

An Analytical Study into Absenteeism in Saudi Higher Education Institutions: Causes and Possible Solutions

Salameh S. Mahmoud

Faculty of Engineering, King Abdul-Aziz University, Jeddah, KSA

Corresponding Author: Salameh S. Mahmoud

Abstract: *This study aims at investigating the reasons behind the frequent absence of students in higher education institutions in Saudi Arabia, its effects on students themselves and the classroom; in addition to suggested solutions to minimize this prevalent phenomenon. To conduct the study a survey into the absence records of twenty instructors in the faculty of engineering was made to see the frequency of students' absences during a fourteen-week semester. The other tools are: a focus group of fifteen students who have the most frequent absences in the records about the reasons of their absence, interviews with parents about their attitudes toward absence and with instructors about reasons, effects and suggested solutions for the frequent absence and a questionnaire based on the literature about absenteeism. The findings of the survey revealed that there is a high percentage of absence among Saudi students especially at the beginning and end of the week and before and after exams. The focus group, parents and instructors interviews show nearly similar responses concerning reasons of absences and the validity of these reasons. The results of the questionnaire also echoed the other findings where the university related causes for absence are the most prominent among other categories. The study concluded with recommendations for minimizing absence in Saudi higher education institutions.*

Keywords: *absenteeism, IE 200, Saudi Higher Education, commitment, classroom environment*

Date of Submission: 29-09-2017

Date of acceptance: 10-10-2017

I. Introduction

1.1 Introduce the problem

Class attendance is very important for the teaching learning process as it is related to performance and success in academics and student-teacher satisfaction ([1]). It is difficult for the teacher and the class to build their skills and progress if students are frequently absent especially in higher education institutions. Absence creates a dead, unpleasant classroom environment that makes students, who come to class, uncomfortable and the lecturer unable to plan well and achieve his objectives (Marburger, (2001) cited in ([2]). Absenteeism from lectures by the university students appears to be a serious problem that seems to exceed and challenge all the strategies by the university authorities and lecturers' efforts to control it ([3]). Students' absenteeism is a major concern for elementary and secondary school educators today. It has become a complex, educational, political and social problem that is generating interest among educators, researchers and policy makers. The problem of absenteeism is becoming the concern of every member of society since it has negative consequences at both individual and social level ([4]). In quality terms, absenteeism is a waste of educational resources, time and human potential. This problem which is very clear among Saudi students demands an urgent solution to minimize it and spread an awareness that absence is the biggest enemy for students' performance. Relying on continuous assessment more than summative assessment exposes frequently absent students to the risk of losing grades because they are being tested every day.

1.2 Research Questions

1. What are the causes of students' absence in institutions of higher education in KSA?
2. What are the effects of students' absence?
3. What are the possible suggested solutions to minimize student' absence in Saudi higher education institutions?

II. Review Of Literature

2.1 Causes for absenteeism

Absenteeism as a problem that faces teachers and educators has been tackled by researchers who have been trying to diagnose the problem and hopefully try to find possible solutions. ([5]) explored absenteeism patterns and trends among a group of third-year student nurses. The findings of the study revealed that 1567 days were lost because of absenteeism during that period on 1027 episodes. The main reasons cited for absence

from both lectures and ward duties were personal and social commitments and stress. ([6]) investigated the causes of absenteeism in selected primary schools in Jamaica. The results showed that the reasons of absenteeism are not only in the family, but also in the schools, the communities and the students themselves. ([2]) investigated the extent of student absenteeism in selected universities in South Africa and explored the reasons why students absent themselves from classes and examined the implications of student absenteeism. The study revealed that student absenteeism is widespread in the universities under study due to reasons such as: lack of subject interest, poor teaching strategies by lecturers, unfavorable learning environment, too much socialization, part-time jobs to expand insufficient supports granted by various sponsors and poor relations with the lecturers. ([3]) investigated the student-centered, home, school and society related causes of absenteeism among 1000 undergraduate students from two public universities. Results revealed that the students were absent from lectures for student-centered, home, school and society related reasons. ([1]) analyzed the causes of unacceptable absence and various categories of excuses that students self-revealed as most effective based on a survey of 100 college freshmen. Sickness, technology, family, transportation, advisor meeting, part-time jobs, school activity, and others are on the excuse list in the order of popularity. Solutions to respond to each of these excuses are proposed. ([4]) highlighted common causes of student absenteeism like family, health or financial concerns, poor school climate, drug and alcohol use, transportation problems, and differing community attitudes towards education. ([7]) investigated the major causes of students' absenteeism; and the possible solutions to the vices in Universal Secondary Education Schools in Uganda. The study findings revealed that; lack of scholastic requirements, household work, lack of interest in education, hunger at school, sexual harassment at school, long distance to school, illness or disease, loss of parent or close relative, peer influence, and harsh punishment at school were the top ten causes of students' absenteeism in USE schools respectively. ([8]) investigated the effect of individual, family and school variables on absenteeism among high school students. The study findings show that high school students' assessment of the school environment explained 83% of the variance of levels of their commitment to school. Students' commitments to school, parental control, and assessment of the school environment together explained 22% of the variance in absenteeism. The survey of studies above shows that reasons of absence are more or less the same in different parts of the worlds.

2.2 Effects of Absenteeism

It goes without saying that when you don't come, you miss something good or bad and because universities and schools give academic services to students, absentees usually miss that service. The effect of absence on performance varies based on factors like timing, student's ability, duration... etc.

