

Research Article

School and Clinical Factors Influencing Absenteeism among Student Nurses in School Of Nursing and Midwifery Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto

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Abstract: The school and clinical areas are where student nurses get all the necessary knowledge and skills to become and practice as competent nurses. Being absent as a result of different factors reduces the ability to graduate capable and competent nurses. This study was aimed at determining the factors influencing absenteeism among student nurses' in school of nursing and midwifery Usmanu Danfodiyo University Teaching hospital Sokoto. Cross sectional descriptive survey was used. The target population consisted of 199 student nurses from year one, year two and year three of the school of which 133 were conveniently sampled. Data were collected by means of an adapted questionnaire. The Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS, version 20) was used for data analysis. The findings of the study revealed some school and clinical factors influencing absenteeism and this includes: lectures are boring, avoiding certain subject content, lecture hours are too long and tiring, Not ready for a test or an assignment that was due, classroom are not conducive, ill treatment by senior staff and being overworked. The study concluded that, the cause of absenteeism among students is multi-factorial. The study recommends Supervision and monitoring of the absenteeism policy. Students should be encouraged to utilize the correct channels of communication if they feel uncomfortable in the clinical area or at school, rather than resorting to absenteeism.

Keywords: absenteeism, students, factors, clinical, influence, school.

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INTRODUCTION

Regular attendance at school is essential for the students' academic achievements, language development and social development. Students who attend school regularly can be successful in their future professional lives through achieving work-related skills such as persistence, problem-solving, and the ability to work with others to accomplish a goal (Kearney & Graczyk, 2014). Absenteeism is defined as not going to school, not following the classes regularly and is an undesired student behavior (Usta, simsek & ugurla, 2014). Motsepe (2012) defines absenteeism as any time taken away from the workstation including arriving late at work, leaving before time, taking extended tea, lunch and toilet breaks, doing shopping and attending to a private business during working hours, unexplained absences from the workstation and absenting one's self without authorized leave. In this study absenteeism shall mean any single day missed by a bursary student,

whether in the academic (theoretical) or in the clinical placements.

Types of absenteeism can vary from institution to institution. However, they tend to have the same meaning. According to Singh (2012) absenteeism can be classified in three broad categories, namely sickness absence, authorized absence and unexcused absence. Sickness absence can be categorized as absence due to illness. Authorized absence is when employees are granted permission to be absent such as study leave and unexcused absence are absences that are not included in sickness absence or authorized absence, usually when no explanation is given for absence or the excuse is not accepted by the employer.

Absenteeism is one of the most basic indicators of to what extent the educational needs of students are met by schools. Absenteeism is a sign of disinterest among students from the education they are provided and this might leads to the questions of "What is wrong in this education?" and "Is something happening in our

schools and classrooms that distract students from education?" (Shute & Cooper, 2015) Students who attend school regularly have higher academic success, standardized test scores, graduation averages, university entrance rates and job opportunities (Balfanz & Byrnes, 2012; Ferrell *et al.*, 2013; Kearney & Graczyk, 2014). Compared to their peers, students who don't attend school regularly have lower academic performance, limited future employment opportunities and will experience social and emotional problems in adulthood (Askeland *et al.*, 2015; Buscha & Conte, 2014; Nolan *et al.*, 2013; Thornton, Darmody & McCoy, 2013).

Absenteeism appears to be a major problem confronting the school system in Nigeria. Absenteeism is not only an epidemic peculiar to the universities but to all public and private schools in the developed and developing countries. Absenteeism does not only violate the school rule and regulation but it affects the school system, the individual students and the society at large, especially when the student in health related sciences are involved.

The link between attendance and academic achievement has been studied in a wide variety of courses such as Culture (Gump, 2005), Pharmacy (Hidayat, Vansal, Kim, Sullivan, & Salbu, 2012), Psychology (Van Blerkom, 1990), Business (Ehsan, 2013) Obstetrics/Gynecology (Deane & Murphy, 2013), Medicine (Chilwant, 2013; LB, 2012; Millis, Dyson, & Cannon, 2009; Subramaniam, Hande, & Komattil, 2013). However, such studies are lacking in the field of nursing.

In all the above studies, various reasons were provided for the absenteeism. However, this is lacking in nursing

as a profession. Therefore this study assesses school and clinical factors influencing absenteeism among student nurses in school of nursing and Midwifery Usmanu Danfodiyo University Teaching Hospital Sokoto (SONM UDUTH).

METHOD AND PROCEDURE

Research Design

Cross sectional descriptive survey was used. A cross sectional survey allows the collection of all data at a single point in time.

Sampling Technique

The sampling technique adopted was convenient sampling technique, because it allows the researcher the ability to administer the questionnaires to the available and accessible participants.

Instrument for Data Collection

The researcher utilized an adapted questionnaire which was created after completion of focused literature review.

Method of Data Analysis

The data for this study was analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 20).

Ethical Consideration

An approval from the school was obtained prior to conducting the research. Also, ethical issues in this study included assurance of confidentiality and anonymity of the participants and their responses.

