



Impact of Teacher Absenteeism on College Students' Academic Achievement in District Mianwali

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Abstract:

This research investigates the effects of teacher absenteeism on students' academic achievement in the private colleges of District Mianwali. A cross-sectional survey on 153 male students using a quantitative research method, descriptive and quantitative approach was carried out. Data collection was done using a structured questionnaire that has been validated by expert reviews and pilot study (Cronbach's alpha = 0.862). In accordance with what is found, the absence of a teacher has an impact on the course completion, continuity, and assessment of students. Statistical analysis proves a positive relationship between teachers' attendance to classes and students' academic performance as absenteeism helps hinder a student's grasping of instructional methods. In addition, monitoring regularity, procedure of training programs and incentive-based motivation can help to reduce absenteeism. Thus, the study calls for policy interventions that can address teacher absenteeism in private institutions to promote educational quality and student outcomes.

Key Words: Teacher Absenteeism, Student Achievement, Private Colleges, Academic Performance, Quantitative Analysis, Course Continuity, Instructional Methods, Education Policy, Teacher Incentives.



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Introduction

Teacher absenteeism has been a significant problem in the education sector for a long time that directly leads to poor academic performance and learning outcomes of the students. Teacher absenteeism as an issue has been explored in many ways: dimensions, connections to the institutional policies, workplace environment, and the personal motivation (Clotfelter, Ladd, & Vigdor, 2009). As Chaudhury *et al.* (2006) says, teacher absenteeism is quite common in developing countries, leading them to disrupt instructional continuity and overall educational quality. Besides classroom learning, absenteeism among teachers reduces student's motivation and interest, which consequently results to poor academic achievement (Rogers & Vegas, 2009).

So, teacher absenteeism is still prevalent; therefore, it compels us to investigate the causes, its effects and remedies it. Teachers are culpable in the case of culpable absenteeism (avoidable reasons), like leaving for vacation, and that they have failed to do what they were expected to do whereas, in the case of non-culpable absenteeism, the reason is uncontrollable such as illness or emergency (Jacobson, 1990). The effect of absenteeism also extends beyond individual students and affects institutional performance and the level of educational standards (Miller, Murnane and Willett, 2008). According to National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ) (2013), in the urban school districts of the United States, 44.5% of teachers missed more than ten instructional days in a school year.

Especially, in higher education institutions, continuous academic mentorship and guidance is required and consistent academic mentorship and guidance is required, and students find absence of teachers very concerning (Bruno 2002). Are teachers available, do they care, and are they involved regularly with students (Ehrenberg *et al.*, 1991) in colleges and universities, it is effective learning dependent upon these three factors. According to research, students become disengaged, fail to understand the material, do not learn, and their academic achievements decrease when teacher absence is long (Duflo, Dupas, & Kremer, 2012). Additionally, teacher absence not only hampers the cognitive development of students, but also the level of their psychological motivation and institutional trust (Banerjee & Duflo, 2014).

Keeping this background in view, the present study is undertaken to explore the effect of the teacher absenteeism on the academic achievements of the college students of District Mianwali. The aims of the study are to find out how teacher absenteeism bears an impact on student performance, the relationship between absences and the student behavior and possible ways of averting the negative effects teacher absenteeism. It is important to address this issue to enhance the education framework, accountability and guarantee that students are receiving high quality instruction without any interruptions.

Literature Review

Importance of Teachers in Education

An education has been a subject most often studied over the past century from various points of view. In this research paper, I have reviewed literature prevalent in the realm of teacher absenteeism. For the past two decades, Hanushek (2014) has mainly argued about the role of teachers in improving student achievement. Even though other factors such as family and peers influence learning teachers are the main agents of education. Miller (2012) further noted that teachers are school based the biggest determinants of student's academic success. But aside from its increasingly expensive financial consequences, finding qualified substitutes, and the fact that it negatively affects students, absentee teachers present a dilemma.

