955	2.99
16. University rules & formalities	2	3.395	2.79
17. Difficult courses	3	3.835	2.74
18. Class environment	2	3.119	2.80

Table 1, shows students' responses in the eighteen items of different factors which cause students' absenteeism at higher education level. It was noticed the highest factors which influences absenteeism is "Too many assignments were stressful" (M = 5.179, SD = 3.3), followed by "Parents look after" (M = 4.492, SD = 3.84). The factors which are on medium level contribution for absenteeism are "No Transport facility" (M = 3.067, SD = 3.29), and "Teachers lack of interest" (M = 2.947, SD = 2.73). The factors which have least influence was "Children's look after" (M = 1.783, SD = 2.22). According to students perceived factors the mean value from 1 to 3 indicates less effect of the stated factor; while the mean value between 4 and 6 is average contribution and above from 6 to 10 indicates that the factor is a high potential for causing students to remain absent. Which could be used to see the relative standing of the factor as well, considering for the variation in terms of the standard deviation. The median value is also an indicator of the ranks of each of the factors. The factor "parents' look after" referred to the fact that a university

graduates, in Pakistani culture do look after their old parents for their health and other needs. The stay at home especially when any of their parents, or grandparents get sick and hospitalized they go along as attendant and thus remain absent from studies. From these findings, it is evident that the factor "Too many assignments were stressful" is the most influential factor that causes students absenteeism at graduate level while the factor "Children's look after" is the least influential factor in absenteeism among graduates' students of KIU. Children's look after refers if any university students are married and have kids to look after, which in the present study cases was the least influencing factors. This aspect of absenteeism can further be studied along with marriage patterns of university students in other context. Also, this fact seemed to indicate that the culture of early marriages in educated communities is declining in Pakistan. It was noticed that in the rating of the most influential factor had a high variation (SD = 3.29, therefore it was thought to be more useful assess the frequencies of participants

under the category of those who rated it as High, Low or Medium as shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics: Most Influential Factor (Too many assignments were stressful)

Rating (n)	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent
1 to 4 [Low]	59	44.0	44.0
5-7 [Average]	33	24.6	68.6
> 7 [High]	42	31.4	100.0
Total	134	100.0	

Table 2 illustrate the most influential factor showing frequency and percentage of student’s participants which rate the statement from 1-10 wherein 1-4 indicates that the factor may little causing students to be absent while 4-7 shows that the factor has a medium effect while values >7 means that the factor is highly causing students to be absent. From the total

number of participants, the students who selected 1 to 4 were 59, (44.0%). The students who selected 5 to 7 were 33, (24.6%); and the students who selected from 8 to 10 were 42, (31.4%). Similar analysis for clarity was conducted on the least influential factor as shown in Table 3.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics: least Influential Factor (I had to look after my children)

Rating (n)	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative percent
1 to 4 [Low]	122	91.0	91.0
5-7 [Average]	04	3.0	94.0
> 7 [High]	08	6.0	100.0
Total	134	100.0	

Table 3 shows the students rated in the range of 1 to 4 (low) were 122, (91.0%), while the students who selected values from 5 to 7 were only 4, (3.0%), and students who selected values from 8 to 10 were 8, (6.0%), respectively. From these findings it is evident that, 122 student’s select 1 to 4 (low) out of 134 which mean that this factor has least influence

on students’ absenteeism, even though there is some variation in the rating.

Next, we compared the rating between gender and faculty type also, using the Mann Whitney U-Test. The result of the comparison for males can be seen in Table 4.

Table 4: Result of Mann-Whitney U Test for Gender Differences

Variable	N = 134	Mean Ranks	U	Assymp. Sig
Total Score	Male 70	69.76	2081.500	.480
Absenteeism	Female 64	65.02		

Note: Significant level is 0.5

From the results of Table 4 we observed that there is no statistically significant difference between male students and female students’ ratings on factors contributing absenteeism (U = 2081.500, N1 = 70, N2 = 64, p = 0.4). The difference in the mean ranks indicates that male had higher mean rank than female

students. The mean rank for male and female were 69 and 65, respectively. It implies that males are affected more than female students.

The results on the comparative analysis between faculty types are shown in table 5.

