



EVALUATION OF USEFULNESS OF EXTRA CLASSES BY STUDENT'S PERSPECTIVE: A CROSS-SECTIONAL STUDY

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ABSTRACT

Background: Low attendance in lectures is not a new problem. It has also been identified previously and number of causative factors has been suggested including illness, transport problems, inconvenient lecture times, poor content of lectures and poor lecturing techniques. Universities also suggest to arrange extra classes to complete the required attendance to appear in the examination.

Objectives: To evaluate usefulness of extra classes by student's perspective and to assess the causes of absenteeism in regular classes among medical students.

Material and Method: This cross-sectional study was conducted in a medical college among third MBBS part I students over a period of 1 month. Sample size was 106, who did not fulfill the criteria of 75% attendance in theory and 80% attendance in practical as cutoff for appearing in the university examination.

Results: Majority 51.8% of the students belonged to age group of 22-23 years followed by 46.2% in the age group of 20-21 years. 50.9% were female students. 34.9% students were affirmative regarding the clear outcomes of the extra classes. 41.5% students agreed that extra classes supported their learning technique. 40.5% students disagreed for the extra classes being beneficial. 53.7% students were willing to participate in similar activities in future. Majority 31.2% students answered that they remained absent for regular classes because of advice from their seniors.

Conclusion: Creating awareness among medical students about the effect of absenteeism on their academic performances may prevent them from skipping classes.

KEYWORDS : Extra classes, Absenteeism, Medical students, Student's perspective.

INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the imperative aspects that not only inculcates the essential skills, abilities and knowledge among the individuals, but also leads to overall growth and progress of the individuals, community and nation as a whole^[1]. The inculcation of academic knowledge, skills, abilities and proficiency among the individuals is enhanced through learning and academic performance. The determinants of academic performance of the students include, class participation, class assignments, home-work assignments, tests, examinations, and participation in competitions or other events. The pressure of the parents and other individuals upon teachers and school administrators to improve the academic performance has enabled schools to come up with advanced strategies^[1]. These include, promoting extra classes for students, introducing effective teaching-learning methods and instructional strategies, using technology, rewarding students for good performance serves as a motivating factor and when they achieve low grades, then they usually tend to work more to make improvements^[2]. Low attendance in lectures is not a new problem. It has also been identified previously and number of causative factors has been suggested including illness, transport problems, inconvenient lecture times, poor content of lectures and poor lecturing techniques. There has been a raising concern that it affects the professional socialization^[3]. Lecture and tutorials provide a platform where students interact with the teachers, observe them and distinguish them as role models. Low attendance hence may affect this process and hinder their professional growth^[4]. As per university guidelines 75% attendance in theory and 80% attendance in practical is mandatory for appearing in University Examination^[5]. Students who were short of attendance according to university guidelines can be made eligible by attending extra classes for the stipulated time. In this institute, as per these guidelines extra classes were arranged for the students who fall short of stipulated attendance. Considering this fact, this study was undertaken to evaluate the effectiveness of extra classes according to medical undergraduate student's perspective and to assess the causes of absenteeism in regular classes.

MATERIAL AND METHOD:

Study Design: Cross-sectional study.

Study Setting: The study was conducted in a medical college among third MBBS part I students.

Study Period: Study period was of 1 month i.e. November 2018.

Inclusion criteria:

1. Students with attendance less than 75% in theory and 80% in practical.
2. Students who willingly consented to participate.

Exclusion criteria:

1. Students with annual attendance more than 75% in theory and 80% in practical.
2. Students who were not willing to participate.

Sample Size:

Sample size was 106. Those who had less than 75% attendance in theory and 80% attendance in practical as cutoff for inclusion of students

Sampling Method:

All the students studying in Third MBBS part I and whose attendance was falling short according to Maharashtra University of Health Sciences, Nashik guidelines.

METHODOLOGY:

The study was conducted among the third MBBS part I students at Medical college of study institute. The intake of the students per year for the curriculum is 150, and few students were from senior batches who failed in their previous examination. Hence the total students were 155 and sample size was 106. The attendance of the students was calculated and it was found that 68.3% [106 out of 155] were found to have low attendance as per MUHS guidelines. 60 Extra Classes were conducted in a period of 45 days. The required permission for the study was obtained from the DEAN of the

institute and approval from IEC. After obtaining the necessary permissions, data was collected on the last day of extra classes using a detailed questionnaire which was distributed amongst the students. The questionnaire was duly filled and then the information was fed into excel sheet. This information was uploaded into SPSS software version 21 which was used for analysis. Statistical methods such as Descriptive frequency was used for analyzing the data.

RESULTS:

The data was collected from 106 students whose attendance was less than stipulated guidelines from university. The sociodemographic characteristics of study subjects is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Sociodemographic Characteristic of study subjects

| Characteristics | | Frequency | |
|----------------------------------|------------|-----------|------|
| | | NO | % |
| Age [In years] | 20-21 | 49 | 46.2 |
| | 22-23 | 55 | 51.9 |
| | >23 | 2 | 1.9 |
| Sex | Male | 52 | 49.1 |
| | Female | 54 | 50.9 |
| Per capita Income [Rs per month] | <2000 | 9 | 8.5 |
| | 2000-5000 | 10 | 9.4 |
| | 5001-10000 | 45 | 42.5 |
| | >10000 | 42 | 39.6 |
| Residence | Local | 25 | 23.6 |
| | Hosteller | 81 | 76.4 |
| Religion | Hindu | 83 | 78.3 |
| | Buddha | 13 | 12.3 |
| | Muslim | 4 | 3.8 |
| | Others | 6 | 5.6 |

Table 1 shows Socio demographic characteristics of Study Subject. Majority 51.8% of the students belonged to age group of 22-23 years followed by 46.2% in the age group of 20-21 years. 50.9% were female students. 82 % students had their per capita income more than rupees 5000 per month. Maximum 76.4 % students were hostellers. 83 students belonged to Hindu religion followed by 13 Buddha, 4 Muslims and others 6 [2 Christian, 4 Atheist].

