



Open Access Indonesia Journal of Social Sciences

Journal Homepage: <https://journalsocialsciences.com/index.php/OAIJSS>

Causes and Effects of Absenteeism among First Year College Students of the Mindanao State University – Sulu

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords:

Absenteeism
First year college students
Academic performance
Classroom environment
Mindanao State University-Sulu

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The author has reviewed and approved the final version of the manuscript.

<https://doi.org/10.37275/oaijss.v4i4.58>

ABSTRACT

One of the major barriers to learning faced by the students and teachers in schools today is lack of consistent attendance. Poor student attendance has a far-reaching effect on the individual student especially on their academic performance in the school. This problem is caused by this major perennial problem—absenteeism. Absenteeism is a chronic absence in nature. It is habitual failure to attend school. When students regularly miss out classes consistently would entail disadvantages academically. However, the main purpose of this study was to identify the causes and effects of absenteeism among first year college students of the Mindanao State University-Sulu, as well as to determine and figure out possible remedies to address this problem. In analyzing and computing the data, the researcher used SPSS version 21.0, and utilized checklist questionnaire and an open-ended questionnaire, respondents were consisted of 100 first year college students and 9 faculty members the researcher was able to find out the leading cause of absenteeism among the first year college students of MSU-Sulu and that is 'school is far from home' with (3.06) mean value . While low grade point average (GPA) with mean value (3.78) was the leading effect of absenteeism followed by poor critical thinking skills, other effects of absenteeism were, poor classroom performance, low examination results, poor oral recitation, poor creative skills, poor communication skills, lack of self-confidence, low comprehension and high risk of dropouts. The researcher was able to figure out remedies that can be applied to address the problem on absenteeism. The remedies include (a) there must be a student dormitory inside the campus to house the students since majority of the students enrolled in the university are from distant island municipalities (b) conduct orientation to students and parents prior to the opening of regular classes (c) the university must have a strict policy dealing with students' absenteeism (d) teacher or instructor should conduct regular assessment in the form of quiz at the end of the session (e) motivate and encourage the students to give more attention and emphasize the importance of education in their future (f) classroom atmosphere should be conducive to learning.

1. Introduction

Being a teacher is a great honor, and a rewarding experience one would say at the end of the class, seeing your students complete and actively participating in the activities. But, one of the most frustrating experiences for teachers, instructors, or lecturers is when students are absent. Teachers, and instructors prepare lessons with the goal in mind that 100 percent of the class will attend and take part in the activities designed for that day and for the

succeeding days that the students will spend for the entire semester, the success of every student in their academic life is determined by the number of days they'd spend in school which the students are offered with a wide range of experiences that will help them to achieve maximum learning.

In spite of what has been said, it is very difficult to perfectly complete the attendance. No matter how interesting and well-prepared the lessons and the



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teaching materials are organized and the flow of classroom activities is in place, there are still students who are not present and eventually miss out on activities.

Absenteeism, according to Merriam-Webster Dictionary, is “the practice or habit of being absent from work or school” it is habitual in its sense. It is where a student or learner who is not in a place of learning for the entire duration of the academic sessions. One of the determining factors that students get good grades in the courses they are enrolled in is when they attend regularly and punctually their classes. It is also believed that students who attend classes regularly will most likely to succeed academically which is manifested in the grades they will get. It is well recognized that attendance is a significant contributor to their grades. To some, attendance constitutes 5 to 10 percent of the total grades of the students.

(Kassarnig V., 2017). Stressed that the theoretical literature on student achievement emphasizes that class attendance is associated with performance. One strand of theoretical literature is the pedagogical model where class attendance can be seen as student involvement, among other features which also highlight the resources of the school and the content being taught (4). Other theoretical approaches include economic models where rational agents decide on optimal usage of time spent studying vs. leisure/ other courses (5). Most existing studies have found that class attendance is a significant and positive predictor of course grades (6-20, 22). More specifically, the Meta study by Crede et al. (20) concludes that attendance is the most accurate known predictor of academic performance and superior scores on standardized admissions tests such as the SAT, high school GPA, study habits, and study skills. In addition to general attendance throughout the semester, initial attendance has been shown to be an important predictor of academic success (7) previous results also

indicate that average attendance drops over the course of the semester, irrespective of performance.

