

An Action Research On Absenteeism As Percieved By Teachers And Students And Its Impact On The Academic Performance Of 1st Year Basic B. Sc. Nursing Students.

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Introduction:

Student absenteeism is a major concern for lecturers at Institutions of higher learning. Absences create a tiresome, unpleasant classroom environment that makes students who come to class uncomfortable and the lecturer irritable (Marburger 2001). Absenteeism disturbs the dynamic teaching-learning environment (Segal 2008). In quality terms, absenteeism is a waste of educational resources, time and human potential. Student absenteeism also causes rework and wasted time for lecturers (Lalek 1995; Rumberger 1997). Lecturers who spend class time re-teaching lessons take instructional time away from students who attend class regularly; and the extra time spent going over absentee homework and class assignments takes time away from lecturer planning periods and time needed to provide individual assistance (Weller 1996). When students are absent from class, they miss valuable information resulting from peer-lecturer interaction and the benefits of the specific examples lecturers use to clarify difficult concepts. This valuable part of the learning experience cannot be replicated when lecturers re-teach the material to absentee students (Weller 1996; Williams 2000).

According to Enomoto (1997), students who missed class on a given date were significantly more likely to respond incorrectly to questions relating to material covered that day than students who were present. The hypothesis that class attendance is likely to be correlated with student learning has been investigated empirically in economic education literature. Most surprisingly, most studies have found an inverse relationship between absenteeism and course performance (Marburger 2001). The relation between attendance and performance in one large lecture course suggest that attendance may substantially affect learning. The difference in performance between a student who attends regularly and one who attends sporadically is about a full letter grade (Bowen 2005). Students who choose not to attend school regularly and who exhibit patterns of extended absences are in violation of the law and are, therefore, the focus of many public school systems.

It is important to note that a primary issue of chronic absenteeism is not that there is no excuse provided, but rather, the excuse is not a valid one. According to Williams (2000), students who have absenteeism problems generally suffer academically and socially. Studies indicate that students who are absent have lower achievement and may be penalized on test scores (Barker and Jansen 2000). Sustained absences may affect retention as it may degenerate into truancy (Lotz and Lee 1999; Barker and Jansen 2000). The implications of absenteeism are felt outside the classroom as well (Williams 2000). Continued losses of instruction or poor academic achievement among students with high absenteeism are essential characteristics of students who later dropout of school (Mayer and Mitchel 1996). Lotz and Lee (1999) indicate that acts of delinquency are more frequent among students, who exhibit low grades, have spotty attendance, and later on drop out of school.

Need of the study:-

Absenteeism often occurs in high numbers more often due to chronic illnesses and family crises, but these absences are not what offer the most concern to school systems. Unexcused absences are the core of the problem being addressed not only nationally, but also in other countries that have compulsory school/college attendance laws.

It is important to note that a primary issue of chronic absenteeism, or truancy, is not that there is no excuse provided, but rather, the excuse is not a valid one. Problems stemming from high rates of absenteeism and truancy are reported from many sources, sometimes in alarmingly high numbers. Wisconsin reports approximately 15,600 students, or 1.6 percentage of those enrolled in Wisconsin public schools, as truant on any given day, with approximately 31.1 percentage of total absences in the 1998-99 academic years resulting in truancy (Wisconsin, 2000). In California, the Oakland Unified School District averages approximately 3,000 to 3,500 of the 50,000 enrolled students absent per day (Phone Master, 1998). Kern County, also in California, reported 143,671 unexcused absences during the 1996-97 school years (VanRy & King, 1998). During 1998, Detroit reported that more than one-third of their 63,000 students missed at least 30 days of school (Fox & Levin, 1999), and in New York City, students absent without a legitimate excuse totalled approximately 65,000 (Fox & Levin, 1999). Absenteeism is not indigenous only to the United States. Rayner & Riding (1996) cite a 1980 national survey report by Schostak in the United Kingdom that found at least 800,000 students absent from school for

unexcused reasons. A repeated survey by Webb in 1993 resulted in suggestions that approximately half a million students were absent each day (Rayner & Riding, 1996).

Conceptual framework:

Charter (1975) has stated that the conceptual framework formalizes the thinking process, so that others may read and know the frame of reference, basic to the research problem. It also gives direction for relevant questions on the phenomenon under study.

