

## Factors Contributing to Absenteeism to Undergraduates Nursing Students

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### Abstract

Absenteeism is an act of being excessively away from educational institute which is a major indiscipline problem among students globally. The purpose of this study was to identify the major factors contributing to the absenteeism among nursing students at undergraduate level. Descriptive cross-sectional study design was used. Data was collected by using by pretested and modified self-administered questionnaire from nursing students of 13 nursing colleges offering 4-year Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) program in Punjab province of Pakistan after taking care of all the ethical considerations. Systematic random sampling technique was used to select 130 participants from nursing institutes offering 4-year BSN program. Most influential factors for absenteeism identified were 'not joined nursing studies as per choice', 'awaking up late for college', 'impending assignments', 'lack of interest in certain subjects', 'when teachers teaching skills are not up to mark', 'Lack of proper guidance in clinical area', 'shortage of staff in clinical area', 'Being treated as hospital staff in clinical area', 'very exhaustive and rigid or irregular timetable'. Study identified that nursing student's absenteeism is interplay of multiple modifiable factors. Hence, necessary steps may be taken to overcome these modifiable factors to improve the quality of nursing education.

**Keywords:** absenteeism, undergraduate student, factors, nursing students, truancy

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## **Introduction and Literature Review**

Absenteeism is one of prevalent problems in educational institutes (Suhid, 2012). In education, term absenteeism describes the presence of students in teaching learning environment when they are obliged to be present, when teacher is not being informed in advance or the student is not sanctioned for leave for which he is entitled (Clores, 2009).

Professional educational institutes have explicit rules regarding compulsory attendance during educational discourse in lectures, laboratory and clinical/ practical hours. Despite of explicit rules and regulations, globally truancy is on rise (Desalegn, 2014). Truancy among students has become major and consistent problem in many countries, especially in developing world. In order to enhance the quality of health services and nursing education it is very essential to address the issue of absenteeism on urgent basis (Abdelrahman, 2017).

Absenteeism is not merely becoming a major social and ethical educational problem but in-fact, it is a serious predictor of many social and moral issues among adolescent learners (Suhid, 2012). It is being reported by Ministry of Education Malaysia that absenteeism is graded as second most common discipline problem after lack of politeness, while other indiscipline behaviors includes criminal habits, wastage of time, lack of personal hygiene, misbehavior, vandalism and offensiveness (Malaysia Education, 2015). The worst thing observed about truancy is that truant students may end up in drug addiction, gangster groups, gambling or in other illegal activities (Henry, 2007; Shute, 2015).

Excessive absenteeism among nursing students portrays low level of interest and motivation for studies (Wadesango, 2011). It has been seen that student absenteeism is an initial warning sign for learner's poor academic performance, educational dropout, juvenile delinquency and poor personal relations in future. It has also been found that learner's truancy is also determinant of depression, anxiety, risky and illegal conduct. (Bruner, 2011; Chou, 2006)

Absenteeism leads to loss of learning opportunities about knowledge and skills vital for professional practice. Missing out lectures results in loss of educational learning material that may be important for the examination and professional practice and hence hinders the progress of student academically and professionally. Studies suggest that good attendance rate is considered as the significant predictor of academic accomplishments (Marburger, 2006). Researchers observed that learners with good attendance percentages are high achievers in academics. It has been noted that higher attendance rates are also associated with the higher quiz scores (Ready, 2010). A meta-analysis of 52 published and 16

unpublished articles on the effect of absenteeism on students' educational performance interpreted a negative association with the phenomenon of absenteeism i.e. increasing incidence of absenteeism was linked to lower grades of students in classroom (Credé, 2011). Many other studies have also found crucial influence of good class attendance with enhanced knowledge and cumulative grade point average (CGPA) (Obeidat, 2012; Horton, 2012; El Tantawi, 2009). Excessive student absenteeism not only impedes academic performance of individual student but also greatly hinders the teaching learning environment of educational institutes (Westrick, 2009).

