



Student Absenteeism and English Language Performance: A Study of First Year Architecture Students

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Abstract

First year undergraduate students go through a critical stage of their education; a challenging transition which makes them feel more independent and free to decide not to attend classes, although attendance is compulsory. Whether this absenteeism has any impact on their academic accomplishments remains a controversial topic. Furthermore, the current literature about the influence of students' attendance on English language achievements is limited. Hence, the purpose of this study was to investigate the correlation between absenteeism among undergraduate architecture students and their English language performance. The participants in this study were 300 first-year students, 153 female and 147 male students; studying at UBT - Higher Education Institution, in Kosova. The results obtained from this study helped to conclude that there is a statistically significant difference between the English exam grades of absent students and students who attended classes regularly. It was deduced that the students who made (1.8) absences had one exam grade decreased. It was also proven that female students who did not attend classes regularly outperformed male students (who had more than three absences) in their English language exam. It is inferred that results of this study will be a valuable contribution to the insufficient current literature related to the impact of absenteeism on undergraduate students' English achievements.

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Introduction

Absenteeism makes an adverse and negative effect on students' learning and academic growth. Students learn better when they attend classes regularly and are actively engaged in classroom activities. Absenteeism, as a very complex phenomenon, requires knowing the exact reason why students are skipping classes. It involves professor's engagement, the school's psychologist's contribution and also communication with the student's parents. A major reason of absenteeism and the neglect of attendance in the current times is the need to switch over to blended learning and flipped-classrooms in order to find new learning trends. These new learning trends disregard the fact that attendance has always proven to be effective since its first application, yet attendance is considered unnecessary and insignificant in students' academic success. Universities around the world cope with the attendance policies differently; some are more rigorous than others. Ullah, Sepasgozar, Tahmasebinia, Sepasgozar, and Davis (2020) state that tracking students' attendance in universities has become a very serious requirement "since the implementation of the European Higher Education Area" (p. 629). Hutt (2018) as cited in

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Bauer, Liu, Schanzenbach, and Shambaugh (2018) adds that “producing accurate attendance data has been a challenge since efforts were first made at systemization in the 19th century” (p. 9).

The University for Business and Technology (UBT) in Kosova has made students' attendance mandatory and it is an on-going process. Attendance has to be registered carefully until the end of the semester, especially towards the end of the semester, which is in line with Davis (2011), who believed that students are more prone to miss classes towards the end of a semester. Lewis (2020) support this view and reiterate the university's policy of compulsory attendance and its impact on student's performance; though their findings did not show very significant results. Marbuger (2006), too, claims that “enforced mandatory attendance policy significantly reduces absenteeism and improves exam performance” (p. 148).

The professors at the UBT, Kosova are required to substitute every missed class, regardless of the reason for their absence; despite that there are a significant number of students skipping classes every day. The number of students not attending English classes is alarming and the negative effects are evident on their academic performance and exam results. This trend of missing English lectures has been perceived mainly in large classes though English professors, including the author of this study, encourage students' to attend classes by making them more entertaining and interactive, and by creating a friendly environment with a less authoritative approach. Professors make several efforts to emphasize the significance of attendance and active participation in classrooms during lectures. At times, individual support is also given to a few students by explaining to them the significance of the English subject in the field of architecture. It is also explained to students that absenteeism will negatively affect their grades. However, despite all these efforts, there are still a considerable number of students who do not attend classes.

This is consistent with Credé, Roch, and Kieszczyńska (2010) who also observed that professors do insist that their students make as few absences as possible in order to achieve better academic progress. According to Gentle-Genitty, Taylor, and Renguette (2020), though schools are tracking attendance and professors are emphasizing on complying with attendance policies and motivating and convincing students to attend classes, they are not effective enough. In addition to enormous efforts being made, there is more to be done to eliminate this on-going problem of absenteeism. There is a need to examine further the impact that attendance can make on student's academic performance. New and better techniques for monitoring attendance and methods for stimulating participation need to be suggested. For instance, Akkus and Çinkir (2022) see absenteeism as a very serious threat to the success of the academic institutions and list a few “recommendations for reducing absenteeism” such as: “briefing activities, organization of social, cultural, and sports activities, and monitoring of students...” (p. 994). However, they are skeptical that these recommendations will reduce absenteeism in the years to come.