([9]) investigated the effect of absence on students' performance. Among the results, it is found that there is a causal effect of absence on performance for students; missing classes leads to poorer performance. This is true for better-performing students and consistent with the hypothesis that effects of absence on performance are likely to vary with factors such as student ability. ([10]) studied the effects of students' attendance on academic performance with the major objective of the study to investigate the relationship between student attendance and academic performance and to examine factors that affect student attendance at SIMAD University. The study found that there is a positive relationship between students' attendance and academic performance. Based on the findings, the researchers suggest that all students, particularly prospective students and those students who are not as academically strong, to be informed about the important influence of class attendance on academic performance. The study also recommended that universities should maintain or develop strict guidelines for student attendance and control factors that could hinder a student from attending classes on regular basis. ([4]) threw the light on the effects of classroom absence as disconnection from school, compromised learning and removal from school. ([11]) examined the direct and indirect relationship between student school absenteeism personal factors, family factors, and academic achievement in a structural equation model. The findings revealed that student absenteeism was negatively related to academic self-perception, attitudes towards teachers and school, goal valuation, motivation/ self-regulation, and academic performance. When a student is regularly absent from class, it has an adverse effect on his academic performance. This is because frequent absence may lead to missing out on vital information, facts and instructions that result in partial understanding of a topic, submission of incomplete work and poor participation in class activities. Some schools also dictate that students should have a particular attendance percentage in order to appear for exams. Therefore it is of utmost importance that parents ensure that their children attend classes.

2.3 Possible Solutions to Reduce Students Absenteeism

Absenteeism is one of the critical challenges that face educators in higher education institutions in the world in general and in KSA in particular. Researchers have been trying to tackle this challenge and to look for possible solutions to eliminate it or to minimize it. ([12]) conducted a study to assess the efficiency of a package

of motivational stimulation techniques in minimizing school absence rates among adolescents. The study found out that group involvement in motivational techniques can prove to be useful in reducing absence.

Among other recommendations to face this problem are: training, symposiums, workshops, conferences and staff development programs for teachers to promote their skills and performance level. Another suggestion is orientation and briefing on students who are absent ([4], [7]) suggested that parents understand their responsibility, government reduces taxes on scholastic materials or provides them free, the government and development partners to support school feeding programs, schools be held accountable for improving attendance. ([13]) conducted a study to supplement additional information on existing research for improving attendance rates in educational institutions and offer suggestions for administrators on how they can tackle the problems of absence. In this study an attempt is made to explore the factors that influence student frequent absence and to obtain some common and generally applicable solutions. The findings of the study reveal that a change in students' own attitude, the efforts of the teachers, the parents and the community will definitely have important roles to play in order to encourage students to attend classes. In addition to the findings of the studies, there are other ideas some experienced instructors sometimes present like punishing students by giving them warnings or asking them to drop the course after certain number of absences. A very good idea instructors found effective is not allowing students who exceed the limit of absence to sit for the final exam.

III. Methodology

3.1 Population and sample of the study

The population of this study is all the Saudi students in higher education institutions in KSA, and the sample is 419 engineering students taking IE 200 in the first semester of 2016. The sample of the study also includes students in the faculty of engineering other than the interviewees, instructors in the faculty of engineering and parents of the students who are frequently absent.

3.2 Data collection tools

The data collection tools used in this study are: A survey of the absence records of twenty teachers teaching IE 200 in the first semester/ 2016. The survey filtered the most frequently absent students. The second tool consists of a focus group and two interviews. The focus group with the fifteen students in the survey about the reasons of their absences and other related issues. The first interview with instructors in the faculty of engineering about their attitudes towards frequently absent students and how this affects the classroom environment and those students' achievement. The second interview with the parents about students' reasons for absence especially those related to parents themselves. All the interviewees in the three types were asked about their suggestions for minimizing absence. The third tool is a questionnaire based on the literature about the topic to be answered by students, parents and instructors as a consolidation for other tools.

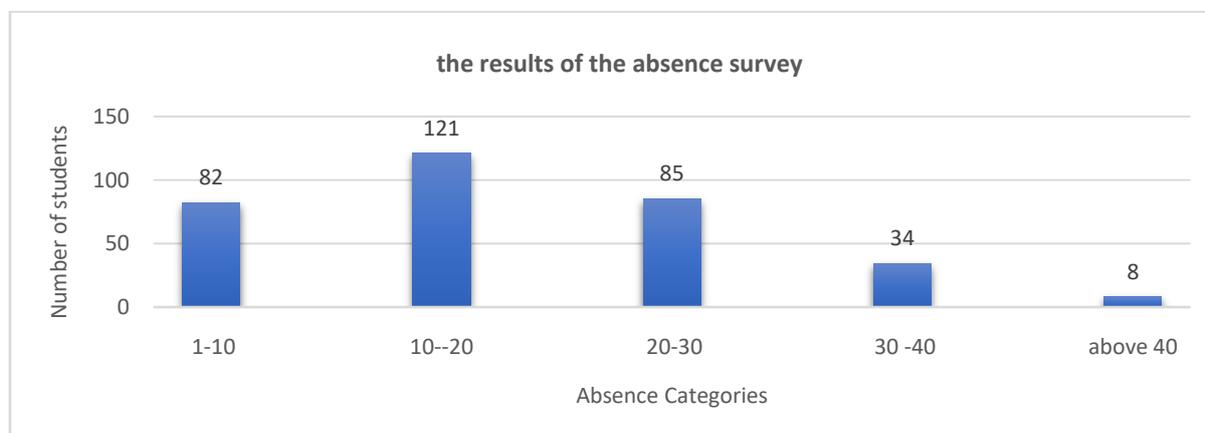
3.3 Data analysis

The results of the survey of the absence records were analyzed and shown in a bar chart. Similarly the results of the focus group and the interviews were also analyzed and tabulated under subtitles related to the different reasons for absence, its effect and the possible solutions. The responses to the questionnaire were also analyzed and exemplified by five bar charts.

IV. Results

4.1 Results of the survey of the absence records

Chart (1) the Results of the Survey of Absence Records of 419 Students Taking IE 200/ First Semester/ 2016



As shown in chart (1) above out of the 419 students in the absence record survey, 82 students had from 1 to 10 absences and 121 students had between 10 and 20 absences. 85 students were threatened because their absences are between 20 and 30. In the DN area 30 to 40, there were 34 students and only 8 students exceeded the 40.

