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**“Impact of Student Demographics on Student Attitude towards classroom learning: An Empirical study of Relational demography of MBA students in Bangalore city”**

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**Abstract:**

It is important to realize whether or not an individual student's demographic similarity with other students shape his or her attitude. Relational demography on the other hand identifies the degree to which an individual student's demographic characteristics are shared by other student's within social units such as a classroom. As per the study conducted by Tsui (1992) and Tajfel (1978), relational demography is closely related to Social identity and Self-identity. Turner (1987), proposed the self-categorization theory wherein individuals classify themselves and others into social units based on demographic characteristics.

The purpose of this paper is to understand the significant demographic characteristics which motivate students to become part of a social unit and the extent to which these demographic characteristics have an impact on the student attitudes.

**Keywords:** *social units, social identity, self-identity, demographics, student attitudes*

**Objectives:**

To understand & analyze the variables which motivate students to become a part of a social unit and the role played demographics in shaping their attitudes. It has been found from the literature that people evaluate self-defining categories positively and are motivated to maintain such evaluations.

To study the extent to which these social units and so-developed student attitudes influence their in-classroom behavior.

The study also aims on examining how the demographics play a role in shaping the self-identity, social identity and attitudes of students.

### **Introduction**

Student attitudes and beliefs towards classroom learning, as well as their satisfaction with past learning experiences are regarded as success determinants of their future classroom behaviour. Nowadays, it is increasingly common to find, in our schools, unmotivated students who experience repeated academic failure, what leads, in many cases, to dropping out of school. What is required from teachers, psychologists and schools principals are new ways to combat these phenomena and increase student interest in school, and in addition improve their academic performance and enhance their classroom learning. How students behave in the classroom, how they relate to peers and teachers, the investment they make in academic and extracurricular activities are aspects largely influenced by the attitudes they have toward learning. Moreover, student's attitudes toward learning are deeply influenced by their cultural background, the kind and quality of family relationships, family and peers support, previous school performance, the kind of friends and classmates that they have, that means, students' positive attitudes and behaviours play an important role in their academic success (Akey, 2006).

There is also evidence that cognitive variables such as ability-related and expectancy beliefs, general attitudes toward school, and attitudes toward specific academic subjects are related to academic performance and these can differ across gender and racial groups (e.g., Ekstrom, 1994; House, 1997; Wigfield & Eccles, 1999)

The most common experience students have working with others in academics is in group projects or group activities. Impediments to effective teamwork range from free riding to overly dominant personalities to group apathy and generally poor leadership. Many of these problems arise as a result of one-time use of groups or constantly changing groups for daily cooperative activities, limiting the opportunity to build trust and synergy. Team-based learning attempts to address these impediments to effective group interaction by keeping students in the same group throughout the semester and utilizing collaborative activities daily in class. In such a context, "teams" are distinct from and more powerful than "groups". But it

is only after some period of time, as students begin to trust each other and develop a commitment to the group that the group becomes a team (Michaelson). Given the diversity of personalities, learning styles, and experiences students have had, their attitude toward the value of working with their peers is likely to vary. Most attitudes are formed from experiences, both positive and negative. Once formed, attitudes shape a person's actions, with a continuous feedback between attitude and behavior. This research begins by assessing how demographic variables such as Age, Gender, Parents' occupation, parents' income, their hometown, prior work experience etc. can influence students' attitudes toward classroom learning. Students tend to form social groups which could be influenced by similar demographic variables and these social units of students may have a strong influence on their classroom behaviour.

### **Review of Literature**

Much of there search on demographic diversity as examined the effects of individual characteristics, such as race and sex, on student attitudes and behaviors (e.g.,Graddick&Fair,1983;Ottaway&Bhatnagar,1988). Recently, however, some researchers have also indicated that diversity research must consider not only individual demographic variables, but also situational variables that comprise the social context within which the individual operates (e.g., Cleveland &Shore, 1992;Ferris, Judge, Chachere, &Liden, 1991; Kanter, 1977; Wagner, Pfeffer,&O'Reilly,1984).