This study is based on the premise that, attendance and classroom participation should be considered more seriously because every skipped class means a new lesson missed by the students, which would mean that absenteeism pushes the absent students behind other students. By not attending classes, whether online or face-to-face, students receive less exposure to the study material. They miss essential explanations and clarifications which the professors provide during lectures. There are many new ideas, beliefs and critical thoughts that are shared among the students by professors while discussing various topics, which the absent students would not be able to benefit from.

There is no dearth of studies on the absenteeism in university courses; however, previous studies are divided between those who think that attendance matters and those who are of the opinion that attendance will not change anything. A few think that students can miss classes and still be successful. However, very limited literature is found on the effect of absenteeism on English language performance. Accordingly, this study aimed to fill this research gap and investigate and address the influence that attendance can make on students' academic achievements, particularly on English language examination grades; and to present the research results by providing insights into the importance of students' attendance and participation. Moreover, the objective of this study was to prove the relevance of the grading policy elements and emphasize that attendance and participation are crucial in order to receive high grades.

The study implies that attendance is a strong determinant of students' success; therefore, it would be a great contribution to the domain of education as it also highlights the importance of class attendance. The findings of this study would serve as guidance for students as well showing that missing classes could negative affect their success and their course grades. Specifically, the findings of this study would analyze the effect of absenteeism on English Language examination grades of the architecture students at the University for Business and Technology (UBT).

Literature Review

A few studies opine that attendance does not have any influence on students' achievements. For instance, Hoffmann and Lerche (2016) express their opinion saying that the teaching style and students' alertness are factors which determine their achievements by seeing no reason why students should attend lectures. Other scholars think that it is uncertain what to be considered as serious chronic absenteeism. The number of absences that may interfere with students' achievements is perceived differently by numerous

scholars who have investigated this topic. As cited by (Hoffmann & Lerche, 2016), Cohn & Johnson (2006) and Durden and Ellis (1995) state that what is important is 'the number of absences' and that students will not succeed only if they make many absences.

On the other hand, there are studies that emphasize upon the need for attendance and provide strong arguments and empirical facts to prove and support their opinion. For instance, Fay, Villafañe Aguirre, and Gash (2013) stress the importance of attendance and claim that students who resort to absenteeism have difficulties with language 'acquisition'. Karabiyik (2016) also investigated the relationship between attendance and English language performance and draws the same conclusions, drawing attention to the positive correlation between the two variables. The study also expressed its concern about the very limited literature conducted on the impact of attendance, specifically on English language courses of students from different faculties. Likewise, Catur Satrianto (2021) addresses the influence of class attendance on students' English speaking performance, indicating that attending classes helps students improve their English speaking skills. Hamamcı and Hamamcı (2017) express their concern for the lack of studies investigating the impact that absenteeism has in language classes and they highlight the urge for strict attendance since according to them "language classes which are relatively small in student numbers require the active use of the target language and interaction" (p. 104). The conclusions obtained from these studies hint at the fact that there is insufficient literature to prove the influence that attendance has on first year undergraduate students who study English as a foreign language.

Lin and Chen (2006) also found "a positive and significant impact" saying that there is coherence between previous lessons and new lessons; moreover, revising or practicing the previous course material in other classes helps students understand the lessons better (pp. 937-938). The interrelatedness of the lessons is one of the main factors which make skipping classes very problematic. For example, if students miss a lesson when one verb tense was taught, afterward, they will have difficulties with the more complex verb tenses, especially when asked to make a comparison with the previous lesson that they have missed. A few recent studies like Naoreen, Tahira, Shahzad, and Asgher (2021) and Ancheta, Daniel, and Ahmad (2021) have also found positive correlation between attendance and students' achievements. A longitudinal study with 8000 participants by Mourad et al. (2021) confirms that attendance has a big impact on students' exam performance, stressing out that "the correlation between the student's class attendance and student's final grade is noteworthy and there is a strong correlation between them" (pp. 249-250).