A qualitative study conducted in a medical collage states that medical students recognized teacher's related factors as the key theme with atmosphere and pupils related contributory themes. Subthemes comprised of inappropriate teaching methodology, lack of a formal curriculum and teachers attitudes leading to little learning and students considering attending the clinical rotations in wards a waste of time (Chaudhary, 2019). Another study conducted at a university found that most of the students gave positive responses about the physical reasons of absenteeism. The 84% of the students were agree that their cause of Absenteeism is that because they are tired so not attend classes (Majeed, 2019).

As the number of learners in nursing institutes has increased over time, hence the learners are facing a more competitive atmosphere at institutions. However, many nursing pupils miss the valuable opportunities to acquire information and learn professional competencies in optimal way. Presently, absence of students from educational institutions is emerging as one of the major discipline problems in educational institutes globally but it receives very little consideration due to plenty of other problems in educational environment (Suhid, 2012; DeSocio, 2007).

Nursing, as profession deals with the care of most valuable being of world so, the nursing institutes have their responsibility to produce quality nursing professionals having attributes of being knowledgeable, skilled and disciplined professionals. A higher student absent rate in nursing colleges can lead to much negative effects as they will not be able to produce quality nursing graduates (Doyle, 2008). Which in turn will lead to poor quality of nursing care. It is also reported in a research study that students who are habitual of absenteeism during academics tend to continue this habit in their professional life as well (López-Bonilla, 2015). Therefore the purpose to conduct this study was to assess factors that may have influence on the absenteeism among nursing students so that strategies may be devised to overcome this neglected issue at nursing institutes.

## Methods

### Study Design

A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted in all the 13 public and private nursing colleges offering 4-year B.S. Nursing programme in Punjab Province of Pakistan.

### Sample

A sample of 130 nursing students was selected. Lists of participants were taken from the institutes and participants were selected by using systematic random sampling method by selecting every 3<sup>rd</sup> participant from the list of students. The study participants were selected with inclusion criteria of students enrolled in B.S nursing program appeared in at least one professional examination or completed at least 1 year of study and having classroom and clinical attendance less than 85%.

### Data Collection Tool

A self-administered and modified structured questionnaire (Thobakgale, 2013) was used to collect data from the participants. Study Supervisor was consulted for content validity of the tool. After suggestion of synopsis review committee of University of Health Sciences, Lahore the questionnaire was modified as per recommended suggestions. A pilot study was done to verify the validity and reliability of tool that showed value of Cronbach's Alpha as 0.746. An approval to conduct the study was taken from the ethical review committee of University of Health Sciences, Lahore, Pakistan.

The designed tool was consisted of the following two main sections with 8 questions in part 1 and 5 section in part 2 with 39 question:

- **Part 1.** Socio demographic data of participants
- **Part 2.** This part was comprised of questions related to factors that may contribute to absenteeism in undergraduate nursing students on 5-point Likert Scale 5. Strongly Agree, 4. Agree, 3. Not Sure, 2. Disagree, 1. Strongly Disagree and includes subheading of:
  - A. Personal factors
  - B. Educational factors
  - C. Social factors
  - D. Teacher related factors and
  - E. Institutional factors.

## Data Analysis

Data was entered and analyzed using SPSS 21. Mean and standard deviation were calculated for numerical variables and frequency and percentage were also calculated. Following score ranges (Suhid, 2012) were used to enable the investigator to identify factors contributing to the absenteeism among undergraduate nursing students:

- Factors have little influence if mean score range is 2.04 to 2.71.
- Factors caused truancy sometimes if mean score range is 2.72 to 3.39.
- Factors influenced more often if mean score range is 3.40 to 4.07.

**Objective:** Purpose of study was to identify the various factors that may contribute to absenteeism in undergraduate nursing students.

## Results

Out of 130 participants 105 (80.77%) were females. Highest proportion was of final year students 51 (39.23%). It was noted that father's educational level of 22 (16.92%) participants was 'not having formal education', 33 (25.36%) having primary education followed by 62 (47.69%) was secondary school education while 13 (10%) having higher education. Analysis of response of participants showed that mother's educational level of 48 (36.92%) participants was no formal education followed by 39 (30%) having primary education; 37 (28.46%) were with secondary education while 6 (4.62%) having higher education. 94 (72.31%) were residing in the hostel. 67 (51.54%) used public transport to attend institute. Data revealed that students have had past history of absenteeism at primary level 17 (13.08%), secondary school level 32 (24.62%) and intermediate level 60 (46.15%). Higher percentage 92 (70.77%) of students found to have had failed at least once in university examination; 4 (3.08%) failed twice while 2 (1.54%) failed more than twice in university examination (Table 1).

