

Assessment of Absenteeism and Lateness among Hospitality and Tourism Students in Sunyani Polytechnic

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Abstract

The ultimate aim of every educational institution is to improve the quality of teaching and learning in order to achieve its set objectives. The quality of teaching and the worth of every school is to a large extent assessed on the basis of its academic achievement and how the students performed in the field level. However, it has been observed that, Hospitality and Tourism department in Sunyani Polytechnic face the problem of absenteeism and lateness among students. Nowadays, attitudes of students are constantly changing towards attending lectures. The study is aimed at investigating the causes of the absenteeism and lateness among the students in Hospitality and Tourism department and to seek for solutions to minimize these problems. The study is based on descriptive approach and primary data was mainly used to gather data from the students. The target population includes all students at the department of Hospitality and Tourism of Sunyani Polytechnic with an average age of 18 years. Questionnaire was used to gather data from the respondents. Data obtained from the study were analysed by using SPSS and the results were presented in the form of tables. Results of the study showed that illness, financial constraint and distance to school were the major causes of lateness and absenteeism among students. It is recommended that, Management of Sunyani polytechnic as well as other stake holders such as the Student Representative Council (S.R.C.) should provide shuttle buses with moderate fare to convey students to and from school at various vintage points.

Keywords: lateness, absenteeism, hospitality and tourism

1.1 Introduction

Each student of Hospitality and Tourism misses a day of school activities and school lessons now and then. But it becomes a problem if the students continuously come to school late and will absent themselves, this will cause serious problems as this can affect their academic performance. School absenteeism and lateness are alarming problem for administrators, teachers, parents and the society in general, as well as for the students in particular. Literally, the term “lateness” implies a situation where an individual arrives after the proper, scheduled or usual time (Oxford Advanced Learners’ Dictionary, 5th ed.,

1995) whilst absenteeism, according to Merriam-Webster dictionary means chronic absence. In the context of the school it is the habitual or intentional failure from going to school or attending lectures.

Indeed, absenteeism and lateness are an act of indiscipline. Despite academic qualifications the school also prepares the students for the industry. Punctuality is related to productivity, discipline and behaviour. Hence minimizing absenteeism and lateness among students’ means that we are building the culture of punctuality in the student which he/she will use in the work place. Furthermore, punctuality is an essential requirement for any hospitality practitioner, since in hospitality there is a need to wait for the customer and not the customer to wait for the service provider.

It is the aim of every school to minimise, if not eliminate absenteeism and lateness among its students. One way of addressing this problem is to identify the causes of lateness and absenteeism among students. Once they are singled out, understood and analyzed, specific actions and measures could be taken to address them.

It is in this context that, the researchers want to undertake this study to investigate the causes and lateness among students in Hospitality and Tourism department in Sunyani Polytechnic.

1.1The research problem

Generally, it is believed that regular attendance has a bearing on how much knowledge and skills a student acquired in course of study. Consequently most institutions require that students attend lectures to cover a percentage of not less than 75% before he/she is allowed to take the semester examination. (Sunyani Polytechnic Student Handbook, 2009)

Furthermore, according to the Ethics Policy of Sunyani Polytechnic, 2011, all students are expected to attend lectures and other prescribed assignments, except when ill or otherwise lawfully excused and shall be on time to all lectures or assignments.

However, it has been observed by the lecturers that, absenteeism and lateness has become a chronic habit of students in the department. The continuous existence of these problems among students in H/T has been a major concern for lecturers as well as administrators as their consequences have been poor academic performance and poor skills acquisition

Even though, these are considered to be serious problem, it appears, not much has been done by way of scientific research to ascertain the causes and address them.

This study, therefore seeks to investigate the causes of absenteeism and lateness among students in Hospitality and Tourism department in order to find ways to address the problems.

1.1.1The research question

- What are the causes of absenteeism among students in hospitality and tourism department?
- What are the causes of lateness among students in hospitality and tourism department?
- What are the effects of absenteeism and lateness among students in hospitality and tourism department?
- What are the possible solutions to the problems of absenteeism and lateness among students in hospitality and tourism department?

