Original Paper

Reasons for Students' Absenteeism from Lectures in Selected Tertiary Institutions in Delta and Edo States of Nigeria: The Students' Views

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Abstract

Students' absenteeism from lectures in tertiary institutions is a universal phenomenon which apparently transcends beyond countries, institutions and course disciplines. This study explored the views of 156 students from Colleges of Education, Polytechnic and Universities from Delta and Edo States on the reasons for their absenteeism from lectures. A survey research design and a 20-item Likert questionnaire were used to collect data. Data was analyzed using SPSS-23 computer package. The results showed the following, as strong reasons for absenteeism from lectures.

- *Poor students' personal dispositions (e.g., laziness/lack of self-motivation to study, X = 3.13: emotional trauma, X = 3.13).*

- *Societal problems (e.g. dependence on examination mal-practice and bribery for success in examinations, X = 3.12).*

- *Health Issues (e.g., Sickness/weakness, X = 3.09).*

- *Lecturer-factors (e.g., boring teaching methods X = 3.04).*

- *Peer pressure, (e.g., distracting peer influences X = 3.03).*

- *Poverty related factors (e.g., hunger and lack of food X = 2.80).*

- *Environmental factors (e.g., availability of the course materials in the library/internet sources X = 2.64).*

The results further suggested that gender and age-range of students had no influence on their views. Recommendations are based on comprehensive ideas that are humanistic, technical and employ digital technology.

Keywords

absenteeism from lectures, tertiary institutions, students' views, students' absenteeism, lecture attendance

1. Introduction

Students' absenteeism from lectures in tertiary institutions is increasingly becoming a universal phenomenon which apparently transcends beyond countries, institutions and course disciplines. It has also attracted a wide range of studies in which stakeholders have sought explanations to the challenging trend by describing the factors responsible for it in various academic environments and possible solutions to it using various approaches. (Edwards & Clinton, 2019; Khan et al., 2019; Ada et al., 2019; Qutub et al., 2018; Dommeryer, 2017; Ezeji, 2017).

Attendance to lectures in tertiary institutions in Nigeria is a policy issue and its importance is specified in the students' information handbooks which is made available to all bona-fide students, as they complete their registration exercise. At times, the information on the importance of lecture attendance is included in the lectures delivered to fresh students during orientation programmes. An excerpt of such statements on lecture attendance, from the students' information handbook of the College of Education (C.O.E), Agbor is as follows:

"A registered student for NCE (Nigeria Certificate in Education) programme must attain 75% attendance to be allowed to write the end of semester examination" C.O.E., Agbor, 2011, p. 34.

A similar statement in the students' information handbook of the faculty of Education of Delta State University (DELSU), Abraka is as follows. *"To be eligible for any examination, a student is required to have attained 80% minimum contact hours before he/she is allowed to take the examination for the particular course"* DELSU, 2018, p. 16.

In the same vein, Fayombo et al. (2012) reported that the minimum attendance which students must attain to qualify to write examination in the University of Ibadan is 75%. This policy makes the keeping and use of records of students' attendance to lectures a mandatory activity, so as to implement it during examinations.

However, some lecturers have noted that the policy has not been strictly implemented in all situations, due to various challenges involved in the ways that attendance is taken, which is mainly manual with paper and pens. Where the students' populations are large, taking attendance manually reduced the actual lecture period from the normal (Shoewu & Idowu, 2012). At times impersonation at lectures could occur if the lecturer was not be able to recognize all students facially (Akinnuwesi & Agagu, 2012). Hence, students easily skip lectures unnoticed. At present a record of average attendance ranging from 50% to 70% is a common phenomenon observed in tertiary institutions. Consequently, overall performances of students in various courses are adversely affected (Wiji et al., 2019; Khan et al., 2019; Dommeryer, 2017).

Absenteeism is simply the absence of a student from the classroom when he/she is scheduled to be present at school. Research has shown that there exists inverse relationship between absenteeism and students' academic performance (Wadesang et al., 2011; Kottasz, 2005), while attendance to lectures has direct positive relationship with continuous assessment scores and the total examination score (Egede & Omiegbe, 2014). Absenteeism is viewed as a poor motivation for learning which has adverse impact on students' final academic performance. Consequently, it poses a serious challenge to the successful implementation of the curriculum of tertiary institutions which is a tool for the production of high- level manpower in the society. With such adverse effect on the human capacity development, it has the potential to obstruct sustainable development of any country, being served by tertiary institutions. Therefore, absenteeism from lectures in tertiary institutions is a cankerworm which must be eliminated. Exploring the reasons for absenteeism from students is a step to obtaining the solution to the problem.