Additionally, by merely being present in the classroom, students are able to learn new things and experience new emotions. Apart from learning the lesson they may also learn how to work in a team, how to respect their colleagues' opinions, how to agree or disagree with them; moreover, they will learn to be part of a learning community. The importance of being present in the classroom has also been emphasized by Bauer et al. (2018) who express their worries about excessive absences made by the students and declare that attending classes is vital in order to have successful students. According to Zubrick (2019) as cited in (Sekiwu, Ssempala, & Frances, 2020), absenteeism affects students' accomplishments by harming their educational achievements. Thus, the absent students apart from lacking behind with the material, they will also have difficulties with lesson comprehension and they may also suffer more serious negative effects as a consequence of chronic absenteeism; which according to the "Center for Research in Education and Social Policy" created by Policy (2018) means "missing 10% or more of the school year" (p. 1). As a result, they call for action; 'prevention' and 'intervention' which should be well planned.

Absenteeism is not a threat for students' success only. As cited by Policy (2018) researchers such as (Gottfried, 2014; Gottfried, 2015; Johnson, 2005) state that "chronic absenteeism has been linked to reduced student achievement, social disengagement, and feelings of alienation" (p. 1). Likewise, Akkus and Çinkir (2022) think that absenteeism does not only have a negative influence on students' achievements, but it also has a negative impact on their psychology and mental state, as it is reflected in the way they behave and grow in the society. Students who skip classes are more likely to avoid social contacts and feel intimidated in a classroom. To emphasize the importance of classroom attendance and to highlight the adverse psychological effects of absenteeism, Kearney, Heyne, and González (2020) explicitly explains: "school attendance and absenteeism are important in clinical and health psychology due to [their] linkage to psychiatric disorders particularly anxiety and depression), social isolation, internalizing and externalizing behavior problems...and long-term issues in adulthood that include psychiatric, occupational, and marital problems as well as economic deprivation (p. 1).

Most research studies have focused on absenteeism up to undergraduate classes, whereas Choudhury (2022) investigated the influence of attendance on graduate students' performance and highlights the negative effect of absenteeism even at graduate levels. Hence, if absenteeism interferes even with graduate students' success, it is easy to hypothesize how vital attendance can be for the undergraduate students who need more orientation, assistance and professor's feedback. Studies also argue that attendance is mandatory not only in face-to-face classrooms but also in virtual/online classes. If students fail to attend the virtual classes as well, they limit their access to important explanations, discussions or classroom debates, which are the activities and opportunities in online classes as well. Jones (2022), who conducted a research in online setting with undergraduate students, found a positive correlation between attendance and academic progress. However, there is a drawback that in online setting it is difficult to measure correlation accurately due to the complexity of recording online attendance correctly because of the possible manipulations that

can be done by students. However, Mokhtari, Nikzad, Mokhtari, Sabour, and Hosseini (2021), on the contrary, claimed that online classes can motivate students to attend lectures because of students' love for technology. Therefore, students are more motivated to attend online classes; therefore, a more rigorous method of monitoring attendance should be employed.

Methodology

- *Research design*

The study adopted a quantitative research design with a descriptive approach. The method suited this study because its setting was the Faculty of Architecture, University for Business and Technology in Prishtina, Kosovo. The data were collected during the first year of their studies, in second semester of the 2021-22 academic year.

- *Sampling and research procedure*

The research participants were undergraduate students, studying architecture at the University for Business and Technology in Prishtina, Kosovo. There were three large groups of 100 students, in total 300 students, where 153 were female and 147 were male students. The participants attended English language classes once per week for a duration of 90 minutes. The data comprised student attendance taken regularly for 12 weeks of one complete semester. At the end of the semester students were divided into two groups based on the number of their absences during the semester. One of the groups included the students with no or maximum two absences. The other group consisted of students who had three or more absences. The students were also divided into male and female students in order to analyse and compare their achievements based on gender.

- *Research Instruments*

The data collection was mainly based on students' attendance record, taken in the beginning of every class and also verified at the end of the class. This served as the research instrument of this study as all measurements and calculations were based on the attendance record. The grading comprised three components: attendance 15%, project 25% and exam 60%. All these components were calculated for the final course grade. However, for the research purpose, only the correlation between the exam grades (students' test achievements) and the students' attendance was examined.

- *Research Hypotheses*

The study framed four hypotheses as follows:

H¹: There is a statistically significant difference between the exam grades of students without absences and the exam grades of students with three or more absences.