1.1.2 Objectives of the study

The study aims at:

- To investigate the causes of absenteeism and lateness among students in hospitality and tourism department.
- To investigate the effects of absenteeism and lateness among students in hospitality and tourism department.
- To put measures in place to manage absenteeism and lateness among students in hospitality and tourism department.

1.1.2.1Significance of the study

- In terms of practice, educational institutions knowing the effects of lateness and absenteeism to a student, the school administration is the one primarily affected. Their concerns can then be discussed with the student body and so as the student body can also share their grievances with the administration. Through such dialogue the administration and the student body could come out with amicable solutions.
- The lecturers who serve as parent when a student is in school will be able to formulate ideas on how to minimize lateness and absenteeism among students.
- In terms of contribution to policy, the results arising from the study will provide vital information to the stakeholders since the main goal of the stakeholders is to be able to produce productive citizens of the community. Absenteeism is one of the factors that disturb the stabilities of this goal. Consequently, the measures identified as reducing absenteeism and lateness should be tested by the stakeholders.
- This survey would provide empirical data for Sunyani Polytechnic and other Tertiary Institutions to identify the causes of lateness and absenteeism among students. This would help the Polytechnic and other Tertiary Institutions to address the problem.
- It will serve as reference materials for other researchers.

2.1Literature review

The purpose of the literature review is to provide relevant information on the research area in order to enhance the understanding of the topic. There have been many empirical works on the causes of absenteeism and lateness in academic institutions and the causes differ from one respondent to another.

The literature review will focus on definitions of absenteeism and lateness. It will then be narrowed to causes and effects of absenteeism and lateness among students in academic institutions.

Literally, the term “lateness” implies a situation where an individual arrives after the proper, scheduled or usual time (Oxford Advanced Learners’ Dictionary, 5th ed., 1995). Furthermore, Lauby (2009) puts it as a term used to describe “people not showing up on time”. Breezes et al. (2010) contributed by saying that lateness is synonymous with “tardiness”, which implies being slow to act or slow to respond, thus not meeting up with proper or usual timing. It is obvious therefore that lateness could be seen as a system of network breakdown (Peretomode, 1991); a situation of not meeting up with programme.

Absenteeism can be defined as persistent, habitual, and unexplained absence from school (Brooks, 1997, as cited in Bond, 2004). Bond noted that chronic absenteeism occurs when a student is absent without reason 20% or more of school time; this nominal figure is consistently identified regardless of the specific circumstances of the absenteeism (p. 8).

Causes of lateness to school

Sleeping late

Some students are found of watching late night movies and hence sleep late. Going late to bed could result in waking up late, as could be deduced from the literal meaning of the saying “early to bed early to rise”. (Ubogu, 2004) study indicated that, the individual involved in watching late films and home videos may be so captivated and hypnotized by it that he/she forgets that he/she has to be in school the next day and likely may not be

punctual in class.

Distance/location of school

Students who stay far away from school are most often come to school late. The further the location of the school from the student the more the distractions such as traffic jam, road accidents, interruptions from friends and so forth. However, students who are closer to the school do not experience such distractions and therefore able to come to school on time.

According to Oghuvbu (2008), "distance to school, is one of the common causes for the lateness of the secondary students. (Emore, 2005) study also revealed that distance to school is a factor to lateness to school.

Engagement in domestic chores

Most often female students are engaged in domestic activities by their parents. Though, these activities are necessary but untimely ones cause lateness to school. In some cases, in the rural areas, most parents force their wards to help carry their goods to the market and other kind of chores like fetching water, fire wood, cleaning of cooking utensils, sweeping before going to school. Activities like these inevitably cause lateness to school, either voluntarily or involuntarily. Dafiaghbor and Kose (2011). According to Oghuvbu (2008), female students are more likely to be late than male students because of "their involvement in domestic activities by their parents.

Parental factors

In some cases, the habit of lateness is being copied from the parents. For instance, the child that sees the father always going late to work could also either voluntarily or involuntarily learn the habit, thus go to school late also. This is supported by Peretomode (2001) and Egbule (2004) when they elaborated the concept of Nature-Nurture as it affects an individual's habits.