Table 1

*Descriptive statistics of selected variables in study (N=130)*

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	25	19.2
Female	105	80.8
Educational Year		
1 <sup>st</sup> Year	20	15.4
2 <sup>nd</sup> Year	47	36.2
3 <sup>rd</sup> Year	12	9.2

Final Year	51	39.2
Father's Educational Level		
No Formal Education	22	16.9
Primary	33	25.4
Secondary	62	47.7
Higher	13	10
Mother's Educational Level		
No Formal Education	48	36.6
Primary	39	30
Secondary	37	28.5
Higher	6	4.6
Student's Resident Type		
Day Scholar	36	27.7
Living in Hostel	94	72.3
Mode of Transportation to Attend Institute		
Public Transport	67	51.5
Personal Transport	49	37.7
Transport offered by Institute	14	10.8
History of Previous Absenteeism		
Never	21	16.2
Primary School	17	13.1
Secondary School	32	24.6
Intermediate Level	60	46.2
Ever Failed University Examination		
Never	32	24.6
Once	92	70.8
Twice	4	3.1
More than Twice	2	1.5

Table 2 below shows the distribution of average mean and standard deviation for personal, educational, social, teacher related and institutional factors that may contribute to nursing student absenteeism at undergraduate level. Analysis showed that mean score and standard deviation of personal factors (mean=3.38, SD: 1.25), educational factors (mean=3.22, SD: 1.22), Social factors (mean=3.14, SD: 1.33), teacher related factors (mean=3.26, SD: 1.17) and institutional factors have average mean score (mean=3.46, SD: 1.11).

Table 2  
*Distribution of Average Mean and Standard Deviation for Factors Contribute to Absenteeism in Undergraduate Nursing Students (N=130)*

Serial No.	Item	Average Mean	Average Standard Deviation
1	Personal Factors	3.38	1.25
2	Educational Factors	3.22	1.22
3	Social Factors	3.14	1.33
4	Teacher Related Factors	3.26	1.17
5	Institutional Factors	3.46	1.11

**Personal Factors:**

Table 3

*Distribution of Mean Score and Standard Deviation for Personal Factors (N=130)*

Serial No.	Item	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	Shortage of personal resources.	3.18	1.24
2	Having a part time job with study.	3.23	1.37
3	Lack of personal interest in studies.	3.08	1.37
4	Often wake up late for college.	3.62	1.31
5	Prefer entertainment more than study.	3.06	1.32
6	Not joined nursing studies as per choice.	3.77	1.06
7	Feel exhausted and fatigued.	3.62	1.16
8	Obligation to stay at home (due to family illness or other family work).	3.34	1.30
9	Frequent minor health issues.	3.53	1.15

Table 3 shows the distribution of mean and standard deviation for personal factors that may contribute to nursing student absenteeism at undergraduate level. Analysis showed that different items of this section showed mean and standard deviation as ‘Shortage of Personal resources’ (mean=3.18, SD: 1.24); ‘having a part time job with study’ (mean=3.23, SD: 1.37); ‘lack of personal interest in studies’ (mean=3.08, SD: 1.37); ‘often wake up late for college’ (mean=3.62, SD: 1.31); ‘prefer entertainment more than study’ (mean=3.06, SD: 1.32); ‘not joined nursing studies as per choice’ (mean=3.77, SD: 1.06); ‘feeling exhausted and fatigued’ (mean=3.62, SD: 1.16); ‘obligation to stay at home (due to family illness or other family work)’ (mean=3.34, SD: 1.30); ‘frequent minor health issues’ (mean=3.53, SD: 1.15).

