

## **“Nursing Student Absenteeism in Class, Reasons and Lower Level of Academic Achievement – Opinion Towards Remedies”**

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Absenteeism is a habitual pattern of absence from a duty or obligation without good reason. Generally, absenteeism is unplanned absences. Absenteeism has been viewed as an indicator of poor individual performance. More recent research seeks to understand absenteeism as an indicator of psychological, medical, or social adjustment to work.

Nursing education plays a pivotal role in preparing future healthcare professionals to meet the diverse and evolving needs of patients and communities. However, like any educational program, nursing education is not immune to challenges, one of which is student absenteeism. Absenteeism among nursing students can impede their learning, delay their progress, and potentially affect their readiness for clinical practice.

Despite its significance, nursing student absenteeism remains a relatively underexplored area within the realm of nursing education research. Understanding the factors contributing to absenteeism among nursing students is crucial for educators, administrators, and policymakers to develop targeted interventions and support mechanisms to enhance student engagement and success.

### **BACKGROUNG OF STUDY**

Student nurse attendance during training is mandatory, and the South African Nursing Council (SANC) stipulates that students must attend 80% of hours for both theory and practice during their training. Unauthorised student nurse absenteeism, especially in the clinical areas, has become an increasing problem in nursing education institutions and in the universities. This study explored student absenteeism with the aim of generating solutions that are specifically relevant to the context of the Free State College of Nursing.

### **NEED OF THE STUDY**

Addressing absenteeism among nursing students is crucial for enhancing educational outcomes and ensuring a competent healthcare workforce. Quantifying absenteeism provides a clear picture of its prevalence and patterns, highlighting the extent of the problem within nursing education. Examining personal, academic, and institutional factors contributing to absenteeism allows for targeted interventions. Research indicates that factors such as lack of transportation facilities, health problems, and workload challenges significantly contribute to absenteeism among nursing students.

Exploring the correlation between absenteeism and academic performance underscores how missing classes affects grades, test scores, and overall competency. Studies have found that excessive absenteeism is a predictor for low academic performance, leading to inadequate learning and prolonged study durations.

Reducing absenteeism and ensuring students complete their education is crucial for maintaining a steady influx of qualified nurses into the healthcare workforce, supporting efforts to bolster the nursing workforce by enhancing student retention and graduation rates. Addressing absenteeism promotes the holistic well-being of nursing students, ensuring they are present and engaged in their studies, leading to better mental, emotional, and academic health. Incorporating opinions from students, educators, and administrators provides a comprehensive view of the issue and potential remedies, ensuring that proposed solutions are practical, relevant, and supported by those directly involved.

### **LIMITATIONS**

- The samples are limited to nursing students.
- Sample size is limited to 150.

Review Of Literature Regarding Nursing Student Absenteeism, Reasons, Lower Academic Performance And Remedial Measures To Decrease Absenteeism.

1. The study conducted on nursing student absenteeism in class/clinics: reasons and remedies. In this non-experimental cross-sectional study design data was collected by 500 participants from selected nursing college. They concluded that student and their suggestive measures need to discussed and handled carefully and their learning environment should be conducive and motivational to facilitate learning.<sup>7</sup>
2. A study directed in University of Maiduguri, Nigeria to evaluate the factor affecting absenteeism among nursing students. Descriptive cross-sectional design was used. A total of 270 respondents were selected using convenient sampling technique after stratified sampling technique was used to ensure that all levels (class) of the nursing students were represented. Data were collected through the use of self- constructed questionnaire which was

administered by the researchers and trained assistants. Collected data were presented in frequency and percentage. Mean scores were used to analyse the data. 2.50 was chosen as the bench mark ( $\geq 2.5$  as criteria of acceptance) Resulted that many students do missing themselves from addresses and clinical posting. Sick wellbeing, nursing a child, interest in different parts other than educational exercise and transportation troubles are critical commitments to non-appearance.