Excessive body care

In some cases, individuals value their body and they are obsessed by their appearance to the detriment of timely engagements in school. Oghuvwu (2008) agreed to this when he opined that "lateness is common among females more than males". This could be as a result of the fact that females require more time for their body.

Cultural background

We live in a society where the culture does not frown at lateness. Thus, to most individuals, especially sub Saharan African punctuality is not really a serious matter, compared with how punctuality is being perceived in Western cultures and developed countries (Breezes et al., 2010).

Effects of lateness to school

Lateness leads to distraction to the individual and the whole system

The individual that came late to school is both a problem to him/herself, fellow students, teachers, and others in the school system. This is because he/she walks in when teaching is going on and both teachers and students turn to look at him/her. Hence, the system and flow is distracted and distorted. In addition, according to "Clackmannshire Council Online", "lateness is disruptive to the individual and to the work of the class and may be an early warning of other difficulties".

Lateness leads to absenteeism and general failure in life

Students could sometimes feel the extent of their lateness and very often they just decide to be absent. This has a very great effect on the individual's academic and other achievements. According to Ali (2007), this could lead to the loss of confidence and engagement in premature sexual activity for students, leading to pregnancy, resulting in a phenomenon called storm and stress among adolescents.

Lateness upset teachers

Most often, teachers feel very annoyed when a student enters the class after lectures has begun for twenty minutes, especially when there is food practical class. The tardy will have to catch up with others and the teacher has to explain again what need to be done. The partner with whom the tardy works also gets annoyed as the latter has to wait for ingredients to be able to work (what ingredients to bring for a particular dish are shared between them as they work in pairs).

Lateness impinges / disrupts the classroom routine

Students are expected to arrive to lecturers on time in order to make lecturers move on smoothly. Coming to school late impinges on instructional time, disrupts the classroom routine and can have impact on academic performance. It is therefore important for students to arrive at school on time. Frequent lateness will result in consequences including making up time missed during recess and/or after school. In addition, according to "Clackmannshire Council Online", "lateness is disruptive to the individual and to the work of the class.

Causes of absenteeism to school

Student factors

Some students are undisciplined and are therefore prone to truancy. Illness is also one of the student factors since it is mainly the student who complains of being sick. Ubogu (2004) identified illness, as one of the factors

influencing students' absenteeism.(Etsey, 2005; Withers, 2004). Also, poor academic performers normally do not have the desire to attend lectures.

Parental factors

Parental factors are those issues that, impact on student absenteeism which are within the control of the parents. Society holds the parents responsible for providing total support for both spiritual and physical development of their children. However, some parents intentionally refuse to give such necessary support especially in the form of providing sufficient finances, discipline, and education for their children. According to the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child (1959), — the best interests of the child shall be the guiding principle of those responsible for his education and guidance; that responsibility lies in the first place with his parents (Principle 7). Parents who lack financial resources cannot provide for their children's basic educational needs.

Children are absent from school because their parents keep them away from school on a frequent basis because of the parents' needs and priorities. For instance, in the farming and fishing communities' parents most often engaged their children in farming and fishing activities instead of allowing them to go to school. This, Cunningham (2005) referred to as —parental agreed absence (p. 29). Bond (2004) noted that this does necessarily equate to approve absence. According to Bond, absence can only be approved by the school given a reasonable excuse (p.8).

School factors

The school environment should be a place of interest. However, if the environment is not conducive for teaching and learning it discourages students from going to school. For instance, if the classroom is poorly ventilated, unclean, and unhealthy, congested and lack furniture, it discourages students from going to school.

Community factors

Community factors include resources that are the responsibility of the local government to make accessible to every member living within a community; such factors are outside of the control of the parent, child, and school. Examples of these are water, electricity, health facilities and transportation. Inadequate availability of these resources could result in lateness and absenteeism among students. Furthermore, low levels of illiteracy among adults in the community serve as disincentive to going to school since there are no role models. Additionally, the beliefs and values of the community could be disincentive to education. Loraine and Austin (2010)

Peer factor

Peer group members could influence student's attendance to school by way of encouraging him/her to engage in other activities instead of going to school. For instance, some peer group could encourage members to engage in such bad practices as gambling, stealing, and indulging in drugs instead of going to school.