The conceptual framework of the study is based on Systems Theory.

“Systems Theory: the trans disciplinary study of the abstract organization of phenomenon, independent of their substance, type, or spatial or temporal scale of existence. It investigates both the principles common to all complex entities and, the (usually mathematical) models which can be used to describe them.”

This theory has three components:

- Input
- Process
- Output

Input can be defined as any form of information, energy or material that enters into the system through its boundary. Throughput process is often referred to as transformation of the input in such a way that it can be readily used by the system. Output refers to the outcome of the processed data; that is, any energy, information or material that is transformed to the environment.

In this study,

Input: refers to the tool selected to collect the data from the students and teachers of 1st Year Basic B.Sc. Nursing course. It also includes their mark record and the attendance record tools.

Process: refers to the formal interaction with the students and teachers with an aim to find out the impact of absenteeism on the academic performance of students of the first year Basic B.Sc. Nursing course.

The procedures used were:

- Teachers and students perception (self-reporting).
- Retrospective data collection from records of the students.

Output: refers to:

- Incidence of absenteeism.
- Explaining causes and solution of absenteeism as perceived by the teachers and students.

❖ Statement Of The Problem:-

An action research on absenteeism as perceived by teachers and students and its impact on the academic performance of 1st year Basic B.Sc. nursing students.

❖ Specific Objectives:-

1. To analyze the causes of absenteeism in the 1st year Basic B.Sc. Nursing students as perceived by the teachers and the students.
2. To find out the solutions to absenteeism in the 1st year Basic B.Sc. Nursing students as perceived by the teachers and the students.
3. To correlate between the selected variables and the rate of absenteeism in the 1st Year Basic B.Sc. Nursing students.
4. To correlate between the rate of absenteeism and the mean scores scored by the 1st year Basic B.Sc. Nursing students at the university examination.
5. To analyze the responses of the possible effect of absenteeism on the 1st Year Basic B.Sc. Nursing students as stated by them.

Review of literature

“There is, by God's grace, an immeasurable difference between late and too late.”

-Mme. Swetchine (1782-1857)

This chapter deals with the review of literature. According to Polit and Hungler, (1978) reviewing the literature is important to gain a better understanding and the insight necessary to develop the conceptual framework in which the problem can be examined. It helps in the formulation of a specific problem, acquaints the investigator to what is already known in relation to the problem under review. It provides a basis for assessing the feasibility of a research problem and gives information on the research approach.

The studies reviewed have been arranged under the following headings:-

- i. Extent and causes of student absenteeism in the college.
- ii. Solutions cited to decrease student absenteeism in the college.

iii.Effects of the absenteeism of students on their overall performance

1. Extent and causes of student absenteeism in college:-

In 2011, Newman Wadesango and Severino Machingambi conducted a study to explore “The causes and structural effects of student’s absenteeism.”The aim of the study was to investigate the extent of student absenteeism in selected Universities of South Africa and to explore the reasons why student’s absent themselves from classes and examine the implications of student absenteeism.

The study adopted the mixed methodology and used a survey research design as the operational framework for data gathering. Data were collected by self-administered questionnaires and interviews with 126 students from 3 Universities in South Africa.

2. Solutions cited to decrease student absenteeism in college:-

In 2008, Courtney Hockney conducted a study to evaluate “the contributing factors to student absenteeism/truancy and effectiveness of social services and interventions.”The aim of this study was to decrease school absenteeism by implementation of a particular intervention in students in a school.

This study used an experimental design. Specifically, this research examined the implementation of a perfect attendance award as a successful intervention or incentive to decrease absenteeism and truancy and promote school attendance. This study used a sample of students in grades 2 to 6 from Charles N. Fortes Elementary school in providence, Rhode Island. Attendance records of these standards for 2 consecutive years were taken (2006-07 and 2007-08) and were compared for standards with perfect attendance. Data was also entered into the statistical package for the social sciences to determine if statistical significance can be recognised for the given intervention.

The researcher saw an increase in motivation and excitement for students to attend school each day in order to receive the certificate. As trivial as a computer printed certificate may seem, the impact and the recognition the certificate gave these students showed in their better attendance records. However these findings cannot be generalised.