3. A study directed at University of Lahore Pakistan to determine the factoring influencing absenteeism among nursing students. In this descriptive cross-sectional study design data was collected from 135 student nurses using self-questionnaire and concluded that most common factors influencing absenteeism among nursing student were related teaching factors and social factors were contributory reasons for absenteeism.
4. A research study on causes and effect of students nurses absenteeism at the KwaZulu-Natal College of nursing. Simple random sampling was used to select students from the peri-urban Midlands and rural uGu districts. Stratified random sampling of 301 student nurses at different levels of training from the three campuses was done. A total of 301 questionnaires were distributed to participants; all were returned, resulting in a 100% response rate. Resulted that students experienced problems in the clinical /practical area resulted in absenteeism in themselves also there were 14 termination of training due to absenteeism.
5. A cross-sectional correlational study on excessive absence from class lead to lower level of academic achievements. The purpose of this study was to check the effect of absenteeism rate on the academic achievement of graduate and undergraduate nursing students at a private university in Amman, Jordan. A cross-sectional correlational design was used with a sample of 130 BSN and 40 Master students. Resulted that students who have higher absenteeism rate grand point's regardless to academic levels and in conclusion study has reported negative correlation between absenteeism and academic achievement.
6. A study on reasons on absenteeism among undergraduate medical students: a review, at Dhaka, Green life medical college. Concluded creating awareness, early detection and prevention might prevent unwanted consequences of absenteeism on medical student academic performance Application of strict attendance policy may influence student attendance and medical colleges should reinforce the attendance policy as an effort to improve their student's academic Performance.
7. This exploratory qualitative study of late dropout from nursing education: an interview directed in bachelors nursing degree program in the Netherlands. Semi-structured interviews were held in 2017 with eleven former nursing students who dropped out in the third year of their Bachelor's Nursing degree programme in the Netherlands. Data was collected and analyzed iteratively, following the principles of Thematic Analysis the study concluded that the supports from lecturer and mentors as well as working in pleasant team were important factors in ensuring students completed the programme.
8. A study on attitude of medical students toward the reasons of absenteeism in medical college of Tripura. Data had been collected by administering the questionnaire to the 98 undergraduate medical students. Data analysis had been done manually as well as in epic info version 7.0. Data had been expressed in frequency and percentage. Concluded that attendance and academic performance are directly correlated Medical education requires in person active engagement among students and teachers .also active engagement of the students should be there to overcome the major challenges in absenteeism .This study evaluated various reason for absenteeism among the students which will be contributing in future evaluation of their reason for absenteeism among the medical student.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Approach - Quantitative Study Approach

Research Design- Descriptive Survey

Variables of the study

1. Dependent variable-

In this study, Academic achievement is dependent variable.

2. Independent variable-

In this study, absenteeism and reason of absenteeism independent variable

Criteria for samples selection

**Inclusion criteria:** Population of student nurses who are willing to participate in the study.

**Exclusion criteria:** Not willing to participate this study.

## TAREGET POPULATION

The targeted population for the study consisted student nurses i.e. Basic bsc nursing students.

## ACCESSIBLE POPULATION

Nursing students from different academic years in selected college.

## SAMPLE

In this study, the sample consists of student nurses.

## SAMPLE SIZE

The sample size for the present study was 150.

Methods of data collection: The technique used for data collection is self-reported method of question with the help of attitude scale.

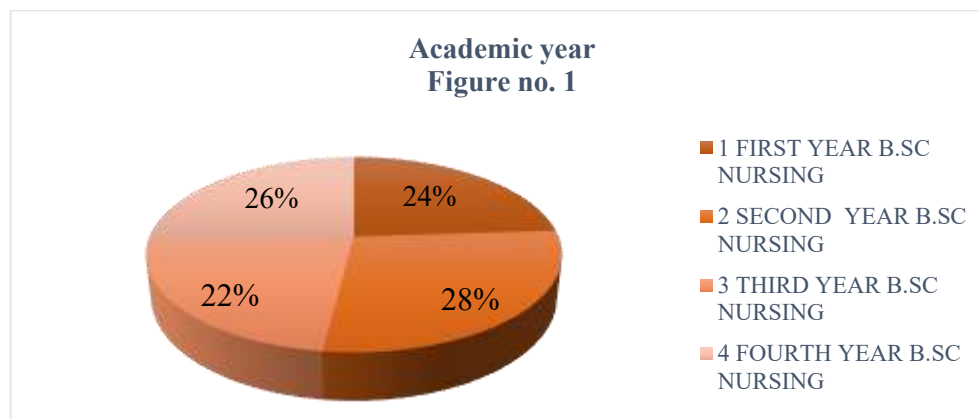
The validity of the tool was obtained by giving it to expert in various fields.