Effects of absenteeism

Disconnected to School

Students who are frequently absent from school have more difficulty forming relationships and participating in school activities. These students feel disconnected from academic activities and believe that the lecturers are not relevant to their lives. In addition, they may spend less time in extracurricular activities, which reduces their chances to discover their talent and develop their skills outside the classroom.

Compromised Learning

Excessive absences create gaps in the student's education. Lesson plans are designed to prepare students for the next lesson. However if the student is not present in the classroom for the teacher to help him/her, they have a higher chance of being left behind. Due to frequent absences, students may forget the previous lessons which may result in poor academic performance.

Inadequate constructive support

Constructive support from teachers and peers can boost a student's confidence in academics and encourage her to work towards academic success. However, students who are habitual absentees are not able to get the opportunity to gain support from teachers and their peers. For instance, students who are noted for exhibiting negative behaviour in school will not have the chance to befriend to students that excel academically.

Expulsion from School

Chronic absenteeism can often result in the student being expelled from the school, especially if the student has behavioural issues and extremely poor academic performance. Students who are in this category are also less likely to be aware of the policies regarding attendance to lecturers; which may therefore increase their chances of being expelled from school. Dube and Orpinas (2009)

Lower academic achievement

According to Schmidt in 1983, absenteeism affects the students' ability to get high marks in examinations which can lead to decreasing of grades and will cause him/her to repeat the same year level. On the other hand students who spent time attending lectures have a significant, positive effect on their performance.

Marburger (2001) study found out that, getting missing in class regularly may lead to the likelihood of poor performance in examination compared to students who attended lecturers regularly.

2.1.1 Methodology

The study adopted descriptive approach and Survey was used to gather primary data from the respondents. The target population includes all students at the department of hospitality and tourism of Sunyani Polytechnic. A sample size of 262 was purposively selected, made up of 7 males and 255 females with an average age of 18 years.

The questionnaires were delivered to the students in the lecture rooms with the help of research assistants. However, 146 students responded to the questionnaire within a period of one month.

These questionnaires were both open and close ended and it was based on the objectives of the study. Besides, the study employed the Likert Scale Measurements and these gave the students opportunity to have a preference to select among the various levels of agreement. Data obtained from the study were analysed by using SPSS and the results were presented in the form of tables.

2.1.2 Limitations of the study

Ideally the study should have covered all the departments in Sunyani Polytechnic to give a clearer picture of the outcome of the study. However, the findings of this study were limited to students of Hospitality and Tourism department. In addition, some of the students failed to respond to the questionnaire administered to them and hence affect the sample size.

3.1 Analysis and Presentation of results

Table 1: Causes of Lateness among Students

N=146

Variable	Frequency of Response						
	SD	D	U	A	SA	NR	TOTAL
Going to bed late	67 (45.9%)	27 (18.5%)	6 (4.1%)	36 (24.7%)	7 (4.8%)	3 (2.1%)	146 (100%)
Too much body care (excessive facial/body make-up)	64 (43.8%)	43 (29.5%)	11 (7.5%)	18 (12.3%)	5 (3.4%)	5 (3.4%)	146 (100%)
Long distance between school and place of residence	41 (28.1%)	31 (21.2%)	6 (4.1%)	40 (27.4%)	22 (15.1)	6 (4.1%)	146 (100%)
Engagement in untimely domestic chores/activities	58 (39.7%)	44 (30.1%)	13 (8.9%)	19 (13.0%)	9 (6.2%)	3 (2.1%)	146 (100%)
Lecturers are not punctual	60 (41.1%)	36 (24.7%)	15 (10.3%)	24 (16.4%)	8 (5.5%)	3 (2.1%)	146 (100%)

Source: Field work, April 2013.

SD=Strongly Disagree D=Disagree U= Undecided A= Agree SA= Strongly Agree

NR= No Response

Table 1 above shows the frequency of the responses for the various variables investigated under the causes of lateness among students and the corresponding percentages. Overall, a larger proportion of the students strongly disagreed with all the variables investigated.