In 2003, Steven B. Sheldon and Joyce L. Epstein conducted a study on “getting students to school using family and community involvement to reduce chronic absenteeism.” The aim of this study was to reduce student absenteeism in schools by involving the families of the students and the community.

3. Effects of student’s absenteeism on their academic performance:-

In 2009, W. Obeng- Denteh, E. Asiamah Yeboah, Charles Sam, J. Esi. Monkah of the department of mathematics, Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology, Kumasi, Ghana, conducted a study on “the impact of student and teacher absenteeism on student performance at the junior high school: - The case of the Kumasi- Metro school district.” The aim of this study was to study the effect of student and teacher absenteeism on the student academic performance of junior high school students.

The exploratory research was conducted in Kumasi sub metro to find out whether student and teacher absenteeism affect the performance of students for the 2008-2009 academic year. In order to get a fair representation an arithmetic mean was calculated. A regression analysis was performed with the mean scores of students in the exams.

This study revealed that student’s absenteeism is of no significance to student’s performance. The teacher absenteeism rate had a greater influence on the performance of the student with all other factors remaining constant. They realized that the teacher absenteeism rate is inversely related to student performance.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In this chapter, the investigator puts across the description of the research setting, population, sample size, research technique and tool, validity of the tool, data gathering process and plan for data analysis.

❖ Research Approach:

Research approach or research design refers to the way in which the investigator plans or structures the research process. It is a set of flexible guide spots designed to keep the research in the right direction.

❖ Variables of the study:

According to John Best variables are the conditions or characteristics that the investigator manipulates, controls or observes. The investigator has identified the following variables of this study:

❖ Independent Variable:

The independent variable in this study is the absenteeism of the 1st Year Basic B.Sc. Nursing students during the academic year 2010-2011.

❖ Dependent Variable:

The dependent variable of this study is the academic performance of the 1st Year Basic B.Sc. Nursing students at the University examination.

❖ Other variables of the study:

The two other variables in this study are the teacher's and student's perception of the causes of absenteeism among the 1st Year Basic B.Sc. Nursing students and the solutions to reduce these.

❖ Setting Of The Study:

The study was conducted in Fortis Institute of Nursing, Bhandup, Mumbai.

❖ Population:

The population selected for the study are the 40 of the 1st Year Basic B.Sc. Nursing students of the Fortis Institute of Nursing and 10 teachers responsible for their academics.

❖ **Sample:** Being an action research, the sample comprised the population of the study, that is, 40 of the 1st Year Basic B.Sc. Nursing students of the Fortis Institute of Nursing and 10 teachers responsible for their academics.

❖ Technique And Tool:

a) **Technique:** - This research incorporates the use of existing data and new data.

b) **Tool:** - Based on the study objectives, the tools designated for the study were: -

Tool – I: Questionnaire.

Tool – II: Attendance Record of The Students.

Tool – III: University Marks' Records of The Students.

❖ Development Of The Tool:

The development of the tool was a step by step procedure for which the investigators adopted a practical approach.

❖ Validity:

The content validity of the tool is concerned with the extent to which a tool reflects the variable it seeks to measure.

❖ Data Gathering Process:

The period of data collection commenced from the 17th of October to the 22nd of October. Prior to the commencement of the study a formal administrative permission was obtained from the Principal of the nursing college.

Plan For Data Analysis: -

1. The investigators planned to analyse the data in the following manner-
2. Demographic data of the students and teachers would be analyzed using the frequency and percentage.
3. The causes –responses of the students and teachers would be analyzed using frequency and percentage.
4. The solutions –responses of the students and teachers would be analyzed using frequency and percentage.
5. The selected variables and the rate of absenteeism would be compared using 't' test.
6. The rate of absenteeism and the mean University score would be compared using Correlation 'r' formulae.
7. The responses of the possible effect of absenteeism on the 1st Year Basic B.Sc. Nursing students would be analyzed using frequency and percentage.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

This chapter deals with the analysis and interpretation of data collected from 40 students of the 1st Year Basic B.Sc. Nursing course and 10 of their teachers, from a selected college of nursing.