4.2 Results of the interview with the university instructors

Table (1) the Instructors' Answers on the Interview Questions

No	Question	Instructor 1	Instructor 2	Instructor 3	Instructor 4	Instructor 5
1	In your opinion, why are students usually absent?	This is a life style, no serious punishment, they don't have enough sleep	-Social commitments like going with parents to certain occasions mainly to hospital or to the airport - Wedding parties or big invitations in the family where even their parents think they should be there to help -Exams where they think that they should be absent to study more -They don't wake up early especially when they have a class at 8:00 am -They may have problems with transportation -Without any good reasons, just because they are not in the mood	- don't take the course seriously - other classes are scheduled at the same time - ten hours for two credit hours only	Carelessness and the absence of strict rules	-They underestimate the importance of attendance -They have alternatives
2	How does students' absence affect them?	They miss important classes, they lose assignments, they fail to follow up with their instructors.	-Students' absence has a negative effect on them because they miss classes and effective teaching especially for things they can't understand by themselves. -Their achievement is also affected especially when continuous assessment is used where students may be tested any time in the class -Students also miss the chance of learning from their colleagues through classroom interaction.	- Affects their learning and communication -They may get DN	Their academic performance is badly affected and they sometimes fail the courses.	They miss important moments of interaction and understanding, - They miss continuous assessment
3	How does students' absence affect classroom interaction?	absence means no interaction, lack of information and causes weak information	When a few students are absent, this affects classroom interaction negatively as many activities can be cancelled because the number of students is not enough like group work, role playing, debate...etc. The focus will be on a limited number of students which makes the class boring	Affect completing the task when the partner is absent	Classes with lots of absences are very boring	The healthy atmosphere of the class in terms of interaction will be negatively affected
4	Do you usually repeat for absent students?	Yes	It depends on the reason of absence; if the reason is valid, I usually help the student(s) to keep up with their colleagues.	In this course we don't	No	Sometimes, when there is a valid reason for absence
5	Do you take attendance regularly?	Yes	Yes, I always take attendance after 15 minutes of the class	Yes	Yes	Yes

			time.			
6	Which reasons for absence do you accept and which you don't?	accept valid reasons and refuse invalid ones	-For me, I accept reasons like helping parents especially the mother when going to hospital, when engaged in family commitments when there is no one to help. -I don't accept reasons like not waking up early, transportation or exams because these things can be solved through more dedication and time management.	Accepting or not is from students affairs department	I only accept valid medical reports plus emergency cases	Medical reports and true issues related to parents
7	Do students usually inform you when they are absent?	Sometimes some students inform me that they want to be absent for emergency reasons.	Sometimes they do	Sometimes they do	Sometimes, especially when they have exams	Yes, they even tell me about their friends absence

4.3 Results of the interview with parents

Table (2) the Parents' Answers to the Interview Questions

N	Questions	Parent 1	Parent 2	Parent 3	Parent 4	Parent 5
1	In your opinion, why are students usually absent?	Lack of interest, carelessness, vigilance and fabrication of fake excuses for absence	Lack of interest due to blurry work opportunities after graduation	There are many reasons, including: - Failure to apply the rules of absence and deprivation - Lack of interest and responsibility	The boredom caused by the methods of explaining the material or indifference or evading the pressures of study	Because our education lacks the element of scientific entertainment and it's traditional and a very boring method
2	Do you think all the reasons of students' absence are valid?	I don't think so	I don't think that all reasons are acceptable	70% are acceptable 30% are unacceptable	Not all excuses are acceptable and logical	No ... Some of them actually have logical excuses but most of them fabricate excuses to evade lectures
3	Does your son or daughter usually inform you when they are absent?	Yes, they do.	No	Mostly not, it is important at this age stage to be given attention	No	Yes, because if they were absent for no reason, I would punish them
4	Which reasons you consider valid and which reasons you don't?	Acceptable causes such as illness, lack of transportation, and unacceptable: I do not like the lecture or the professor does not take absence	Disease, not finishing curriculum	Acceptable reasons, such as those related to health aspects, others do not	Conditions out of the students' hands	Reasonable reasons: -Disease and exams - The unacceptable reasons are to claim disease or to say that the doctor is not coming
5	How do you act if the reason is not valid?	Things are resolved by discussing the opinion and hearing the other person for reasons of absence until we reach a positive result	Advice and guidance and sometimes threats	Leave the option to him, he is at an age that he has to learn to take responsibility.	Remind him that all this is in his favor and that absence will affect his future and punish him with appropriate punishment	Try to understand the real cause of absence through quiet discussion and then stimulate and prepare the atmosphere of the study
6	Do you accept it when the reason for absence is related to you personally? Like sending you to the	I accept this only when it is absolutely necessary when I can't find an	Yes, I accept it.	Certainly not, because I do not want to be a block in his academic career	Yes if it is necessary	Depending on the circumstance and often yes

airport, being with you in hospital attending social duties on behalf of you... etc.	alternative.				
--	--------------	--	--	--	--

4.4 Results of the students' focus group

Table (3) the Students' Focus Group Contributions

No #	Focus Group Questions	Summary of Contributions
1	Why are students frequently absent?	Oversleeping, family concerns, tests, lack of motivation, consuming the limit (35 absences) and laziness
2	In your opinion, what is a good reason for being absent?	Sickness or health issues, family circumstances, death of a close relative, tests nothing that can't be delayed or ignored
3	What is a silly reason for being absent?	Weather conditions, for something others can do, sleep and traffic jams, laziness, very mild health issues like minor flu, waking up late and trying to avoid an activity on that day, feeling lazy and my car didn't work
4	Are you usually absent for good reasons or silly reasons? What is an approximate percentage of each?	The average percentage for good reasons is 60 to 80% and for silly reasons 20 to 40%
5	Do you inform your parents when you are absent?	Almost 60% said "YES", 10% said "NO" and 30% said " I tell them if they ask
6	Do you usually tell your instructors when you are absent?	40% said "YES", and "sometimes" 50% said "NO" and 30% said only when I travel
7	In your opinion, how does your absence affect you?	Almost 40% said " It doesn't affect me" and 60% said " It affects me in terms of understanding, poor test results and performance especially with continuous assessment
8	How does your absence affect the classroom especially when more than one student are absent?	Nearly 20% don't know, 20% said it doesn't affect the classroom, 60% talked about the lack of interaction, and the absence of group work, team work and the seriousness of the class as a whole
9	How do you usually get what you miss while you were absent?	25% said from the book or the internet, 60% said from other classmates, 15% said they don't care much about this
10	Does the instructor usually repeat for absent students?	80% said "YES" and 20% said most of them don't and if they do, it will be outside the classroom not to lose other students' time
11.	How can we minimize absence?	The university can follow more strict rules for absence where students have to reconsider taking attendance lightly. Improving life style of students through three key words: A) Priorities, B) Culture, C) Reward & Punishments. Parents can play a very important role in encouraging their sons and daughters to come to university regularly, .motivate and reward students who have the least or no absences. Classes have to be more motivating through using multimedia and variety of teaching strategies, theuniversity should provide activities and entertainment to encourage students to stay if they have a loose schedule, and to make schedules more flexible so that student have their classes successively either in the morning or in the afternoon. Students should learn how to manage their time, it is time that students change their priorities to be in favor of coming to university.

