COLLABORATIVE-BASED APPROACH MANUAL (CBAM): ABSENTEEISM REDUCER FOR JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL REGULAR CLASSES AT LUNA NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL-CENTRAL

YMOR A. BALALA
Luna National High School
Division of La Union

Abstract

The attendance of students in the Philippines is declining. It is important to identify potential causes of absenteeism and implement techniques for reducing it. At the Luna National High School, 163 student absences in a month were recorded frequently. These lead to failing grades, poor performance, disciplinary problems and long-term social difficulties. This study assessed the most prevalent cause of absenteeism, the frequency of absences of students, and the significant difference in the number of cases of absences before and after the implementation of the intervention. The study used the one-shot pretest/post-test experimental method of research to determine the effectiveness of the intervention among the selected non-attendance learners. The research instruments used were survey questionnaire and interview. The researcher used a purposive sampling technique in selecting the 38 students who responded to the study. The data gathered were treated using frequency counts, percentages, weighted mean, ranking, and t-test. Results revealed that the most prevalent cause of absenteeism was the health factor which includes toothache, stomachache, headache, fever, and diarrhea. The intervention program was effective in reducing the number of cases of absences. The CBAM is recommended for use among non-attendance learners. This must be institutionalized to sustain its purpose.

Keywords: Absenteeism, Collaborative- Based Approach Manual, Attendance Action Team, Action Research, Problem reducer, health problems

1. Introduction

Students' absenteeism is a serious issue in public education. Buccat and Cuntapay (2006) study defined absenteeism in an educational institution as a perennial problem. When students are not in school, they miss the opportunity to grow academically, socially, and emotionally. These aspects are critical for continued success in school, in the community, and onward into adulthood.

In developing countries like the Philippines student's attendance is a problem. This is alarming and needs to be remediated. Frequent absences from classes can lead to failing grades, poor performance, disciplinary problems, and long-term social difficulties. These skills are critical for continued success in school, in the community, and onward into adulthood.

One of the most unsatisfying experiences of school educators is dealing with student absenteeism. The teacher prepares daily lesson logs with the objective that all the learners in a class will learn from the day's classroom activities. It is most satisfying when all students are present on that day and the days thereafter to guarantee the highest level of learning. Sadly, it is very difficult to achieve a perfect attendance among students.

This research study is anchored on constructivist theory. Constructivist theory is commonly used in professions such as social work because it aligns with the important values of the social work profession. Constructivist theorists recognize that each person has his or her own frame of reference that comes from his or her own values, concepts, and ideas. Constructivist theory can be used by the guidance counselor or the teacher in starting counseling or advising since they have already understood the student's experiences and perception toward absenteeism.

Also, this research study is related to system theory. Systems theory is used as a framework to help social workers treat clients as a system and as part of a larger system (Walonick, 1993). The systems theory provided the researcher with additional information to consider as well as data to gather about the students' backgrounds. Each student had a different story to tell with different influential structures, people, and events that may have caused them to be absent. For example, when a student became absent due to a major change in his living situation (micro-system) resulting in the family

becoming homeless. Each student has their own frame of reference that was developed based on his or her childhood experiences, the school, and community in which they lived, and cultural/religious influences. The researcher took into account what systems impacted the students' lives to understand how they became absent.

Absenteeism can be affected by any number of factors such as lack of community support, dysfunctional family life, severe weather, personal illness, family illness, physical limitations or any other reason why a student may not attend school on a given day. From the study of Cook and Ezenne (2010) school factors stand out as a major reason of absenteeism that occur when school environment is not attractive for students, students feel bored doing homework, are bullied by peer students in schools, Teachers' relations to students are not friendly and the school curriculum is irrelevant to children's interest and experiences.

In addition, absenteeism is an undesired student behavior which might arise from several factors such as physical, psychological and social factors and might affect the academic success of the student in a negative way (Altınkurt, 2008). Student absenteeism is a major concern for Public School Teachers because it can create a dead, tiresome, unpleasant classroom environment.

A successful intervention creates partnerships between schools, families, social workers, outside organizations, the community and sometimes law enforcement (Baker, Sigmon, & Nugent 2001; Chang & Romero, 2008). The reported Project GRAD a community- based approach in Atlanta, Georgia was a success by improving students 'attendance for those who were absent 15 or more days. This intervention offered guidance, counseling, outside resources from the community, and family aid for those students or families experiencing difficulties.

Perhaps the most effective strategy schools can implement to reduce rates of absenteeism is to create solid absenteeism policy. According to Railsback (2004), schools should begin by creating consistent and reasonable attendance policies that include appropriate consequences when students do not attend school. Schools need to find an ideal balance when deciding upon an attendance policy. A school's attendance policy must be made to ensure regular attendance. The policy will be more meaningful if there is a collaboration between teachers, students, parents, and administrative staff.

According to Wyimmer (2008) the following are the main cause of absenteeism: health problems; family problems; lack of subject interest; poor teaching strategies by teachers; unfavorable learning environment; and poor relation with teachers. However, the findings of these researchers have also variations, such as/ stressful life events, community influences, socio-economic factors, and irrelevant curriculum

Thornton, Damody, & McCoy, (2013) revealed that the children of families who cannot have a good communication with their children, who are highly oppressive have no authority on their children and have accepted the failure of their children show considerably high cases of absenteeism and school dropout.

According to Epstein and Sheldon (2002), the most effective strategy at the school level is to use a comprehensive approach where the school involves students, parents, and the community. Spradlin et al. (2012) proposed a local partnership between the families, community, and school improve attendance.