**Educational Factors**

Table 4

*Distribution of Mean Score and Standard Deviation for Educational Factors (N=130)*

Serial No.	Item	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	Suppose to demonstrate procedure in classroom or clinical area.	3.34	1.15
2	Not want to do presentation.	2.75	1.29
3	Not want to appear in quiz/test.	2.87	1.40
4	Impending assignments.	3.68	1.02
5	Lack of interest in certain subjects’.	3.46	1.24

Table 4 shows the distribution of mean and standard deviation for educational factors that may contribute to nursing student absenteeism at undergraduate level. Analysis showed that the items related to this factor having means score and standard deviation as ‘suppose to demonstrate procedure in class room or clinical area’ (mean=3.34, SD: 1.15); ‘not want to do presentation’ (mean=2.75, SD: 1.29); ‘impending assignments’ (mean=3.68, SD: 1.02) and ‘lack of interest in certain subjects’ (mean=3.46, SD: 1.24).

### Social Factors

Table 5  
*Distribution of Mean Score and Standard Deviation for Social Factors (N=130)*

Serial No.	Item	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	Disruptive events occurring at home.	3.09	1.34
2	Family or social commitment.	3.32	1.26
3	Likes to spend time with friends.	3.28	1.30
4	Like to skip college when my friends are absent.	3.12	1.35
5	Poor relations with classmates or peers.	2.88	1.39

Table 5 shows the distribution of mean and standard deviation for social factors that may contribute to nursing student absenteeism at undergraduate level. Analysis showed that items of social factors have mean score and standard deviation as ‘disruptive events occurring at home’ (mean=3.09, SD: 1.34); ‘family or social commitment’ (mean=3.32, SD: 1.26); ‘likes to spend time with friends’ (mean=3.28, SD: 1.30); ‘like to skip college when my friends are absent’ (mean=3.12, SD: 1.35) and ‘poor relations with class mates or peers’ (mean=2.88, SD: 1.39).

### Teacher’s Related Factors

Table 6  
*Distribution of Mean Score and Standard Deviation for Teacher’s Related Factors (N=130)*

Serial No.	Item	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	Deliberately refrain from attending classes of teachers who are strict.	3.45	1.20
2	Having poor relation with teacher.	3.63	1.07
3	Teacher having an attitude of disrespect.	3.15	1.28
4	Teacher is not regular and punctual.	2.99	1.27
5	Teacher’s teaching skills are not up to mark.	3.67	0.94
6	Teacher asks me so many questions.	2.64	1.25

Table 6 shows the distribution of mean and standard deviation for teachers' related factors that may contribute to nursing student absenteeism at undergraduate level. Analysis revealed the mean and standard deviation of various items to teachers related factors as 'deliberately refrain from attending classed of teachers who are strict' (mean=3.45, SD: 1.20); 'having poor relation with teacher' (mean=3.63, SD: 1.07); 'teacher having an attitude of disrespect' (mean=3.15, SD: 1.28); 'teacher is not regular and punctual' (mean=2.99, SD: 1.27); 'teacher's teaching skills are not up to mark' (mean=3.67, SD: 0.94) and 'teacher asking so many question' (mean=2.64, SD: 1.25).

### Institutional Factors

Table 7

*Distribution of Mean Score and Standard Deviation for Institutional Factors (N=130)*

Serial No.	Item	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	Poor class room environment.	3.09	1.25
2	Very exhaustive and rigid or irregular timetable.	3.81	0.94
3	The Institute does not provide adequate facilities (equipment and materials) for students.	3.22	1.24
4	Institution has lack of effective and consistently applied attendance policies in class or clinical area.	3.06	1.32
5	Shortage of staff in the clinical area.	3.88	0.85
6	Not want to be treated as workforce in clinical area.	3.82	0.90
7	Lack of proper guidance in clinical area.	3.94	0.94
8	Raging or bullying at institute.	2.95	1.29
9	Lack of extracurricular and recreational activities at institute.	3.35	1.27

Table 7 shows the distribution of mean and standard deviation for Institutional factors that may contribute to nursing student absenteeism at undergraduate level. Analysis showed the mean and standard deviation of various items included in the section of institutional factors as 'poor class room environment' (mean=3.09, SD: 1.25); 'very exhaustive and rigid or irregular timetable' (mean=3.81, SD: 0.94); 'the Institute does not provide adequate facilities (equipment and materials) for students' (mean=3.22, SD: 1.24); 'institution has lack of effective and consistently applied attendance policies in class or clinical area' (mean=3.06, SD: 1.32); 'shortage of staff in clinical area' (mean=3.88, SD: 0.85); 'not want to be treated as workforce in clinical area' (mean=3.82, SD: 1.90); 'lack of proper guidance in clinical area' (mean=3.94, SD: 0.94); 'raging or

bullying at institute' (mean=2.95, SD: 1.29) and 'lack of extracurricular and recreational activities at institute' (mean=3.35, SD: 1.27).