4.5 Results of the questionnaire

Chart (2) the Respondents' Answers to the Questionnaire with Regard to Student Related Causes of Absence

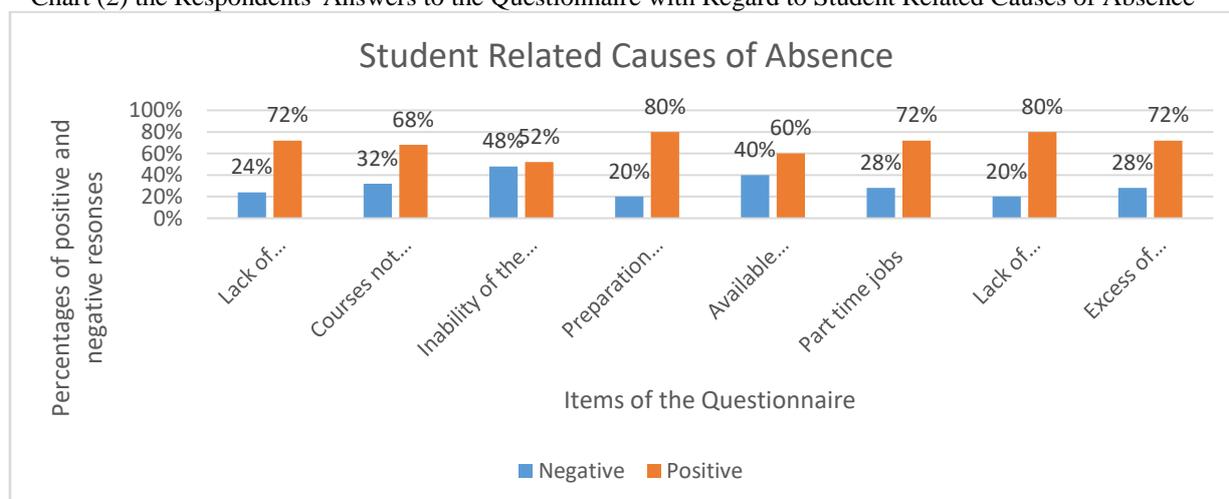


Chart (2) above shows the negative (the average of 1&2 in the Likert scale from 1 to 5) responses in blue and the positive (the average of 3, 4 &5 in the scale) responses in orange. The responses cover the first eight items in the questionnaire. All the positive responses are higher than the negative responses. Preparation for exams, lack of confidence, lack of interest and excess of homework are the highest causes of absence.

Chart (3) the Respondents' Answers of the Questionnaire with Regard to Home Related Causes for Absence

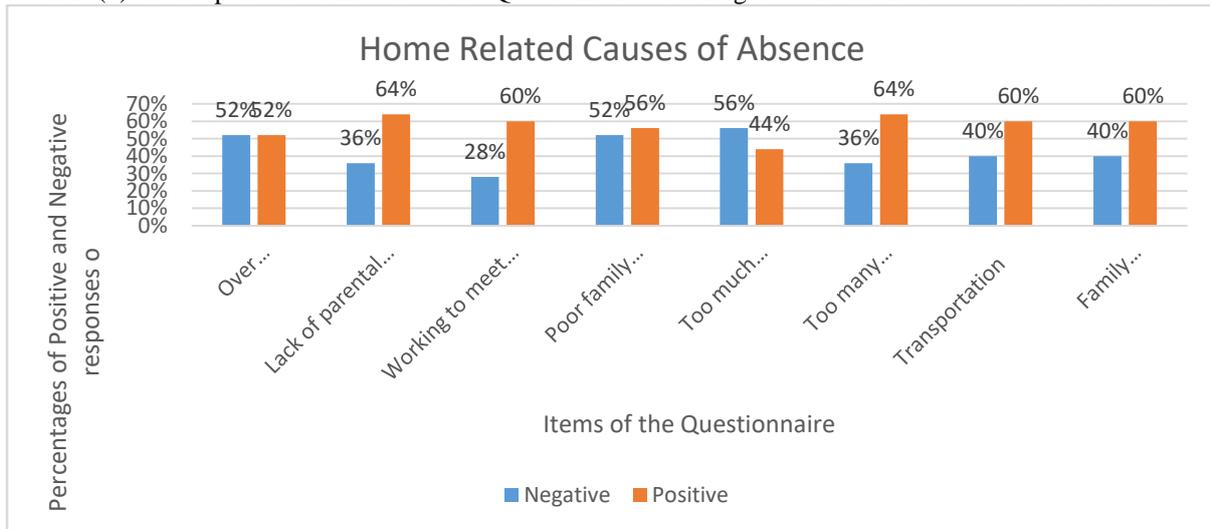


Chart (3) above shows the negative responses in blue and the positive responses in orange. The responses cover the second eight items in the questionnaire. The percentages of items 1 and 5 show that negative responses are higher than positive responses. The other items were all in favor of positive responses.

