



A Study of Absenteeism Among Degree College Students in Mumbai

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Abstract

This study examines the growing issue of absenteeism among the degree college students in Mumbai City, focusing on its causes and contributing factors. Key areas explored include teaching effectiveness, student interest, personal problems, job commitments and health issues. Using a mixed-method approach, data was collected through surveys with students from various colleges. The findings reveal that ineffective teaching methods and lack of engaging content reduce student motivation to attend classes. Many students also face personal and financial challenges, leading to part-time job commitments that interfere with academic schedules. Additionally, stress, mental health concerns and physical health issues contribute significantly to the absenteeism.

The study highlights the need for improved teaching practices, student support systems and flexible attendance policies. Addressing these areas can help reduce absenteeism and enhance student engagement, ultimately improving academic performance and the overall quality of education in Mumbai’s degree colleges.

Keywords: Degree College, Attendance, Absenteeism, Teaching effectiveness, Engaging Classroom, Interactive Classroom, Academic Performance.

Introduction

College education plays a vital role in shaping students’ academic, personal and professional growth. Consistent classroom attendance is often considered a key factor in achieving educational success, as it encourages interaction, discipline and continuity in learning. However, a growing concern across many degree colleges in Mumbai City is the rising trend of student absenteeism. This issue not only affects the individual academic performance but also impacts classroom dynamics and institutional outcomes.

Mumbai, as a bustling metropolitan city, presents a unique set of challenges for college students. Long commutes, part-time job commitments, mental health struggles and family responsibilities are increasingly influencing students’ ability to attend classes regularly. Additionally, lack of interest in the subject matter, uninspiring teaching methods and rigid academic structures further discourage regular attendance.

This study aims to explore the key causes behind absenteeism among degree college students in Mumbai. It focuses on several contributing factors, including teaching effectiveness, student interest, personal and emotional issues, job-related obligations and health problems. Understanding the root causes of absenteeism is essential for institutions seeking to create more student-friendly environments.



By examining these factors, this research study hopes to provide practical insights for educators and administrators to design better teaching practices, offer flexible academic support and improve student engagement. The study aspires to contribute to the development of effective strategies that reduce absenteeism and promote a more inclusive and supportive educational experience in Mumbai’s degree colleges.

Problem of the study

Absenteeism among the degree college students in Mumbai has been steadily increasing, negatively impacting academic performance and overall student engagement. Despite efforts by educational institutions, many students regularly miss classes due to various factors such as ineffective teaching methods, lack of interest, personal problems, part-time job commitments and health issues. This growing absenteeism not only hampers individual learning but also affects the quality of education and institutional reputation. Understanding the root causes specific to Mumbai’s diverse student population is essential to developing effective strategies to reduce absenteeism and improve attendance rates in degree colleges.

Research Objectives

1. To identify the major causes of absenteeism among degree college students in Mumbai City.
2. To examine attendance patterns and evaluate teaching effectiveness, student interest, personal, health and job related issues contribute to absenteeism.
3. To give the recommendations and suggestions to reduce the absenteeism and improve student participation in classes.

Literature Review

1. Geeta Paluskar & Pallavi Rege (2016) - SIES College, Sion, Mumbai

In a focused study of Mathematics and Statistics undergraduates at SIES College, Sion (Mumbai), the authors uncovered a clear link between attendance and performance. Among 78 students surveyed, major causes of absenteeism included inconvenient timetables, early morning lectures, health issues, peer pressure and involvement in extracurricular activities. Notably, students without clear career goals tended to miss classes more frequently. A significant positive correlation was found between attendance and exam performance, underscoring the academic cost of absenteeism.

2. Narayankar et al. (2024) - Government Medical Colleges, Western Maharashtra including Mumbai

A recent cross-sectional study involving students from government medical colleges including Grant Government Medical College in Mumbai, utilized Google Forms to identify causes of absenteeism. Students recommended interventions like preparatory leave before exams (50.7%), air-conditioned classrooms (49.7%), better ventilation (44.1%), interactive teaching (41.8%), shorter lectures (38%), more practical sessions over theory (37.6%) and improved transportation



(34.3%) to bolster attendance. This highlights the importance of infrastructure, comfort and pedagogy in addressing absenteeism.