Researchers have studied the reasons for absenteeism from lectures in various countries, institutions and courses disciplines and came up with a gamut of results which included socio-economic factors, student values and attitudes, lecturers' teaching and attitudinal variables, factors in the learning environment and society at large (Kahya et al., 2019; Gumbuz et al., 2016; Desalagn et al., 2014; Fayombo et al., 2012, Wadesango & Severino, 2011; Moore et al., 2008; Kottasz, 2005). The phenomenon of absenteeism is still rampant in our tertiary institutions. In fact, situations are experienced where lecturers sought the whereabouts of their students, so as to teach them. In some worse situations, students could use social media, (such as whatsapp groups) to control, inform and stop themselves from attending some lectures. It is therefore pertinent to find out from students themselves, in various learning environments, the reasons for this malady. This study is aimed at surveying the reasons for absenteeism from lectures in selected tertiary institutions in Delta and Edo States. The selection of these institutions is based on the authors' experience which showed that colleagues in these institutions were beset with the problem of absenteeism from lectures also. It is expected that exploring students' views on the reasons for absenteeism as done in this study, will yield a more valid data which could be used by stake holders in solving the problem.

2. Methodology

2.1 Research Design

In this study, a mixed methodology using two approaches in a survey research design was adopted. In the first stage, a qualitative approach was used to obtain reasons for students' absenteeism from lectures. Seventy (70) students from a tertiary institution were asked to write ten reasons for their absenteeism from lectures. Their responses in their own words were content- analyzed and used to design a structured questionnaire (Likert type) on reasons for absenteeism from lectures. In the second stage, quantitative approach using the four-point Likert questionnaire was used to assess the students' reasons (from the main sample of the study) for their absenteeism from lectures.

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2.2 Population

The target population were students in public tertiary institutions in Delta and Edo states. These institutions included 6 Colleges of Education, 3 polytechnics and 3 Universities in December, 2019. One of the Colleges was used to generate the qualitative data for the questionnaire. Hence the total student population in the remaining eight institutions was not less than eight thousand (8,000).

2.3 Sample and Sampling Procedure

A stratified and purposive sample of 156 students from eight tertiary institutions was used for the study. The strata were used to include students from each of the institutions as follows.

1) College of Education Agbor – Delta State – 60 students.

2) Delta State University Abraka – Delta State – 28 students.

3) University of Benin, Benin City – Edo State – 20 students.

4) Ambrose Alli University, Ekpoma – Edo State – 18 students.

5) Auchi Polytechnic, Auchi – Edo State – 10 students.

6) Ogwashi-uku Polytechnic – Delta State – 10 students.

7) Federal College of Education, Asaba – Delta State – 5 students.

8) College of Education, Warri – Delta State – 5 students.

9) College of Education, Igueben, Edo State (Students were used for the qualitative approach)

The purposive sample was based on the availability of the students on campus at the time of data collection, who are willing to participate in the research.

2.4 Instrument and Data Collection

Students' responses were collected using a questionnaire on Reasons for Absenteeism from Lectures (QUORAL) which was constructed and validated by the authors. It is made up of a first part A which called for the gender and age-range of the respondents. Then part B is made up of 20-items 19 of which are structured items while one is open-ended, free response item. The structured questionnaire was constructed from the free responses of the students during the first stage of the research. In this first stage, a class of 70 final year students from College of Education, Igueben was asked to state ten reasons for students' absenteeism from lectures, based on their experience or that of their friends and colleagues which is known to them. They were free to write it as truly as they observed or experienced it without bias. The 700 responses were content-analyzed using coding and frequency counts. The 19 most frequent responses constituted the items for the structured questionnaire (QUORAL) which was administered to the sample of 156 students in this study. The questionnaire was administered to 50 students from College of Education, Agbor, who were not in the sample used for this study and their responses were analyzed to find the reliability index of the questionnaire using a computer package.