According to Miller (2012), teacher absences inflict severe non-financial costs to student achievements. Our research findings show that teachers with more than ten absences are related with lower mathematics achievement equivalent to the gap between a novice teacher and a slightly more experienced teacher. The impact of absenteeism on student achievement is difficult to estimate given difference in the timelines for absenteeism (a daily measure) and student achievement (a long-term measure).

Classic Approach to Teacher Absenteeism: Principal-Agent Theory

Traditionally, teacher absenteeism has been discussed within the principal-Agent Theory. Through this theory, education is not the only type of situation where a principal designs an incentive structure to ensure that an agent works in his best interest, but, also, there are other employment relations where a principal is an employer, and an agent is an employee such as the employer's pocketbook theory (Ross, 1973). Therefore, in the field of education, the principal-agent relationship has several manifestations under which teachers are agents to several principals such as parents, school administrators, and education officials (Umansky, 2005). It assumes an absence of alignment of interests, in which principals are then interested in having as higher the productivity as possible while employees wish to have higher compensation with less effort. For this reason, incentive-based mechanisms are frequently utilized to induce teachers to behave such that they increase student outcomes. In this study however, I suggest an alternative framework whereby teacher absenteeism is seen not as a problem of the principal agent but as a public good issue that considers teacher vocation, student expectations and academic achievement.

The Impact of Teacher Absenteeism

Classroom Presence and Student Performance

Effective instruction occurs because teachers are always present in the classrooms. According to some researchers, low worker morale leads to high numbers of employee absenteeism (Lippmann *et al.*, 1996). Additionally, studying has shown that when teachers must inform their principal directly about upcoming absences, absenteeism rates are decreased (Miller, 2012). Student learning is hurt when teachers are absent. According to Finlayson (2009), student performance falls with repeated teacher absences. The study of her demonstrated that the more a teacher would be absent from school, the lower their students test scores would be. In particular, specific relationship between the scores of the third grade CRCT students in math and reading was calculated and it was found that the relationship is a inverse negative. According to the National Council on Teacher Quality (NCTQ), teachers around the Nation miss an average of ten days per year, 2013.

Teacher Absenteeism in Developing Countries

The attention has been on the effect of teacher absenteeism on education quality in developing countries. In Ghana, Obeng-Denteh (2011) conducted a study which revealed that teacher absenteeism has a negative effect on student learning and student performance in national examination. He looked at the absenteeism in Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) showing that while student absenteeism was not statistically significantly, teacher absenteeism was higher when student scores were lower. Poor student performance was noted to occur with higher absenteeism rates. Suryadarma *et al.* (2006) also studied children in Indonesia and found that higher teacher absences were significantly related to lower scores on the national mathematics test made by 4th graders. Since there was no previous research on teacher absenteeism in Indonesia, there was no record of this correlation. According to their findings, they find support of the view that teacher absenteeism either is a cause, or is an indicator of, general educational deficiencies.

According to Uehara (1999), the Pacific Resources for Education and Learning (PREL) program, which strongly signifies that teacher absenteeism is higher in the Pacific region compared to the U.S. recommends incentive-based strategy to eliminate teacher absenteeism. Moreover, the researchers believe that students tend to copy what they do, hence they are also influenced by teacher absenteeism. School absenteeism suggests that school attendance is unimportant (and hence, should be disregarded) and hence, decreases student motivation and performance. Teacher absenteeism is minimized by normative influence (Bradley *et al.* 2007), i.e. peers will usually not take leave if their peers are not absent.

Socioeconomic Factors and Teacher Absenteeism

Economic and geographical factors also are factors in teacher absenteeism. According to Clotfelter (2009), for instance, absenteeism was higher in North Carolina schools in more disadvantaged locales. Almost one more sick day per year was averaged by teachers in the poorest quartile of the schools than by teachers in wealthier schools. In addition, persistently high absenteeism rates usually occurred in schools that served low-income students. Bruno (2002) asserts that efforts focused on school reform must tackle discrepancies of teacher absenteeism rate at different geographic areas. He found that teacher absenteeism is based on school location and community economic conditions. A school that is in the low-income community tends to have a higher absenteeism rate which results in an inequity in the education quality.