3. Broader Trends Influenced by NEP 2020 - Digital Disengagement

The National Education Policy 2020, while progressive in advocating flexible and online learning, has inadvertently contributed to lower in-person attendance. With digital access to course materials, social media distractions and one-way teaching methods, many students find traditional lecture settings less compelling. This shift suggests a need to blend digital convenience with engaging, interactive classroom experiences.

4. Sharma & Kulkarni (2021) - Absenteeism Among Arts, Science and Commerce Students in Mumbai

This study examined absenteeism patterns in 3-degree colleges in Mumbai covering Arts, Science and Commerce streams. Data collected through student surveys revealed that the highest absenteeism rates were among Commerce students, followed by Arts and then Science. Key reasons identified included lack of interest in certain subjects, uninspiring teaching methods and frequent involvement in part-time jobs or internships especially among Commerce students. Personal issues such as family responsibilities and health problems were common across all streams. Additionally, many students reported that the traditional lecture-based teaching style failed to engage them effectively leading to a decline in motivation to attend classes regularly. The study recommended adopting more interactive teaching methods, flexible attendance policies and improved student counselling to address these challenges and reduce absenteeism.

Methodology

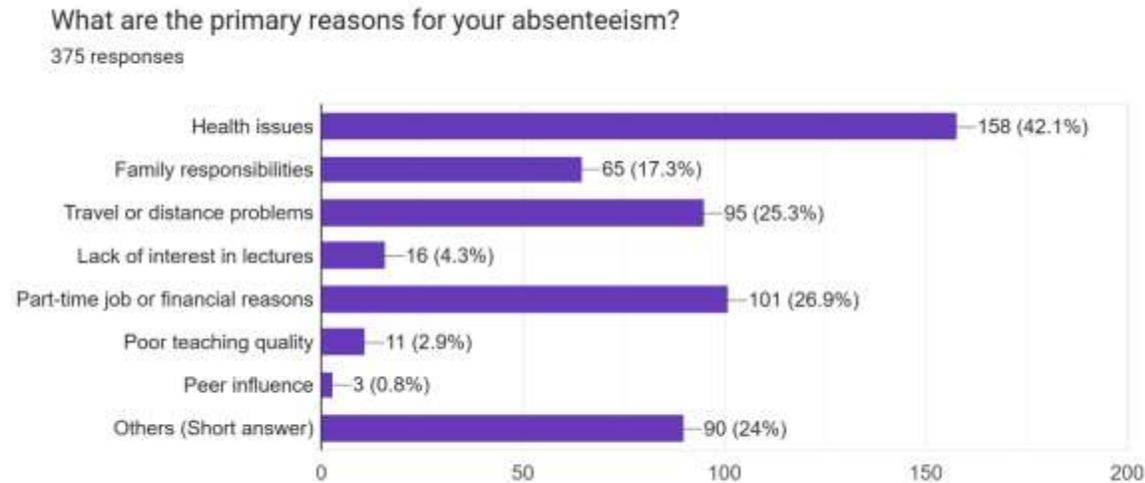
This study adopts a descriptive research, design to understand the patterns and causes of absenteeism among degree college students in Mumbai. A quantitative approach was primarily used supported by some qualitative insights for better understanding. The sample consisted of 375-degree college students selected from different colleges across Mumbai using random sampling techniques. The sample included students from various streams such as Arts, Science and Commerce. Out of 375 students 50% are male and 50% female, 40.8% students belong to the first year, 36.8% to second year and 22.4% third year.

Data was collected through a structured questionnaire, which included both closed-ended and a few open-ended questions. The questionnaire was divided into sections covering demographics, attendance patterns, reasons for absenteeism and suggestions for improvement.