On the other hand, absenteeism is a major factor that contributes to low academic performance and low-grade point average. (Demir, 2015) posited “Student attendance is one variable that has a significant impact on student achievement”. It is also noted that absenteeism would have disadvantages on the students, academically and socially. (Obrador, 2014; Majeed, A., 2019), regularly attending these is significantly important for the student’s learning process and for their services. “The students who are not present are placed in the category where they have disadvantages generally and educationally. This may cause low self-esteem, social isolation, and the feeling of dissatisfaction in the students”. School absenteeism is also an alarming situation for the organization administration, teachers, and parents, and in society generally. According to research, the teacher identifies the effects of absenteeism as academic failure, and difficulty in socialization which can or may lead to boredom, and a lack of confidence. The absences from the classes also affect the instructor’s capabilities to give the classwork in a progressive and structured way.

There are contributory factors that cause absenteeism in students; these factors have negative effects on the academic performances and the overall all achievements of students to succeed in their academic life in pursuit of completing their academic programs or degrees. (Balkis, 2016) the student’s absenteeism is related to some contributing factors which can be the family background, behavioral issues, as well as the motivational lack also structural, social, and environmental conditions. (Kumakech & Osuu, 2014; Majeed A., 2019) The absenteeism can also be the result of a lack of interest in the study, punishment in school, household work, or peer influence.

The different physical and emotional factors resulting in absenteeism; physical health issues like



vision or hearing impairments, peer-related issues, and some chronic diseases negatively impact the students' attendance. Emotional and safety issue led to absenteeism (Blackwell, 2010)

The present issue under study sparks great concern and frazzling people in the higher institutions, where most students are performing poorly in the class is due mainly on the students constantly evading classes for different reasons. Hence, the researcher aims to determine the causes and effects and to figure out remedies that can be applied to address absenteeism among first-year college students of the Mindanao State University-Sulu.

2. Methods

The researcher used the descriptive method in conducting the study which deals with what is designed for the investigation to gather information about the present condition, status, or trend, and deals with what is prevailing. The main objective of this study is to describe the nature of a situation as it exists at the time of the study, and explore the cause of a particular phenomenon. This study was conducted at Mindanao State University-Sulu, located 2.3 kilometers away from the town of Jolo. The questionnaire checklist and an open ended questionnaire instruments were utilized by the researcher to determine the causes and effects of absenteeism. However, adopted checklist questionnaire and open -ended questionnaire contains 4 parts, the first part covers the personal data of the student, the second part contain questions which are divided into 5 categories these include the physical factor, personal attitude, teacher- related factor, classroom environment and home factor. All of these categories are showing corresponding causes, the

third part deals with the effects of absenteeism among first year college students of MSU-Sulu, while the last part an open-ended question was used to figure out remedies in addressing the problem on absenteeism. In computing the data the researcher used SPSS version 21.0 particularly in determining the mean, standard deviation, frequency and the percentage of items. With the selection of respondent was scientifically done to observe the ethical principles of research. The researcher utilized a purposive sampling, a purposive sampling as utilized in qualitative and mixed methods research; purposive sampling involves an iterative process of selecting research subjects rather than starting with a predetermined sampling frame. Akin to grounded theory, the selection process involves identifying themes, concepts, and indicators through observation and reflection. (Schutt, 2006:384). Along these lines, researchers often utilized a purposeful sampling technique to select informants based on their particular knowledge of and/or experience with, the focus of empirical inquiry (Schutt, 2006: 155) hence, the respondents of the study consisted of 100 first year college students who are officially enrolled in the university and 9 faculty members.