Individual demographic variables, by themselves, may not adequately reflect the full meaning and impact of diversity within a work setting, especially because most individuals work within a social context such as a work unit. Therefore, a complete examination of diversity needs to address individuals within the context of this social environment. One theory that provides a basis for predicting how individual demographic characteristics and the social context interacts relational demography (Mowday & Sutton, 1993).

Relational demography: proposes that individuals compare their own demographic characteristics with those of others in their social units to determine if they are similar or dissimilar in their demographic characteristics to the composition of the unit (Tsui, Egan, & O'Reilly, 1992; Tsui & O'Reilly, 1989). The level of an individual's similarity or

dissimilarity in demographic attributes to the composition of his or her social unit, in turn is proposed to affect the individual's work-related attitudes and behaviors. Thus, the same individual demographic characteristic may yield different work-related attitudes in different social contexts. In other words, relational demography proposes that it is the relative, not the absolute, demographic characteristics that are predictive of individuals' work-related attitudes. For example, Zenger and Lawrence (1989) found that the more similar an individual's age was relative to the ages of the rest of the members of his or her project group, the more frequently the individual communicated with the other members concerning technical issues.

**Hypothesis**

- i) Length of a class does not influence student absenteeism
- ii) There is no significant association between the students' future plans and their rate of absenteeism.

**Research Methodology**

Research method is a style of conducting research through a scientific procedure. There are several research methods; one of them is the descriptive research or survey method which is used to investigate the present circumstances.

The Study would be undertaken as an empirical frame work to study the impact of Student Demographics on Student Attitudes. In this context, the factors relating to student attitudes and demographics at Bangalore city will be studied.

**Tools of Data Analysis**

A structured questionnaire was prepared and data collected was analyzed using SPSS package.

**Discussion of Results and Implications of the Study**

Through an extensive literature review a set of variables were identified which were then subjected to Reliability Analysis. Reliability Test was done to measure the scale reliability with the help of Cronbach alpha which is a coefficient of reliability and is used for

measuring the internal consistency among the scale items. The alpha coefficient for the 54 items is 0.754, suggesting that the items have relatively high internal consistency. (Note that a reliability coefficient of .7 or higher is considered “acceptable” in social science research).

**Table 1.1 RELIABILITY TEST**

| <b>Reliability Statistics</b> |            |
|-------------------------------|------------|
| Cronbach's Alpha              | N of Items |
| .754                          | 54         |

### **Causal Relationship between class duration and student absenteeism**

**Table 1.2 Association between Class duration and student absenteeism**

| <b>Case Processing Summary</b>                                     |       |         |         |         |       |         |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-------|---------|---------|---------|-------|---------|
|                                                                    | Cases |         |         |         |       |         |
|                                                                    | Valid |         | Missing |         | Total |         |
|                                                                    | N     | Percent | N       | Percent | N     | Percent |
| Length of class is too long * Reduce length of class to 35 minutes | 100   | 100.0%  | 0       | 0.0%    | 100   | 100.0%  |

| <b>Chi-Square Tests</b>      |                     |    |                       |
|------------------------------|---------------------|----|-----------------------|
|                              | Value               | df | Asymp. Sig. (2-sided) |
| Pearson Chi-Square           | 39.456 <sup>a</sup> | 16 | .001                  |
| Likelihood Ratio             | 42.897              | 16 | .000                  |
| Linear-by-Linear Association | 3.137               | 1  | .077                  |
| N of Valid Cases             | 93                  |    |                       |

From the above table, it is evident that, at 5% significance level (95% confidence level), there is a significant association between the class duration and student absenteeism. From the above table it can be found that students tend to skip classes because of its duration; however students' attendance may improve if each class' duration is reduced to 35 minutes (P Val = 0.001).

Therefore, since the P Val (0.001) < 0.05, H<sub>0</sub> is rejected and it can be concluded that there is a significant association between the class duration and student absenteeism.