H²: There is a statistically significant difference between the exam grades of male students without absences and the exam grades of male students with three or more absences.

H³: There is a statistically significant difference between the exam grades of female students without absences and the exam grades of female students with three or more absences.

H⁴: Female students with absences achieve better success in their English exams compared to male students with absences.

- *Data analysis*

The data analysis was initiated by first interpreting and discussing the results and the deductions made by researchers in previous studies. This helped in framing a ground for the current study. Subsequently, the methods and approaches of the current study were identified, followed by data interpretation and discussion. Lastly, conclusions were made based on the results of the study. The quantitative data of this empirical study was analysed using SPSS software.

Results and Findings

Table 1 presents the gender status of the participants in this study. There were 300 students (147 male and 153 female) from the Faculty of Architecture, UBT, Kosovo.

Table 1. Gender Status of the participants

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
Male	147	49.0	49.0	49.0
Female	153	51.0	51.0	100.0
Total	300	100.0	100.0	

The main variable of the study was the status of the students based on their attendance (absences). After collecting and processing the data, Table 2 shows 218 students with absences against 82 students with zero absences or maximum two absences.

Table 2. Subjects Based on Absence Status

	Frequency	Percentage	Valid Percentage	Cumulative Percentage
0-2 absences	82	27.3	27.3	27.3
3 or more absences	218	72.7	72.7	100.0
Total	300	100.0	100.0	

As the second variable (dependent variable) of the study was students' *academic success* (their exam points were converted into average grades) which after the statistical processing resulted with an average grade $M=6.96$ ($SD=1.919$). According to Skewness=.352 (which is within the limits of a normal distribution -0.5 and 0.5) and according to Kurtosis=-1.438 (which is a value greater than the limit of a normal distribution -1 and 1), it can be concluded that the academic achievement does not have a normal distribution in this sample or we can say that the significant majority of the students have poor grades (close to 50%) despite the other half distributed with grades from 7 to 10, i.e. an asymmetric distribution that does not precede the psycho-social phenomena, as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Students' Academic Achievements

	Exam	Exam Grade
Mean	51.40	6.96
Median	60.00	7.00
Mode	0	5
Std. Deviation	34.754	1.919
Skewness	-.340	.352
Std. Error of Skewness	.141	.141
Kurtosis	-1.354	-1.438
Std. Error of Kurtosis	.281	.281
Minimum	0	5
Maximum	100	10

After processing the descriptive statistics for the students' exam grades (academic achievements) referring to the study's hypotheses, average values of the academic achievements for all the students were calculated according to their status of absences as shown in Table 4:

Table 4. Descriptive Statistics of Students' Academic Achievements (exam grades) According to Their Status of Absences

Status (Lectures)	Exam	Exam Grade
0-2 absences	Mean	74.26
	Median	83.00
	Mode	92
	Std. Deviation	25.296
	Minimum	0
	Maximum	100
3 or more absences	Mean	42.81
	Median	50.00
	Mode	0
	Std. Deviation	33.967
	Minimum	0
	Maximum	100

The average of the exam grades of students who attended classes regularly is $M=8.29$ ($SD=1.781$) against the average of the absent students $M=6.46$ ($SD=1.723$). Since the hypotheses are structured to analyze the differences according to the gender of the students, the descriptive statistics of students' academic achievements is presented according to gender and divided according to the status of absences, as shown in Table 5 and Table 6 for male and female students respectively.

Table 5. Descriptive Statistics of Students' Academic Achievements (exam grades) According to the Status of Absences – Male Students

Status (Lectures)	Exam	Exam Grade
0-2 absences	Mean	74.44
	Median	84.00
	Mode	92
	Std. Deviation	27.329
	Minimum	0
	Maximum	100
3 or more absences	Mean	31.97
	Median	28.00
	Mode	0
	Std. Deviation	31.534
	Minimum	0
	Maximum	100

As it can be seen from Table 5, the average for the academic achievement of male students without absences is $M=8.42$ ($SD=1.763$), whereas the average of the absent students is $M=5.87$ ($SD=1.376$).