3. Results and Discussion

The data gathered was analyzed and computed by the use of SPSS version 21.0 for the items identified. Weighted mean and standard deviation were used to describe the causes and effects of absenteeism. Data was collated through questionnaires from 100 students and 9 faculty members who were the respondents of the study. For age group and gender were analyzed and computed using frequency and percentage.



Table 1

Age	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
18-19	50	50
20-21	39	39
22-23	11	11
Total	100	100

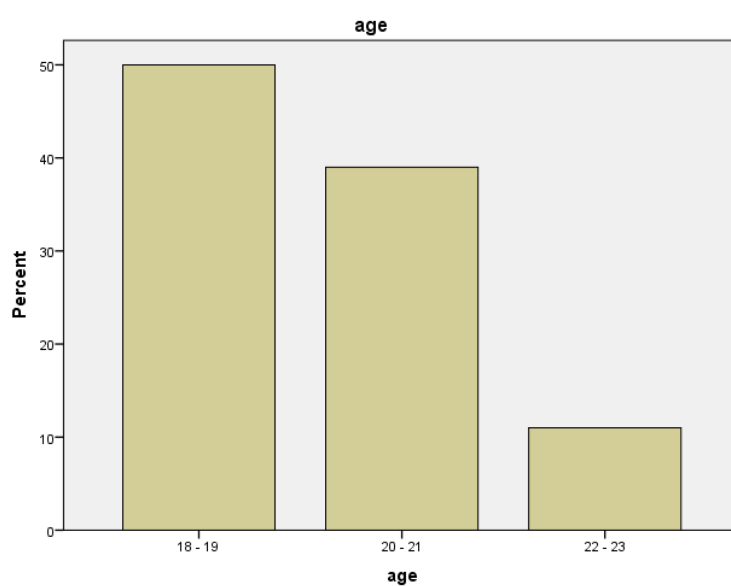


Figure 1

Table and figure 1 show the age distribution of the respondents with the age bracket 18 to 19 with the

frequency of (50) and a percentage of (50%), for age 20-21 (f 39) with (39%), for age 22-23 with (f 11) (11%).

Table 2

Gender	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Male	20	20
Female	80	80
Total	100	100

Figure 2

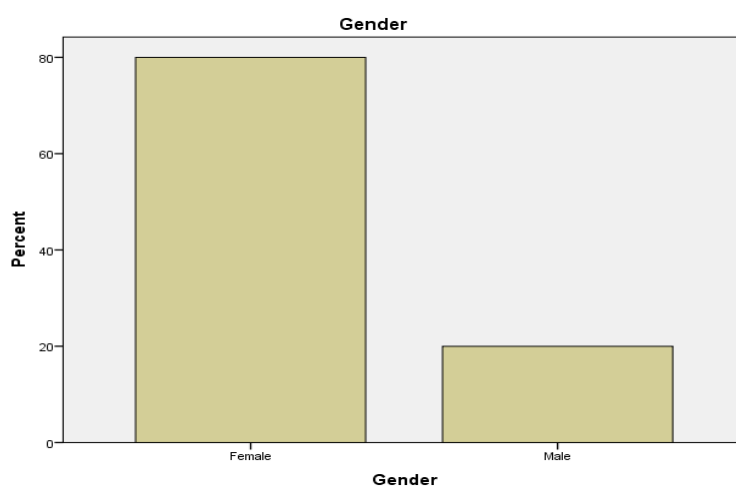


Table and figure 2 show, male (f20) and with a (20%), while female frequency has (f 80), and with (80%).

Table 3. Causes of absenteeism among first-year college students of MSU-Sulu.

