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## **AN ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT**

**UNUSUALLY HIGH NUMBER OF HALF DAY LEAVE REQUESTS (FOR SECOND HALF) RECEIVED ON THE UNIT TEST DAY CAUSING DISTURBANCE TO THE SCHOOL ROUTINE.**

# AN ACTION RESEARCH PROJECT

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**BAL BHARATI PUBLIC SCHOOL, NOIDA**

**PROBLEM AREA: UNUSUALLY HIGH NUMBER OF STUDENTS GO ON A HALF DAY LEAVE ON THE UNIT TEST DAY CAUSING DISTURBANCE TO THE SCHOOL ROUTINE.**

In order to discourage parents from applying for a half day leave for their wards, for inappropriate reasons, the school has a clear cut policy of granting half day leave in case of emergency only. However, it has been observed that on the unit test day the primary school receives maximum number of half day leave request. As a result, the school routine gets disturbed.

## **PROBABLE CAUSES:**

On the Unit Test Day many students go home in the second half of the day. The probable causes are:

- 1) **Medical reasons:**
  - The child is unwell. However, he is sent to school in the morning for the following reasons with a half day leave request: -
    - a) The parents want the child to take the unit test, to avoid promotion issues
    - b) The student wants to take the unit test to maintain his/her rank or to secure passing grades.
- 2) **Prior appointments with the doctor or the passport authority**
- 3) **Unplanned visits to a relatives' place.**
- 4) **Working parents- not in a position to take a full day leave**
- 5) **Emergency**
- 6) **To avoid shortfall in attendance**
- 7) **Endemic**
- 8) **The child is sent back home by the school for being unwell.**

## **PIN POINTED PROBLEM**

How can I reduce the half day leave requests on a unit test day to the minimum?

## **ACTION HYPOTHESIS:**

The school has a well-defined mistreatment policy, promotion policy and also has a medical policy for the benefit of the students who miss unit test on medical ground. During the orientation the parents are given sufficient insight into the school's policies and working.

However, the parents seem to overlook all these while applying for a second half leave request for their ward on a Unit Test Day.

### **The action hypothesis is-**

If:

- a) The parents are counseled frequently on the issues of promotion, mistreatment and medical indisposition the second half leave applications will reduce considerably.
- b) The students are counseled regularly on the issues of promotion, mistreatment and medical indisposition the inflow of application will reduce considerably.
- c) The teachers are guided and motivated sufficiently they will be able to identify regular defaulters for counselling.

## **ACTION RESEARCH DESIGN (PLAN OF ACTION)**

- A. **Base Line Data (Initial information)**- On every Tuesday, which is a Unit Test Day, the Primary wing of school receives on an average 4-5 applications of half day leave or students are sent back home for being medically indisposed. Which is generally not the case on other days.
- B. **Source of data/Tool for collection of data:**
  - a) Class wise record of 'Half Day Leave Applications' received in last 4-5 months from the student's diary, dossier files.
  - b) Medical Room record of 4-5 months of those students who were sent back home for being medically indisposed.
- C. **Tool for analyzing the data:**
  - a) Presentation of data in a tabular form for analysis
  - b) Pie and bar graphs of weekly data
- D. **Action Programme (Time Line)**

➤ <u>Collection of base line data</u>	: April 7 <sup>th</sup> to July 14 <sup>th</sup> 2015
➤ <u>Analysis of data</u>	: July 15 <sup>th</sup> to 30 <sup>th</sup> 2015
➤ <u>Execution of action hypothesis</u>	: July 31 <sup>st</sup> to 25 <sup>th</sup> August 2015
➤ <u>Assessment of action hypothesis</u>	: August 31 <sup>st</sup> 2015
➤ <u>Execution of action hypothesis continue...</u>	: September 1 <sup>st</sup> to 14 <sup>th</sup> 2015
➤ <u>Evaluation</u>	: September 15 <sup>th</sup> and 22 <sup>nd</sup> 2015

**1) Collection of Base Line Data:** In order to collect data related to half day leave, two sources were identified a) Class Teacher's record of students' leave b) Medical room record of half day leave. The data was collected over a period of **7 weeks beginning from 6<sup>th</sup> April till 14<sup>th</sup> July 2015.**