Majority of the students (45.9%) strongly disagreed that going to bed late caused lateness among students. This is contrary to the study of (Ubogu, 2004). A good proportion of the students (24.7%) however agreed with the statement and few of them (4.8%) strongly agreed with it. Many of students (43.8%) strongly disagreed that too much body care caused lateness among students. This is contrary to the study of Oghuvwu (2008), while 29.5%, 12.8% and 3.4% disagreed, agreed and strongly agreed respectively to the statement. Large proportion of students either strongly disagreed (28.1%) or agreed (27.4%) that lateness is caused by long distance between school and their residencies. This confirmed the claimed by (Emore, 2005). Some students (15.1%) strongly agreed while 21.2% disagreed with the statement. Many of the students (39.7%) strongly disagreed. This is contrary to the study of Dafiaghori and Kose (2011) while (6.2%) strongly agreed with the statement that engagement in untimely domestic activities is a cause of lateness among students. Some (30.1%) disagreed while (13.0%) agreed with the statement. Majority (41.1%) of students strongly disagreed that a cause of lateness among students is that lecturers are not punctual. A small proportion (5.5%) of students however strongly agreed with the statement. Some of the students (24.7% and 16.4%) disagreed and agreed respectively. Fifteen of the students (10.3%) were undecided and 2.1% gave no response.

Table 2: Effects of student Lateness

N=146

Variable	Frequency of Response						
	SD	D	U	A	SA	NR	TOTAL
Disorganizes and causes distraction to individual and the whole system (lectures)	49 (33.6%)	28 (19.2%)	13 (8.9%)	35 (24.0%)	15 (10.3%)	6 (4.1%)	146 (100%)
Inhibits the process of achieving the goals of the lecturer	43 (29.5%)	26 (17.8%)	27 (18.5%)	38 (26.0%)	8 (5.5%)	4 (2.7%)	146 (100%)
Demoralises lecturers	37 (25.3%)	30 (20.5%)	32 (21.9%)	27 (18.5%)	10 (6.8%)	10 (6.8%)	146 (100%)
Leads to absenteeism and general failure in life	46 (31.5%)	27 (18.5%)	17 (11.6%)	35 (24.0%)	16 (11.0%)	5 (3.4%)	146 (100%)

Source: Field work, April 2013.

SD=Strongly Disagree D=Disagree U= Undecided A= Agree SA= Strongly Agree

NR= No Response

Table 2 above displays the frequency of responses and the corresponding proportions for the various variables investigated under the effects of lateness. Many (33.6%) of the students strongly disagreed that lateness disorganises the individual and lectures. Some (10.3%) however strongly agreed with the statement. Many (24.0%) also agreed while 19.3% disagreed with the statement. Forty three students (29.5%) strongly disagreed that lateness inhibits the process of achieving the goals of the lecturer while 5.5% strongly agreed. Many (26.0%) agreed with the statement while 17.8% disagreed. Twenty seven (18.5%) were undecided. Thirty seven of the students (25.3%) strongly disagreed that lateness demoralises lecturer. However, 6.8% strongly agreed. Some students (20.5%) disagreed while 18.5% agreed with the statement. Many students (21.9%) were undecided and 6.8% did not give a response. Many students (31.5%) also strongly disagreed that lateness leads to absenteeism and general failure in life while 11.0% strongly agreed with the statement. Thirty five students (24.0%) also agreed but 18.5% disagreed. Seventeen of the students (11.6%) were undecided and 3.4% gave no response.

Table 3: Measures to Address Lateness among Students

N=146

Variable	Frequency of Response						
	SD	D	U	A	SA	NR	TOTAL
Provide shuttles to convey students to and from school	34 (23.3%)	19 (13.0%)	14 (9.6%)	54 (37.0%)	24 (16.4%)	1 (0.7%)	146 (100%)
Provide counselling interventions to students	27 (18.5%)	20 (13.7%)	15 (10.3%)	50 (34.2%)	27 (18.5%)	7 (4.8%)	146 (100%)
Lecturers should be punctual and serve as role models for students	28 (19.2%)	16 (11.0%)	11 (7.5%)	50 (34.2%)	39 (26.7%)	2 (1.4%)	146 (100%)
Provide sanctions for perpetual late comers.	31 (21.2%)	21 (14.4%)	28 (19.2%)	39 (26.7%)	20 (13.7%)	7 (4.8%)	146 (100%)

Source: Field work, April 2013.