**CAUSAL RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE STUDENTS' FUTURE PLANS AND THEIR RATE OF ABSENTEEISM.**

**Table 1.3 Association between the students' future plans and their rate of absenteeism.**

**H0: There is no association between the students' future plans and their rate of absenteeism**

**H1: There is an association between the students' future plans and their rate of absenteeism**

**Descriptives**

|                                           |                         | N  | Mean | Std. Deviation | Std. Error | 95% Confidence Interval for Mean |             | Minimum | Maximum |
|-------------------------------------------|-------------------------|----|------|----------------|------------|----------------------------------|-------------|---------|---------|
|                                           |                         |    |      |                |            | Lower Bound                      | Upper Bound |         |         |
| Completing assignments at the last minute | Work in Family Business | 18 | 3.33 | 1.283          | .302       | 2.70                             | 3.97        | 1       | 5       |
|                                           | Take up a Job           | 35 | 3.26 | 1.336          | .226       | 2.80                             | 3.72        | 1       | 5       |
|                                           | Pursue Higher studies   | 40 | 3.10 | 1.215          | .192       | 2.71                             | 3.49        | 1       | 5       |
|                                           | Total                   | 93 | 3.20 | 1.265          | .131       | 2.94                             | 3.46        | 1       | 5       |
| Length of class is too long               | Work in Family Business | 18 | 3.56 | 1.097          | .258       | 3.01                             | 4.10        | 1       | 5       |
|                                           | Take up a Job           | 35 | 2.89 | 1.157          | .196       | 2.49                             | 3.28        | 1       | 5       |
|                                           | Pursue Higher studies   | 40 | 2.78 | 1.050          | .166       | 2.44                             | 3.11        | 1       | 5       |
|                                           | Total                   | 93 | 2.97 | 1.127          | .117       | 2.74                             | 3.20        | 1       | 5       |
| Classes are not stimulating               | Work in Family Business | 18 | 3.06 | .725           | .171       | 2.69                             | 3.42        | 1       | 4       |
|                                           | Take up a Job           | 35 | 2.91 | .853           | .144       | 2.62                             | 3.21        | 1       | 5       |