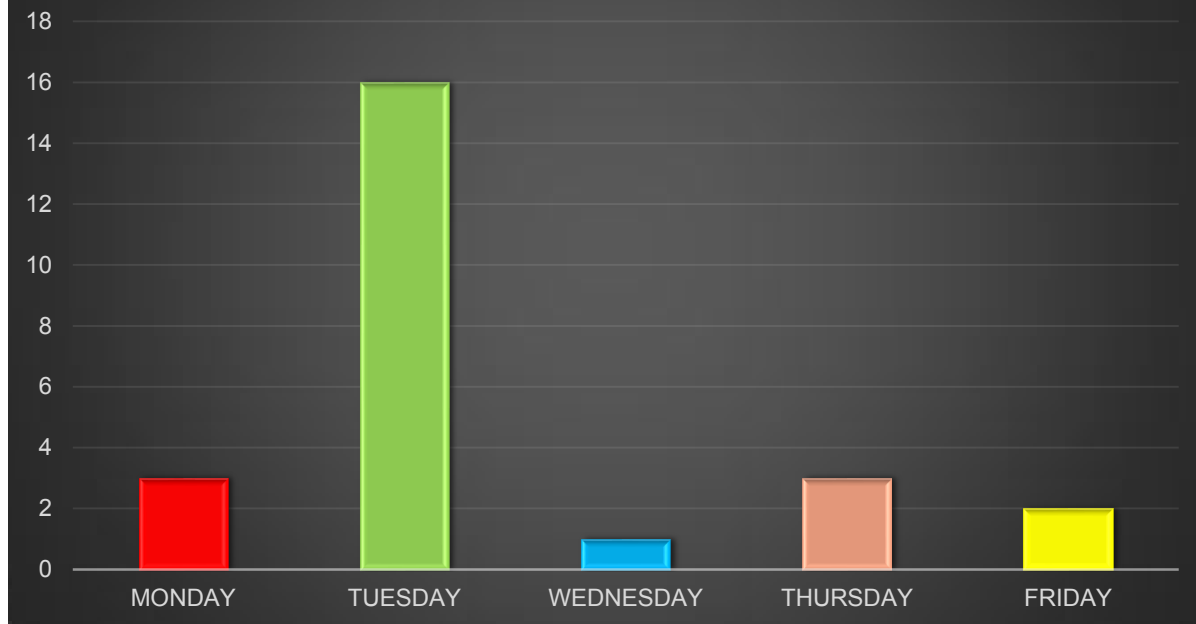
**2) Analysis of data**

a. **Day wise frequency of receiving half day leave applications in 5 weeks:**

<b>DAYS/WEEKS</b> → ↓	<b>1<sup>ST</sup></b> <b>WEEK</b>	<b>2<sup>ND</sup></b> <b>WEEK</b>	<b>3<sup>RD</sup></b> <b>WEEK</b>	<b>4<sup>TH</sup></b> <b>WEEK</b>	<b>5<sup>TH</sup></b> <b>WEEK</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
<b>MONDAY</b>	NIL	NIL	1	NIL	2	3
<b>TUESDAY</b>	NIL	3	3	3	7	16
<b>WEDNESDAY</b>	NIL	NIL	NIL	NIL	1	1
<b>THURSDAY</b>	NIL	NIL	NIL	1	2	3
<b>FRIDAY</b>	NIL	NIL	NIL	1	1	2
<b>TOTAL</b>						<b>25</b>

