

STRATEGIC AND INSTRUCTIONAL INTERVENTIONS ON STUDENTS' HABITUAL ABSENCES FOR ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to determine the problems encountered due to students' habitual absences, and the extent of its effects on academic performance. This is a descriptive research design utilizing survey questionnaire. The population was composed of nine subject teachers and forty-seven students. Descriptive statistics using mean, average weighted mean, over-all mean, percentage distribution, ranking and descriptive ratings based on 5-point Likert scale were utilized. t-Test results indicating significant difference were employed. There was salient finding that depicts significant difference on the extent of the effects of the problems on academic performance as perceived by the teachers and students. In view of the finding, this conclusion was drawn: the disparity is made known because the prevailing situation might be in contrast to students' expectations and they are not adjusted on classroom activities that demand time. Another reason is that, the teachers are duty-bound to scrutinize the details of the component before rating them while the students appraised the area in accordance to their own understanding, thus, overlooking its significance. In the light of the foregoing conclusion, the following were recommended: determine the type and frequency of absences prevalent in the classroom, evaluate the validity of the strategic and instructional interventions before its application, enrich the academic development programs, provide incentives to active students and give greater emphasis on areas where students are deficient.

Keywords: Habitual absences, effects, academic performance, interventions.

INTRODUCTION

Quality education is difficult to achieve but it is a challenge to all educators to see that their learners are performing well. It must address practically the needs of the students, if it is to be true to its goals of preparing them for the future. Perhaps, the most important thing to consider is to know the kind of students to be served by educational authorities. Rodrigues (1986) cited the interview made to Minda C. Sutaria, which says: "Our thrust is quality education which to me does not just mean knowing how to read, write, compute and think rationally. It also means that the students possess the moral, civic and spiritual values that make for sound citizenship. It reinforces the educational vision which is the articulation of the ideal state of education, taking into account the concerns for effectiveness, equity, excellence, efficiency and relevance in the light of the aspiration and development of students as well as the benefits, welfare and academic fulfillment of teachers, school officials and society. The ultimate outcomes in the pursuit of the above-mentioned concerns in educational processes are shown in the kind of graduates and school learners who are prepared to discharge their social, political, spiritual and economic roles in society, thus enhancing the quality of life in the country and the world."

Therefore, there is a need to examine the effects of the habitual absences committed by the students. The academic achievement of the students depends upon their willingness to surpass the challenges that surround them. Mostly, the students earn a living to finance their schooling and other expenditures, and indulge in some activities that may demand time. They have to work hard to the point of sacrificing their attendance in the university. However, the researcher's main point is not to question students' absenteeism but to ensure that maximum inputs are provided to them for future benefit.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The theoretical framework of this study evolved from the systems analysis theory. Kast and Rosenzweigh (1987) stated that the systems analysis is a methodological way to identify significant problems from symptoms and to evaluate solutions in existing system. In the process, resources are utilized in a way to optimize the time, cost and quality issue. The inputs are the various resources that must be transformed into the products or services to achieve the purpose. Output is sensed and compared with objectives and feedbacks are generated to control the process. System theory is significant in this study especially it is open to any influence that will affect the interaction of the involved person. It usually inspires him/her to perform effectively in order to provide contribution that can be evaluated as an important part of the school system. Although his/her actions are being constrained by its effects, still his/her involvement as a human being is greatly considered. It can also be stated that the interventions applied whether successful or not could be a symptom of a problem that needs to be identified in order to formulate possible reform. If that happens such action creates interdependences in the educational system which means that any change in one part affects the other parts of the whole.

This study is also inspired by Bruner's theory of instruction (Hall and Lindzey: 1970). This theory emphasizes the teachers' role in the instructional and learning processes. Bruner saw that maturation and environment influence intellectual development, but he turned most of his attention to the instructional environment. He recognized the importance of structure, but he focused on the responsibilities of the teacher rather than the responsibilities of the student. Since the purpose of this study is to come up with strategic and instructional interventions through the new instructional materials and devices appropriate in addressing problems on students' academic performance, this study pointed out Bruner's idea (1970). His emphasis on the effectiveness of teachers whose aim is to make his/her students end up possessing at least the knowledge and skills judged to be appropriate for that particular type of learner despite frequent absences, is hereby appealing to be relevant to the need of this research.