SD=Strongly Disagree D=Disagree U= Undecided A= Agree SA= Strongly Agree

NR= No Response.

Table 3 above shows the responses given to the various variables considered under measures to address lateness among students. Majority of students agreed with all the measures suggested. Fifty four of the students (37.0%) agreed that shuttles should be provided to convey students to and from campus and 16.4% strongly agreed with that. However, some students (23.3%) strongly disagreed with that. On the provision of counseling to students, 34.2% agreed, 26.7% strongly agreed, 18.5% strongly disagreed, 13.7% disagreed and 7.5% were undecided. Again, 34.2% agreed that lecturers should be punctual and serve as role models for students. A lot of students (26.7%) also agreed with that. Some students (19.2%) however strongly disagreed and 7.5% were not decided.

On the provision of sanctions for perpetual late comers, 13.7% strongly agreed, 26.7% agreed, 21.2% strongly disagreed, and 14.4% disagreed while 19.2% were undecided.

Table 4: Causes of Absenteeism among Students

N=146

Variable	Frequency of Response							TOTAL
	SD	D	U	A	SA	NR		
Much interested in practical work than theory lessons	37 (25.3%)	50 (34.2%)	22 (15.1%)	17 (11.6%)	17 (11.6%)	3 (2.1%)	146 (100%)	
Illness	38 (26.0%)	18 (12.3%)	13 (8.4%)	48 (32.9%)	15 (10.3%)	14 (9.6%)	146 (100%)	
Non-attendance due to lecturers whom you dislike	46 (31.5%)	31 (21.2%)	17 (11.6%)	30 (20.5%)	18 (12.3%)	4 (2.7%)	146 (100%)	
Place of residence is far from campus	35 (24.0%)	36 (24.7%)	15 (10.3%)	40 (27.4%)	17 (11.6%)	3 (2.1%)	146 (100%)	
School environment is not conducive for teaching and learning	46 (31.5%)	36 (24.7%)	18 (12.3%)	27 (18.5%)	17 (11.6%)	2 (1.4)	146 (100%)	
Financial constraints	34 (23.3%)	26 (17.8%)	14 (9.6%)	41 (28.1%)	20 (13.7%)	11 (7.5%)	146 (100%)	

Source: Field work, April 2013.

SD=Strongly Disagree D=Disagree U= Undecided A= Agree SA= Strongly Agree

NR= No Response

Table 4 above shows the variables investigated under causes of absenteeism and the corresponding frequencies of the responses recorded. Majority (34.2%) of students disagreed that more interest in practical work than theory lessons caused absenteeism and 25.3% also strongly disagreed. Some (11.6%) however agreed and some (11.6%) even strongly agreed with the statement. A lot of students (15.1%) were undecided and (2.1%) did not respond to the statement. Majority of students (32.9%) agreed that illness is a cause of absenteeism and 10.3% also strongly agreed. Some of them (26.0%) however strongly disagreed. In response to whether absenteeism is caused by non-attendance due to lecturers students do not like, 31.5% strongly disagreed, 21.2% disagreed, 11.6% were undecided, 20.5% agreed, 12.3% strongly agreed and 2.7% did not respond. In response to whether long distance between residency caused lateness, a great proportion of students (27.4%) agreed, 11.6% strongly agreed, 24.0% strongly disagreed, 24.7% disagreed, 12.3% were undecided and 1.4% gave no response. Majority of the students (31.5%) strongly disagreed with the statement that school environment is not conducive for teaching and learning caused of absenteeism. Many (24.7%) also disagreed. However, some (18.5%) agreed with the statement and 11.6% strongly agreed with it. With regards to financial constraints, Majority of the students (28.1%) agreed that financial constraints caused absenteeism and 13.7% strongly agreed with that. A proportion of students (23.3%) however strongly disagreed and 17.8% also disagreed.