**FREQUENCY TABLE**

graph showing day wise frequency of half day leave over a period of 5 weeks



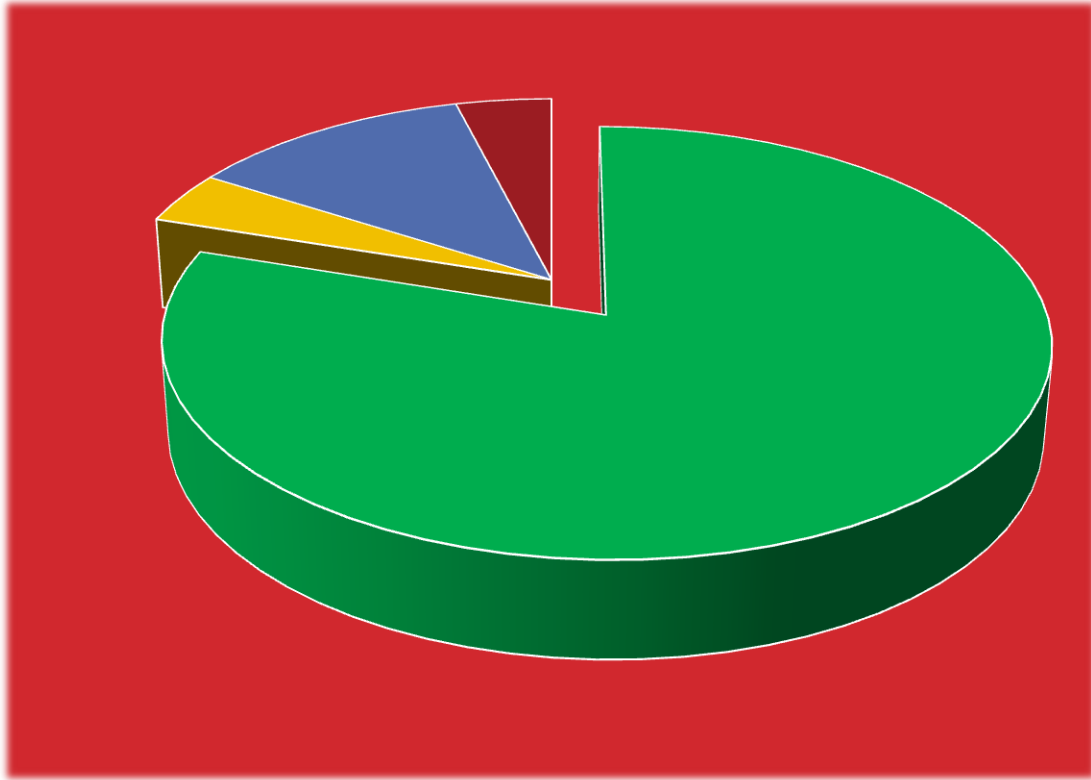
**Note: Tuesday is a Unit Test Day**

**b. Reasons for receiving half day leave applications in 5 weeks:**

<b>Weeks/Reasons</b> ↓ / →	<b>Medical</b>	<b>Prior appointment,</b>	<b>Emergency</b>	<b>Travelling out of station</b>
<b>1<sup>st</sup> week</b>	-	-	-	-
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> week</b>	3	-	-	-
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> week</b>	3	-	1	-
<b>4<sup>th</sup> week</b>	1	1	2	1
<b>5<sup>th</sup> week</b>	13	-	-	-
	<b>20</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>

**FREQUENCY OF THE REASONS**

## APPLICATIONS



- MEDICAL
- PRIOR APPOINTMENT
- EMERGENCY
- TRAVELLING OUT

### 3) Execution of Action Hypothesis:

After analyzing the data, it was clear that the half day leave applications were received mostly on Tuesdays (the test day). Also the most common reason was the medical condition. The parents were sending their children to take the unit test due to the fear of detention or losing desired grades. During the interaction with the parents it was noticed that they have not read the school policies on misbehavior, promotion and medical leave, which provide students ample opportunities to manage their grades and attendance percentage to a desired level.

Following steps were taken to execute the Action Hypothesis:

- On 31<sup>st</sup> July 2015 all the class teachers were called in the meeting room for discussion. After apprising them about the result of the data analysis the teachers were asked to give their inputs on the excess half day leave cases reported on almost every Tuesday.

The following were the inputs provided by the teachers:

- I. The child is unwell but doesn't want to miss the unit test, hence parents send request for half day leave, to allow the student to go home after taking the test.
- II. The child is unwell but to cover the shortfall in attendance is sent to school with a half day leave request.
- III. The child is travelling out of station on Tuesday but the parents want the child to take the test, hence a half day leave request is sent.
- IV. The child is unwell and is sent back home by the school.
- V. Parents have prior appointments with the passport authority or doctors on Tuesday but send the child to school with half day leave request to take the test.
- VI. There is an emergency at home and the parent takes the child home on a half day leave.