Addressing Teacher Absenteeism

There are several strategies proposed to minimize teacher absenteeism. According to Clotfelter *et al.* (2003) of Duke University, schools with more low-income and minority students had higher absenteeism, hurting test scores for students involved. Over six years, Little and Dellangela showed in an analysis for the Chicago Tribune that the school that had the highest absenteeism rates were in those that were failing. In response, the district started publishing teacher absence records in parent directory. Over 500 elementary schools, absences ranged from 2 to 35 days per teacher. In fact, Miller *et al.* (2002) showed that there were significant differences in teacher absenteeism within the same school district. According to their interview with the Associated Press (2009), Raegen Miller pointed out school culture and teacher-administrator relationships contribute to student absenteeism. Bradley *et al.* (2007) found similarly that the absence patterns of teachers are influenced by their peers.

Frequent use of substitute teachers also researches that they will decrease the students' desire to learn (Bruno *et al.*, 2007). In North Carolina, there is a clear negative relationship between teacher absences and elementary student performance on standardized tests. Absence was concluded to particularly affect young learners by Clotfelter *et al.* (2009). In 2,594 teachers from 75 schools, Miller, Murnane, and Willett (2002) found that teachers took an average of 5.13 sick and personal leave days a year, with the range from 2.5 to 8 days. In 2007 for the 2007-2008 school year in Cobb County another study determined an average of 10 days per sick, and a maximum of 57.5 sick days. The results also applied to research on fourth grade math test scores that found teacher absences had a statistically significant negative effect on student performance.

Policy Recommendations

Several of these seem to be effective ways to reduce absenteeism. According to the Wisconsin Association of School Boards, teacher absences would increase by teachers reporting directly to their supervisor as the research has shown (Hubbell, 2008). The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (2007) reported in a report that automated systems to report absences increased rates of absenteeism. Pitkoff (1993) found that schools with principals who did not demand personal notification from absent teachers had also higher absenteeism rates. Absenteeism of teachers is a multidimensional and potent issue of student achievement. Despite its contributors, it has the most dramatic effect in low income and minority serving schools. Strategies to address this issue are focused policies, like incentive-based attendance programs, administrative accountability, improving working conditions for teachers, etc. These strategies can be put in practice by educational institutions to minimize absenteeism's negative effect and result in a successful student learning.

Method

This study employed a descriptive research method with a quantitative approach to investigate the impact of teacher absenteeism on students' academic achievements in private colleges of District Mianwali. A cross-sectional survey design was used, allowing data collection at a single point in time with minimal researcher interference. The population comprised male students from only one private college in District Mianwali using a simple random sampling technique. The final sample size consisted of 153 male students. The primary data collection tool was a

structured questionnaire, designed after reviewing relevant literature, seeking supervisor guidance, and consulting subject experts to ensure content validity. The questionnaire was based on a five-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5) and consisted of two sections: demographic information (name, school name, tehsil, gender, academic qualification, and age) and items measuring the impact of teacher absenteeism on students' academic achievements. To ensure validity and reliability, a pilot study was conducted with 10 questionnaires, and the Cronbach's alpha value was found to be 0.862, indicating a high level of reliability and internal consistency. The data collection process was conducted with the assistance of resource persons, who distributed and collected the questionnaires. Out of 160 questionnaires administered, 153 valid responses were obtained, achieving a 93% response rate. Data were analyzed using quantitative statistical techniques, including frequencies, percentages, mean scores, combined mean scores, and rank orders. Ethical considerations were maintained by ensuring anonymity, confidentiality, informed consent, and voluntary participation. This structured methodology provides a reliable and valid approach to understanding the effects of teacher absenteeism on student academic performance in private colleges of District Mianwali.

