

Research Article

The Personal Factors that Influences Absenteeism among Student Nurses in School of Nursing and Midwifery Usmanu Danfodiyo University Teaching Hospital, Sokoto

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Abstract: Absenteeism affects the overall performance of student and leads to low quality graduates. This study was aimed at determining the factors that influence student nurses' absenteeism in the school of nursing and midwifery Usmanu Danfodiyo University teaching 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 21) was used for data analysis. The findings of the study revealed the physical illness, family responsibilities, and inadequate finance as the personal factors that influence absenteeism among students in school of nursing UDUTH. The study recommends that, students should be provided with timely scholarship and free drugs for the treatment of common illness. Similarly, mentorship should be provided to all students indulged in such act.

Keywords: absenteeism, students, factors, personal, influence.

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INTRODUCTION

Absenteeism is defined as not going to school, not following the classes regularly and is an undesired student behavior (Usta, simsek & ugurla, 2014). 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).

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 lead 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 factors that influence absenteeism among nursing students 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 16).

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: 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.

Table 2: Personal factors that influence absenteeism

S/N	Statements	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	Physical illness, no free health care for student nurses.	3.70	1.36
2	Family matter to attend to, e.g., sick child, husband, wife or parent.	3.60	1.36
3	Have no money for transport.	3.25	2.2
4	Stay too far from school, no accommodation at the school hostel	2.52	1.54
5	They are not paid for working but funded for studying.	2.66	1.35
6	Lazy to come to school	2.63	1.41
Aggregate mean		3.01	

Table 2: shows that Physical illness, Family matter, Have no money for transport are personal factors influencing absenteeism.

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 deducted that majority of the student nurses receive no allowances (35.9%).

The result of this study shows that student personal factors influence student nurses absenteeism and the factors includes, physical illness, family responsibilities and inadequate finance.

Physical illness:

Current study identified physical illness as one of the factors leading to absenteeism among student nurses in UDUTH. This is in line with the study by Emmanuel et al., (2017) in Maiduguri. This factor might lead to low quality of life which subsequently affects overall students' motivation and ability to attend lectures. The reason behind absenteeism in case of physical illness might also be due to the struggle in seeking for medical treatment which in the event of poverty and lack of sponsorship can be worsen.

Family Responsibilities

The study also establishes family responsibility as the factor which leads to absenteeism. This is in agreement with that of Safaa & Aheer, (2017). The responsibility involves caring for the sick, feeding, decision making process and socialization among others. These are demands that can limit the amount of attention to be provided to education.

Financial constraint:

This is also part of the finding of this study which was also established by Emmanuel et al., (2017). Financial constraint affects transportation to school, feeding, school fees and payment for some educational materials. This can directly de-motivate the student with subsequent absenteeism.

Nursing Implication:

The general public, professional bodies and nurse employer expect the production of high quality and competent nurses from all school of nurses 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 influence 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, personal factors affect students' attention and leads to absenteeism. Provision of scholarship and medical services can improve the situation and promote the graduation of quality products.

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