The data collected was classified based on the objectives of the study in the following manner:

TABLE I Demographic data of the students:-

N = 40

Sr.no.	Demographic characteristics	Frequency	Percentage
1	Age (years):		
	• 18 years	26	65
	• 19 years	7	17.5
	• 20 years	4	10
	• 21 years	2	5
	• Other	1	2.5
	Gender:	2	5
2	• Male	38	95
	• Female		
	Type of family:		
	• Nuclear family	39	97.5
3	• Joint family	1	2.5
	No. Of Family members:		
	• One	8	20
	• Two	1(6)	57.5
4	• Three	20	20

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four • Five • Others 	15	2.5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1500 to 3000 • 3001 to 5000 • 5001 to 8500 • 8501 to 12000 • 12001 to 15500 	4	50
Per capita income:(in rupees):	-	
Area of residence:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hostelite • Non -hostelite 		

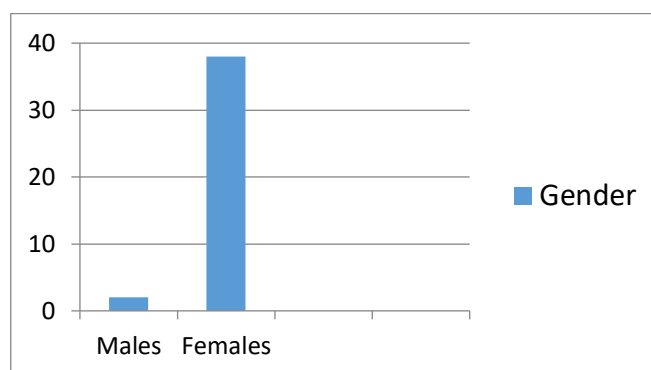