Chart (4) the Respondents' Answers of the Questionnaire with Regard to University Related Causes for Absence

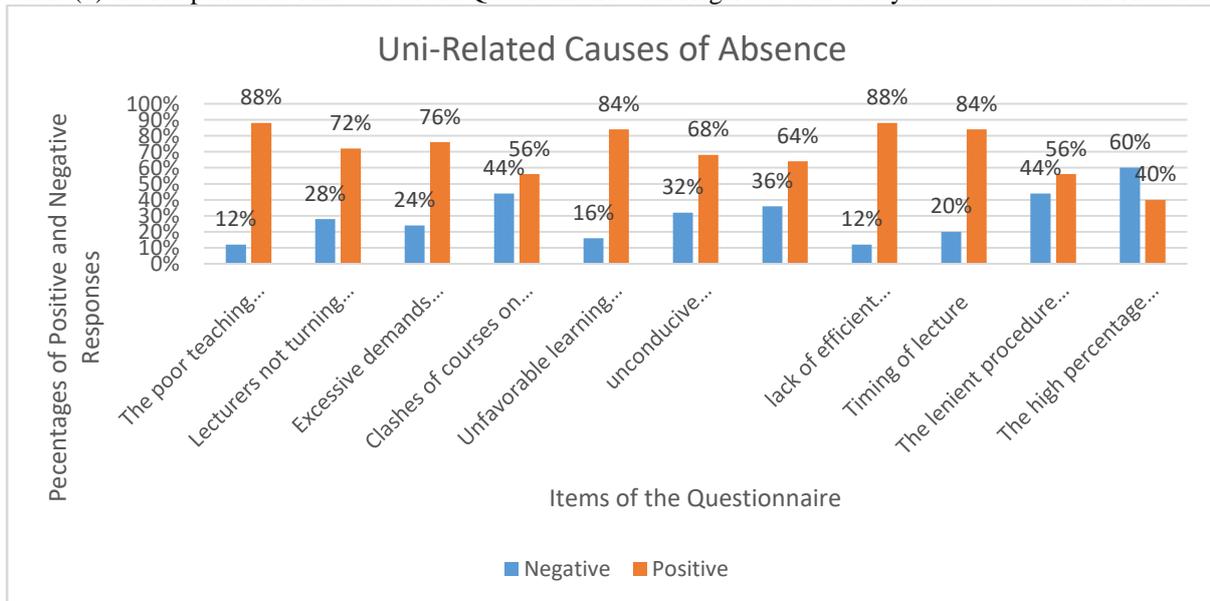


Chart (4) above shows the negative responses in blue and the positive responses in orange. The responses cover the items from 17 to 27 in the questionnaire. All the percentages of the positive responses are much higher than the negative responses with the exception of the last item. This shows that university related causes are real reasons behind students' absence.

Chart (5) the Respondents' Answers of the Questionnaire with Regard to Society Related Causes of Absence

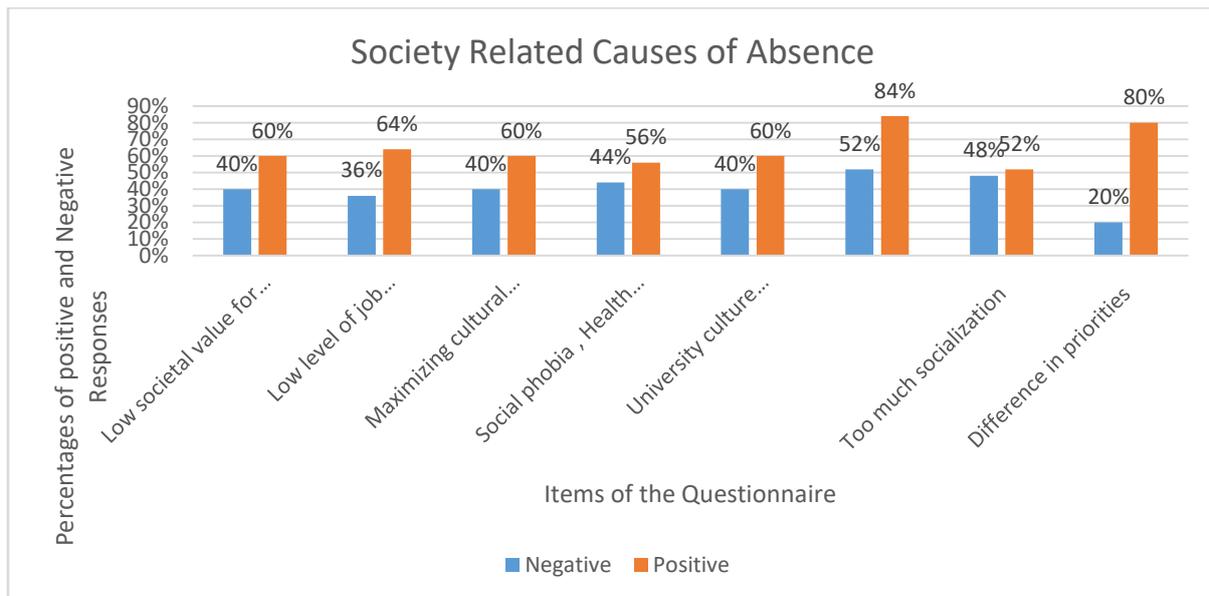


Chart (5) above shows the negative responses in blue and the positive responses in orange. The responses cover the last eight items in the questionnaire from 28 to 35. All the positive percentages are higher than negative percentages.