The questionnaire is a 4-point Likert type, hence the coefficient alpha reliability index was computed. The value of the reliability index is 0.812. It is considered high enough to use the questionnaire as a reliable instrument for this study.

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2.5 Data Collection Procedure

The questionnaires were personally administered by the researchers so as to engage only the students who were willing to give their honest views on the reasons for absenteeism from lectures.

2.6 Analysis of Data

The responses to the questionnaire were analyzed using SPSS computer package to obtain descriptive statistics; (the weighted mean for each reason, the percentage of the respondents which are in each age range and gender), to perform t-test for independent groups and one-way ANOVA to determine the influence of gender and age range on absenteeism. The Likert scale points are assigned weights of 4 (strongly agree), 3 (agree), 2 (disagree), 1 (strongly disagree). If the computed weighted mean is greater than 2.50, then, the respondents agreed to the reason, but if it is less than 2.50, then they disagreed to the reason according to the Likert scale usage by Jonald (2019). The responses of the students in the open-ended item are also collated qualitatively by coding some of their statements while presenting a few of them as quotes by the students so as to give insight into their real expression of their experiences relating to absenteeism from lectures.

3. Results

Table 1. Students' Views on the Reasons for Absenteeism from Lectures

S/No	Reasons	Total weight	Mean(X)	Significance.
1.	Laziness and lack of self-motivation.	489	3.13	*
2.	Frustrations and emotional-trauma.	488	3.13	*
3.	Dependence on examination mal-practice and bribing of lecturers for success in examination.	487	3.12	*
4.	Sickness and weakness.	482	3.09	*
5.	Lecturers' boring, uninteresting and discouraging teaching method.	474	3.04	*
6.	Peer groups' distracting influences.	473	3.03	*
7.	Banning late comers from lectures by lecturer.	473	3.03	*
8.	Giving undue priority to students' politics, associations, clubs and parties.	462	2.96	*
9.	Unfriendliness harassments and intimidation by lecturers.	460	2.95	*
10.	Apathy due to difficult courses	451	2.89	*
11.	Lack of interest in studying.	445	2.87	*
12.	Hunger and lack of food	437	2.80	*
13.	Discouragement due to past poor performance in the course	427	2.74	*

14.	Lack of money for transport to and from far away students' residences	420	2.69	*
15.	Distractions from part time /full time work.	417	2.67	*
16.	Lack of encouragement from parents/guardian.	412	2.64	*
17.	Availability of course materials in the library, textbooks or other sources.	412	2.64	*
18.	Tight and inconvenient lecture periods without break periods	409	2.62	*
19.	No money to buy textbooks or other materials used during lectures.	393	2.52	●

N = 156; * Mean is greater than the criterion value Mean is

not greater than the criterion value.

The results in Table 1 above show that 18 out of the 19 reasons had mean values which are more than the criterion value 2.50. The 19th reason, (no money to buy textbooks or other materials used during lectures), had a mean value of 2.52 which is not significantly greater than 2.50. Hence, the results showed eighteen (18) reasons representing the views of the sample of students used in the study.

Table 2. T-test for the Difference between the Views of Male and Female Students on Students' Absenteeism from Lectures

S/N	Reasons	Group	Mean	Standard and error of mean	T-value	Significance	Significance at 0.05 level
1.	Laziness and lack of self-confidence.	1	3.23	0.129	0.813	0.419	
		2	3.06	0.158			●
2.	Frustration and Emotional trauma.	1	3.06	0.123	-0.593	0.555	
		2	3.17	0.129			●
3.	Dependence on malpractice for success in examination.	1	3.03	0.177	-0.953	0.344	
		2	3.25	0.151			●
4.	Sickness and weakness.	1	3.06	0.133	-0.127	0.900	
		2	3.08	0.140			●
5.	Lecturers' boring method of teaching.	1	3.00	0.135	0.000	1.000	
		2	3.00	0.128			●
6.	Peer group distracting influence.	1	3.06	0.133	-0.276	0.783	
		2	3.00	0.164			●
7.	Distractions from part time/full time work.	1	3.15	0.131	-0.286	0.774	
		2	3.00	0.144			●