FIGURE – 1 AGE OF THE STUDENTS

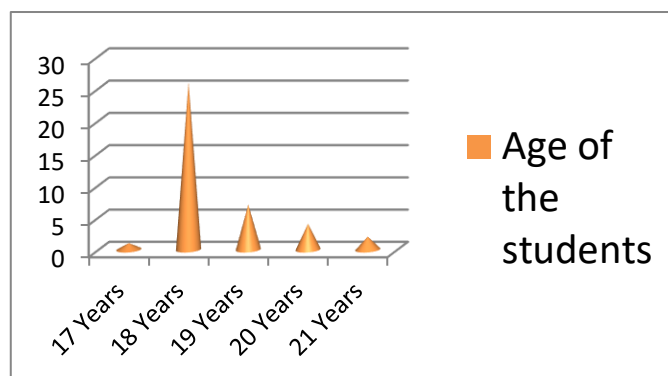


FIGURE – 2 GENDER OF THE STUDENTS

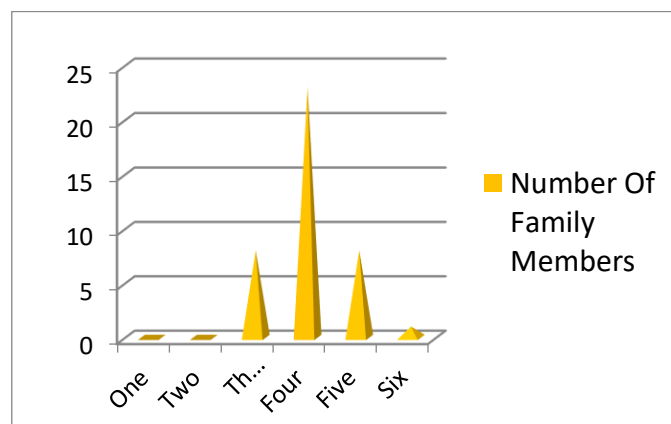


FIGURE – 3 TYPE OF THE FAMILY OF THE STUDENTS

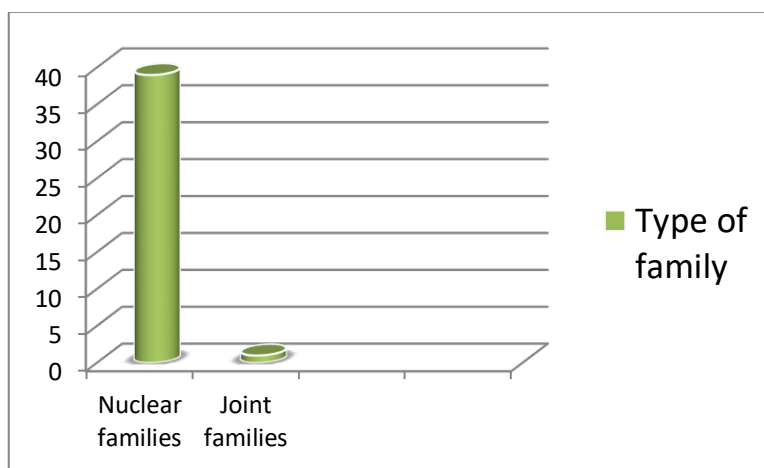


FIGURE – 4 SIZE OF THE FAMILY OF THE STUDENTS

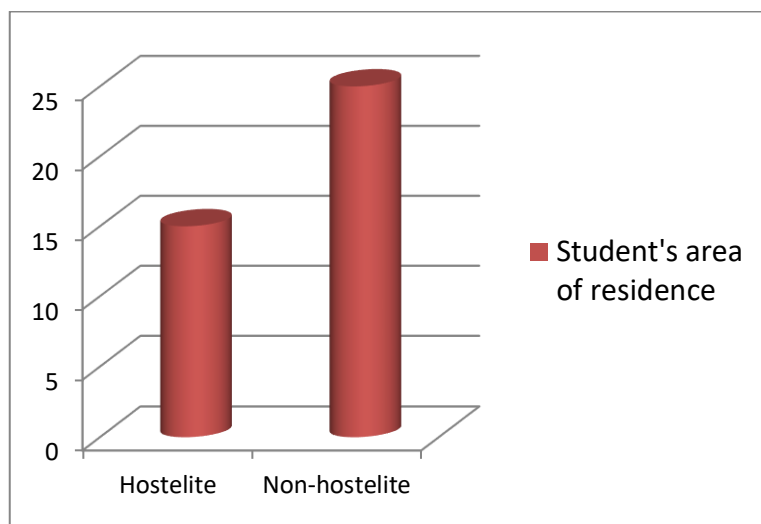


FIGURE – 5PER CAPITA FAMILY INCOME OF THE STUDENTS

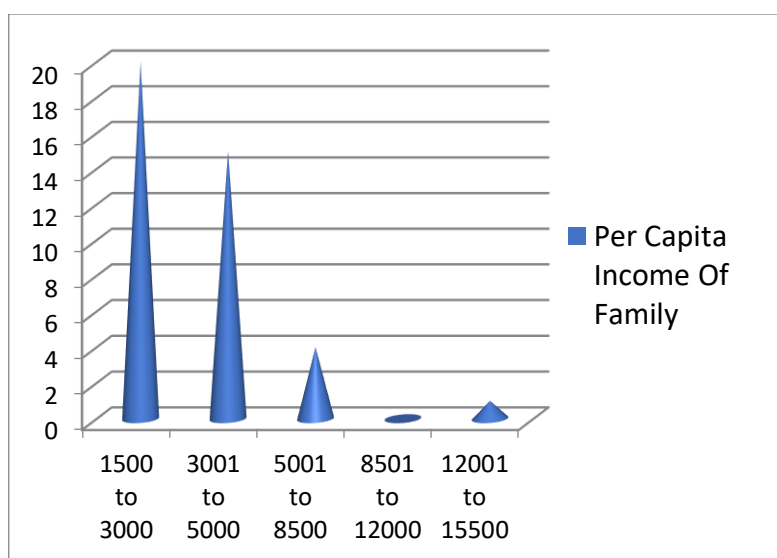


FIGURE – 6 PLACE OF RESIDENCE OF THE STUDENTS

TABLE IIDemographic data of the teachers:- N = 10

Sr.No.	Demographic characteristics	Frequency	Per cent
1.	Age (years):		
	• 21-30	7	70
	• 31-40	2	20
	• 41-50	-	-
	• 51 and above	1	10
2	Education:		
	• B.Sc. Nursing	8	80
	• M.Sc. Nursing	2	20
3.	Years of experience:		
	• Upto 1 year	3	30
	• 1 to 5 years	4	40
	• 5 to 10 years	2	20
	• 10 to 15 years	-	-
	• 15 years and above	1	10