Chart (6) The Differences between the four Categories of the Questionnaire

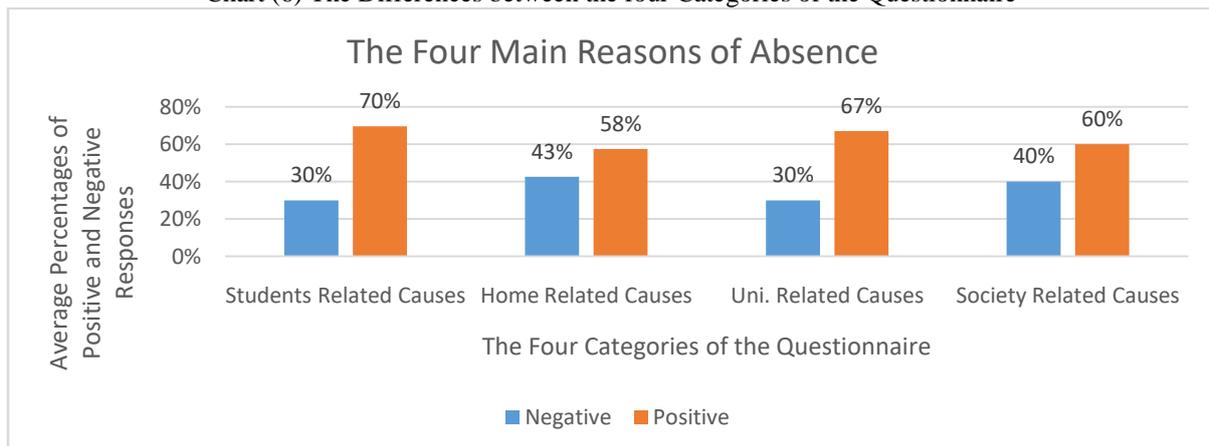


Chart (6) above shows the negative (the average of negative responses in the four main categories of the questionnaire) responses in blue and the positive (the average of the positive responses in the four main categories of the questionnaire) responses in orange. In the four categories, the percentages of the positive responses are higher than those for the negative responses. It is clear that student related causes and university related causes are the highest among the reasons of absence.

V. Discussion And Analysis

The issue of students' absenteeism in Saudi higher education institutions has become a complex educational problem that is engaging educators, researchers, and community. It is becoming the concern of every member of society since it has negative consequences at both the individual and social level. This three-question study is meant to shed light on this challenging problem in terms of reasons, effects and suggested solutions.

The tools of the study including the survey into the absence records of IE200 students in the second semester of 2016 showed the number of absences in five categories and found out that these absences usually occur just before and after the weekend, before and after exams and before and after vocations. These findings show that some students especially those who travel on vacations usually extend the vocation before and after to make it longer. They also find exams a good undisputed excuse to be absent to prepare and get higher grades. The responses to the instructors' interviews added more reasons to absence like: social commitments, wedding parties, lack of sleep, overlaps in schedules, transportation; in addition to reasons that are not acknowledged anywhere like very silly reasons including boredom, frustration and not having a good mood.

"They underestimate the importance of attendance, they have alternatives." Salah, April 21, 2017. "This is a life style, No serious punishment, they don't have enough sleep." Majid, May 5, 2017. See table (1). Similarly, the parents' interview added more reasons like: lack of interest, fake excuses, and disappointment caused by unemployment, the high limit of absence and the lenient way the university follows in dealing with absence and finally the traditional way of teaching some instructors still use. "Because our education lacks the element of scientific entertainment and its old traditional method of teaching which is very boring." Al-Zahrani, May 15, 2017. See table (2). The students' focus group also echoed the causes of absence mentioned above. Sickness or health issues, family circumstances, death of a close relative, tests and something that can't be delayed or ignored as valid reasons and weather conditions, for something others can do, traffic jams, laziness and sleep, very mild health issues like minor flu, waking up late and trying to avoid an activity on that day, feeling lazy and my car didn't work as invalid reasons. See table (3).

All the reasons valid or invalid, justified or unjustified are part of the culture that sometimes can't be even questioned. Instructors are sometimes told not to touch certain areas like these as they are very culture-sensitive. Parents like to see their brothers, sons and grandsons around in social occasions; this gives them a feeling of strength and pride. You can't blame a student for being absent if he accompanied his mother to hospital or to the airport. These reasons are not exclusive to the Saudi culture, most of them are mentioned in other studies about this issue, ([5], [6], [3], [1], [2], [4], [8]).

The results of the study also shows how inconvenient frequent absence is with regard to instructors, other students and the classroom environment and the absent students themselves. Instructors feel disappointed when a few of students in proportion to the total are absent as this affects their planning and the classroom activities like pair work and group work ([9], [10]). Absence also has a negative effect on other students in the class. The motivation and the enthusiasm achieved when students work in groups and teams and do roleplays and open debate will not be achieved if students are frequently absent. The absentees themselves are the most negatively affected. They miss important knowledge, they lose assignment especially if continuous assessment is used excessively. If they exceed the limits of absence, they will be asked to drop the course or they may fail the course ([4], [11]). See table (1)

When students were asked about the possible solutions to minimize absence, their answers were surprising as they blamed everyone except themselves. They blamed the university system in terms of bad schedules that encourage students to be absent. "When I have my first class 8:00 to 10:00 am and the second at 1:00 pm, I feel tempted to leave and not to come back. Similarly, when I have my last class 9:00 to 11:00 pm, I find it justified to compromise the 8:00am class." Khaled Asseeri, April 21st, 2017. They also considered poor teaching strategies and lack of extracurricular activities as main reasons behind their absence. Surprisingly, they suggested that the university should be stricter with regard to absent limits and absence rules.

VI. Conclusion And Recommendations

This study has shown that the problem of absenteeism is quite prevalent in higher education institutions in KSA. The problem is caused by interplay of a multiplicity of factors which are both internal and external to the student and/or the university. Among these factors that give rise to absenteeism are lack of seriousness and motivation to attend classes caused by the relaxed financial situation in the kingdom, the lenient approach in applying the rules related to absence, and most importantly the confusion in the arrangement of priorities that might be caused by cultural beliefs. To go to a wedding occasion on behalf of the family or to come to university, to help a neighbor in a social affair, to go with mom to hospital, to receive dad in the airport ...etc. or to come to university. Time management is another big issue for students; a test or even a quiz is enough reason for absence. These are the reasons that instructors, parents and students deemed as not valid. On the other hand and to be fair to students there are other reasons related to poor teaching strategies and the unwelcoming nature of the classroom environment. The problem of student absenteeism is gaining much attention from educators, researchers and policy makers as it is not just an educational problem but also a social and economic issue which may go with students to their future careers to affect their productivity and reliability. Therefore, this study advocates that in order to address the problem, efforts should be directed to training centers and institutes to organize symposiums, workshops, conferences and staff development programs for lecturers to improve their skills and performance level. Lecturers should try to respond to the problem of student absenteeism by exploring creative techniques to increase class attendance. Obviously one way of operationalizing this ideal is through the use of innovative teaching methods, the use of better equipped classrooms and a change in attitude. The implementation of effective and functional student orientation and student support programs could be part of the intervention strategies that universities might need to consider among others. Students need regular guidance and counselling services as well as career support so that they may be able to cope with university life and all that goes with it. It is hoped that this support may make a difference.