8.	Unfriendly lecturers who intimidate students during lectures.	1	3.94	0.162	-0.309	0.759	
		2	3.00	0.126			
9.	Hatred for difficult courses.	1	3.09	0.107	2.105	0.039	*
		2	3.72	0.136			
10.	Giving undue priority to social activities and politics.	1	3.03	0.149	0.521	0.604	
		2	2.92	0.156			●
11.	Hunger and lack of food	1	2.79	0.152	0.301	0.767	
		2	2.72	0.144			●
12.	Tight and inconvenient lecture periods without break period	1	2.69	0.162			
		2	3.00	0.143	-0.346	0.730	●
13.	No interest in studying	1	3.10	0.139			
		2	2.71	0.167	1.743	0.086	●
14.	Banning late comers from lectures by lecturers	1	2.64	0.168			
		2	2.61	0.145	0.114	0.909	●
15.	Lack of money for transport to and from far away students' residences	1	2.68	0.136			
		2	2.63	0.168	0.222	0.825	●
16.	Availability of course materials in the library or other sources	1	2.66	0.183			
		2	2.59	0.169	0.273	0.789	●

Code: Female-1. Male-2; df = 148, * significant at 0.05 level, Not significant at 0.05 level. Number of males-78; Number of females-72.

Table 2 above showed that the male and female students did not differ significantly in their views on sixteen (16) out of the nineteen (19) reasons. Both male and female students agreed on the sixteen reasons for absenteeism from lectures. In fact, the male and female students have the same mean value 3.00 for the reason of lecturers' boring/uninteresting teaching method.

Table 3. Reasons in Which Male and Female Students Differed in Their Views

S/N	Reasons	Group	Mean	Sig. Error mean	t-value	significance
1.	No encouragement from parents/guardians.	1	2.44	0.165	-1.890	0.063
		2	2.86	0.150		
2.	Discouragement due to past poor performance in exam.	1	2.55	0.131	-1.845	0.070
		2	2.91	0.148		

Number of females N (1) = 72, df = 148.

Number of males N (2) = 78.

The three reasons where there were relatively different views between the male and female students are shown in Table 3 above. The female students disagreed that "no encouragement from parents/guardians" is a reason, while the male student viewed it as a reason. The strength of agreement on the item "discouragement due to past poor performance in the examination" was higher for males (2.91) than the females (2.55). However, the t-values (t = -1.89 and -1.845) were not statistically significant at 0.05 level. (See Table 3).

Table 4a. T-test for the Difference in the Views of Students by Age-Range

S/N	Reasons	Group	Mean	S E. of mean	t-value	significance
1.	No money to purchase textbook or other materials used during lectures	1	3.33	0.494.		
		3	2.38	0.167	2.036	0.048*
2.	Lack of money for transport to and from distant students' residence	1	3.50	0.342		
		3	2.54	0.132	2.661	0.011*
3.	Distraction from full time/part time work	1	3.25	0.479		
		3	2.98	0.110	0.729	0.470·
4.	Banning Late comers from lectures by lecturers'	1	3.50	0.342		
		3	2.53	0.139	2.553	0.014*
5.	Lecturers boring/uninteresting teaching methods	1	3.67	0.211		
		3	3.03	0.131	1.827	0.074·
6.	Unfriendliness, harassment and intimidation by lecturers	1	3.67	0.211		0.038*
		3	2.90	0.136	2.139	
7.	Peer group distracting influences	1	2.67	0.422		
		3	3.03	0.127	-0.986	0.329·
8.	Giving undue priority to students, politics, associations etc.	1	3.50	0.342		
		3	2.83	0.151	1.632	0.110·

S/N	Reasons	Group	Mean	S.E.	t-value	significance
9.	Lack of interest in studying	1	3.00	0.365		
		3	2.78	0.165	0.516	0.609·
10.	Dependence on malpractice and bribing lecturers to pass examination	1	3.50	0.342		
		3	3.10	0.155	0.945	0.350·
11.	Hunger and lack of food	1	2.83	0.477		
		3	2.65	0.154	0.419	0.677·
12.	Sickness and weakness	1	3.33	0.333		
		3	3.03	0.136	0.822	0.416·
13.	Laziness and lack of self-motivation	1	3.20	0.583		
		3	3.05	0.146	0.327	0.745·
14.	Frustration and emotional trauma	1	3.33	0.333		
		3	3.08	0124	0.750	0.457·
15.	Lack of encouragement from parents/guardian	1	2.67	0.333		
		3	2.68	0.154	-0.020	0.984·
16.	Discouragement due to past poor performance in the course	1	2.80	0.374		
		3	2.76	0.148	0.085	0.932·
17.	Availability of course materials in the library, textbook or others sources	1	3.67	0.211		
		3	2.39	0.166	3.059	0.004*
18.	Apathy due to difficult courses	1	3.50	0.342		
		3	2.78	0.116	2.220	0.032*
19.	Tight and inconvenient lecture periods without break periods	1	3.33	0.422		
		3	2.51	0.146	2.015	0.050*