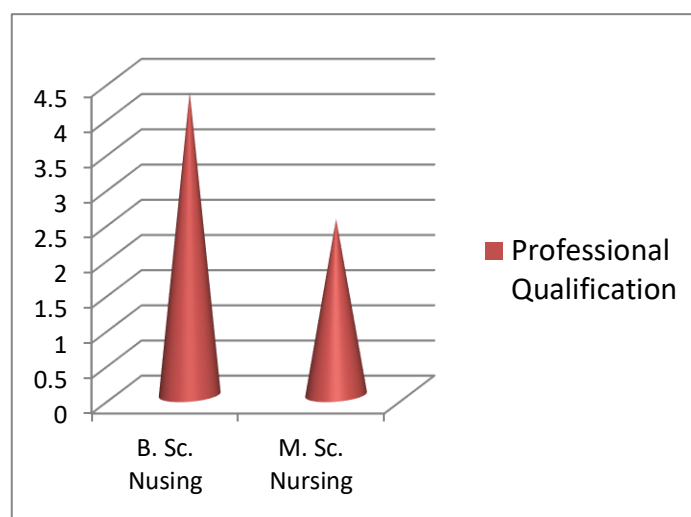


FIGURE – 7 AGE OF THE TEACHERS

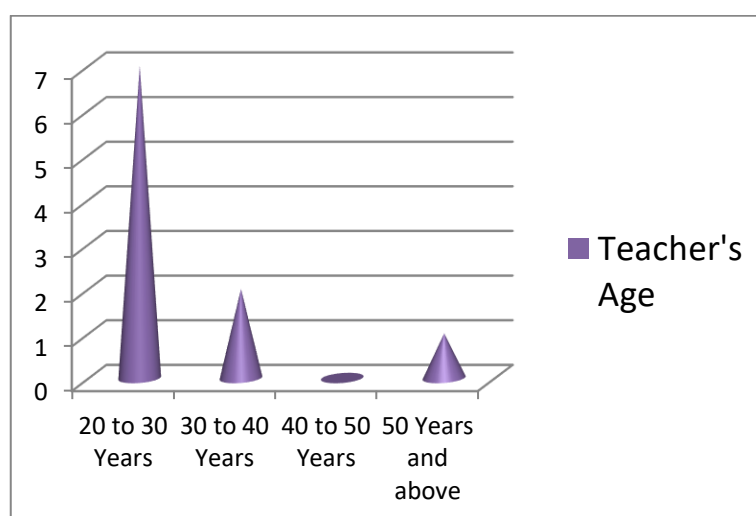


FIGURE – 8 PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS OF THE TEACHERS

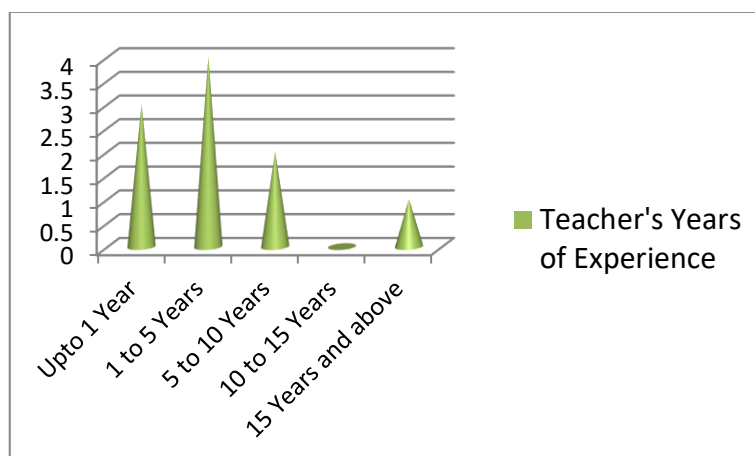


FIGURE – 9 PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE OF THE TEACHERS

From the above table, it is evident that majority of teachers were 20 to 30 years of age with a professional experience ranging 1 to 5 years. From these, 8 teachers were armed with a professional qualification of B.Sc. Nursing and 2 teachers were with M.Sc. Nursing. The findings reflect the usual composition of the faculty of a nursing education program in the country.