Table 6. Descriptive Statistics of Students' Academic Achievements (exam grades) According to the Status of Absences – Female Students

Status (Lectures)	Exam	Exam Grade
0-2 absences	Mean	74.11
	Median	83.00
	Mode	83 ^a
	Std. Deviation	23.892
	Minimum	0
	Maximum	100
3 or more absences	Mean	54.04
	Median	62.00
	Mode	0
	Std. Deviation	32.859
	Minimum	0
	Maximum	100

^a Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown

As for the female students, (refer to Table 6) the average of the exam results of the female students without absences is $M=8.20$ ($SD=1.809$) in contrast to the average of the exam results of the absent female students $M=7.07$ ($SD=1.839$). This suggests that there is a difference on the level of the academic achievements according to gender between the students who have missed classes and the students who have attended classes regularly. Nevertheless, due to the fact that the number of students according to gender is not proportional or equal (147 male students and 153 female students); and there is also an abnormal distribution of students' success (exam results) based on gender, tests with conclusive statistics were used to interpret the hypotheses of the study, in this case it was an independent sample t-test.

Interpretation of the Research Hypotheses

The first hypothesis states that there is a significant difference in the academic achievements of the students depending on the status of their absences. (H1): *There is a statistically significant difference between the exam grades of students without absences and the exams of students with three or more absences.* Table 7 shows differences in academic achievements (exam grades) of students according to the status of absenteeism

Table 7. Differences in Academic Achievements (exam grades) of Students According to the Status of Absenteeism

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	Sig. (2-tailed)	p
Final Grade	0-2 absences	82	8.29	1.781		
	With absences	218	6.46	1.723	8.141	.000
						$p < 0.01$

In Table 7, the fourth column presents the average of the students without absences $M=8.29$ ($SD=1.781$) and for the students with absences $M=6.46$ ($SD=1.723$). After the analysis with independent sample t-test, it was found that $t=8.141$ with $sig=.000$ ($p < 0.01$). Accordingly, it can be concluded that the average differences have statistical significance; so there are significant differences in the level of academic achievements (exam results) of the students depending on their absences. Thus, the students without absences have higher achievements (average grade 8.29) in contrast to students who have abstained from classes and have lower academic achievements (average grade 6.46). Therefore, (H1) holds true and is verified. For scientific accuracy, due to the fact that (H1) includes all the students, in order to have a more concise overview between these two variables (absenteeism and success) we will continue with linear regression to see how strong this relationship is and whether the unit of absences for a *degree increases or decreases* in achieving success.

Table 8. Linear Regression Between Students' Success and Status of Absenteeism

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	F	Sig.
1	.427 ^a	.182	.179	1.739	66.279	.000 ^b

^a Predictors: (Constant), Status (Lectures)

Accordingly, the correlation between *the exam results* (success) and *attendance* in this study is $R=.427$ which shows a significant positive correlation ($sig=.000$), but in Table 9 the negative unstandardized coefficients show that with the increase of one variable there is a decrease of the other.

Table 9. Standardized and Unstandardized Regression Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	
	B	Std. Error	Beta			
1	(Constant)	10.127	.402		25.209	.000
	Status_(Lecture)	-1.834	.225	-.427	-8.141	.000

^a. Dependent Variable: Exam Grade

In Table 9 the unstandardized negative coefficients show that one missing *unit* (absence) -1.834 results in the increase of one degree of the success, i.e. if a student makes 1.834 absences it decreases one degree of the success (one grade).

The second hypothesis affirms the existence of a significant difference between the exam grades among male students and their class attendance. (H2): *There is a statistically significant difference between the exam grades of male students without absences and the exams of male students with three or more absences.* Table 10 presents the analysis:

Table 10. The Differences of Academic Achievements (exam grades) of Male Students According to the Status of Their Absences

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	Sig. (2-tailed)	p
Final Grade	0-2 absences	36	8.42	1.763			
	3 or more Absences	111	5.87	1.376	8.967	.000	p<0.01

Table 10 provides the evidence that average of male students without absences is M=8.42 (SD=1.763) and for male students with absences is M=5.87 (SD=1.376). After the independent sample t-test analysis, it was found that t=8.967 has sig=.000 ($p < 0.01$); therefore, we can conclude that there is a significant difference in the level of English language achievements (exam grades) of male students depending on their attendance. The male students who attended classes regularly achieved higher results (average grade 8.42) in contrast to male students who skipped classes and demonstrated lower academic achievements (average grade 5.87). Hence, H2 holds true and is verified.

