Absenteeism and Factors Affecting Absenteeism

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Abstract

Attendance is an important factor in school success among children and youth. Studies show that better attendance is related to higher academic achievement for students of all backgrounds, but particularly for children with lower socioeconomic status. Beginning in kindergarten, students who attend school regularly score higher on tests than their peers who are frequently absent. Chronic truancy (frequent unexcused absence) is a strong predictor of undesirable outcomes in adolescence, including academic failure, dropping out of school, substance abuse, gang involvement, and criminal activity. Many factors can contribute to student absenteeism. Considering this ever-increasing menace of absenteeism, a descriptive study was conducted to assess the point prevalence of absenteeism and factors influencing absenteeism among student nurses in a selected college of nursing of Delhi, and to explore the factors influencing absenteeism among student nurses. The research approach adopted for the study was quantitative with descriptive research design. The tool used for data collection was a structured opinionnaire and record analysis. The sample comprised of nursing students of Ruffaida College of Nursing, selected by using total enumeration sampling technique. The study revealed that the majority of the student nurses (81%) were having attendance above 75% whereas only 19% were having attendance below 75%. It was found that the days following or prior to holidays or weekends saw maximum number of student absenteeism.

Keywords: Absenteeism, Point prevalence, Student nurses

Introduction

Education is not merely the delivery of knowledge, skills and information from teachers to students. Pupil is able to perceive accurately, think clearly and act effectively to achieve self-selected goals and aspirations. The study of absenteeism is very important for any college. The word absenteeism means the absence of student from class when the student is scheduled to be present at school/college. Absenteeism of a student is defined as a period of time when teacher has no information in advance that the student will not report for class, if she has taken leave to which she is entitled, or on ground of sickness or in case of accident. Thus, absence may be authorized or unauthorized, willful or caused by circumstances beyond the teacher's control.¹ Attendance is an important factor in school success among children and youth. Studies show that better attendance is related to higher academic achievement for students of all backgrounds, but particularly for children

with lower socioeconomic status. Factors that contribute to absenteeism may be family health or financial concerns, poor school climate, drug and alcohol use, transportation problems, and differing community attitudes towards education.^{1,2}

The absenteeism among university students can lead to much negative effect such as the student pointer can drop and many social problems may happen. The university also will not be able to produce quality graduates. University has its own responsibility to produce a knowledgeable, skilled and disciplined graduate student so that after graduation, the students can easily get a job and become good citizens, which can help economy of the country develop. Student absenteeism is a major concern for university education worldwide. Despite strict rules, absenteeism is an on-going problem in universities.³ Due to paucity of research in Indian setting on the factors influencing absenteeism, we chose to conduct this study.

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Materials and Methods

The purpose of the present study was to assess the point prevalence of absenteeism among the student nurses in a selected college of nursing of Delhi and to explore the factors influencing absenteeism. A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted during the academic year 2017-18, among students enrolled in B.Sc. (H) Nursing Program at Rufaida College of Nursing, Jamia Hamdard. The formal administrative approval was obtained from the concerned authority to conduct the study. Sampling technique used for selection of sample was total enumeration technique, and records of 211 students were analyzed for assessing the point prevalence of absenteeism. This demonstrated that 40 students were having less than 75% attendance. For assessing the factors influencing absenteeism, those (40) study subjects were used, as per the norms of the university (minimum 75% attendance is required for attempting the examinations). Record analysis was used to assess the point prevalence and a structured opinionaire was used to assess the factors affecting absenteeism. The opinionaire consisted of two parts. Part-A consisted of 12 questions related to demographic data and Part-B consisted of an opinionaire to elicit the factors that may affect absenteeism. The data were collected and analyzed using descriptive statistics.

Result

Table 1. Attendance Record Analysis of B.Sc. (H) Nursing I, II, III and IV Year Students

Class Attendance Percentage (%)	B.Sc. (H) Nursing I year	B.Sc. (H) Nursing II year	B.Sc. (H) Nursing III year	B.Sc. (H) Nursing IV year	Total Students
<75	4	13	19	4	40
75-79	5	6	10	1	22
80-84	10	9	8	2	29
85-89	19	12	14	4	49
90-94	7	9	5	19	40
95-99	9	3	0	19	31
100	0	0	0	0	0
Total	54	52	56	49	211

N=211

Of the total (211) students enrolled in B.Sc. (H) Nursing program in the academic year (2016-17), 40 (18.9%) students had attendance less than 75% (minimum attendance percentage required for writing the examinations as per the university byelaws), of which 19 (47%) numbers of students were in III year followed by 13 (33%) in II year. Both I and IV year students had recorded least number of student absenteeism, i.e., 4 (10%).

Further, these 40 students (with attendance less than 75%) were included to assess the factors influencing absenteeism.

Table 2. Frequency and Percentage Distribution of Subjects in Terms of Their Sociodemographic Profile

S. No.	Variables	Frequency	Percentage
1	Age		
	18-19	13	32.5
	20-21	20	50
	22-23	7	17.5
2	Gender		
	Male	2	5
	Female	38	95
3	Religion		
	Hindu	15	37.5
	Muslim	14	35
	Christian	8	20
	Others	3	7.5
4	Social background		

n=40

	Urban	37	92.5
	Rural	3	7.5
5	Schooling		
	Private school	28	70
	Government school	9	22.5
	Missionary School	3	7.5
6	Class XII percentage		
	Below 60	1	2.5
	61–75	20	50
	76–85	14	35
	86–100	5	12.5
7	Mother's education		
	Illiterate	2	5
	Primary	4	10
	Secondary	6	15
	Higher secondary	6	15
	Diploma	6	15
	Degree and above	16	40
8	Father's education		
	Illiterate	2	5
	Primary	2	5
	Secondary	3	7.5
	Higher secondary	4	10
	Diploma	6	15
	Degree and above	23	57.5
9	Current residence		
	In university hostel	23	57.5
	Outside university hostel with family	11	27.5
	Outside university with relatives	2	5
	Outside university with friends	0	0
	Paying guesthouse	3	7.5
10	Meals		
	University cafeteria	2	5
	Outside the university	4	10
	At hostel	22	55
	At home	12	30
11	Use of psychoactive drugs		
	Yes	0	0
	No	40	100
12	Siblings in the university		
	Yes	9	22.5
	No	31	77.5