Table 5: Effects of Student Absenteeism
N=146

Variable	Frequency of Response						
	SD	D	U	A	SA	NR	TOTAL
Demoralizes lecturers	49 (33.6%)	45 (30.8%)	20 (13.7%)	24 (16.4%)	3 (2.1%)	5 (3.4%)	146 (100%)
Loss of learning and instructional time	40 (27.4%)	34 (23.3%)	20 (13.7)	33 (22.6%)	17 (11.6%)	2 (1.4%)	146 (100%)
Lower academic achievement	36 (24.7%)	31 (21.2%)	23 (15.8%)	36 (24.7%)	18 (12.3%)	2 (1.4%)	146 (100%)
Inability to complete courses/programs of study	52 (35.6%)	27 (18.5%)	11 (7.5%)	31 (21.2%)	24 (16.4%)	1 (0.7%)	146 (100%)
Potential of perpetrators to influence other students	36 (24.7%)	29 (19.9%)	30 (20.5%)	32 (21.9%)	14 (9.6%)	5 (3.4%)	146 (100%)
Lateness and absenteeism become habitual which affect efficiency and productivity at work after completion of course	43 (29.5%)	21 (14.4%)	16 (11.0%)	34 (23.3%)	28 (19.2%)	4 (2.7%)	146 (100%)

Source: Field work, April 2013.

SD=Strongly Disagree D=Disagree U= Undecided A= Agree SA= Strongly Agree NR= No Response

Table 5 shows the frequency of responses given for the various variables considered under effects of student absenteeism. Forty nine of the students (33.6%) strongly disagreed that student absenteeism demoralises lecturers and 30.8% also disagreed. A smaller proportion of students (2.1%) however strongly agreed and 16.4% also agreed with the statement. In response to the statement that absenteeism leads to loss of learning and instructional time, 27.4% strongly disagreed, 23.3% disagreed, 22.6% agreed, 11.6% strongly disagreed and 13.7% were undecided. In response to the statement that student absenteeism caused lower academic achievement, the same percentage (24.7%) was recorded for the responses; strongly disagree and agree. Some (21.2%) disagreed while 12.3% strongly disagreed. Majority of students (35.6%) disagreed that absenteeism results in inability to complete courses of study. Some students (21.2%) however agreed with the statement and 16.4% strongly agreed. On the potential of perpetrators to influence other students, 24.7% strongly disagreed, 19.9% disagreed, 21.9% agreed, 9.6% strongly disagreed and 20.5% were undecided. Forty students (29.5%) strongly disagreed, 14.4% disagreed, 23.3% agreed, and 19.2% strongly agreed with the statement that lateness and absenteeism become habitual which affect efficiency and productivity at work after completion of program of study.

Table 6 above displays the frequency of responses for the variables investigated under measures to address absenteeism among students. Majority of the students again agreed with all the measures suggested. On the provision of counselling to students, 39.7% agreed, 14.4% strongly agreed, 18.5% strongly disagreed, 15.1% disagreed and 12.3% were not decided. On the provision of sanctions to perpetual absentees, 23.3% agreed, 10.3% strongly agreed, 23.3% strongly disagreed and 17.8% disagreed. Sixty one students (41.8%) agreed that lecturers should adopt the appropriate teaching methodology and 21.1% strongly agreed with that. However, 16.4% strongly disagreed while 12.3% disagreed. Many students (34.2%) agreed that shuttle buses should be provided while 21.1% strongly agreed with that. Some students (20.5%) however strongly disagreed that shuttles should be provided. Also, many of the students (37.0%) agreed that lecturers should familiarize themselves with students. Some students (17.8%) however strongly disagreed with that.