## Discussion

The education process has very important postulation that the attendance of learner is a crucial prerequisite (Coelho, 2015). Among nursing students, absence from clinical and theory lessons is a substantial problem, if not antagonized it may deter the quality of care provided to patients (Chukwu, 2017).

The study presented that a higher percentage (80.8%) of participants were females, it is due to the reason that nursing is a female dominant profession and as per admission criteria made by Pakistan Nursing Council (PNC) for B.Sc Nursing Program, at undergraduate level, there is quota of only 10% male students (PNC, 2018). That is also supported by a study stating that nursing is female dominant profession globally. (Juliff, 2017)

Study shows that highest percentage of truant pupils (39.23%) were in final year of nursing program. It may have explanation that behavioral modification follows with age due to impact of peers and enriched awareness about the culture of educational institution (Desalegn, 2014). It is consistent with the study conducted at Hawassa University in Ethiopia on medical undergraduates which revealed significant relation of age and seniority of pupils with absenteeism (Desalegn, 2014).

Analysis of data showed that father's education level of only 10% absentees and mother's education level of only 4.62% absentees was higher education that has a rational that more educated parents pay more attention to their children's education. It is similar with the study conducted by Lee SA (Lee, 2018) which states that educated parents are more concerned about the education of their children. Another study conducted on medical and health sciences undergraduate students in Ethiopia states that the odds of missing classes are 76% less in students whose mother had a university degree qualification (Desalegn, 2014).

Interestingly this study revealed that most of the participants 72.31% were residing in the hostel while only 27.69% students were day scholars, reason behind these results may be that students residing in the hostel mostly belong to the remote areas and once they go back to their hometowns, they try to stay at home for a longer period of time and hence their absent days are higher. It was noted that higher percentage of students 51.54% found to use public transport to attend institute while only 37.69% had their own transport followed by only 10.77% students found to use transport offered by institution. A study supports the results as it states that

transit (Public transport) usage among the students of educational institutes of Minnesota lead to increased absent days (Fan, 2016).

According to results of present study a higher percentage of students found to have history of being absent at primary, secondary and intermediate level. Studies found to support the result of results of present study as if not controlled in early grades, absenteeism grows as habit and it is associated with higher rates of dropout from education (Robinson, 2018).

Results revealed that higher percentage (70.77%) of students found to have had failed at least once in university examination; (3.08%) failed twice; (1.54%) failed more than twice while only 24.62% absentee students never failed in university examination. Many studies have found out that excessive absenteeism is a predictor for low academic performance (Branson, 2016; AbuRuz, 2015). It may have a rationale that chronic absenteeism leads to missing of important learning opportunities offered at educational institutes and results in higher failure rate in students who are habitual of truancy.

The study questionnaire used to conduct this study contained items on factors contributing to undergraduate nursing student's absenteeism which were grouped under five factors namely, personal factors, educational factors, social factors, teacher related factors and institutional factors.

### **Personal Factors**

Analysis showed that most influential factors among items of personal factor category was 'not joined nursing studies as per choice' (mean=3.77, SD: 1.06). This is evident by the study conducted by (Prymachuk, 2009) which states dissatisfaction with career choice is linked to stress, anxiety, poor performance and mostly results in attrition. It may have explanation that student lose their interest in studies as it is not as per their choice.

Other item of personal factor category found to have higher influence on absentees were 'awaking up late for college' (mean=3.62, SD: 1.31). Many studies have suggested tardiness as the predictor for absentees (Martinez, 2016). It is due to the reason that tardiness relates to the lack of motivation, dissatisfaction and lack of interest for studies. Also students may feel uncomfortable to attend institute as they have to undergo scolding for their act of tardiness, Hence they make them absent for the whole lecture or the day.