The data was analyzed, interpreted and findings were organized under following sections –

**SECTION A:** Analysis of data related to demographic details of the samples.

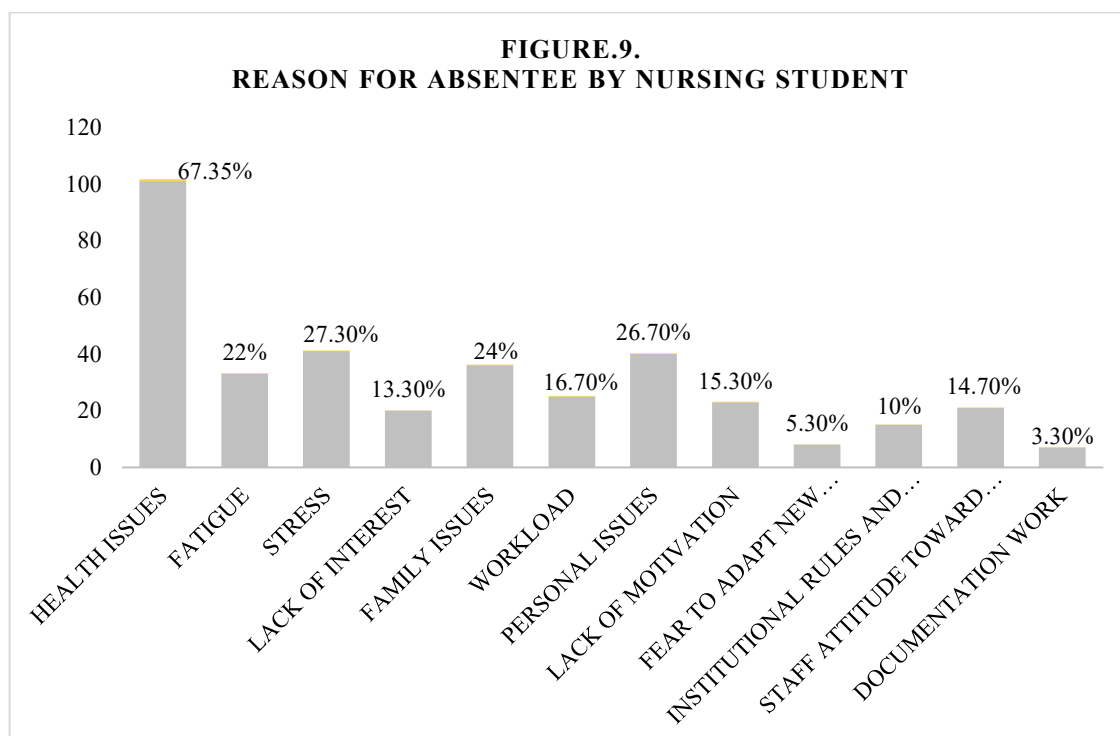
**SECTION B:** Analysis of data related to questionnaires related reasons of absenteeism and academic performance.