Findings and Discussions



1. Major causes of absenteeism



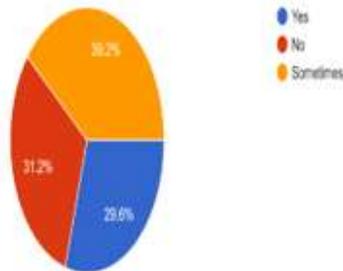
The chart presents data from 375 respondents on the primary reasons for their absenteeism. Health issues emerged as the most significant factor, cited by 42.1% (158 respondents), highlighting a major barrier to consistent attendance. Part-time jobs or financial reasons were the second most common cause, accounting for 26.9% (101), suggesting that economic pressures play a considerable role. Travel or distance-related problems followed closely at 25.3% (95), indicating logistical challenges faced by many. Family responsibilities (17.3%) and “Others” (24%) were also prominent, suggesting a variety of personal circumstances impacting attendance. In contrast, academic-related reasons such as lack of interest in lectures (4.3%), poor teaching quality (2.9%), and peer influence (0.8%) were far less significant. This indicates that absenteeism is predominantly influenced by personal, financial, and health-related factors rather than dissatisfaction with the academic environment. Addressing these external challenges could help reduce absenteeism and improve student participation.

2. Attendance patterns and teaching effectiveness, student interest, personal, health and job-related issues contribute to absenteeism.

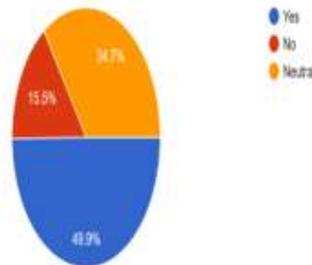
The pie charts reflect student perceptions of class timing and classroom environment based on 375 responses. Regarding the impact of college schedules on attendance, 39.2% of students responded “Sometimes,” suggesting that inconsistent or inconvenient timings occasionally hinder regular attendance. Meanwhile, 31.2% said “No,” and 29.6% said “Yes,” indicating that for a significant number of students, scheduling remains a challenge.



Does the college schedule or timing affect your ability to attend classes regularly?
375 responses



Do you find the classroom environment engaging and supportive?
375 responses



In terms of the classroom environment 49.9% found it engaging and supportive which is a positive indication. However 34.7% remained neutral and 15.5% expressed dissatisfaction. This implies that while nearly half of the students feel positively about the learning environment, there is still room for improvement in making classrooms more inclusive and motivating. Together, the data suggests that both scheduling flexibility and enhancements in classroom engagement could contribute to better student attendance and participation. Institutions may need to reconsider class timings and pedagogical approaches to address these concerns effectively.

The chart shows the average number of classes attended per week by 375 students. 36% attend 5-8 classes weekly and 24% attend only 0-4 classes weekly, indicating a concerning level of low attendance. Additionally, 23.2% attend 9-12 classes and only about 16.8% attend 13 or more. These figures suggest that over half the students attend fewer than 9 classes per week, highlighting

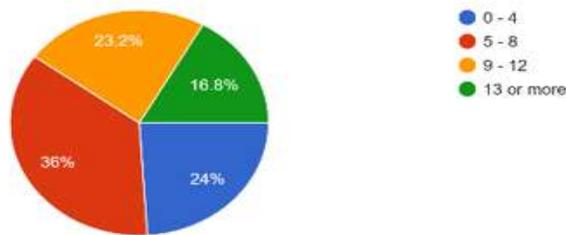


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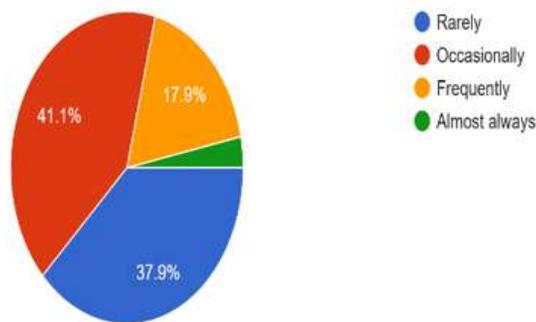
Organized by the IQAC, KHMW College of Commerce (December 2025)

potential issues with attendance consistency that may impact academic performance and engagement.

