

A Study on Absenteeism among First Year Undergraduates: With Special Reference to First Year Arts Faculty Undergraduates in University of Peradeniya

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Student's absenteeism to the lectures and tutorials has become a big issue for universities. Participation lectures is very important for students. It would be very difficult to gain knowledge only through copying notes taken by a classmate. The broad objective of this study was to identify the reasons for absenteeism among undergraduates. The study was conducted in faculty of Arts in University of Peradeniya applying a quantitative research approach. 38 respondents were identified as a sample of 1st year students. Questionnaires were distributed among the respondents. And the collected data was analysed using Microsoft Excel. The unfamiliar university environment, teaching methods, ragging, influence of peer group, medium of instruction, poor time management, unavailability of transport facilities, homesickness were some of the reasons for increasing absenteeism among undergraduates. Gender and the medium of instructions also influenced on students to create a variation regarding absenteeism. Ragging has a negative impact over student's classroom attendance. 92% of the Tamil and Sinhala medium students have accepted that ragging has played a negative role in their classroom attendance whereas 32% of English medium students have accepted the above statement. Further, compared to the students from other medium of instruction, absenteeism was lower among English medium students. Due to dependency and peer group influence majority of the female undergraduates skip their classes. However, absenteeism was higher among male students than female students. Poor time management was a leading factor that has impacted over the classroom attendance of students. Majority of the students skipped their classes to write their assignments and to study for the examinations. Based on the above findings, the study concluded that ragging, poor time management, medium of instruction and homesickness were the major reasons for absenteeism among undergraduates.

Key words: *Absenteeism, Medium of instruction, Ragging, Undergraduates*