**SECTION C:** Analysis of data related to Opinion regarding students toward remedial measures for absenteeism



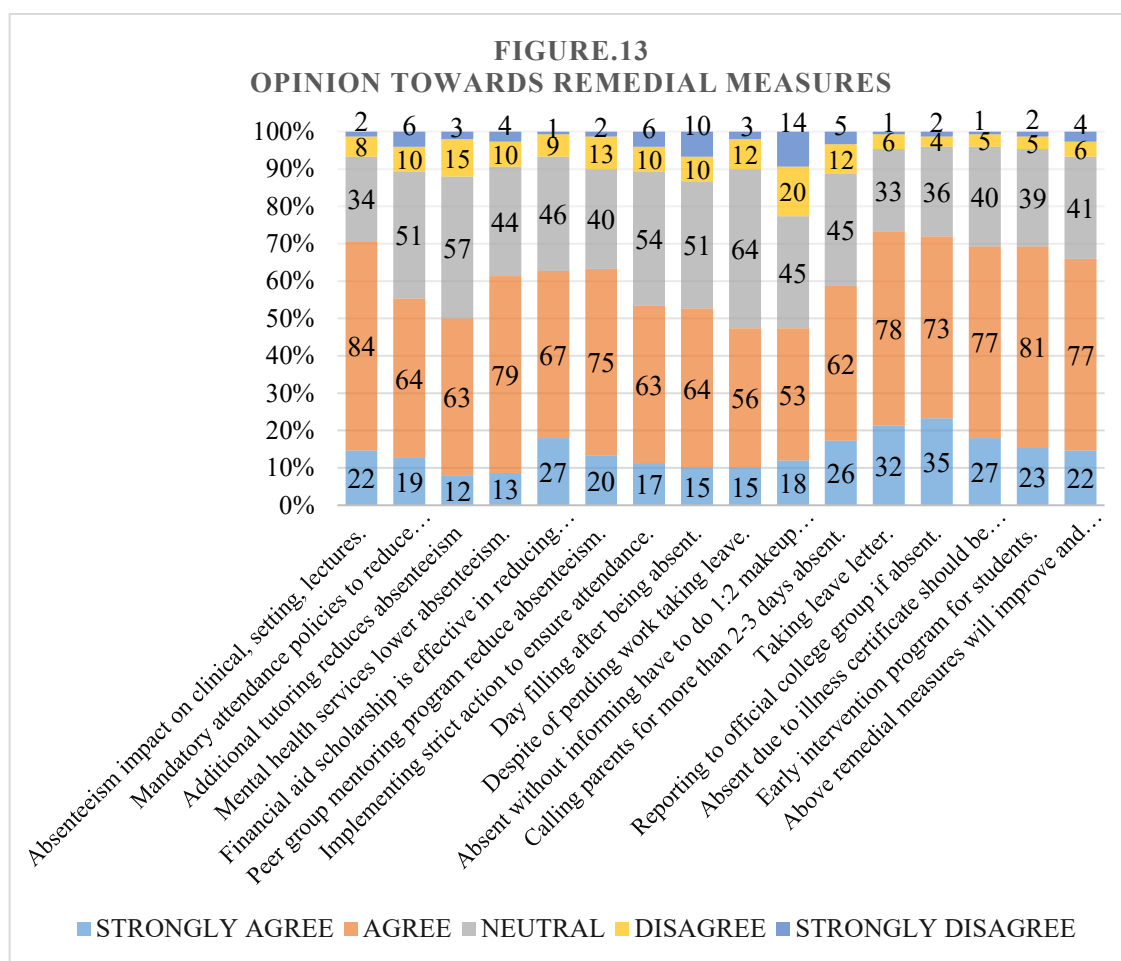
The data reveals the distribution of samples based on academic year shows a balanced representation across all four years of the B.Sc. Nursing program. The highest proportion of students belongs to the second year (28%), followed closely by the fourth year (26%). The first year (24%) and third year (22%) have slightly lower representation. This even distribution suggests that the study includes perspectives from students across different academic levels, ensuring a well-rounded understanding of their experiences and demographic characteristics.

## SECTION –B: QUESSTIONARIES



The data reveals various reasons for absenteeism among nursing students, with health-related issues being the most prominent, affecting over two-thirds (67.35%) of the students. Fatigue (22%) and stress (27.30%) are also significant contributors, suggesting that physical and mental well-being plays a crucial role in student attendance. Family issues (24%) and personal issues (26.70%) highlight the impact of external factors on students' ability to attend classes. A smaller proportion of students cite academic and institutional challenges such as workload (16.70%), lack of interest (13.30%), and institutional policies (10%), indicating that while these factors do affect attendance, they are not as prevalent as health-related issues. Stress related to adapting to a new environment (5.30%) and negative attitudes from staff (14.70%) appear to have a moderate influence on absenteeism. (4.60%), suggesting that administrative tasks are less of a barrier compared to personal, health, or academic challenges. Overall, the findings point to the importance of addressing students' physical, mental, and emotional health to reduce absenteeism and ensure a more supportive learning environment for nursing students.

### SECTION-C: OPINION OF STUDENTS TOWARDS REMEDIAL MEASURES FOR ABSENTEEISM GIVEN BY COLLEGE.



This above data shows that large majority of students (48.7%) strongly agree or agree that absenteeism has the most impact on clinical settings, lectures, and sessions in nursing college. When it comes to mandatory attendance policies, 42.2% support it to reduce absenteeism, though 26.7% remain neutral. Offering additional tutoring sessions to reduce absenteeism receives moderate support, with 36.7% agreeing, while 28.8% are neutral. Mental health services are seen as an effective solution by 49.6% of students, while 41.7% support the idea of financial aid scholarships to reduce absenteeism. Peer group mentoring also gets positive feedback, with 45.5% in agreement, though there is still a notable neutral stance from 19.5% of students. Strict consequences for absenteeism find moderate support, with 39% in favour, but many students remain neutral. The practice of filling in for missed days is viewed positively by 40.1% of students, although 26.5% express neutrality. Regarding leave taken despite pending work, 34.9% of students agree it is an issue, while many remain neutral (31.5%). The idea of charging 1:2 makeup duties for unnotified absences receives mixed opinions, with 32.6% in favour and 21.7% neutral. In contrast, 74.4% of students agree that calling parents for extended absences could help curb absenteeism, and a solid 55.8% strongly support requiring leave letters for absentees. Reporting absences to an official