On average, how many classes do you attend per week?
375 responses



How often do you remain absent from college?
375 responses

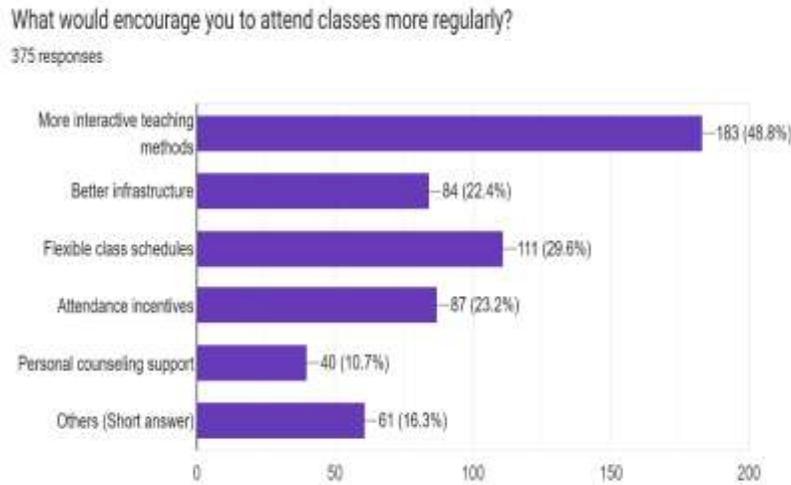


The chart reveals students' frequency of absence from college. Out of 375 responses 41.1% reported being absent "occasionally," while 37.9% said they are "rarely" absent, showing generally moderate attendance. However, 17.9% admitted to being absent "frequently," and a small portion (around 3%) are "almost always" absent. This indicates that while most students maintain relatively regular attendance, a significant portion still struggles with consistent presence which may impact academic performance and overall engagement.

3.Recommendations and suggestions to reduce the absenteeism and improve student participation in classes.



The



bar graph illustrates responses from 375 individuals regarding factors that would encourage them to attend classes more regularly. The most preferred option is “More interactive teaching methods,” selected by 183 respondents (48.8%), indicating a strong desire for engaging participatory

and classroom environments. “Flexible class schedules” was the second most popular choice at 29.6% (111 responses), reflecting the need for adaptable timing to suit diverse student needs. “Attendance incentives” (23.2%) and “Better infrastructure” (22.4%) were moderately chosen, suggesting that both rewards and improved facilities could have a positive impact. “Personal counseling support” was selected by only 10.7% (40 responses), indicating it is a lesser concern for most students. Lastly, “Others” accounted for 16.3% (61 responses), pointing to additional factors. Overall, the data emphasizes that making teaching more interactive and class timings more flexible are key to improving regular attendance.

1. Implement Interactive Teaching Methods: Traditional lectures often result in passive learning, where students lose interest quickly. By using interactive methods like group discussions, role-playing, debates, real-life case studies and technology-based tools (e.g. quizzes, polls, interactive simulations), teachers can make classes more engaging and enjoyable. Active learning increases student participation, encourages critical thinking and fosters deeper understanding of concepts, ultimately motivating the students to attend regularly.

2. Offer Flexible Class Schedules: Many students today balance academics with part-time jobs, internships, family responsibilities or health issues. A rigid timetable can be a barrier to regular attendance. Offering flexible scheduling such as multiple time slots for popular courses, weekend or evening classes or recorded sessions for review accommodates the diverse student needs. Flexibility empowers the students to manage their time better and reduces the likelihood of them skipping classes.