|                                                      |                         |     |      |       |      |      |      |   |   |
|------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------|-----|------|-------|------|------|------|---|---|
| I can pass exams without attending all classes       | Pursue Higher studies   | 409 | 2.90 | .871  | .138 | 2.62 | 3.18 | 1 | 5 |
|                                                      | Total                   | 93  | 2.94 | .832  | .086 | 2.76 | 3.11 | 1 | 5 |
|                                                      | Work in Family Business | 18  | 1.94 | .873  | .206 | 1.51 | 2.38 | 1 | 4 |
|                                                      | Take up a Job           | 35  | 2.06 | 1.110 | .188 | 1.68 | 2.44 | 1 | 5 |
|                                                      | Pursue Higher studies   | 40  | 2.55 | 1.154 | .182 | 2.18 | 2.92 | 1 | 5 |
|                                                      | Total                   | 93  | 2.25 | 1.110 | .115 | 2.02 | 2.48 | 1 | 5 |
|                                                      | Work in Family Business | 18  | 3.06 | 1.259 | .297 | 2.43 | 3.68 | 1 | 5 |
|                                                      | Take up a Job           | 35  | 3.26 | 1.172 | .198 | 2.85 | 3.66 | 1 | 5 |
|                                                      | Pursue Higher studies   | 40  | 3.53 | .987  | .156 | 3.21 | 3.84 | 1 | 5 |
|                                                      | Total                   | 93  | 3.33 | 1.116 | .116 | 3.10 | 3.56 | 1 | 5 |
| My friends don't attend classes regularly so I don't | Work in Family Business | 18  | 2.67 | 1.188 | .280 | 2.08 | 3.26 | 1 | 5 |
|                                                      | Take up a Job           | 35  | 2.20 | 1.052 | .178 | 1.84 | 2.56 | 1 | 4 |
|                                                      | Pursue Higher studies   | 40  | 1.85 | .893  | .141 | 1.56 | 2.14 | 1 | 5 |
|                                                      | Total                   | 93  | 2.14 | 1.049 | .109 | 1.92 | 2.36 | 1 | 5 |
|                                                      | Work in Family Business | 18  | 2.67 | 1.188 | .280 | 2.08 | 3.26 | 1 | 5 |
|                                                      | Take up a Job           | 35  | 2.54 | 1.120 | .189 | 2.16 | 2.93 | 1 | 5 |
|                                                      | Pursue Higher studies   | 40  | 2.38 | .979  | .155 | 2.06 | 2.69 | 1 | 5 |
|                                                      | Total                   | 93  | 2.49 | 1.070 | .111 | 2.27 | 2.71 | 1 | 5 |
|                                                      | Work in Family Business | 18  | 2.50 | 1.249 | .294 | 1.88 | 3.12 | 1 | 5 |
|                                                      | Take up a Job           | 35  | 2.46 | 1.245 | .210 | 2.03 | 2.88 | 1 | 5 |
| I don't feel relaxed in class                        |                         |     |      |       |      |      |      |   |   |
|                                                      |                         |     |      |       |      |      |      |   |   |
|                                                      |                         |     |      |       |      |      |      |   |   |
|                                                      |                         |     |      |       |      |      |      |   |   |
|                                                      |                         |     |      |       |      |      |      |   |   |
|                                                      |                         |     |      |       |      |      |      |   |   |
|                                                      |                         |     |      |       |      |      |      |   |   |
|                                                      |                         |     |      |       |      |      |      |   |   |
|                                                      |                         |     |      |       |      |      |      |   |   |
|                                                      |                         |     |      |       |      |      |      |   |   |
| Class attendance is not                              |                         |     |      |       |      |      |      |   |   |
|                                                      |                         |     |      |       |      |      |      |   |   |
|                                                      |                         |     |      |       |      |      |      |   |   |
|                                                      |                         |     |      |       |      |      |      |   |   |
|                                                      |                         |     |      |       |      |      |      |   |   |
|                                                      |                         |     |      |       |      |      |      |   |   |
|                                                      |                         |     |      |       |      |      |      |   |   |
|                                                      |                         |     |      |       |      |      |      |   |   |
|                                                      |                         |     |      |       |      |      |      |   |   |
|                                                      |                         |     |      |       |      |      |      |   |   |



|                                 |                         |     |      |       |      |      |      |   |   |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|-----|------|-------|------|------|------|---|---|
| compulsory                      | Pursue Higher studies   | 409 | 2.20 | 1.159 | .183 | 1.83 | 2.57 | 1 | 5 |
|                                 | Total                   | 3   | 2.35 | 1.204 | .125 | 2.11 | 2.60 | 1 | 5 |
|                                 | Work in Family Business | 18  | 2.50 | .985  | .232 | 2.01 | 2.99 | 1 | 4 |
| I cannot understand and lessons | Take up a Job           | 354 | 2.20 | .797  | .135 | 1.93 | 2.47 | 1 | 4 |
|                                 | Pursue Higher studies   | 409 | 2.03 | .768  | .121 | 1.78 | 2.27 | 1 | 3 |
|                                 | Total                   | 3   | 2.18 | .833  | .086 | 2.01 | 2.35 | 1 | 4 |
| The teacher is uninspiring      | Work in Family Business | 18  | 2.56 | 1.097 | .258 | 2.01 | 3.10 | 1 | 5 |
|                                 | Take up a Job           | 354 | 2.11 | .900  | .152 | 1.81 | 2.42 | 1 | 4 |
|                                 | Pursue Higher studies   | 409 | 2.25 | 1.032 | .163 | 1.92 | 2.58 | 1 | 5 |
|                                 | Total                   | 3   | 2.26 | .999  | .104 | 2.05 | 2.46 | 1 | 5 |
|                                 | Work in Family Business | 18  | 4.22 | 1.309 | .308 | 3.57 | 4.87 | 1 | 5 |
|                                 | Take up a Job           | 354 | 3.20 | 1.368 | .231 | 2.73 | 3.67 | 1 | 5 |
| I can't wake up so early        | Pursue Higher studies   | 409 | 3.18 | 1.375 | .217 | 2.74 | 3.61 | 1 | 5 |
|                                 | Total                   | 3   | 3.39 | 1.407 | .146 | 3.10 | 3.68 | 1 | 5 |
|                                 | Work in Family Business | 18  | 3.33 | 1.495 | .352 | 2.59 | 4.08 | 1 | 5 |
| I live very far from college    | Take up a Job           | 354 | 2.40 | 1.311 | .222 | 1.95 | 2.85 | 1 | 5 |
|                                 | Pursue Higher studies   | 409 | 2.70 | 1.436 | .227 | 2.24 | 3.16 | 1 | 5 |
|                                 | Total                   | 3   | 2.71 | 1.426 | .148 | 2.42 | 3.00 | 1 | 5 |
| I am already working so it's    | Work in Family Business | 18  | 2.17 | .985  | .232 | 1.68 | 2.66 | 1 | 4 |
|                                 | Take up a Job           | 354 | 1.57 | .850  | .144 | 1.28 | 1.86 | 1 | 5 |