The third hypothesis affirms the existence of a significant difference in exam grades among female students depending on the status of their absences. (H3): *There is a statistically significant difference between the exam grades of female students without absences and the exam grades of female students with three or more absences.* Table 11 shows the t-test analysis:

Table 11. Differences of Academic Achievements (exam grades) of Female Students According to the Status of their Absences

		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	Sig. (2-tailed)	p
Grade final	0-2 absences	46	8.20	1.809			
	3 or more Absences	107	7.07	1.839	3.503	.000	p<0.01

As it can be seen in Table 11, the average of female students (without absences) is M=8.20 (SD=1.809) and for the female students who missed classes is M=7.07 (SD=1.839). The independent sample T-test indicated t=3.503 with sig=.000 ($p < 0.01$); so, it can be concluded that the differences of the averages have statistical significance; or in other words, there is a significant difference in the level of academic achievements (exam grades) of female students depending on their attendance and that female students without absences showed to have higher achievements (average grade 8.20) in contrast to female students who have not attended classes and showed lower academic achievements (average grade 7.07). So, H3 holds true and is verified.

The fourth hypothesis asserts that absent female students achieve better success in contrast to absent male students. (H4): *Female students with absences achieve better success in their English exam compared to male students with absences.* Table 12 presents the t-test analysis:

Table 12. Differences of Academic Achievements (exam grades) of Female and Male Students with Absences

Gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t	Sig. (2-tailed)	p
Grade final	Male	111	5.87	1.376		
	Female	107	7.07	1.839	-5.429	.000

Table 12 presents the average of male students (with absences) M=5.87 (SD=1.376) and for the female students (with absences) M=7.07 (SD=1.839). After the independent sample t-test it was found that t=-5.429 has sig=.000 ($p < 0.01$); so, it can be concluded that the differences of the averages have statistical significance, or in other words, there is a significant difference in the level of academic achievements (exam

grades) of the students depending on gender and attendance. Female students (with absences) are seen with higher achievements (average grade 7.07) in contrast to male students (with absences) who have lower academic achievements (average grade 5.87). H4 also, therefore, holds true and is verified.

Discussion

Historically it has been perceived as a stereotype that male students are more prone to miss classes (Ocak, Ocak, & Baysal, 2017). Despite this belief, the present study proved that the number of absent male students and absent female students was approximately equal. However, when thinking of female and male students' English language achievements, it can only be hypothesized that female students perform better. As a result, this study confirmed that female students who had more than three absences outperformed the male students who had also missed more than three classes. This is in line with Hakami (2021) conclusions that female and male students' achievements are not the same even though they have similar rate of absenteeism.

Based on the results of this study, it was also concluded that attendance plays an important role in determining students' success. More specifically, the students who attended classes regularly received better exam grades. As a result, this phenomenon should not be ignored or perceived as not important or traditional; instead, further investigations are required in order to analyze this correlation more thoroughly. This is in accordance with Gershenson, Jackowitz, and Brannegan (2017) who believed that there should be more research on the significance of classroom attendance.

The results of this study indicated that the students who made (1.8) absences had one exam grade decreased, which is consistent with Klein, Sosu, and Dare (2022) "1% point of school days more absent was associated with reducing students' achievement by 3% of a standard deviation" (p. 7). Moreover, Choudhury (2022) has concluded the same negative impact of absenteeism even with graduate students where "the cumulative test grade of a student would decrease by 2.562 points for every absence..." (p. 5). Ezeji (2017) also found a positive correlation in the impact of absenteeism on *architecture* students' performances, but emphasized a very powerful dilemma stating: "...students who perform poorly do so because they are not there when the subject matter is covered or whether students with a high level of absenteeism are less committed to academics in general" (p. 36). Marburger (2001), as cited by Ezeji (2017), also raises the concern for the absence of literature that would have clarified the ambiguity of the relationship between the different reasons behind absenteeism and academic results. Therefore, it still remains hypothetical and further research needs to be conducted in order to obtain more concrete results regarding this relationship.