Table 5: Result of Mann-Whitney U Test for difference based on Faculties

Variable	N = 134	Mean Ranks	U	Assymp. Sig
Total Score	Social science 80	68.32	2014.500	.628
Absenteeism	Natural science 53	65.01		

From the results of Table 5 we observed no statistically significant difference between students from social science and natural science on the factors contributing to absenteeism ($U = 2014.500, N1 = 80, N2 = 53, p = 0.6$). The difference in the mean ranks is very small. However, there is small variation between social science and natural sciences. The mean rank for social science and natural sciences was 68 and 65, respectively. Yet, we need to note that this difference was statistically insignificant, however may have a significant difference in case the problems is explored using more samples and in a different context.

5. Discussion

The study has examined the factors contributing to absenteeism among university students in a public sector university from an under privileged region, the administrative province of Gilgit-Baltistan of Pakistan. Among various factors enlisted the highest rated factor that contribute absenteeism for university students was found to be overloaded academic burden, reflected in words: “Too many assignments were stressful”. Apparently, it did not seem to be such a powerful influencer, however, when we went through other similar studies, we realized its significance. For instance, findings of the study by López-Bonilla & López-Bonilla, (2015), revealed that the factor “Class work overload in multiple subjects” as the named the variable/factor was reported to be the third most influential factor. The second highest rated factor in our study was “Parents’ look after” ($M = 4.4$), had relatively higher mean in this study. It referred to the fact that university graduates had to take care of their parents, especially old parents who usually have health issues and thus need to visit doctors and health facilities. If we compare that factor with López-Bonilla & López-Bonilla’s (2015) findings, nearly the same was reflected in terms of “Family and working duties” as the second most influencing factor.

Similar to the finding by Hussain et al., (2019) “The time table of the subject of different courses are overlapped” had the lowest level. This factors arises from the mismanagement of university administration especially in case of overcrowded classes and shortage of teachers, and lacking other facilities. The factor that “Difficult courses” had a mean value of 3.8, in our study, while on the same factor, the study of López-Bonilla & López-Bonilla (2015) shows the least mean “Difficulty of the subject” ($M = 2.2$). The factor in our study, the “lacking interest” ($M = 3.8$), seemed more relevant to the factor of “Disinterest in subject” with the mean of 3.0 in the study of Lopez-Bonilla (2015). ‘Health issues’ in our research had almost similar levels of influence as of those from other context (e.g., Sharmin et al., 2017). Although Sharmin et al. (2017) found that the married are more likely to miss classes owing to non-academic obligations, which in our case was not fully supported. In our case most of the university students were in their early twenties and single in marital status, however, they had other social responsibilities such as taking care of their older or sick parents. This seems to be a culture-specific factor as in western culture parents in their old age are not burden on their adult descendent as expected in Pakistan culture.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

As in accord with our findings, the major factor indicated that it was more of teaching and learning approaches related issues causing students to remain out of university classrooms. Teaching approaches that were more traditional in nature expected from students with assignments in a great deal. The approaches stem from the beliefs and assumptions of university faculty and teachers about learning that the more university students are given assignments the more they learn, without properly assessing the negative side of such approaches. It may not be an effective strategy and may results in demotivating

students instead of motivating them towards studies. In the context of the selected sample of university students, the student takes six or more courses in a semester. The policy rules have suggested to give at least five assignments as part of assessment process under each course in each semester. If five assignments of each course is counted for total, it goes up to 30 assignments in one semester. It does not only burden students with faculty centered-approaches, assumingly necessary for 'quality'—the quality only in the eyes of the professor and the university faculty, which does not only over-burden students but also it fails to make an allowance for students to have their own independent, self-directed self-motivated learning. The emergence of this factor from study findings forced us to think over it not in terms of what other studies say but also the situation of the sampled university students. Researchers belonging to the same context helped to realize the significance of this factor of the 'overloaded assignment' burden. We had no doubts that this situation was being aggravated by the already various other factors having their own relative impact on students' pressures, such as taking care of parents at home and facing financial challenges. Hence, the whole, and the so-called learning processes become more painful than being joyful experiences for university students who were the victim of an academic culture which was lost into procedural concerns for degrees more than concerning it with true sense of knowledge and the joy of learning. The comparison of the contribution of the factors across demographics showed no differences, indicating similar influences of the indicated factors on university students regardless of their gender and the nature of academic discipline. The study findings have a great deal of matter for university administration to think over regarding their teaching approaches. One more important aspect both university administrators and teachers cannot ignore is the need to identify pupils who have a pattern of absences and design plans to address their specific issues rather than having a general outlook to 'average' student's behavior as only valid source of assessing and generalizing about the absenteeism behavior of every university student.

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