Several related literature had been gathered from local and foreign authors to equip the researcher with background knowledge of the problem she had investigated. The extent of the cause of absences should be well thought out to analyze the degree of the absences committed because if it will be tolerated the students' academic standing will be affected. The following factors are greatly reflected:

Habit: Habit of the students is one of the problems in the changeable trend of attendance. Many students who enrolled in schools have already established the attitude that studying was not their "thing". If indeed their grades have indicated that they have not attained mastery, their chances of success in high-level would seem to be minimal. In fact, there were many cases wherein students did not know their basic facts. Moreover, talking about the habit of always feeling anxiety, Skiba (1990) said that students seemed more intense but others

accepted it as normal in college life. This study aims to divert this bad habit into good by applying intervention that matches their interests.

Work: Work is needed in order to survive but sometimes it can be a reason why students commit absences. With this regard, McMillan and Weyers in their Study Skills Book (Second Edition: 2009) advised by saying that University is an exciting place with lots of activities beyond those your course offers. You will need to make choices about how you go about enjoying these activities while maintaining your employment activities at realistic level. Exploring possible career routes at an early stage will provide the students with a better idea of the range of options they should consider. If their chosen discipline has a clear aim, they may feel that they have made the most important decisions already.

Sickness: This condition should be avoided because if it happens the students cease to attend classes. It is possible because this is a valid reason to be excused. The students will only present medical certificate then, he/she will be given chances to recover from the missed activities. This study wanted to point out that sickness should not be used as an alibi for one's absences that's why it is a must to verify the documents presented in addition to what you have observed in your personal contact to the student. It does not curtail one's right but as an educator, whose main objective is to provide students a quality input, should address this problem so the student will become conscientious of his/her action. Sickness may refer to illness, disease, nausea and sickness behavior (Wikipedia). If these are really experienced by the concern; then immediate intervention should be provided for the lapses.

Athletic Involvement: Students are fond of exposing their interests in sports, and their involvement in these strenuous activities could be a main reason why they fail to attend classes regularly. Since it is also necessary to have a passing mark to be considered a real athlete, it is now the task of the teacher to apply intervention of one's absences. Still many factors should be considered to determine whether or not one's excuses are valid.

Family: Family is the main reason why everybody is working hard. But sometimes, we can't deny that it can cause conflict to your studies. That's why it is suggested by McMillan and Weyers in their Study Skills Book (Second Edition: 2009) that if you've thought about your goals for your time at university (page 5), think about what sort of study regime will be required to achieve them which you can still keep in contact with your family. Mature students need to plan equally and carefully to achieve a balance between family and study responsibilities. Using a planner such as *The Smarter Student Planner* will help you to allocate your time and keep track of academic and personal commitments.

Frequent absences can cause many problems on academic achievement. Education, which is greatly affected, should address the question on how to reduce it and how to help students recover from it (Carter: 1991). The most common approaches to provide are academic consultation and advising which are already applied in the university. These methods are the focal point where all ideas and resources are translated into action. Reviewed and presented below are some studies, which were found relevant to the present study.

Management of Instructional Materials

In her study, Sabado (1994) found out that instructional materials provided adequate and appropriate activities needed to develop the students' skills in English grammar. So, the primary purpose is to develop those powers of understanding in order to appreciate the

progress of civilization in various aspects, and to cultivate those habits of putting thoughts into action which will make these powers effective in the life of the individual.

Recommendations on Utilization of Instructional Materials

Based on the result of the study conducted by Raful (1990), she offered the following recommendation: 1.) Teachers should give greater emphasis on areas where students are deficient. Developments of instructional materials are recommended to overcome these deficiencies. 2.) Teachers should equip themselves with teaching methodologies and use those instructional materials in their teaching to solve the problem of insufficient supply of textbooks and other references. 3.) Teachers should adjust instruction to the needs and characteristics of individual learners.

Interventions to Student Achievement

Noting that the most accurate predictor of student achievement is the extent to which the family is involved in his or her education. Anne Henderson (1994) reported in the findings on research work on the function and importance of family to a student's achievement and education in school and the community. Major findings indicated that the family makes critical contributions to student's achievement from the earliest childhood years up to present, and efforts to improve students' outcomes are much more effective when the family is actively involved.

The reviewed studies provided more insights to the researcher regarding the problem investigated. Related studies were in terms correlated on the different aspects of intervention both strategic and instructional.

METHODOLOGY

Methods and Techniques of the Study

While undertaking this research, the descriptive method was utilized. This method involves description, recording, analysis and interpretation of phenomena; those were already existing (Van Dalen: 1993). The search aimed at providing much-needed information with respect to the strategic and instructional interventions to be applied by the teachers of Languages and Literature Department in AMAIUB on students' habitual absences. In attaining this, group of respondents in each of the selected English classes provided the information sought for. Questionnaire was the instrument used in this study which was further explained through interview.