Results and Analysis

Analysis of the Respondent's Responses

Total 160 questionnaires were administered to the students at colleges of District Mianwali. All the questionnaires were collected on the spot. Thus, the response was 93 percent. The response of the items, relevant to the objectives of the study were analyze as follows:

Frequency Tables

Table 1

Teachers Absenteeism creates hurdle in course completion.

Responses	Frequency	Percent	Mean
SDA	12	7.8	3.56
DA	25	16.3	
UC	24	15.7	
A	50	32.7	
SA	42	27.5	
Total	153	100.0	

Table 1 shows that 50.2% respondents were agreed about the statement “teachers absenteeism creates hurdle in course completion”, whereas 15.7% were uncertain and 24.1% respondents were disagreed. The mean score 3.56 shows that above statement is true.

Table 2

An absent teacher cannot assess his student abilities on daily basis.

Responses	Frequency	Percent	Mean
SDA	21	13.7	3.25
DA	24	15.7	
UC	41	26.8	
A	29	19.0	
SA	38	24.8	
Total	153	100.0	

Table 2 shows that 43.8 % respondents were agreed about the statement “an absent teacher cannot assess the abilities of his students on daily basis”, whereas 26.8% were uncertain and 29.4% respondents were disagreed. The mean score 3.25 shows that above statement is true.

Table 3

Absenteeism causes hurdle in continuity of course.

Responses	Frequency	Percent	Mean
SDA	13	8.5	3.43
DA	30	19.6	
UC	30	19.6	
A	38	24.8	
SA	42	27.5	
Total	153	100.0	

Table 3 shows that 52.3% respondents were agreed about the statement “absenteeism causes hurdle in continuity of course”, whereas 19.6% were uncertain and 28.1% respondents were disagreed. The mean score 3.43 shows that above statement is true.

Table 4

An absent teacher has compassion for his children.

Responses	Frequency	Percent	Mean
SDA	16	10.5	3.41
DA	26	17.0	
UC	28	18.3	
A	46	30.1	
SA	37	24.2	
Total	153	100.0	

Table 4 shows that 54.3% respondents were agreed about the statement, “an absent teacher has compassion for his child. Whereas 18.3% were uncertain and 27.5% respondents were disagreeing. The mean score 3.41 shows that above statement is true.

Table 5

Students pay respect to an absent teacher.

Responses	Frequency	Percent	Mean
SDA	13	8.5	3.52
DA	25	16.3	
UC	32	20.9	
A	35	22.9	
SA	48	31.4	
Total	153	100.0	

Table 5 shows that 54.3% respondents were agreed about the statement “students pay respect to an absent teacher”, whereas 20.9% were uncertain and 24.8% respondents were disagreed. The mean score 3.52 shows that above statement is true.

Table 6

Absent teacher is unaware of students' individual differences.

Responses	Frequency	Percent	Mean
SDA	11	7.2	3.33
DA	30	19.6	
UC	44	28.8	
A	34	22.2	
SA	34	22.2	
Total	153	100.0	

Table 6 shows that 44.4% respondents were agreed about the statement “absent teacher is unaware of student’s individual differences”, whereas 28.8% were uncertain and 26.8% respondents were disagreeing. The mean score 3.33 shows that above statement is true.

Table 7

Students can understand the methodology of an absent teacher.

Responses	Frequency	Percent	Mean
SDA	16	10.5	3.39
DA	23	15.0	
UC	35	22.9	
A	44	28.8	
SA	35	22.9	
Total	153	100.0	

Table 7 shows that 51.7% respondents were agreed about the statement “students can understand the methodology of an absent teacher”, whereas 22.9% were uncertain and 25.5% respondents were disagreed. The mean score 3.39 shows that above statement is true.

Table 8

Regular check and balance can reduce the problem of teacher absenteeism.