Table 4b. T-test for Differences in the Means for Students' Views by Age-range(Indicating Significant Differences)

S/N	Reasons	Group	Mean	S.E. of the mean	t-value	significance
1.	Availability of course materials in the library, textbook or other sources	1	3.67	0.211		
		3	2.39	0.166	2.036	0.048 *
2.	Lack of money for transport fare from very distant students' residences to campus	1	3.50	0.342		
		3	2.54	0.132	2.661	0.011 *
3.	Banning late comers from lectures by lecturers'	1	3.50	0.342		
		3	2.53	0.139	2.553	0.014 *
4.	Hatred for difficult courses	1	3.67	0.211		
		3	2.90	0.136	2.139	0.004*

5.	Unfriendly lecturers' who intimidate	1	3.67	0.211		
	students during lectures	3	2.96	0.166	3.059	0.004 *
6.	Lack of money to purchase materials	1	3.50	0.342		
	used for lecture	3	2.78	0.116	2.220	0.032 *
7.	Tight lecture period without break	1	3.33	0.422		
	period.	3	2.51	0.146	2.015	0.05 *

Number of students in the age range below 18yrs (1) = 12 Number of students in the age range above 22yrs (3) = 78; df = 88 * Significant at 0.05 level.

In Tables 4a and 4b above, the results of the t-test for the difference in the views of the students grouped with respect to the age range they belong was shown. The extreme age ranges of "below 18years" (1) and above 22years (3) were compared. The students from both age ranges agreed on 14 out of the 19 as reasons for absenteeism of students from lectures. Although the mean value of the views of students from both ranges of age were statistically and significantly different for seven items, it is only in one of them that both groups disagreed on the reasons (i.e. 1). In table 4 while the students in the lower age range (less than 18years) agreed that availability of resource materials in the library is a reason for absenteeism, those in the upper range (above 22years) viewed it as no reason. Table 4b makes the items 1 and 6 for which there is sharp disagreement very vivid. Generally, these results suggested that age-ranges made no significant difference in their view

The one-way ANOVA analysis is performed to show how different or similar the group-means for the three age-ranges are for each of the reasons.

Table 5. One Way ANOVA for Testing the Differences in the Views of the Students by Age-range

S/N	Reasons	Between Groups	Within Groups	Total	Mean square	F	significance
1.	Lack of money for transport to and from distant students' residence	4.811 df=2	48.410 df=65	53.22 df=67	2.405 .745	3.230	0.046
2.	Banning late comers from lectures by lecturers	5.015 df=2	50.793 df=65	55.809 df=67	2.508 .781	3.209	0.047
3.	Availability of course materials in the library text books or other sources	8.626 df=2	56.758 df=62	65.385 df=64	4.313 .915	4.711	0.012

*F-ratio is significant at 0.05 level (1)—below 18years; (2) —18-2years; (3)—above 22years.

Table 5 above shows that the students in the three age ranges differed in three (3) out of the 19 reasons. The younger students considered lack of money for transport, banning of late-comers from lectures and availability of lecture materials in the library as strong reasons (see Table 4b) while the older ones did not see them as strong reasons. However, the agreement of the younger students for the last two reasons is not very strong with the means of 2.54 and 2.53 see Table 4b).

Responses to the open-ended questionnaire items: The students were required to provide more reasons for absenteeism, if any. Some wrote none or nil. But some wrote one or two reasons in addition to the 19 reasons stated in the structured part of the **questionnaire**. These were collated and grouped according to some common factors identified, but statements are quotes from the students.