'Feeling exhausted and fatigued' (mean=3.62, SD: 1.16) followed by 'frequent minor health issues' (mean=3.53, SD: 1.15). It has the support

of study stating that exhaustive schedule, ill health and sleeplessness are the reasons for non-attendance from classes (Gbadamosi, 2016).

‘Shortage of personal resources’, ‘having part time job with study’ belong to the less influential factors contributing to absenteeism among students. That contradicts with the study conducted by (Peters, 2019), and (Wadood, 2018) concluding that part time employment have impact on student’s attendance and academic performance. The reason for this may be that most of the students of public and private institutes are getting financial support in form of stipends that may lessen contribution by these factors to absenteeism.

### **Educational Factors**

Analysis showed that the items related to this factor with highest means score were ‘impending assignments’ (mean=3.68, SD: 1.02), this is congruent with the study conducted on medical and health sciences students by (Desalegn, 2014;Komakech, 2014) which states that overload with assignments causes absenteeism among students. It may have explanation that overload with assignment lead to higher cognitive load on students and causes burnout from classes. Second item considered influential factor with high means score is ‘lack of interest in certain subjects’ (mean=3.46, SD: 1.24). It is supported by the study conducted by (Wadesango, 2011) stating that lack of interest in the subject taught is a predictor of absenteeism in students.

‘Not want to appear in quiz’ and ‘not want to do presentation or demonstration’ belongs to category of little influential factors. It may have reason that all these activities are graded and students are compelled not to miss these activities. A study conducted by (Desalegn, 2014) states that students miss classes due to the reason that they need to work on assignments or prepare presentation.

### **Social Factors**

Results states that items of social factors have mean score between 2.72 and 3.39 which denotes that these factors sometime cause absenteeism. Highest mean score among items of social factors category was noted for ‘family and social commitments’ (mean=3.32, SD: 1.26). That is similar with the study conducted by (Fayombo, 2012) which states that family commitments noted to be a reason for student absentees. It may have reason that family responsibilities can interfere with learner’s capacity to carry out educational endeavours. Mean score for ‘like to spend time with friends’ and ‘like to skip classes when friends are absent’ were

3.28 and 3.12 respectively, that is supported by the study conducted by (Goodman, 2014) which states that students like to stay away from classes when their friends are absent. Disruptive events occurring at home noted to have mean score of 3.09. That may have support of a study stating that anxiety and not able to actively cope from stress may lead to dropout from educational institute (Ingul, 2013).

Least mean score of 2.88 among the social factors was noted for 'poor relations with classmates or peers. Institutional social climate plays a major role for student's engagement and motivation with learning (Gottfried, 2014).

### **Teacher's Related Factors**

Results stated that overall mean score of teacher's related factors is 3.26, hence it also falls under the category of factors that sometimes cause absentees. Analysis revealed that most influential factors among items of teacher related factor category were 'when teachers teaching skills are not up to mark' (mean=3.67, SD: 0.94). That is in agreement with the study conducted by (Gershenson, 2016) which states that teachers having poor and casual teaching skills lead to significant students' absences from class. That may be due to the reason that teachers with mediocre teaching skills and classroom management lead to development of boredom in learners and students do not feel comfortable in the environment.

Second item having influential contribution in absentees found to be was 'poor relation with teacher' (mean=3.63, SD: 1.07). While third item that have contributed more often to absentees was 'deliberately refrain from attending classes of teachers who are strict' (mean=3.45, SD: 1.20). 'Teacher having an attitude of disrespect' (mean=3.15, SD: 1.28) belongs to the category of factors that sometime causes truancy as per mean score. That may have explanation that misbehave, poor educator-learner relations and strictness in class creates a disturbed class environment and distraction hence student make them chronically absent to avoid any clash with teachers (Oghuvbu, 2007).

'When teacher is not regular and punctual' (mean=2.99, SD: 1.27) belongs to factors that some time cause truancy as per their mean score. A study conducted by (Holt, 2015) states that teachers regularity has impact on absentees in students. While results of this study states that teachers regularity and punctuality belongs to the category of items that only some time causes absentees, this can be due to the reason that multiple teachers are present in educational institute, who may replace the absent teacher, hence students are not much inclined to absentees due to teacher's absentee behavior.