Population of the Study

Two sets of respondents were the sources of data in the study, those who have records of eight or more absences in the second trimester of school year 2012-2013. The first set consisted of forty-seven students who were responsible to answer the problems met and effects on academic performance. The second group of respondents, comprised of nine (9) subject teachers, mismatched to the number of English classes due to the number of retrieved questionnaires. They provided detailed information on the problems encountered, its effect on academic performance and the way to address the problem about absenteeism.

Research Instruments

The primary data-gathering instrument in the study was questionnaire constructed by the researcher. The first draft of the questionnaire was shown to the five research experts in the university; for their comments, corrections and suggestions. The improved copy was later subjected to validation and reliability test.

Data Processing and Statistical Treatment

Descriptive statistics such as frequency counts, average and percentage distribution of data gathered were utilized. The rating scale items for the problems encountered and the effects of the problems on academic performance called for responses on a five-point Likert scale. Hypothesis testing was used for the significant difference in the perceptions between subject teachers and students on the effects of the problems on academic performance, and individual's scores as to TWS, Mean, SD and t-test.

RESULTS

Table 1 presents the problems encountered due to absenteeism as perceived by both groups. The degree of each problem was rated based on the given 5-point scale such as: all of the time, often, sometimes, rarely and never. The analysis of the responses on the problems encountered was known through the mean distribution of the teachers and students' data. The outcomes show that both groups are synonymous in perceiving that items 1, 2, 3, 6 and 8 were often encountered. This means that disruption of classes, distraction of students, irregular attendance, difficulty in participation and insufficient lessons were frequently experienced due to habitual absences. Although the over-all mean of 3.47, rated as sometimes, suggests a decreasing occurrence of the problems still the teachers' potentials are being challenged to fully realize its remediation and consequently, promote the students' welfare.

Table 2 emphasizes the extent of the effects of the problems on academic performance as perceived by the groups. The data gathered were interpreted based on computed mean, Average Weighted Mean and over-all mean, which were derived from 5-point scale. Further scrutiny of the table divulged a great extent interpretation on items 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7 and 9; and very great extent on items 5, 8 and 10. On the part of the students, no item received a very great extent rating instead moderate extent on items 1, 3, 4 and 7; and great extent on 2, 5, 6, 8, 9 and 10 items. Combining their average weighted mean (4.13 for teachers and 3.73 for students) manifests a great extent in analysis, meaning the respondents viewed homogeneously the entirety of the areas.

Table 3 illustrates the t-Test results obtained from the teachers and students' perceptions. A quick glimpse on the table reveals that there is a significant difference in its observation on the extent of the effects of the problems on academic performance. Therefore, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant difference on groups' perceptions in line with these aspects is rejected. This infers that although they have disparity in interpretation, this could be considered significant because it revealed the groups' awareness of its impact to one's academic performance. They are mindful that due to habitual absences, learning outcomes are being hampered. Another reason is that, its discrepancy is made known because the prevailing situation might be in contrast to students' expectations and they are not adjusted on classroom activities that demand time. It is also expected that because teachers

are duty-bound to scrutinize the details of the component before rating them while the students appraised the area in accordance with their own understanding, heterogeneous result is expected. Sometimes they considered it simply a brief presentation, thus, overlooking its significance.

Table 1: Mean Distribution and Descriptive Rating on the Extent of the Problems Encountered Due to Absenteeism as Perceived by the Groups

Indicators	Subject Teachers (9)			Students (47)		
	Mean	Interpretation	Rank	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
1. Classes are disrupted	3.78	Often	5	3.94	Often	4.5
2. Students are distracted	3.89	Often	4	3.72	Often	6
3. Irregular attendance is experienced	3.56	Often	6	4.21	Often	2
4. Request for consideration becomes customary on the part of the students	2.33	Rarely	9	3.47	Sometimes	7
5. The cause of absences becomes a reasonable excuse	2.78	Sometimes	8	4.19	Often	3
6. Difficulty in achieving the 100 percent participation	4.00	Often	2.5	3.94	Often	4.5
7. Teacher's work becomes tedious due to students' fluctuating attendance record	3.44	Sometimes	7	2.49	Rarely	9
8. Lessons are not 100 percent disseminated	4.00	Often	2.5	4.28	Often	1
9. Teaching objectives are not completely attained	4.11	Often	1	2.06	Rarely	10
10. Students' record of absences influence others to do the same	2.00	Rarely	10	3.26	Sometimes	8
Average Weighted Mean	3.39	Sometimes		3.56	Often	
Over-All Mean	3.47			Sometimes		