References

- [1]. Song, P. (2013) Absence Excuses in Freshman College Classes and Solutions. US-China Education Review B, ISSN 2161-6248 April 2013, Vol. 3, No. 4, 261-268
- [2]. Wadesango, N. & Machingambi, S. (2011) Causes and Structural Effects of Student Absenteeism: A Case Study of Three South African Universities. *Kamla-Raj J Soc. Sci.*, 26(2): 89-97
- [3]. Fayombo, G. A. and et al (2012) Cross Institutional Study of the Causes of Absenteeism among University Students in Barbados and Nigeria. *Journal of Educational and Developmental Psychology* Vol. 2, No. 1, pp: 122-136
- [4]. Gupta, M. and Lata, P. (2014) Absenteeism in Schools: A Chronic Problem in the Present Time. *Educational Confab*, Vol. 3, No. 1, pp: 11-16
- [5]. Timmins, F & Kaliszzer, M. (2002) Absenteeism among nursing students – fact or fiction, *Journal of Nursing Management*, 2002, 10, 251–264
- [6]. Cook, L. d. and Eaenne, A. (2010) Factors Influencing Students' Absenteeism in Primary Schools in Jamaica Perspectives of Community members, *Caribbean Curriculum* Vol. 17, 2010, 33-57 .2009, pp: 185-198
- [7]. Komakech, R.A. and Osuu, J.R. (2014) Students' Absenteeism: A Silent Killer of Secondary Education (USE) in Uganda, *International Journal of Education and Research*, Vol. 2 No. 10, pp: 410-417
- [8]. Demir, K. & Akman Karabeyoglu, Y. (2015). Factors associated with absenteeism in high schools. *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research*, 62, 37-56 <http://dx.doi.org/10.14689/ejer.2016.62.4>
- [9]. Arulampalam, W., Naylor, R. A. and Smith, J. (2007) Am I missing something? The effects of absence from class on students' performance. Working Paper. Coventry: University of Warwick, Department of Economics. Warwick economic research papers (No.820), Official URL: <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/economics/research>
- [10]. Abdi Aden, A. and et al (2013) The Effect of Students' Attendance on Academic Performance: A Case Study at Simad University Mogadishu, *Academic Research International*, Vol. 4 No. 6 November 2013, pp: 409-417
- [11]. Murat B., Gökmen A., Erdiñç D., (2016) The School Absenteeism among High School, *Educational Science: Theory and Practice*, 16(6), 1819-1831: Contributing Factors.* Students
- [12]. Enea, V. and Dafinoiu, I. (2009) Motivational/ Solution- focused Intervention for Reduced School Truancy among Adolescence, *Journal of Cognitive and Behavioral Psychotherapies*, Vol. 9, No. 2, September
- [13]. Thekadam, J.S. and Kottaram, J.S. (2015) Strategic Intervention Techniques to Reduce Chronic Absenteeism and Truancy among Students, *IJMBS* Vol. 5, Issue 2, pp: 9-14

APPENDICES

Appendix (1)

Questions of the instructors, parents' interviews and students' focus group

Instructors' Interview Questions	Parents' Interview Questions	Students' Focus Group Questions
<p>1. In your opinion, why are students usually absent? برأيك الشخصي، لماذا يتغيب الطلاب بشكل متكرر؟</p> <p>2. How does students' absence affect them? كيف يؤثر الغياب على الطلاب؟</p> <p>3. How does students' absence affect classroom interaction? كيف يؤثر غياب الطلاب على التفاعل الصفّي؟</p> <p>4. Do you usually repeat for absent students? هل تعيد المحاضرة أو جزءاً منها للطلاب المتغيبين؟</p> <p>5. Do you take attendance regularly? هل تأخذ الغياب بشكل منتظم؟</p> <p>6. Which reasons for absence do you accept and which you don't? ما هي المبررات المقبولة للغياب في نظرك وما هي المبررات غير المقبولة؟</p> <p>7. Do students usually inform you when they are absent? هل خبرك الطلاب مسبقاً بنيتهم الغياب مستقبلاً؟</p>	<p>1. In your opinion, why are students usually absent? في رأيك لماذا يتغيب الطلاب الجامعيين عن المحاضرات بشكل متكرر؟</p> <p>2. Do you think all reasons of students' absence are valid? هل تعتقد أن جميع الأسباب لغياب الطلاب مقبولة ومنطقية؟</p> <p>3. Does your son or daughter usually inform you when they are absent? هل يخبرك ابنك أو بنتك عادة عندما ينون التغيب عن المحاضرات؟</p> <p>4. Which reasons you consider valid and which reasons you don't? أي الأسباب مقبولة في نظرك كمبرر للغياب وأيها غير مقبول؟</p> <p>5. How do you usually act if the reason is not valid? كيف تتصرف عادة عندما يكون السبب غير منطقي وغير مقبول؟</p> <p>6. Do you accept it when the reason for absence is related to you personally? Like meeting or sending you to the airport, being with you in hospital attending social duties on behalf of you... etc. هل تقبل عندما يتعلق الغياب بك شخصياً مثل إرسالك أو إحضارك من المطار. الذهاب معك الي المشفى أو حضور مناسبات إجتماعية بدلا عنك؟</p>	<p>1. Why are students frequently absent? لماذا يتغيب الطلاب بشكل ملحوظ؟</p> <p>2. In your opinion, what is a good reason for being absent? برأيك الشخصي ما هو المبرر الحقيقي للغياب؟</p> <p>3. What is a silly reason for being absent? ما هو المبرر غير المقبول للغياب؟</p> <p>4. Are you usually absent for good reasons or silly reasons? What is an approximate percentage of each? هل تتغيب لمبررات مقبولة أم غير مقبولة، ما هي نسبة كل منهما؟</p> <p>5. Do you inform your parents when you are absent? هل تخبر والديك عادة عندما تتغيب؟</p> <p>6. Do you usually tell your instructors when you are absent? هل تخبر مدرسيك مسبقاً عندما تتغيب؟</p> <p>7. In your opinion, how does your absence affect you? برأيك الشخصي كيف يؤثر الغياب في أداءك الأكاديمي؟</p> <p>8. How does your absence affect the classroom especially when more than student are absent? كيف يؤثر غيابك على مجريات الحصة وخاصة عندما يتغيب أكثر من طالب؟</p> <p>9. How do you usually get what you miss while you are absent? كيف تحصل عادة على المادة التي تفتنك عندما تتغيب؟</p> <p>10. Does the instructor usually repeat for absentees?</p>

