



A qualitative study to explore the reason of absenteeism among students

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Abstract

Education is regarded as the richest and highest treasure of man. Human life has two aspects, biological and social. The biological needs like food, shelter and sex can easily be supplemented by external bodies Hence education is treated as a basic need for human being in this changing world. The study was conducted on 14 students. Focal group interview was conducted on the participants which extended up to 45 minutes. In focus group majority 9 (64.2%) of participants was from the age group of 18-21 years. In regard with sex 8 (57.1%) are male. In religion 13 (92.8%) of them are Hindu. Regarding education 4 (28.5%) are from commerce stream. In semester 6(42.8) students from 1st & 2nd semester. Total 3 themes were generated which were peer group effect, interest in studies and personal issues.

Keywords: Absenteeism, students, focus_group_interview, peer_group_effect, personal_issues

Introduction

Education is regarded as the richest and highest treasure of man. Human life has two aspects, biological and social. The biological needs like food, shelter and sex can easily be supplemented by external bodies Hence education is treated as a basic need for human being in this changing world. In this era of competition, a person needs a good academic qualification. So it is imperative that students must attend classes regularly.

Need of the study

In India in almost all universities and colleges 75% attendance is mandatory failing which can either affect the grade of the student or even end in his failure. Almost every year Delhi University prepares a list of all the students who have less than 40% attendance and they are liable to repeat the year. Those who have 40% to 67% attendance are forced to sign bonds.

Research Goal

To study in depth regarding absenteeism among students of university.

Purpose

1. The aim of the study is exploring reason behind absenteeism from the perspective of students.

Research question

1. What is the reason behind absenteeism
2. How absenteeism affects your study

Review of literature

The investigator carried out an extensive review of literature on the research topic in order to gain deeper insight into the problem as well as to collect maximum relevant information for building up the present study.

Moreoagae Bertha Randa conducted study explorative study on: sought to explore and understand the reasons for absenteeism from the perspectives of the nursing students in the context of a South African University in 2020. The study

Used an explorative qualitative design to conduct four focus group discussions with undergraduate nursing students. Tesch's method of data analysis was followed. One theme and four sub-themes emerged, such as the negative attitudes of lecturers, poor guidance and lack of prompt feedback from lecturers, lack of commitment from lecturers and classes starting late, and inability of the students to cope with the workload. The study revealed that the main reasons for the students' absenteeism from scheduled learning experiences were related to the lecturers' behaviour and practices. The poor lecturer-student relationship discouraged the students from attending classes.

Methodology

An explorative, descriptive and qualitative approach was followed to gain in depth learners view regarding factors contributing to their absenteeism in scheduled learning experience. Focus group interviews were employed to capture the students view regarding their absenteeism from scheduled learning activities. In focus group interview, the researcher interviewed participants with common characteristics or experience for the purpose of eliciting ideas, thought and perceptions about specific topic or certain issues linked to an area of interest. An unstructured interview guide with open ended question was used, thus allowing participants an opportunity to give their answer in their own words and to express self-opinion.

Setting

The participant setting was the renaissance university. A private room was used where no interruptions occurred.

Sample, sampling technique and data collection

The target population consisted of all accessible graduate and post graduate students from various department a purposive method was used to select the participants for focal group. Total 15 students were selected. The students were selected as they were identified to have in depth knowledge and experience related to absenteeism. Data collection tool consist of two section which include Socio-demographic data and a structured open- ended questions regarding absenteeism.

Sampling criteria**Inclusion criteria**

- Who are willing to participate in the study
- Those students who are not regular in college
- Graduate and post graduate students from renaissance university, Indore

Exclusion criteria

- Not willing to participate
- Who were absent at the time of data collection

Method of data collection

After obtaining permission from the college authority. The aim, objective and nature of the study were explained to the participants. Confidentiality was assured to get their cooperation throughout the process of data collection. Informed consent was obtained from the study sample. Before starting the focus group interview samples were requested to fill the socio-demographic tool which includes Age, sex, religion, education, semester. Structured open-ended questions asked during the interview aims to explore the factors behind absenteeism and its impact on academic performance. For a deeper and better understanding of participants experience and to explore the data subsequent questions (What do you mean? Why do you think so? Please explain little more) were asked based on the preliminary responses. The researcher always asked to give an example for the better extraction of information from study participants. Interview session was extended for approximately 30-45 minutes. Audio data is collected during interview was reviewed many times for an accurate data transcription. Triangulation and Member checking was done to check the validity of the participant's response. Transcript interpretation and coding was done.

Results**Distribution of Socio- Demographic Variable**

In focus group majority 9 (64.2%) of participants was from the age group of 18-21 years. In regard with sex 8 (57.1%) are male. In religion 13 (92.8%) of them are Hindu. Regarding education 4 (28.5%) are from commerce stream. In semester 6 (42.8) students from 1st & 2nd semester. The analysis of the qualitative data was based on research questions. Coding was done by thematic analysis and themes were generated which are peer group effect, personal issues, interest in studies.

Peer group effect: When enquired about pre group effect participant responded that peer group affect the student's attendance in college. Some of the focal group members also experienced due to friends they do not come to college. One among the group quoted that "I discussed in WhatsApp group before coming to college that how many friends are coming. If my group member doesn't come so I also absent the class because with friend I don't like to come college. I feel boring in classes and college. Another participant replied that "If my best friend doesn't come so I also become absent from class." That is the reason when I come to class that time I don't understand the concept and lectures.

Personal issues: Many of the participants experienced many issues in personal life. These issues affect the student attendance in college. One of the participants quoted "in my family only my mother is working and I have 3 siblings. So

for my fees I do part time job so because of this reason I absent from college sometimes. Another participant mentioned that "I have health issues. It's very difficult to wake up early in the morning. I feel tired and headache always. One among the participant vented out that "I don't like to wake up early in the morning. So, if I am not able to catch my bus I absent from college. Other factors associated with this are: family issues, health issues, assignment work etc. which are the reason which affects our grades in exams.

Interest in studies: One sample replied that "I like college campus I enjoyed college but I have no interest in BPT. I choose this profession because of my father. I am not interested to come college and attend lecture. Whereas other participants commented that "I came from different background of studies so because of this reason I absent from classes. Some other responses not interested in study because of family I enroll myself.

Conclusion

As very less literature was available on the absenteeism of students, the findings of the study can open up new strategies to identify reason behind absenteeism. A larger target population would produce more generalizable results. Total 3 themes were generated which were peer group effect, interest in studies and personal issues.

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