Table 2: Usefulness of Extra Classes- Student's perspective

| Sr. No | Variable | Awareness regarding Clear Outcomes | Supports learning technique | Beneficial | Willingness to participate |
|--------|-------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|------------|----------------------------|
| 1. | Strongly agree | 6 | 14 | 10 | 13 |
| 2. | Agree | 31 | 30 | 31 | 44 |
| 3. | Unsure | 40 | 24 | 22 | 22 |
| 4. | Disagree | 21 | 20 | 25 | 19 |
| 5. | Strongly Disagree | 8 | 18 | 18 | 8 |
| | Total | 106 | 106 | 106 | 106 |

Table 2 shows usefulness of extra classes- student's perspective under various parameters such as Awareness regarding clear outcomes of extra classes, supporting learning technique, Beneficial for exam purpose and student's willingness to participate in extra classes. In this study it was seen that only 29 [27.3%] were unaware regarding clear outcome of extra classes. 38 [35.8%] students disagree that extra classes support their learning technique. 41 [38.6%] students were affirmative that extra classes were beneficial for their exam. Only 27 [25.5%] students were not willing to participate in extra classes.

Majority 56.6% of the students attended all 60 extra classes followed by 39.6% who missed 1-2 classes followed by 3.7% who missed >7 classes. Also majority 72.6% students considered volume of the portion apt for preparation followed by 24.5% who considered it as too high and 2.8% considered it as too low.

Table 3: Reasons for absenteeism in regular classes

| Reasons for absenteeism | Frequency | |
|------------------------------|-----------|------|
| | No. | % |
| Advice from seniors | 33 | 31.2 |
| Self-Study | 26 | 24.5 |
| Illness | 17 | 16.0 |
| Overlap with tuition classes | 13 | 12.3 |
| Others | 17 | 16.0 |

Table 3 shows the reasons for absentee in regular classes. It was found that peer pressure was the main reason for the students being absent from the class. About 31.2% answered that they remained absent because of advice from their seniors. Followed by self-study 24.5%, illness 16.0% and other reasons 16.0%. Other reasons include travel to native place, not interested in classes, social functions, college extra-curricular activities.

DISCUSSION

This study was carried out in Medical college to assess the usefulness of extra-classes – student's perspective amongst those who fall short of attendance to appear in university exams. Total 106 students attended the extra classes and were analyzed. The proportion of males and females in the class was almost equal. Similar findings were seen in the study conducted by Tripura K et al^[6] titled "Attitude of medical students towards the reasons of absenteeism in a medical college of Tripura". Also most students belonged to age group 22-23 years which was relevant to the findings seen in this study. In this study 78.3 % students belonged to Hindu religion followed by 12.3% Buddha, 3.8% Muslim and 5.6% Others compared to 93.9 % Hindu in the study conducted by Tripura Ket al^[6].

In this study it was found that, when enquired about outcome of extra classes 34.9% students were affirmative regarding the clear outcomes of the extra classes as opposed to 25.4% students who contradicted for the same. 41.5% students agreed that extra classes supported their learning technique compared to 35.8% students who dissented for the same. 40.5% students disagreed for the extra classes being beneficial compared to 38.6% students who agreed that extra classes were beneficial. 53.7% students were willing to participate in similar activities in future compared to 25.4% students who dissented for the same.

In this study it was found that the most common cause of absenteeism in the students was "Advice from seniors" followed by "Self Study". Similar findings were seen in the conducted by Tripura K et al^[6] and Dashputra A et al^[7] titled "Medical students' absenteeism in class: reasons and remedies," which mentioned "Self-study" as the most common cause of absenteeism. Upreet Dhaliwal^[8] in the study titled "Absenteeism and under-achievement in final year medical students" mentioned "Illness" as the most common cause of absenteeism. Similar findings were found in the study conducted by T. Sharmin et al^[2] titled "Reasons of Absenteeism among Undergraduate Medical Students: A Review" i.e. Self –Study as one of the main causes for absenteeism. Hafeez K et al^[3] in the study titled "Low attendance in lectures at medical colleges of Karachi – A cross sectional survey" mentioned Self –Study as one of the main reason for absenteeism in students. Rao et al^[9] in the study titled "Reasons for Absenteeism among the Undergraduate Medical Students Attending for Theory Classes in Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS) Ongole, Prakasam District of Andhra Pradesh: A Self Review." mentioned laziness and extra-curricular activities as main causes of absenteeism. T Haritha et al^[10] in the study titled "Undergraduate medical student's absenteeism during dermatology, venereology and leprosy clinical postings," stated lack of interest in the subject, mood disturbance, movies, peer pressure, Illness as the causes for absenteeism.

CONCLUSION

Creating awareness among medical students about the effect of absenteeism on their academic performances may prevent them from skipping classes. 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. Also inclusion of new teaching techniques which creates interest among the students should be incorporated in routine teaching. HELP GROUP should be formed for students to prevent them from misguidance by peer group. It can be said that teacher's role in prevention of absenteeism among the students is of prime importance.

Declarations

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Conflict of Interest: None

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