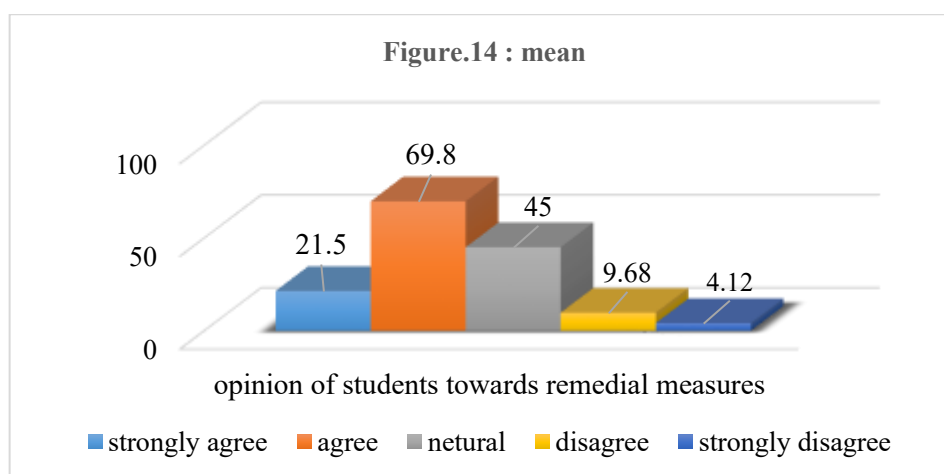
college group garners strong support from 55.9% of students. Additionally, 55.1% agree that students should submit medical reports or certificates for absences due to illness, and 50.7% support early intervention programs for students with frequent absences. Lastly, when asked whether the remedial measures would decrease absenteeism, 54.7% of students strongly agree or agree, signalling a strong belief in the effectiveness of these measures.

Overall, while some remedial measures, like mandatory attendance and mental health support, have strong backing, other measures, such as stricter consequences or makeup duties, received more mixed or neutral responses.

## RESULTS

**Table no: 07 Mean of opinion of students towards remedial measures**

Overall mean	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Opinion of students towards remedial measures.	21.5	69.8	45	9.6	4.12



The data in table no.14 shows that the average opinion score of students towards remedial measures is approximately 3.63 on a 5-point Likert scale. This suggests that, on average, students have a positive attitude towards the remedial measures, as scores above 3 typically indicate agreement or approval.

## DISCUSSION:

Absenteeism among nursing students results from a complex interplay of academic stress, personal obligations, and institutional policies. This study corroborates previous findings, such as those by T. Shamin et al. (2016), which emphasize early intervention as an essential strategy for preventing absenteeism. Additionally, research suggests that absenteeism directly affects practical skills acquisition, leading to reduced confidence and lower clinical competency.

## CONCLUSION:

Absenteeism among nursing students remains a multifaceted issue, driven by health concerns, financial constraints, academic stress, and institutional factors. While most students exhibit commitment to their education, external and internal challenges contribute to frequent absences. Addressing absenteeism requires a combination of strict attendance policies, academic support, financial aid, mental health interventions, and faculty training. By implementing these measures, nursing institutions can enhance student attendance, improve academic performance, and ensure that future nurses are well-prepared for their professional roles.

## IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY:

This study has important implications for nursing students, educators, institutions, and healthcare policymakers. Identifying the root causes of absenteeism enables institutions to implement targeted strategies that boost student retention, engagement, and academic performance.

- Improved attendance enhances clinical preparedness, graduation rates, and institutional reputation, while also contributing to better patient care outcomes through well-trained nursing professionals.
- Creating inclusive and flexible learning environments, such as offering alternative schedules or support services, can further encourage attendance among diverse student populations, including working students or those with family responsibilities.

### RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH:

Future research should explore the long-term impact of absenteeism on professional performance, patient care, and career growth, including cross-institutional and longitudinal studies. Key areas include the effects of hybrid learning, mental health, faculty mentorship, and attendance policy effectiveness.

Researchers should also investigate how cultural, socioeconomic, and demographic factors influence absenteeism to develop more tailored interventions. Moreover, studies should evaluate the impact of early intervention systems that identify at-risk students and provide timely academic and psychological support to prevent chronic absenteeism.

### SUMMARY:

In summary, this study highlights the widespread impact of absenteeism in nursing education and offers a foundation for actionable improvements. By addressing the issue through institutional strategies and continued research, stakeholders can foster a more effective learning environment that supports student success, enhances professional readiness, and ultimately strengthens the healthcare system.

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