	Causes of Absenteeism					Mean	SD	Interpretation
Physical Factor	1. House is far from school	41	30	23	6	3.06	0.941	Often
	2. Danger may cause as a result of going to school	8	33	44	15	2.34	0.831	Seldom
	3. Lack in public utility vehicle as a ride to go to school	9	28	43	20	2.26	0.883	Seldom
Personal Attitude	4. I am not interested to learn	5	15	17	63	1.62	0.919	Seldom
	5. I feel lazy	5	10	53	32	1.88	0.7821	Seldom
	6. I don't wake up early/ on time	4	7	48	41	1.74	0.760	Seldom
Teacher-related	7. I am afraid of my teacher, he/she is strict	15	30	38	17	2.43	0.946	Seldom
	8. I can't understand my teacher's explanation	3	20	61	16	2.10	0.689	Seldom
	9. My teacher always enters the classroom late	6	11	50	33	1.90	0.823	Seldom
Classroom environment	10. Classroom is not well ventilated	4	22	55	19	2.11	0.751	Seldom
	11. Classroom is noisy	3	20	58	19	2.07	0.714	Seldom
	12. My classmates bully me	3	11	31	55	1.62	0.801	Seldom
Home Factor	13. I do too many household chores	17	23	50	10	2.47	0.893	Seldom
	14. Family Problems	8	15	66	11	2.20	0.739	Seldom
	15. Don't have food to eat at home	1	12	50	37	1.77	0.694	Seldom

Table 3 revealed that out of the fifteen causes that may cause absenteeism among first-year college students of the Mindanao State University-Sulu, the leading cause of absenteeism is 'the house is far from school' which has mean of 3.06 with a standard deviation of 0.941 with the interpretation of often. This means that the problem on absenteeism is caused by reason of distance of the house to school. It should be noted that the location of MSU-Sulu is 2.3 kilometers from the town of Jolo. MSU-Sulu is situated in the municipality of Patikul an adjacent municipality of Jolo, it must also be noted that the center of economic, social and academic activities is centered around in the municipality of Jolo, majority of the students enrolled in the university are residing in the island municipalities of Sulu, others are from the municipalities of Indanan, Maimbung, Talipao, Parang, Panamao, Kalinggalan Caluang, Luuk and Omar. These municipalities are outside of Jolo, students from these municipalities need to spend around 1 hour or more just to reach school by riding in public utility vehicles. Other causes of absenteeism among first year students, are 'I do too many household chores' mean(2.47) SD (0.893) interpretation(seldom), 'I am afraid of my teacher he/she's strict' mean (2.43) SD (0.946) interpretation

(seldom), 'danger may cause as a result of going to school' mean (2.34) SD (0.831) interpretation (seldom), 'lack of public utility vehicle (PUV) jeepney ride to go to school' mean (2.26) SD (0.883) interpretation (seldom), 'family problem' mean (2.20) SD(0.739) interpretation (seldom), 'classroom is not well ventilated' mean (2.11) SD(0.751) interpretation (seldom), 'I can't understand my teacher's explanation' mean (2.10) SD (0.689) interpretation (seldom), 'classroom is noisy' mean (2.07) SD (0.714) interpretation (seldom), 'my teacher always enters the room late' mean (1.90) SD (0.823) interpretation (seldom), ' I feel lazy' mean (1.88) SD(0.782) interpretation (seldom), 'Don't have food to eat at home' mean (1.75) SD(0.694) interpretation (seldom), 'I don't wake up early/on time' mean (1.74) SD(0.760) interpretation (seldom), 'my classmates bully me' mean (1.62) SD(0.801) interpretation (seldom), and lastly is 'I am not interested to learn' with a mean of (1.62) SD(0.883) with the interpretation of seldom. Based on the above result, out of 15 given causes of absenteeism only one cause contributed and impacted absenteeism that is house is far from school and the remaining causes or predictors have less significant impact on absenteeism among the first year college students of the Mindanao State University-Sulu.