Responses	Frequency	Percent	Mean
SDA	16	10.5	3.33
DA	36	23.5	
UC	24	15.7	
A	36	23.5	
SA	41	26.8	
Total	153	100.0	

Table 8 shows that 50.3% respondents were agreed about the statement “regular check and balance can reduce the problem of teacher absenteeism”, whereas 15.7% were uncertain and 44.0% respondents were disagreed. The mean score 3.33 shows that above statement is true.

Table 9

Reward (material and appreciation) motivate a teacher to become a regular teacher.

Responses	Frequency	Percent	Mean
SDA	18	11.8	3.34
DA	28	18.3	
UC	27	17.6	
A	44	28.8	
SA	36	23.5	
Total	153	100.0	

Table 9 shows that 52.3% respondents were agreed about the statement “reward (material and appreciation) motivate a teacher to become a regular teacher” whereas 17.6% were uncertain and 20.1% respondents were disagreed. The mean score 3.34 shows that above statement is true.

Table 10

Institute should arrange training programs for teachers to make him/her professional.

Responses	Frequency	Percent	Mean
SDA	23	15.0	3.38
DA	24	15.7	
UC	27	17.6	
A	30	19.6	

Table 10 shows that 30 were agree 47 were disagreed. The mean score 3.38 shows that above statement is true.

Application of Ranks

Table 1

Arithmetic Mean (M) and Ranks for the Items of teacher absenteeism.

Sr. NO	Statements	Mean	Rank
1	Teacher’s absenteeism creates hurdle in course completion.	3.56	1
2	An absent teacher can assess the abilities of his student on daily basis.	3.25	6
3	Absenteeism causes hurdle in continuity of course.	3.43	3
4	An absent teacher has compassion for his children.	3.41	4
5	Students pay respect to an absent teacher.	3.52	2
6	Absent teacher is unaware of student’s individual differences.	3.33	5
Combined mean score		3.4	

Table 1 signifies the mean score and ranks of the items related to teacher absenteeism. The mean score of the respondents assigns the rank 1 to the item “Teacher’s absenteeism creates hurdle in course completion” and last rank to the item “an absent teacher cannot assess his students’ abilities on daily basis.” The combined mean score of 6 items were 3.4.

Table 2

Arithmetic Mean (M) and Ranks for the Items of teacher absenteeism and regular check and balance.

Sr. NO	Statements	Mean	Rank
7	Student cannot understand the methodology of an absent teacher.	3.39	2.5
8	Regular check and balance can reduce the problem of teacher absenteeism.	3.33	5
9	Reward (material and appreciation) motivate a teacher to become a regular teacher.	3.43	1

Table 2 signifies the mean score and ranks of the items of college student achievements. The mean score of the respondents assigns the rank 1 to the item “absenteeism causes hurdle in continuity of the course”. And last rank to the item “an absent teacher has compassion for his children.” The combined mean score of 4 items were 3.3 which show that absent teacher has compassion for children was true.

Discussion

In private colleges, teacher absenteeism remains a great challenge to the academic attainment and even the whole learning experience of the student. According to this study, teachers’ absenteeism interrupts course completion, break the continuity of lesson and consequently contradicts the ability of students to understand concepts. The flow of instruction is sustained while students are ensured proper guidance, however, this is dependent on the presence of teachers. Absent teachers are also unable to frequently assess student’s abilities on an individual basis which hinders personalized learning due to unmet individual student needs. Further findings of the study are also that although students continue to respect absent teachers, their absence adversely influences students’ academic performance and engagement.

Results indicate that teacher absenteeism disrupts learning time while exerting pressure on the commitment of professionals. An absent teacher is generally not aware of the different characteristics of each of their students; therefore, it becomes hard to come up with ways of teaching every one of their students. In addition, some absent teachers are kind to their students, which reminds us that having absence of teachers will not help alleviate the impact of teacher’s absence on student’s progress even though the teachers are friendly.