Table 2 describes demographic data on age, gender, religion, social background, schooling, percentage secured in class XII, mother's and father's education level, current residence, venue for meal, use of psychoactive substances and siblings studying in the same university. Half of the subjects 50% (20)

were in age group 20–21 years, 32.5% (13) of subjects were in age group 18–19 and 17.5% (7) subjects were in age group 22–23 years. Most of the subjects 95% (38) were female and 5% (2) were male. 37.5% (15) followed Hinduism, 35% (14) practiced Islam, 20% (8) subjects followed Christianity and

rest 7.5% (3) followed other religions. 92.5% (37) subjects belonged to urban background and only 7.5% (3) subjects were from rural background.

70% (28) subjects had done their schooling at private schools and approximately one third 22.5% (9) subjects at government schools and only 7% (3) had done their schooling at missionary schools. Half of the subjects 50% (20) had scored 61–75% in class XII, 35% (14) subjects 76–85%, 13% (5) subjects 86–100% and only 2.5% (1) had scored below 60% in class XII. Data for education level revealed 40% (16) mothers were postgraduates as compared to their male counterparts 57.5% (23).

More than half 57.5% (23) subjects were staying in university's hostel, approximately one fourth 27.5% (11) outside the university with family, 5% (2) outside the university with relatives, 2.5% (1) in paying guesthouses and 7.5% (3) were staying in rented rooms with friends. 55% (22) subjects were having meals at the hostel, 30% (12) at home, 10% (4) outside the university and only 5% (2) at university's cafeteria. None of the subjects were consuming psychoactive substances. Only 22.5% (9) subjects were having their siblings studying in this same university.

unfavorable responses and 27% (54) were favorable responses. Infrastructure-centered factors got the highest favorable response 47% (113) among all the factors and 52% (127) were unfavorable responses whereas in social-centered, only 21% (43) were favorable responses and 65% (77) subjects had shown unfavorable responses. In consequences-centered, 33.3% (40) were favorable responses and 66.6% (80) were unfavorable responses.

It was observed that students were not satisfied with the infrastructure including the classrooms and the routine of clinical duties was also found to be a contributing cause of increasing absenteeism. It was also found that the days following holidays or weekends saw maximum number of student absenteeism.

Discussion of Findings

Absenteeism refers to a situation where a student does not attend lectures, practice or any education activities. In a study conducted by Faiza, it was found that the prevalence of absenteeism among nursing students was 29.4%. Absenteeism was more prevalent in males than females which was 41.1% and 26.5% respectively.⁴ the results of

Table 3. Percentage Distribution of Responses of Student Nurses on Factors Influencing Absenteeism

S. No.	Factors	Response	Total	Percentage %
1	Teacher centered	Favorable	73	30.41
		Unfavorable	167	69.58
		Total	240	100
2	Pupil centered	Favorable	257	33.81
		Unfavorable	503	66.18
		Total	760	100
3	Personal centered	Favorable	54	27
		Unfavorable	146	73
		Total	200	100
4	Infrastructure centered	Favorable	113	47.08
		Unfavorable	127	52.91
		Total	240	100
5	Social centered	Favorable	43	21.5
		Unfavorable	77	64.5
		Total	120	100
6	Consequences centered	Favorable	40	33.33
		Unfavorable	80	66.66
		Total	120	100

Table 3 illustrates the responses given by the study subjects regarding the factors influencing absenteeism. In teacher-centered factors, nearly 70% (167) were unfavorable responses whereas 30% (73) were favorable responses. In pupil-centered factors, 66% (503) were unfavorable responses and 34% (257) were favorable responses. In personal-centered factors, 73% (146) were

the present study were similar to this study, which also found out that there were about 18.9% students having attendance less than the minimum requirement as directed by the university.

A similar study was conducted by Wadesango and Machingambi with the aim to investigate the extent of

student absenteeism in selected universities in South Africa, and to explore why students absent themselves from classes and examine the implications of student absenteeism. The study revealed that student absenteeism was rampant in the universities under study due to reasons such as lack of subject interest, poor teaching strategies by lecturers, unfavorable learning environment, too much of socialization, part-time jobs to augment meager bursaries granted by various sponsors and poor relations with the lecturers. The study also found an inverse relationship between student absenteeism and course performance.⁵ These findings were comparable to the present study, which also observed poor infrastructure to be a contributing factor along with practical session.

A study conducted by Timmins and Kalliszer explores absenteeism patterns and trends among a group of third-year student nurses. It was found that absenteeism commencing on either Mondays or Fridays accounted for more than half of the absenteeism episodes in the group. Voluntary absence was reported to be a feature of this group, which occurred more frequently from lectures than ward duties; the main reasons cited for absence from both lectures and ward duties were personal and social commitments and stress.⁶ Findings of the present study also suggested that absence had a pattern of predictability with the holidays or weekends.

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Conflict of Interest: None

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