Appendix (2) Questionnaire about reasons of students' absence

No. #	Categories and Items	Scale from 1 -5 where 1 is the least probable and 5 is the most probable				
		1	2	3	4	5
	Students' related causes					
1	"Lack of interest in school subjects or courses نقص الأستمتاع بالموضوعات الدراسية					
2	Courses not relevant to real world عدم وجود علاقة بين المواضيع الدراسية والحياة					
3	"Inability of the mental capacity of students to match the course or courses opted for عدم قدرة عقل الطالب على إستيعاب المقررات الدراسية المخصصة له ضمن الخطة					
4	Preparation for examination الأعداد للإختبارات					
5	Available opportunities for entertainment like malls, movie halls etc. توفر فرص للإستمتاع مثل المولات ومباريات كرة القدم ووسائل الأستمتاع الأخرى والتي تشغل الطالب					
6	Part time jobs وظائف الدوام الجزئي					
7	Lack of confidence and frustration caused by challenges نقص الثقة والأحياب المتولد عن التحديات					
8	Excess of homework and sometimes fear from examination زيادة الواجبات البيئية وأحيانا الخوف من الأختبارات					
	Home related					
9	Over expectation of parents التوقعات المبالغ فيها من قبل الأهل					
10	Lack of parental care and involvement in their children's academic activities نقص الأهتمام من قبل الأهل وعدم متابعة شؤون الطالب اليومية					
11	Working to meet up the daily needs for the family إنتشغال الطالب بالشؤون اليومية للعائلة					
12	Poor family relationships ضعف العلاقة والترابط بين أفراد العائلة					
13	Too much pamperness from family العناية الزائدة من قبل الأهل					
14	Too many facilities and high amount of pocket money كثرة المشتتات والمصروف الزائد للطالب					
15	Transportation المواصلات					
16	Family commitments الالتزامات العائلية					
	School related					
17	The poor teaching skills of lecturers leading to boring lectures المهارات التدريسية التقليدية للمحاضرين تؤدي الى محاضرات مملة					
18	Lecturers not turning up for scheduled lectures غياب بعض المحاضرين عن المحاضرات					
19	"Excessive demands and project work for students المتطلبات الكثيرة من واجبات ومشاريع تؤدي بالطالب الى الغياب عن المحاضرات					
20	Clashes of courses on the time table تضارب المواعيد في جداول لمحاضرات					
21	Unfavorable learning environment, وجود بيئة تعليمية غير محببة لدى الطالب					
22	unconducive interpersonal relations between students & instructors وجود علاقة غير حميمية بين المعلمين والطالب					
23	Lack of allied activities like no sports program, no fresher or farewell parties, no annual day celebration etc عدم وجود نشاطات لا منهجية جاذبة للطالب مثل الأحتفالات وحفلات الوداع ...					
24	lack of efficient instructors is a major cause to shift towards private tutoring تراجع فعالية المدرسين فسحت المجال للتدريس الخصوصي مما أدى الى الأستغناء عن الحصة الصفية					
25	Timing of lecture توقيت المحاضرة. غالبا ما يتأخر الطلاب أو يتغيّبوا عن محاضرة الساعة الثامنة					
26	The lenient procedure of dealing with absences					

	الأجراءات غير الحازمة في التعامل مع الغياب					
27	The high percentage of absence limits النسبة العالية لعدد الغيابات المسموح بها					
	Society related					
28	Low societal value for education القيمة المتدنية للتعليم والأكاديميين في المجتمع					
29	"Low level of job opportunities that match person's academic qualifications نقص الفرص الوظيفية التي لها علاقة بالمؤهلات التعليمية					
30	Maximizing cultural events over academic duties تعظيم قيمة المناسبات الاجتماعية على حساب الواجب الأكاديمي					
31	Social phobia (don't have friends), Health (always sick) and inferiority complex within student. الخوف الاجتماعي والصحي وعقدة النقص أمام الطلاب الزملاء					
32	University culture shock (have a hard time coping up, might be that the school is too advance or too slow.) صدمة الثقافة الجامعية والفرق بين مجتمع الطالب ومجتمع الجامعة					
33	Differing Community Attitude towards Education (The people that surrounds your home and within it education is not given importance) إختلاف الاتجاهات المجتمعية نحو أهمية التعليم					
34	Too much socialization النشاطات والمناسبات الاجتماعية الزائدة					
35	Difference in priorities إختلاف الأولويات بين شخص وآخر. من الأهم الذهاب للمحاضرة أم استقبال والدي في المطار؟					

Salameh S. Mahmoud. "An Analytical Study into Absenteeism in Saudi Higher Education Institutions: Causes and Possible Solutions." IOSR Journal of Research & Method in Education (IOSR-JRME) , vol. 7, no. 5, 2017, pp. 20–31