While it was noted that ‘teacher asking so many question’ (mean=2.64, SD: 1.25) belongs to the category of least influential factors. It may be explained as that learners are there for learning and it is quite normal for teachers to ask questions about whatever has been taught.

### **Institutional Factors**

Interestingly, institutional factors showed highest average mean of 3.46 among all factors. Analysis showed that most influential factors among items of institutional factor category were ‘Lack of proper guidance in clinical area’ (mean=3.94, SD: 0.94) followed by ‘shortage of staff in clinical area’ (mean=3.88, SD: 0.85), ‘Not want to be treated as workforce in clinical area’ (mean=3.82, SD: 1.90). A study conducted by (Thobakgale, 2013) states that there is possibility of nursing pupils to make absents if there is shortage of staff in clinical area it may have reason that students are there for preceptorship and learning, in case of shortage of clinical staff sometimes, students are being used as replacement of staff due to which they may feel uncomfortable. Secondly, when clinical staff is short, a proper guidance and mentorship is not being offered to the leaner, hence due to decreased supervision they make absentees (Timmins, 2002).

Another item found to have significant influence on student absent behavior identified in results is ‘very exhaustive and rigid or irregular timetable’ (mean=3.81, SD: 1.94). That have the support of a study conducted on pharmacy students that showed considerable influence of back to back classes without breaks on decreased student’s attendance (Hidayat, 2012). It may have rational that rigid or irregular time schedule for classes may lead to boredom and lethargy in students.

**Limitations:** The study only focusses on undergraduate students of 4-Year generic B.Sc. nursing students. It did not focus on other nursing programs so findings cannot be generalized to other nursing education programs.

### **Implication for Future Studies**

The scope of this research can be stretched to future researches on the student absenteeism. Furthermore, present study may provide directions for future researches to explore relationship of various socio-demographic factors, with absent behavior. A comparative study regarding absentees may provide a deeper picture of problem. Moreover, present study may give directions to nurse educationists, researchers and managers

to strengthen and strictly implement policies regarding attendance of students. An in-depth qualitative study exploring perspective of teachers regarding absentee behavior of students may provide a deeper understanding of the phenomenon.

This research may have implication for nurse educators, administrators and policymakers to implement the guidelines to reduce absentees among nursing students.

### **Recommendations**

The problem of chronic absenteeism was precipitated by interplay of multiple factors hence, following recommendations and guidelines to reduce absenteeism may be used by nurse educationists, administrators of nursing institutes and top-level nursing education policy makers:

- Educational scholarships and financial assistance may be awarded to needy students so that part time jobs may be discouraged.
- Nursing curricula may be redesigned and upgraded so that repetition of topics may be eliminated, and element of boredom may be disregarded.
- Aptitude and level of interest in the nursing profession may be assessed for new induction of students for joining nursing education programs by the nursing institutes.
- A regular health check-up of students can be arranged by educational institutes and students may be taught about health promotion and illness prevention public health strategies as a small module or in form of awareness seminars.
- Providing institutional transportation may enhance punctuality and regularity of students.
- The cognitive load must be managed accordingly by educators as too much cognitive load may cause students to burn out.
- Absentee students may be buddied with punctual and high achieving students, as peers have considerable influence on our habits.
- Respecting students by creating pleasant and enabling environment for teaching to motivate them lecturers can make the institute a place where students feel safe and respected.
- Pre-service and refresher trainings of teacher may be arranged to equip and keep them updated about latest developments and innovations in teaching and learning.
- Flexible classroom and clinical timetables must be planned with proper breaks so that students may not get exhausted.

- Clinical areas must be optimally staffed, and students should not be treated as workforce as they are in clinical area for learning purposes under proper supervision.
- Proper extracurricular and recreational activities must be initiated at institute.
- Incentives like good attendance certificates, student of the month, or sharing list of students with good attendance on social media pages or notice boards of institutes.
- A counselling center must be built at nursing institutes that must be staffed with trained nurse psychologist/ clinical psychologist, that may be able to help students in various cognitive, behavioral and psychological issues.

### **Conclusion**

Despite of all the efforts of authorities, absenteeism is a growing discipline issue which is faced by the nursing institutes globally. This study concludes that students viewed that many personal, educational, social, teacher related, and institutional factors are influencing to student absenteeism.

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