Table 2: Mean Distribution and Descriptive Rating on the Effects of the Problems on Academic Performance as Perceived by the Groups

Indicators	Subject Teachers (9)			Students (47)		
	Mean	Interpretation	Rank	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
1. Student learning outcomes are not completely attained	3.89	Great Extent	7	3.28	Moderate Extent	9
2. Obtain a limited time for learning	4.00	Great Extent	6	3.77	Great Extent	6
3. Academic pursuit is inadequate due to disrupted classes	3.78	Great Extent	8.5	2.83	Moderate Extent	10
4. Basic skills are not properly developed	4.33	Great Extent	4	3.40	Moderate Extent	7.5
5. Lessen one's interest to perform well in class	4.56	Very Great Extent	2.5	4.15	Great Extent	2.5
6. Students' potentials are not realized to the fullest	3.78	Great Extent	8.5	3.98	Great Extent	5
7. Students are not progressively advancing in oral and written outputs	3.56	Great Extent	10	3.40	Moderate Extent	7.5
8. Lack of opportunities to participate in scholastic activities	4.56	Very Great Extent	2.5	4.15	Great Extent	2.5
9. Prone to achieve a failing mark	4.11	Great Extent	5	4.04	Great Extent	4
10. Failure to complete the total number of attendance for the trimester	4.78	Very Great Extent	1	4.30	Great Extent	1
Average Weighted Mean	4.13	Great Extent		3.73	Great Extent	
Over-All Mean	3.93			Great Extent		

Table 3: t-Test Results Indicating Difference in the Perceptions on the Effects of the Problems on Academic Performance

Respondents	Mean	Mean Difference	t	Probability	Remarks
Teachers	4.13	0.40	2.373	0.021	Significant Difference
Students	3.73				

DISCUSSION

Problems Encountered: The data revealed the following problems encountered due to habitual absences: disruption of classes, distraction of students, irregular attendance, difficulty in participation and insufficient lessons.

Effects of the Problems: Combining their average weighted mean (4.13 for teachers and 3.73 for students) manifests a great extent in analysis, meaning the respondents viewed homogeneously the entirety of the areas.

Difference in the Perceptions on the Effects of the Problems on Academic Performance: There is a significant difference in its observation on the extent of the effects of the problems

on academic performance. Therefore, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant difference on groups' perceptions in line with these aspects is rejected.

CONCLUSION

The most important point that this study tried to figure out, after discovering the problems met due to habitual absences, is the extent of its effect on academic performance. The interpretation indicating significant difference in the perceptions between teachers and students infers that although they have disparity in views, this could be considered substantial because it revealed the groups' awareness of the problems' impact on one's academic performance. They are mindful that due to habitual absences, learning outcomes are being hampered. Therefore, the discrepancy is made known because the prevailing situation might be in contrast to students' expectations and they are not adjusted on classroom activities that demand time. It is also expected that because teachers are duty-bound to scrutinize the details of the component before rating them while the students appraised the area in accordance with their own understanding, heterogeneous result is expected. Sometimes they considered it simply a brief presentation, thus, overlooking its significance.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This study was completed by the researcher through the help of kind and wonderful people who gave valuable contributions to make this piece of work whole. The following will forever be engraved in her heart:

Dr. Amable R. Aguiluz V, President of AMAIUB, for his utmost intention to strengthen the attainment of quality research;

Ms. Buena Gracia A. Canzana, Head, Administration of AMAIUB, for her enthusiastic encouragement to realize the mission of the university concerning research;

Dr. Geraldo C. Talisic, VP, Academic Affairs of AMAIUB, for his intellectual criticisms and precious suggestions;

Prof. Mahdi F. Mosa, Dean, Center for General Education of AMAIUB, for his inspiring comments and persuasive remarks;

Dr. Amin A. El-Meligi, former Research Chairman of AMAIUB, for his productive observations that have indeed, enriched this study;

Dr. Rodel L. Ortanez, Statistician, for his valuable annotations;

The members of the Research Committee, for their fruitful ideas imparted and recording made during the examination/evaluation of the research output;

The AMAIUB Faculty and Staff, for granting permission to conduct this study;

The Librarian of AMAIUB, for her unselfish service given to the researcher;

To my husband, children, parents brothers and sisters, for the inspiration;

And most of all, **To God Almighty**, for the strength and wisdom bestowed to the researcher.

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