|                             |                         |    |      |       |      |      |      |   |   |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------|----|------|-------|------|------|------|---|---|
| difficult to attend classes | Pursue Higher studies   | 40 | 1.73 | .816  | .129 | 1.46 | 1.99 | 1 | 4 |
|                             | Total                   | 93 | 1.75 | .880  | .091 | 1.57 | 1.93 | 1 | 5 |
|                             | Work in Family Business | 18 | 2.83 | 1.339 | .316 | 2.17 | 3.50 | 1 | 5 |
|                             | Travel / commut ing     | 35 | 2.31 | 1.157 | .196 | 1.92 | 2.71 | 1 | 5 |
| problem s                   | Pursue Higher studies   | 40 | 2.65 | 1.424 | .225 | 2.19 | 3.11 | 1 | 5 |
|                             | Total                   | 93 | 2.56 | 1.314 | .136 | 2.29 | 2.83 | 1 | 5 |
|                             | Work in Family Business | 18 | 3.33 | 1.455 | .343 | 2.61 | 4.06 | 1 | 5 |
|                             | Take up a Job           | 35 | 2.66 | 1.235 | .209 | 2.23 | 3.08 | 1 | 5 |
| Illness or too tired        | Pursue Higher studies   | 40 | 2.83 | 1.318 | .208 | 2.40 | 3.25 | 1 | 5 |
|                             | Total                   | 93 | 2.86 | 1.324 | .137 | 2.59 | 3.13 | 1 | 5 |
|                             |                         | 3  |      |       |      |      |      |   |   |

**Table 1.4 One-way ANOVA to identify the association between the students' future plans and their rate of absenteeism.**

**ANOVA**

|                                                       |                | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F     | Sig. |
|-------------------------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|----|-------------|-------|------|
| Completing assignments at the last minute             | Between Groups | .833           | 2  | .416        | .256  | .775 |
|                                                       | Within Groups  | 146.286        | 90 | 1.625       |       |      |
|                                                       | Total          | 147.118        | 92 |             |       |      |
| Length of class is too long                           | Between Groups | 7.941          | 2  | 3.970       | 3.279 | .042 |
|                                                       | Within Groups  | 108.962        | 90 | 1.211       |       |      |
|                                                       | Total          | 116.903        | 92 |             |       |      |
| Classes are not stimulating                           | Between Groups | .326           | 2  | .163        | .232  | .794 |
|                                                       | Within Groups  | 63.287         | 90 | .703        |       |      |
|                                                       | Total          | 63.613         | 92 |             |       |      |
| I can pass exams without attending all classes        | Between Groups | 6.582          | 2  | 3.291       | 2.775 | .068 |
|                                                       | Within Groups  | 106.730        | 90 | 1.186       |       |      |
|                                                       | Total          | 113.312        | 92 |             |       |      |
| Study Material is available and I can study from that | Between Groups | 3.062          | 2  | 1.531       | 1.234 | .296 |
|                                                       | Within Groups  | 111.605        | 90 | 1.240       |       |      |
|                                                       | Total          | 114.667        | 92 |             |       |      |
| My friends don't attend classes regularly so I don't  | Between Groups | 8.483          | 2  | 4.241       | 4.118 | .019 |
|                                                       | Within Groups  | 92.700         | 90 | 1.030       |       |      |
|                                                       | Total          | 101.183        | 92 |             |       |      |
| I don't feel relaxed in class                         | Between Groups | 1.187          | 2  | .593        | .513  | .600 |
|                                                       | Within Groups  | 104.061        | 90 | 1.156       |       |      |