Lecturers-Related Reasons:
- ❖ *"Lecturers not teaching well, not allowing students to ask questions".*
- ❖ *"Lecturers adjusting lecture periods to suit their time".*
- ❖ *"Lecturers who make working so difficult for students".*
- ❖ *"Lecturers who fail students because of not sleeping with them".*
- ❖ *"Lecturers sharing students (their friends) for sex, mostly the female ones".*
- ❖ *"Lack of encouragement from lecturers".*

Continuous Assessment-Related Reasons:
- ❖ *"No assignment and feedback".*
- ❖ *"No feedback from assignment/tests".*
- ❖ *"No feedback from assignment and corrections".*

Infrastructure-Related Reasons:
- ❖ *"No enough lecture hall".*
- ❖ *"Congested and uncomfortable lecture hall".*

Curriculum-Related Reasons:
- ❖ *"Too many courses for NCE students".*

Others:
- ❖ *"No school fees and financial support from their parents".*
- ❖ *"Poor learning atmosphere, distractions from handsets and movies".*
- ❖ *"Unemployment".*
- ❖ *"Personal frustration and depression".*

These further elucidated the views of the students in a qualitative form and gives clues to what they expect in a school system to motivate them to attend lectures.

Table 6. Description of the Sample of the Study

S/No		Groups						Total
		<18yrs	%	18-22	Yrs.%	>22yrs	%	
1.	Age range	12	5%	60	40%	78	52%	150*
								100%
2.	Gender	female	%	Male	%		%	
		76	49%	80	51%			156
								100%

*Some students did not fill their age-range.

4. Discussion of Results

The reasons for absenteeism from lectures obtained from the study are valid views of the sample of students of this study which are described in Table 6 above. Firstly, these views validate the reasons obtained from the unstructured questionnaire from students in one of the tertiary institutions. Secondly, they include the range of reasons, which students who attempt to obtain permission for absenteeism present to us lecturers. They often take excuses because of sickness, associations' meetings, students' "government" matters, traveling for family issues and to do some part time work to get money. At times they complain among themselves or openly about difficulty of some courses and lecturers. Thirdly, the anonymous nature of the instrument made them free to give their honest views on the reasons presented in this study.

The reasons obtained in this study corroborated those obtained in various studies on absenteeism. Studying the declining attendance to lectures at a UK medical school, Edward, et al. (2016) found that access to power-point presentation prior to lecture correlated positively with declining attendance (see reason, number 17 in Table 1). Kahya, et al. (2017) found that difficulties, lack of interest in engaging classes, teachers who are critical and have very high expectations of students, teachers who have authoritarian attitudes and lack communication with students and poor teaching strategies as causes of absenteeism (see numbers 5,7,9 and 11 in Table 1.). Desalegn, et al. (2014) obtained similar reasons in addition to poor students' habit (see number 1 in Table 1.) which Gurbuz, et al. (2017) termed psychological reasons. Wadesango and Severino (2011) studying students' absenteeism in south African University found similar reasons including unfavorable learning environment, part-time jobs, too much socialization and lack of interest in a subject (see numbers 8, 10 and 15 in Table 1). In an analytical study using UK University, Kottasz (2005) also found competing assessment pressures, timing of lecture and lack of intrinsic motivation as reasons among others mentioned earlier in this report (see numbers 1 and 18 in Table 1). In a comprehensive study on absenteeism among College Students, Shalini (2009) provided an exhaustive list of reasons for this phenomenon as follows:

- *Lack of subject interest; lack of personal interest in studies; Available opportunity for entertainment, e.g., malls, movie hall, etc.; the mental capacity of students does not match with course opted; too much pampered from family; poor teaching skills of lecturers; lack of confidence ragging; lack of allied activities such as sports, welcome/farewell parties; Excess homework; Fear from examination; Preparation for participation in TV shows/acting dance/music; Preparation for examination; College very far from the residence of students; Over expectation from parents; Too much socialization especially among teenagers who form groups to freak out; Too comfortable, especially being car owners, big phone owner, Too much money to spend; Inferiority complex within the student. p-10-11.*

The reasons obtained in this study are therefore real in tertiary institutions and especially to the students of the population of the study. The reasons spanned the whole wide range of factors such as psychological, parental, academic, social, environmental, socio-economic to include survival needs such as hunger and lack of food for a student.

Reasons for Absenteeism and Gender: In this study there is a general harmony in the views of male and female students except in few items like "no encouragement from parents/guardians". This result is expected because parents tend to pay more attention to female children more than the male counterpart especially in the Nigerian environment. Hence the females will hardly see it as a reason for absenteeism as confirmed in this study.