Table 6: Measures to Address Absenteeism among Students

N=146

Variable	Frequency of Response							TOTAL
	SD	D	U	A	SA	NR		
Provide counselling interventions to students	27 (18.5%)	22 (15.1%)	18 (12.3%)	58 (39.7%)	21 (14.4%)	—	146 (100%)	
Sanction students for absenting themselves	34 (23.3%)	26 (17.8%)	31 (21.2%)	34 (23.3%)	15 (10.3%)	6 (4.1%)	146 (100%)	
Lecturers should adopt the appropriate teaching methodology	24 (16.4%)	18 (12.3%)	10 (6.8%)	61 (41.8%)	32 (21.1%)	1 (0.7%)	146 (100%)	
Provide shuttle buses to convey students to and from school	30 (20.5%)	23 (15.8%)	15 (10.3%)	50 (34.2%)	27 (18.5%)	1 (0.7%)	146 (100%)	
Lecturers should familiarize themselves with students	26 (17.8%)	23 (15.8%)	18 (12.3%)	54 (37.0%)	25 (17.1%)	—	146 (100%)	

Source: Field work, April 2013.

SD=Strongly Disagree D=Disagree U= Undecided A= Agree SA= Strongly Agree NR= No Response

3.2 Summary of findings

The findings of the study were as follows:

Majority of the students (45.9%) strongly disagreed that going to bed late caused lateness among students. A good proportion of the students (24.7%) however agreed with the statement and few of them (4.8%) strongly agreed with it.

Large proportion of students agreed that lateness is caused by long distance between school and their residencies.

Majority of students (32.9%) agreed that illness is a cause of absenteeism.

Majority of the students (28.1%) agreed that financial constraints caused absenteeism and 13.7% strongly agreed with that.

Majority of the students agreed that, shuttles buses should be provided to convey students to and from campus.

Majority of the students (52.7) agreed that counselling intervention should be provided for the students.

3.3 Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusion of the study the researchers recommend the following:

1. Management of Sunyani polytechnic as well as other stake holders such as the Student Representative Council (S.R.C.) should provide shuttle buses with moderate fare to convey students to and from school at various vintage points since majority of the students stay out off campus. This when put in place will go a long way to generate funds for the school as well as serving as a means of quick transport for both workers and students in order to curtail lateness to work and lectures. Furthermore, the institutions should set up more school hostels in and around the campus at affordable rents to control the long distance to school factor.

2. Counselling intervention for students should be strengthened. Academic counsellors and teachers should educate the students on the effects of lateness and absenteeism on their academic performance. Imbibe in the mind of the students that their academic success is very much dependent on their attitude towards school. Motivate them so that, they will attend lecturers regularly and promptly. For those who wake up late, encourage them to have an alarm clock and to sleep early and avoid watching late movies.

3. The school environment should be a place of interest. The classroom should be conducive for teaching and learning process, furniture, facilities of co-curricular activities, adequate libraries and reading rooms, clean and healthy environment do play an important role in attracting the students. With all these facilities and attractions the school becomes a place of interest rather than of aversion.

4. Appropriate teaching methods should be applied by the teachers. If instruction is imparted by means of modern methods and techniques keeping in view the interests, and needs of the students there is no reasons why there will not be any improvement in the attitude of the students toward studies and the school and their attendance. The old methods of lecturing, subjecting the students to arduous exercises and meaningless drill and memorizing of useless items of instruction have no place in the modern school because instead of attracting the

students such methods repel them from the school environment. Motivation of students through field-trips, the use of films, film-strips, records, television, radio and any other audio visual aids should at least now be realized by our teachers.

5. Curriculum should be framed in accordance with the capacities and needs of the students. The subject matter must be related to their lives. It should be presented in an interesting manner. In selection of certain specialized courses only interests and abilities of the students should be kept in view rather than the wishes of the students or their parents, because wrong choices at the school stage not only lead to the students' failure but are also detrimental to the society.

6. The Department should build in lecturers and students, the virtue of "time-consciousness". For instance, putting wall clocks in conspicuous locations for all to see and instil the time-consciousness among lecturers and students. Also, school administrators and lecturers must talk and walk 'punctuality'.

8. Resident tutors should conduct regular inspection of halls and private hostels to encourage personal and environmental hygiene among students. This will go a long way to minimize the spate of sickness among students.

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