Age, educational qualification and professional experience are some of the attributes of high quality teachers that have a strong influence on the students which also helps to reduce absenteeism in them. Research findings point to four key dimensions of teacher quality; that is, content knowledge, Teaching experience, Professional certification, overall academic ability.

TABLE III A Incidence of absenteeism amongst the student N = 40

Days of absenteeism	Frequency	Percentage
1 day	2	5
2 days	4	10
3 days	5	12.5
4 days	3	7.5
5 days	1	2.5
6 days	5	12.5
7 days	2	5
1 week 1 day - 2 weeks	12	30
2 week 1 day -3 weeks	4	10
3week 1 day – 4 weeks	2	5

TABLE III C Analysis of the causes of absenteeism in the 1st Year Basic B.Sc. Nursing students as perceived by their teachers:-N = 10

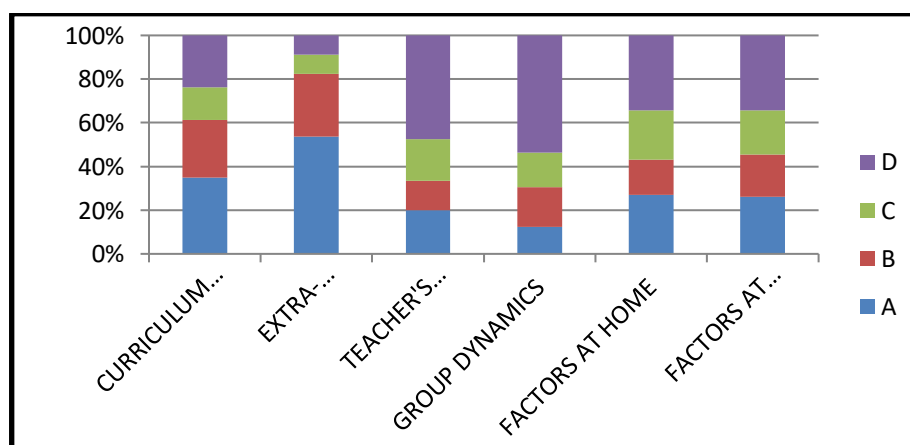


FIGURE – 10 STUDENT'S PERCEPTION OF THE CAUSES OF THEIR ABSENTEEISM

TABLE III B Analysis of the causes of absenteeism in the 1st Year Basic B.Sc. Nursing students as perceived by them:- N = 40

SSr. No.	Causes	A		B		C		D	
		Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
1.	Curriculum related.(Q1 to Q13)	182	35	137	26.34	77	14.8	124	23.84
2.	Extra Curriculum related.(Q14 to Q15)								
	Teacher's visibility and guidance.(Q16 to Q18)	43	53.75	23	28.75	7	8.75	7	8.75
	Group dynamics.(Q19 to Q22)								
3.	Factors at home.(Q23 to Q30)	24	20	16	13.33	23	19.17	57	47.5
	Factors at a personal level. (Q31 to Q40)	20	12.5	29	18.2	25	15.62	86	53.75
5.		86.97	27.18	52	16.25	72	22.5	117.12	34.6
6.		105	26.25	77	19.25	81	20.25	13700	34.25

Conclusion:

Absenteeism is a common problem in most schools and colleges. This action research concluded that student absenteeism has an inverse relationship with the student's academic performance. Students in a professional program realize that their academic performance speaks of them and has a profound effect on future professional decisions. Thus, despite limitations as absenteeism, these students have performed academically well. Again, literature proves there are many factors that influence an individuals' academic performance, which perhaps may have influenced these students to perform well. The selected variables which were correlated with the rate of absenteeism were categorized as- student's place of residence, their parent's educational status, their size of the family and their per capita income of the family. Most of the variables correlate to the frequency of absenteeism. The empirical results indicate that absenteeism is a phenomenon that is controllable through sound policies, adequate college infrastructure and support system. The study findings also suggest that students and their teachers have commonly identified the causes of student absenteeism both at the 'Curricular and Extra-curricular' level, which implies modifications to be incorporated at the curricular level and inclusion of more extra-curricular activities in the student's academics. Similarly, they have commonly identified the solutions for student absenteeism that is at the 'College and the Home' level.

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