3. Improve Classroom Infrastructure: A poorly maintained physical environment can demotivate students. Classrooms that are overcrowded, poorly lit or uncomfortable make it difficult to focus. Investing in ergonomic furniture, air conditioning, clean restrooms and digital teaching aids like smart boards or projectors creates a positive and professional learning space. A well-equipped and aesthetically pleasing environment can significantly enhance student motivation and attendance.

4. Provide Attendance Incentives: Incentives can serve as effective behavioural motivators. These can include bonus academic credits, certificates of appreciation, participation in exclusive workshops or field trips or recognition in school publications. When students know that their consistent attendance is noticed and rewarded, they are more likely to prioritize showing up. This also creates healthy competition and peer motivation within the student body.

5. Conduct Regular Counselling and Mentorship: Absenteeism is often rooted in deeper personal or emotional challenges such as stress, anxiety, low confidence or family issues. Providing access to qualified counsellors or implementing a mentorship program can offer students the support they need. Counsellors can help students develop coping strategies, while mentors can guide them academically and personally, ensuring they feel cared for and less isolated, leading to higher attendance and engagement.

6. Enhance Curriculum Relevance: Students often skip classes when they perceive the material as outdated or irrelevant. Courses that include real-world applications, skill-building components, current industry trends and guest lectures from professionals keep content fresh and meaningful. Incorporating hands-on projects, internships and interdisciplinary topics shows students how learning connects to future career paths, making them more eager to attend and participate.

7. Track and Follow Up on Absenteeism: Monitoring attendance systematically helps identify at-risk students early. Using digital tools or apps, institutions can track patterns of absenteeism and send alerts or reminders. Personalized follow-ups such as emails, messages or brief meetings show students that their absence is noticed and matters. This level of accountability often encourages better attendance and gives educators a chance to address root causes.

8. Create a Supportive Class Environment: A welcoming and inclusive classroom culture promotes student well-being and participation. Teachers can build rapport with students by showing empathy, encouraging open communication and avoiding judgment. Group activities, peer collaboration and inclusive teaching practices make students feel respected and valued. When students feel emotionally safe and connected, they are far more likely to attend and contribute to class.

9. Use Technology and Learning Management Systems (LMS): LMS platforms like Google Classroom, Moodle or Canvas allow for blended learning by providing access to assignments, recorded lectures, reading materials and progress tracking. Gamified learning (badges, points,



leaderboards) and mobile-friendly content make education more accessible and engaging. Such systems also help students stay connected even when they can't physically attend, reducing the fear of falling behind.

10. Encourage Faculty Training: Teachers are the most influential factor in student engagement. Providing regular training in modern pedagogy, digital tools, mental health awareness and inclusive teaching helps educators connect better with the students. When faculty members are equipped to handle diverse classrooms and apply innovative methods, they can create a more engaging learning environment, improving both attendance and participation.

Conclusion

The study on absenteeism among the degree college students in Mumbai highlights that the issue is multidimensional, influenced by health concerns, part-time job commitments, long commutes, family responsibilities and to a lesser extent academic dissatisfaction. Findings suggest that while ineffective teaching methods and lack of engaging pedagogy play a role, the larger determinants are external pressures such as financial constraints and personal responsibilities. This indicates that absenteeism is not merely a reflection of academic disinterest but also a by-product of the socio-economic realities faced by students in metropolitan contexts.

To address this challenge, institutions must adopt a holistic strategy that combines interactive and relevant teaching practices with the flexible class schedules, supportive infrastructure and counselling mechanisms. Enhancing curriculum relevance and leveraging technology can further sustain student engagement. Importantly, collaboration between faculty, administrators and policymakers is necessary to design student-centric policies that recognize the realities of urban learners. By acknowledging the underlying causes and implementing targeted interventions, degree colleges in Mumbai can significantly improve attendance, strengthen academic performance and foster a more inclusive learning environment. Ultimately, reducing absenteeism is not just about enforcing attendance but about creating conditions where students are motivated and able to learn consistently.

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