The study also emphasizes the need for institutional mechanisms such as regular check and balance systems to contain teacher absenteeism. In addition, it states that material rewards and applause can be used as the motivating factors for teachers to perform their duties regularly. These findings correspond to what has already been or is being spoken about, in terms of educational effectiveness; that a good teaching structure and discipline is needed for academic success.

Absenteeism of the teacher interrupts this model that causes a gap in the transfer of knowledge and in motivation of the students. This issue needs to be solved with a proper explanation from the side of the educational institutions such as having professional development programs and developing a culture of accountability. For ultimately, having proper learning outcomes for students and keeping the academic system intact in private colleges is the prime issue and that is all depend on having teacher presence and engagement.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the teacher absenteeism effect on the students' academic achievements in private colleges of District Mianwali. The results further stress that in case of teacher absenteeism, it becomes tough to complete course, discontinues the continuity of learning and teachers are unable to assess students' capabilities. The lack of teachers reduces their knowledge of uniqueness of every student and, as a result, cripples them in their endeavor to accommodate the requirements of individual learning. However, in the absence of regular classes, some students continue to respect absent teachers while others fail to have such respect. It highlights those institutional measures, including monitoring of performance on a regular basis, well-structured policies and motivational incentives to overcome this problem. Nevertheless, teachers whose commitment is appreciated and rewarded are more regular and thereby stimulate more students to stay in school long enough to achieve academic success. The study concludes that it is important for reducing teacher absenteeism through systematic interventions and accountability mechanisms to create a productive learning environment.

Significance

This study has significance in several different stakeholders within the education sector including administrators, policy makers, and teachers. It is very important to address teacher absenteeism for the improvement of the outcomes of students learning and maintenance of academic institutions integrity. They constitute a valuable resource for policymakers and institutional leaders to develop strategies of promoting teacher accountability and enhancing student academic success. Moreover, this research is also added to the educational management literature by elaborating on how teacher commitment is linked to student performance. These findings can be built on by future researchers to examine other aspects of teacher absenteeism, for instance, their psychological, institutional and socio-economic determinants. These insights can also be used by educational institutions to design interventions to develop better or more effective or engaged teaching workforce through, for example, targeted teacher training programs, as well as incentive-based strategies. Finally, through reducing the problem of teacher absenteeism institutions can create a more stable, efficient and student focused teaching and learning climate.

Recommendations

The problem of teacher absenteeism and its effect on students' academic performance should be fixed by educational institutions by having established procedures in place that maintain teachers' accountability and improve students' learning experience. Secondly, absent teachers should receive immediate intervention through the monitoring system, which avails teachers' attendance records. Of course, there are deterrent mechanisms regarding absenteeism, for example, the use of digital attendance systems or performance reviews.

Second, incentive-based programs which recognize and compensate teachers that attend regularly and demonstrate an attitude on the part of their students need to be implemented by institutions. By way of motivating educators, material rewards, professional developments, public appreciations may serve as motivators to create a culture of responsibility and dedication.

Thirdly, professional development programs should be provided aimed at building teachers' pedagogical skills and increase their liability toward students. Training workshops and capacity building initiatives are ways by which teachers can understand the long-term impact that their presence is creating in student learning outcomes as well as the overall institutional reputation. In addition, it can play a strong role in cutting absenteeism by encouraging professional belonging. Positive and supportive work environment is to be ensured by institutions so that teachers feel it is their job to take ownership of theirs. The psychological and administrative support, handling the teachers' concerns, and offer a good work and life balance are likely to increase the levels of engagement.

Finally, strictly formulated policies by policymakers and educational leaders are imperative about cases of teacher absenteeism. This helps in enforcing clear guidelines like medical certifications for absences, supplement with a

substitute teacher programs and finally, be accountable to the absentee teachers so that students don't miss learning experiences. If these recommendations are applied, educational institutions will be able to reduce the negative influence of teacher absenteeism on academic performance of students and create a disciplined, efficient, and high performing learning environment.

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Declaration of Interest

The authors declare that there is no clash of interest.

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