Reasons for Absenteeism and Students' Age: The students provided their views based on their experiences and that of their colleagues. Few of the issues the younger students considered as strong enough to cause absenteeism (e.g., banning late-comers from participating in lectures and availability of course materials textbooks and internet) were not seen by the older and more matured students as reasons. This is in line with the finding of Shalini (2009) that the adolescents are affected more by socialization because they want to freak out, hence tight lecture time-table and anything which reduces their freedom would be strong reasons to them unlike the more matured ones who are above 22years.

Students' Views on Absenteeism from Open Responses: These responses confirm the various factors which combine to influence absenteeism such as socio-economic (no school fees financial support), curricular/academic (too much courses for NCE); teaching strategies and lecturers' attitudes (such as "no feedback for their assignments). These responses portray the expectations of the students from the educational system contrary to their experiences, (such as sexual harassment by lecturers), which would motivate them to attend classes. Extrinsic factors like unemployment after studies, which is very high in Nigeria at present could engage the mind of a student so adversely that he/she will lose the interest to study.

These responses, though related to the ones in the structured part of the questionnaire revealed other dimensions (e.g. unemployment) of causes of absenteeism in the Nigerian setting.

Although learning takes place outside the lecture-classroom setting, it is achieved in desirable ways through planned and well-structured teaching environment of the lecture room/classroom. The ability, discipline and motivation of a student to go to the classroom to learn are what should be aimed at in solving the problem of absenteeism. Sick, weak and hungry students who lack basic needs are unable to attend lectures. On the other hand, students who have no justification to be absent from lecture, except for lack of motivation will also be absent. Absenteeism indicates a poor motivation to learn and has been shown to result in poor learning also Kottasz (2009). Strong desire to learn is the best state a student should be in. Efforts of all stakeholders in the formal education system should be combined to launch every student in the tertiary institution into this state by enhancing their ability and motivation (physically and morally) to attend lectures. The following recommendations could help in motivating students to attend lectures, based on the results of this study.

5. Recommendations

1) Records of lecture attendance should not only be used to allow students to write (or not to write) examinations, but to identify, regular absentees, interact with them so as to help them through planned counselling.

2) Consequently, institutions' counseling units could use, lecture attendance records to identify, chronic absentees, interact with them to help them especially when lecturers are involved in their problem.

3) Lecturers could give short written quiz during the lecture which is assessed and counts as part of their continuous assessment scores. This has proved very effective in our experience.

4) Attendance to lectures should be managed using technology as designed by some concerned computer engineers, so as to ensure its effectiveness (Akinnuwesi & Agagu, 2012).

5) The institutions' policy on attendance to lectures should be implemented and updates should be given to students so as to sensitize and motivate them to comply.

6) Through counselling, students should be helped to choose or change to courses or subjects which they are interested in, and are able to study.

7) In the case of mere truancy on the part of the students, the parents could be informed and involved so as to help the student.

8) Lecturers should be required to and rewarded for maintaining professionalism in their teaching and employing the aspect of salesmanship of creating and maintaining favorable attention of their students that will inspire them to desire to learn.

9) Every necessary infrastructure should be provided to make lecture rooms convenient and comfortable for all students.

10) Efforts should be made by concerned departments, individuals and agents in the tertiary institutions to be overtly humanistic to address the needs of students which could cause absenteeism through appropriate interventions.

One of the goals of tertiary institutions should be to make use of informed researches to solve problems. Hence researches on absenteeism should be carried out in various institutions so as to make use of the results to provide appropriate remedies.

6. Conclusion

In this study the views of students on the reasons of absenteeism were obtained and they corroborated reasons obtained from past studies on absenteeism. Through their responses in an open-response item some of the students in this study freely provided more reasons for absenteeism which are reported in their own words. This implies that absenteeism from lectures is a reality in their tertiary institutions and consequently the attention of all stake holders is required to provide remedies. Since the reasons for absenteeism from lectures have societal, environmental, academic/curricular, learner and teacher-factors, more studies are required in various institutions so as to describe the problem more succinctly as it manifests within them. It is expected that the results of this study will sensitize all stake holders on the need to enhance lecture attendance in tertiary institutions, since absenteeism is already a phenomenon in campuses.

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