

# Causes of Absenteeism of Students: A Survey

Two surveys were designed at Thakur College of Engineering and Technology (TCET), Mumbai, to find the reasons of absenteeism amongst college students. The surveys were conducted for the second year, third year and final year students.

The questions included in the survey 1 enquires students about college atmosphere, student's attentiveness in class, notes availability for studies, motivation for self-study, mandatory attendance, use of multimedia presentations in classrooms, effect of availability of crash course, classroom learning engagement, family issues and health issues.

Questions in survey 2 enquired from students about factors which can help in improving attendance, like regular follow-up with parents, calling them for meetings, association of school leaders and community members with parents, advertising and adopting policies that explain the consequences for missed exams or late assignments, modern teaching methodologies, change in classroom teaching and peer mentoring by classmates and senior students

## I. SURVEY ANALYSIS

T-test of hypothesis testing is conducted to find any significant difference between the means of sample groups. So, this test helps to determine which factor is more dominant in student's absenteeism by comparing the means. In the surveys, students had three options to respond, 'Yes'=3, 'No'=2 and 'Don't know'=1. According to this the null and alternate hypothesis **Error! Reference source not found.** defined for t-test is:

Null hypothesis:  $H_0: \mu=2$  (population mean  $\mu$  is equal to 2, that is, students answer to the question asked is 'No').

Alternate hypothesis:  $H_A= \mu \neq 2$  (the population mean is not equal to 2, that is, students answer to the question asked is either 'Yes' or 'Don't know').

**Table 2: Survey 1**

Component	Survey Questions
1.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do you find the college atmosphere unhealthy due to poor relationships between teachers and students?</li> <li>Do you think borrowed notes were as good as attending class?</li> <li>Do you sleep, Face book chatting, online shopping, watching videos on YouTube, streaming live sporting events etc during lectures</li> <li>Do you think that attendance should not be mandatory and you shouldn't be punished for missing something they are paying for anyway?</li> <li>Do you miss the class because you need to complete other course work, find the class boring, are ill, or have social obligations?</li> </ol>

Component	Survey Questions
2.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do you prefer to learn the material on your own?</li> <li>For easy subjects Coursework may not be challenging enough and students have become bored to attend?</li> <li>Do you feel disconnected when teacher uses multimedia presentations in class which is not developed by him/her?</li> <li>Do you think poor engagement in learning in classroom is identified as contributing to the student's attendance pattern?</li> </ol>
3.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Are you working to support your family along with studies?</li> <li>Is there a family problem because of which you are missing college?</li> </ol>
4.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Is Illness the reason for low attendance</li> </ol>

**Table 2: T-Test Results Of Survey 1**

Component	Parameters	Hypot-hesis	T-test value
1.	The low attendance of students is because of students' attitude	$H_0: \mu=2$ $H_A: \mu \neq 2$	$p=0.000$ $\mu = 2.42$
2.	The low attendance of students is because of Absence of Innovative teaching methodologies	$H_0: \mu=2$ $H_A: \mu \neq 2$	$p=0.000$ $\mu = 2.57$
3.	The low attendance of students is because of Family Problems	$H_0: \mu=2$ $H_A: \mu \neq 2$	$p=0.000$ $\mu = 2.15$
4.	The low attendance of students is because of Illness	$H_0: \mu=2$ $H_A: \mu \neq 2$	$p=0.000$ $\mu = 2.15$

Results of t-test are given in table 2. In all the results shown here  $p < 0.01$ . Also in all the four cases the mean  $\mu > 2$ , so the null hypothesis is rejected.

Therefore, all the parameters are of concern to improve attendance.  $\mu$  is quite near to 2 for factors: family problems and illness, but is significant for factors: Absence of Innovative teaching methodologies and Students' attitude. From factor loading and t-test, it is observed that the two factors, illness and family problems are genuine and well-defined structures as the component loading is greater than  $\pm 0.70$ . So, the two major factors for absenteeism obtained here are: Absence of Innovative teaching methodologies and Students' attitude.

After getting these results for reasons of absenteeism, one more survey was conducted to find the factors which help in sustaining attendance in classroom.

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**Table 3- Survey 2:**

Component	Survey Questions
1.	1. Do you think regular follow-up with parents will improve attendance? 2. Do you think regularly informing parents about your absenteeism on phone and through letters and calling them for meetings will improve attendance by involving them 3. Do you think when parents, school leaders and community members' work together to focus on reducing absences will improve attendance? 4. Do you think advertising and adopting policies that explain the consequences for missed exams or late assignments can encourage attendance?
2.	5. Do you think instead of using traditional teaching methodologies if modern teaching methodologies like TPS, Peer learning that fit the situation will help to improve attendance? 6. Do you think a change in classroom teaching where each member has something to contribute and where disagreement is tolerated will improve attendance? 7. Do you think including a peer mentoring by classmates and senior students will help to improve attendance of worst case defaulter?

According to the factor loading the questions were divided into two components. They were identified as:

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1. Involving parents and society to enhance attendance and
2. Use of Innovative / interactive teaching methodologies to enhance attendance

The hypothesis definition for t-test is same as survey 1:

Null hypothesis:  $H_0: \mu=2$  (population mean  $\mu$  is equal to 2, that is, students answer to the question asked is 'No').

Alternate hypothesis:  $H_A= \mu \neq 2$  (the population mean is not equal to 2, that is, students answer to the question asked is either 'Yes' or 'Don't know').

In survey 2, t-test result shows that  $p < 0.01$  for both the components, but for component 1, value of  $\mu$  is very small. It states that involving parents and society is not the contributing factor for improving attendance of students. This is one of the major findings of this research. But the other major factor which got revealed from survey 1 also is involvement of innovative/interactive teaching methodologies can help in improving attendance.

**Table 4: t-test result of survey 2**

Parameters	Hypothesis	T- test value
The attendance in the class can be sustained by Involving Parents and society.	$H_0: \mu=2$ $H_A: \mu \neq 2$	$p=0.000$ $\mu = 1.74$
The attendance in the class can be sustained by Innovative /Interactive teaching methodologies.	$H_0: \mu=2$ $H_A: \mu \neq 2$	$p=0.000$ $\mu = 2.13$

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