Table 4. Effects of Absenteeism on the Academic Performance of the First Year College Students of MSU-Sulu

Effects of Absenteeism					Mean	SD	Interpretation
1.Poor Communication Skills	4	3	2	0	3.22	0.833	Agree
2. Poor Classroom participation	4	5	0	0	3.44	0.527	Agree
3. Poor critical thinking skills	5	4	0	0	3.56	0.527	Strongly Agree
4.Poor creative skills	3	5	1	0	3.22	0.667	Agree
5. Poor oral recitation	3	6	0	0	3.33	0.500	Agree
6. Lack of Self-confidence	3	5	0	1	3.11	0.928	Agree
7. Low comprehension	2	5	2	0	3.00	0.707	Agree
8. Low examination results	5	3	1	0	3.44	0.726	Agree
9. High risk of dropouts	3	2	4	0	2.89	0.928	Agree
10. Low grade point average (GPA)	7	2	0	0	3.78	0.441	Strongly Agree



Table 4 revealed that, of the ten effects of absenteeism on the student's academic performance of the first-year college students of MSU-Sulu, the following results were determined from the data given it showed that the highest mean as to the effects of absenteeism on the academic performance of the students is 'low-grade point average' with the mean value of 3.78 and a standard deviation of 0.441 with the interpretation of strongly agree. It is without a doubt that the majority of the respondent teachers have unanimously strongly agreed that absenteeism would result in a low-grade point, followed by 'poor critical thinking skills with the mean value of 3.56 and SD 0.527 with strongly agree as to the description, results also depicted, not only students who make absences or who do not attend classes will result to low GPA but also leads to poor critical thinking skills. The results further show that respondent teachers have agreed that absenteeism would have a significant effect on the students, in this case, poor classroom participation has a mean of 3.44 with SD of 0.527, followed by low examination results with a mean of 3.44 SD 0.726, poor oral recitation with a 3.33 SD 0.500, poor communication skills and poor creative skills share the same value of mean 3.22 but these effects differ on the standard deviation respectively, which the latter has SD of 0.833 and the former has 0.667, another effect of absenteeism would result to lack of self-confidence with a mean of 3.11 SD 0.928, and low comprehension has a mean of 3.00 standard deviation of 0.707. From these effects of absenteeism, respondent teachers validly justified that all of these will have a significant effect on the academic performance of the students.

Remedies that can be applied to address absenteeism among first-year college students of MSU-Sulu

The statements below are the suggested remedies that can be applied to address absenteeism. The researcher provided the respondent's teachers an

open-ended questionnaire where the respondent teachers stated and wrote the suggested remedies.

The respondents suggested the following remedies:

R.T 1. The school must have a dormitory to house students who are not from the mainland but who are residing in different distant island municipalities.

R.T 2. School administration should have a policy in dealing with absenteeism. **R.T 3.**

Teachers/Instructors must have class rules in consonance to the institutional policy on absenteeism and implement them religiously inside the class. **R.T**

4. Conduct orientation to students and parents prior to the opening of regular classes. **R.T 5.** The university

must have a strict policy dealing with students' absenteeism. **R.T 6.** Teachers or instructors should conduct regular assessments in the form of quizzes

at the end of the session. **R.T 8.** Motivate and encourage the students to give more attention and emphasize the importance of education in their future.

R.T 9. The classroom atmosphere should be conducive to learning.

4. Conclusion

Absenteeism is considered to be a recurring and an imperishable issue or problem in education, such issue or problem has long been the concern not only of the parents, teachers, and school administrators but also the society in general, with the pressing issue, it is important to rule on what causes absenteeism and its effects on the academic performance of the students. This study established that the leading cause of absenteeism among first-year college students of the Mindanao State University-Sulu was 'school is far from home' this is substantiated that distance has a significant influence that dictates the presence or absence of the students in their respective classes, and the leading effect of absenteeism is low-grade point average followed by, poor critical thinking skills, poor classroom participation, poor oral



recitation, poor communication skills, poor creative skills, lack of self-confidence and low comprehension.

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