Conclusion

This study aimed to draw attention towards the negative impact of student absenteeism on their academic performances. From the findings of this study it is evident that undergraduate students with three or more absences show poor exam performance. This leads to conclude that the low exam grades affect students' final course grades. Hence, the architecture students who participated in this study are seen affected negatively by the numerous absences that they made during the semester and it resulted in low grade average in their English language course.

One critical consequence derived from student absenteeism is the improbability of receiving feedback from the professors. This makes students less self-confident when using the target language. Moreover, the absent students have fewer opportunities for collaboration or for using the foreign language in an academic environment. Consequently, they are penalized for their absences which later affect their participation percentage and their final course grades. Students, therefore, should be continuously reminded of the consequences of not attending classes; not participating and not taking into consideration the grading criterion. Raising students' awareness of the importance of attendance and class participation is every professor's responsibility. Since in language classes practice and usage of the language is essential; attendance in these classes becomes undeniable.

The following is a short list of the core conclusions drawn from its empirical findings:

- A significant correlation between student attendance and English exam results has been verified.
- There is a statistically significant difference between the exam grades of male students who attended classes regularly and grades of absent male students.
- Male students who attended classes regularly achieve better exam results (average grade 8.42) in contrast to male students who skip classes and demonstrate lower academic achievements with an average grade 5.87.
- Absent female students show an average (7.07) whereas female students who attend classes regularly show an average (8.20).
- Absent female students indicate higher achievements (average grade 7.07) in contrast to absent male students who indicate lower academic achievements (average grade 5.87).

Recommendations, Implications and Limitations

Absenteeism, as a very conclusive factor, determines students' success and retention. Therefore, it should be thoroughly investigated in undergraduate and even graduate cycle of studies. While this research particularly deals with the effect that absenteeism has on students' English language performance, further studies can investigate the possible causes of absenteeism; and the internal and external factors which may interfere with students' choices not to attend classes. These factors can be individual, complex and difficult to investigate; nevertheless, the results support the professors to effectively handle difficult situations when dealing with chronic absenteeism.

It is also necessary to investigate whether more rigorous attendance tracking methods, or support and encouragement could help undergraduate students reduce the number of excused and unexcused absences. Additionally, further research on English language teaching strategies can stimulate students' presence in the classroom; more specifically, it is fundamental to target the uninterested students. Even though there are scholars who state that these recommendations are not always productive and they change with new generations of students, there must be continuous research on student attendance encouragement in order to mitigate the severity of absenteeism.

Another aspect which is critical and needs further investigation is the tolerance level of absences which might interfere with the students' success. For instance, Durden and Ellis (1995) are of the opinion that attendance becomes critical if students make *four* or more absences and they also raise the dilemma whether students' success depends on the specific number of skipped classes or the fact that successful students attend classes regularly. Therefore, it is crucial to know the tolerated absence rate for English as a foreign language courses.

This study would play a great role in emphasizing the correlation between students' attendance and their academic achievements in English as a foreign language. There is a dearth of studies related to absenteeism and English language performance of architecture students. Therefore, this study would spark the interest of English professors and students who particularly want to understand the impact that attendance has on English language exam results of the students who study architecture.

It is also required to examine whether these findings would apply to students from other faculties. It is hoped that the obtained results would make a relevant theoretical contribution for all first year undergraduate students regardless of their educational fields. Furthermore, raising the university management or the policy makers' awareness of the impact that attendance has on undergraduate students' success is an urgent call for action. Henceforth, since rigorous attendance tracking is vital for improving students' academic achievements, scholars from different fields should practice a more attentive approach regarding students' absenteeism.

This study examined the impact of absenteeism on students' English language performance; however, it did not investigate the possible reasons behind their absenteeism. There may be different gender-based factors influencing students' lack of interest to attend classes regularly. Possibly, exploring even the factors which might have contributed to student absenteeism could have fostered the significance of the current study still further. Not examining the correlation between students' enthusiasm to attend classes; their English proficiency; psychological factors (including anxiety); and their willingness to attend classes can be the main limitations of this study. Even though examining these factors requires a more extensive research, perhaps merely gathering students' responses regarding the reasons behind their absences could suffice.

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