Except for the last reason the rest could be controlled with proper planning. The school has four prominent policies as general guidelines of conduct.

- a) **The Promotion Policy:** The school academic year has been divided into two terms, each term has two round test cycles. Thus in total there are four round tests. For promotion to the next class, a child has to secure over all C grade at the end of the second term. Absenteeism leads to zero weightage in the said subject, resulting in considerable fall in the overall grades. However out of four rounds of tests only best three are considered for overall grading.
- b) **The mismuster policy:** If a child misses a unit test on medical ground he/she will be given weighted marks in the test missed on producing a valid medical certificate.
- c) **The medical Policy:** If a child is unwell he/she must not come to school till declared fit to join. On producing a valid medical certificate, the child will be given medical leave which is counted in attendance to avoid short of attendance. Also the child gets the benefit of mismuster policy.
- d) **The half day leave policy:** No half day leave will be accorded to any child unless it is a case of justified emergency.

It appeared that although the teachers were aware of the stated policies but the same were not clearly and repeatedly communicated to the students and parents. As a result parents were sending their wards to school with a half day leave request on the unit test day (i.e. Tuesday).

Two-point action plan was suggested:

- I. **Teachers were asked to interact with the students regularly on the matter till the desired results were forthcoming.**

- II. Taking advantage of the **Round I P.T.M.** scheduled on 1<sup>st</sup> August 15 (the next day), the teachers were asked to inform parents about the school policies and their benefits.
- On 1<sup>st</sup> August (P.T.M. day)- The teachers were given prepared gist of the policies to be displayed through the Smart Board during the ptm for parents to note. Teachers were also asked to inform parents about the page number in the student diary and the web page address where they could find these policies available for their ready reference.

To evaluate the impact of the **Action Hypothesis** the data of the next four Tuesdays was closely monitored. **The data was disturbing as the school registered 11 half day leave cases during this period.**



**Something was not working!!!!!!!**

Teachers were again called on 25<sup>th</sup> August (fourth Tuesday) to discuss the persisting issue. They needed further guidance as the previous two steps did not yield desired result.

This time it was decided to send the precise message repeatedly a day before the unit test as **preventive** measure:

- I. The teachers were asked to give counselling reminder to students for next few Mondays that they don't have to come to school if not well or are going out of station, as absenteeism will not affect their grades or promotion in general.
- II. The teachers were also asked to write reminder notes to the parents through student diary for three consecutive Mondays reminding them to refer to the school policies and not to send their child to school with a half day leave request if the child is unwell or has prior appointment.

The note was to be sent on 31<sup>st</sup> August 15 as a preventive measure for the test scheduled on 1<sup>st</sup> September. **The data collected, on 1<sup>st</sup> September, was absolutely shocking. 7 cases of half day leave on medical ground were reported in a single day.** The applications were ranging from classes 1-5.



**'The strategy was carefully planned and should have not failed.'**

The teachers were asked to produce the evidences of sending diary note on 31<sup>st</sup> August. **Most of them accepted that they forgot to send the note.**

As an immediate measure those 7 parents were called to school. A meeting was convened in the meeting room and in the presence of the class teachers the students and their parents were



counselled not to repeat the act. Also as a policy the students were marked absent for the whole day.

The teachers were given strict warnings to follow the instruction sincerely for the next three Mondays.

The reminders were to be sent on 7th September(Monday), 14<sup>th</sup> September(Monday) and 21<sup>st</sup> September(Monday). The teachers were alert this time and the notes were sent as per the schedule. The students were also counselled. **As a result, on 8<sup>th</sup> September(Tuesday) there was only one case and on 15<sup>th</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> September(Tuesdays) No case of half day leave was reported.**

**Conclusion:**

**Regular reinforcement and precise communication will yield desired result. Teachers will have to do this exercise for a very long time period to ensure non occurrences.**

**Thanks**