|                                                          |                |         |    |       |       |      |
|----------------------------------------------------------|----------------|---------|----|-------|-------|------|
| Class attendance is not compulsory                       | Total          | 105.247 | 92 |       |       |      |
|                                                          | Between Groups | 1.705   | 2  | .852  | .583  | .560 |
|                                                          | Within Groups  | 131.586 | 90 | 1.462 |       |      |
| I cannot understand lessons                              | Total          | 133.290 | 92 |       |       |      |
|                                                          | Between Groups | 2.817   | 2  | 1.409 | 2.076 | .131 |
|                                                          | Within Groups  | 61.075  | 90 | .679  |       |      |
| The teacher is uninspiring                               | Total          | 63.892  | 92 |       |       |      |
|                                                          | Between Groups | 2.319   | 2  | 1.160 | 1.166 | .316 |
|                                                          | Within Groups  | 89.487  | 90 | .994  |       |      |
| I can't wake up so early                                 | Total          | 91.806  | 92 |       |       |      |
|                                                          | Between Groups | 15.578  | 2  | 7.789 | 4.211 | .018 |
|                                                          | Within Groups  | 166.486 | 90 | 1.850 |       |      |
| I live very far from college                             | Total          | 182.065 | 92 |       |       |      |
|                                                          | Between Groups | 10.361  | 2  | 5.181 | 2.637 | .077 |
|                                                          | Within Groups  | 176.800 | 90 | 1.964 |       |      |
| I am already working so it's difficult to attend classes | Total          | 187.161 | 92 |       |       |      |
|                                                          | Between Groups | 4.265   | 2  | 2.133 | 2.863 | .062 |
|                                                          | Within Groups  | 67.046  | 90 | .745  |       |      |
| Travel / commuting problems                              | Total          | 71.312  | 92 |       |       |      |
|                                                          | Between Groups | 3.782   | 2  | 1.891 | 1.097 | .338 |
|                                                          | Within Groups  | 155.143 | 90 | 1.724 |       |      |
| Illness or too tired                                     | Total          | 158.925 | 92 |       |       |      |
|                                                          | Between Groups | 5.522   | 2  | 2.761 | 1.596 | .208 |
|                                                          | Within Groups  | 155.661 | 90 | 1.730 |       |      |
|                                                          | Total          | 161.183 | 92 |       |       |      |

From the above table, it is evident that, at 5% significance level (95% confidence level), it can be found that there are 3 factors which significantly influence student absenteeism when compared with their future plans. They are:

- a) Length of class is too long
- b) My friends don't attend classes regularly so I don't
- c) I can't wake up so early

From the Descriptive table, it can be seen that those students who have a future plan of continuing to work in their family business have the highest probability (highest mean) of skipping classes due to the above mentioned reasons. However, those students who wish to take up a job or pursue higher studies have a lesser probability (lesser mean) of skipping classes due to the above mentioned reasons.

**Conclusion:**

The results of the study reveals the importance to understand attitude towards learning, towards college and competence and motivation. Majority of the pupils succeed or intends to achieve good academic score, by the support and motivation by the family. They motivate kids to study and keep going on, even they find the barriers. The current scenario and importance for education in the outer world, has changed the perception towards education.

This motivational attitude brings change in the attitude of the kids, their perception towards education and also increases zeal to learn new things.

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