RESULT

Table 1: Socio Demographic Data

VARIABLES	FREQUENCY	PERCENTAGE %
GENDER		
Male	41	32
Female	87	68
AGE		
18-30	122	95.3
31-40	5	3.9
41-50	1	0.8
TOTAL	128	100.0
RESIDENCE		
In the hostel	75	58.6
At home	40	31.2
Renting elsewhere	13	10.1
TOTAL	128	100.0
YEAR OF TRAINING		
First year	34	26.6
Second year	49	39
Third year	45	34.4
TOTAL	128	100.0

ALLOWANCE

Enough	38	29.7
Too little	44	34.4
Not receiving	46	35.9
TOTAL	128	100.0

The above table shows that majority of the respondent are females. Majority of the respondents were between the age of 18-30 years and the lowest are within the range of 41-50. Majority of the students are in year two and the lowest are in year one .Majority of the

respondent stays in the hostel while the minority rent elsewhere. Response base on allowance received by the students indicates that most of the students were not receiving allowances and lowest says it's enough to carter for their academic needs.

School factors

Table2: Responses on school factors that influences absenteeism

S/N	Statements	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	Avoiding certain lecturers who are too strict and unfriendly.	3.60	1.35
2	Lecturers' teaching methods are boring.	3.58	1.37
3	Lecturers discipline students unequally, there is favoritism.	2.92	1.46
4	Avoiding certain subject content.	3.74	1.66
5	Lecture hours are too long and tiring, from 7:15am-4pm.	3.48	1.38
6	Lecture rooms are not conducive to learning they are either too hot or too cold.	2.98	1.51
7	Not ready for a test or an assignment that was due.	3.20	1.47
8	Students have no platform to raise their academic problems and opinions concerning teaching and learning.	3.20	1.47
9	Students who never absent themselves from college are never noticed or rewarded, I rather be absent like others.	3.23	1.56
Aggregate Mean		3.33	

The above table 2 shows that, *lectures are boring, avoiding certain subject content, lecture hours are too long and tiring, Not ready for a test or an assignment that was due, classroom are not conducive are above the decision mean and therefore the factors influencing absenteeism.*

Table 3: Responses on factors in the 'clinical area' that influences absenteeism

S/N	Statements	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	They are avoiding certain wards with very sick patients	3.06	1.45
2	Students are allocated in heavy cubicles.	2.95	1.30
3	Students cover staff shortages over weekends & public holidays.	3.11	1.44
4	They are not given day offs they requested.	3.27	1.45
5	They are ill-treated by senior staff.	3.48	1.42
6	They are being overworked while staff sit in the rest room and take a break.	3.39	1.49
7	They are not mentored in the wards, being there is a waste of time.	3.12	1.47
8	They need time to finish an assignment or prepare for a test.	3.79	1.23

Aggregate
mean

3.27

Table 3 shows that, *ill treatment by senior staff*, The need for time to finish an assignment or prepare for a test, not mentored in the wards, *being overworked are clinical factors leading to absenteeism among students.*

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This study was conducted on 133 student nurses in school of nursing and midwifery Usmanu Danfodiyo University Teaching Hospital Sokoto. The age distribution of the students shows that majority of the student (95.3) were within the age range of 18-30 years and females were the majority (68%). majority of the respondent resides in the hostel (58.6%). most of the respondent were students in their second year of training. it was also deduced that majority of the student nurses receive no allowances (35.9%).

This research shows that certain school factors tend to influence student nurses absenteeism. Some of this college factors includes; avoiding certain lecturers, boring teaching method, avoiding certain subject content and lecture hours that is too long and tiring. The finding of this study is similar to that of Mokgobola (2013) in some ways and differs in the other ways. The two studies agreed in teaching methodology, attitude of the lecturers, lecture hours and difficulty of certain subject content. In all these factors, lecturers are the centre for intervention which includes mentoring, effective content development and utilization of appropriate teaching method.

However, the two differs in the aspect of resources to be used in the teaching process. The current study did not establish teaching resources as influencers of absenteeism. This could be as a result of the availability of resources in the study area. Similarly, the current study is not in agreement with In a study conducted in Minia University, minia, Egypt, by Wadesango, & Machingambi (2011), which established the unavailability of resources for procedures as the factor.

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In the current study, the language barrier and attending community activities were not found to be the reason for the absenteeism. However, Safaa and Aheer, (2017) found them as the influencers of students' absenteeism.

The study also reveals the need for time to finish an assignment or prepare for a test, ill-treatment by senior staffs, being overworked and not given day offs as the clinical factors that promote absenteeism among students. The study is in accordance with the research carried out by Nomathamsanqa (2017) which reveals that ill-treatment of student, not giving a day off, being overworked while staff sit in the rest room and take break as the major contributory factor of bursary student absentee.

Nursing Implication

The general public, professional bodies and the hospital settings expect the production of high quality and competent nurses from all school of nursing and university offering degree in nursing. There is a relationship between absenteeism and poor performance in academics and clinical skills; therefore it's mandatory that the identified factors that influences absenteeism should be mitigated since some absenteeism cannot be avoided. Student improvement in academic and clinical skills will improve the health care delivery system and improve professional competency.

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that, *the cause of absenteeism among students is multi-factorial* which comprises of both school and clinical factors.

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