Furthermore, the research study on absenteeism of the Students at LPU- Batangas reveals that the reasons of student's absenteeism are health reasons, financial concern, transportation difficulties, peer pressure and no assignments (Counseling& Testing Center LPU-Batangas, 2012). The intervention program is so important to combat this kind of school problem. In connection with this, the research study of Menia (2014) entitled "Referral system on truancy among tourism students of Lyceum of the Philippines University" uses referral system aimed to reduce truants and drop-outs from the class. Based on the study, the highest contributory factor to learner's absences was health reasons with 30.51 percent followed by family matter with 18.64 percent. Therefore, it implies that students incurred absences due to health reasons.

In Luna National High School, the drop-out rate is considerable:35 drop-outs for SY 2011-2012;19 drop-outs for SY 2012-2013; and 17 drop-outs for SY 2013 -2014. (Source: Guidance Office). Some of the causes of dropping out are as follows: (1) illness or disease, poor academic performance, and lack of interest; (2) domestic related factor such early marriage/pregnancy, and family problems; and (3) due to geographic factors such as the distance between homes and school. The findings revealed that zero drop- out rate cannot be fully achieved at the Luna National High School.

With this scenario, theories, concepts, and ideas on absenteeism the researcher would like to determine the most prevalent cause of absenteeism, the frequency of absences, the percentage (%) of absences, and the significant difference of the attendance of students before and after the implementation of the *Collaborative -Based Approach Manual* (CBAM) as an intervention designed to reduce the rates of absenteeism.

This intervention consists of attendance policies that include possible consequences when students do not attend school. The CBAM is a referral system which is a comprehensive approach where the school involves a student, classroom adviser, co-adviser, parents or guardian, guidance counselor, department heads and school principal who work as a team through a series of conferences at different phases.

2. Method

2.1. Research Design

This study was a school-based action research. The study used the one-shot pretest/posttest experimental method of research respectively to determine the most prevalent cause of absenteeism and the intervention effectiveness among the selected non-attendance learners.

2.2 Participants

This research study was conducted in Luna National High School, Barrientos, Luna, La Union from July to November S.Y. 2016-2017. This study was delimited to find out the effectiveness of Collaborative-Based Approach Manual (CBAM) among the selected absentee students from Grade 7 to 10 Regular class. The manual was conceptualized based on the study of Thornton, Darmody and McCoy (2013) and it was implemented for one month. The thirty-eight (38) elements of the sample size were selected using purposive sampling technique based on the consistency in incurring consecutive absences from their classes.

2.3. Instrumentation

To determine the main cause of absenteeism among the respondents, the researcher used a survey questionnaire. The survey questionnaire was adopted from the study of Murcia (2011). The questions are statements on the reasons why students absent themselves. The responses of the learners were tallied and statistically analyzed using descriptive statistics.

2.4 Data Analysis

The frequency counts, weighted mean, and ranking were used to treat the data. To determine the improved attendance, the mathematical formula on the percentage (%) of absences was adopted from the study of Komakech and Osuu (2014). On the other hand, a t-test was used to determine the significant difference between the attendance of the students before and after the implementation of the intervention.

Below are the statistical limits that were used to quantify the data needed in evaluating the level of status of common causes influencing absenteeism.

Scale	Range	Descriptive Equivalent Rating
5	4.20 - 5.00	Always (A)
4	3.40 – 4.19	Most Often (MO)
3	2.60 – 3.39	Sometimes (S)
2	1.80 – 2.59	Rarely (R)
1	1.00 – 1.79	Never (N)

3. Results

3.1. Most Prevalent Causes of Absenteeism

As shown in Table 1, the factors influencing absenteeism such as physical factor, personal attitude, teacher-related factor, classroom atmosphere, and home-related factors were rated never. The health as a factor that can cause absenteeism was ranked first with a weighted mean of 1.98 and was rated rarely. It is also noticeable in the data that the classroom atmosphere was ranked second on the list with a weighted mean of 1.63. There were two (2) factors which came next: the physical factor and home-related factor, with a weighted mean value of 1.57 described as never. Finally, Teacher-Related factor was ranked last on the list with a weighted mean of 1.44.

Table 1. Most Prevalent Causes of Absenteeism

Common causes of absenteeism	Weighted Mean	Descriptive Equivalent Rating	Rank
A. Physical Factor	1.54	Never	4.5
B. Health	1.98	Rarely	1
C. Personal Attitude	1.63	Never	3
D. Teacher-Related Factors	1.44	Never	6
E. Classroom atmosphere	1.72	Never	2
F. Home-Related Factors	1.54	Never	4.5

3.2. Total Frequency of Absences

As shown in Table 2, the total frequency of absences before and after the implementation of the intervention is four hundred sixty-two (462) and eighty-seven (87). It is noticeable in the data that the total frequency of absences before the implementation of the intervention is greater over the total frequency of absences after the intervention was implemented.

Table 2. Total Frequency of Absences

	Before	After
No. of Students	462	87

3.3. Percentage (%) of Student with Improved Attendance

Data in Table 3 revealed that the total number of attendance before and after the implementation is six hundred seventy-eight (678) and one thousand fifty-three (1,053) respectively. This means that there is an increase on the number of attendance. Furthermore, the data show that the percentage of improved attendance was rated good (55%).

Table 3. Percentage (%) of Student with Improved Attendance

Total number of attendance before the implementation	Total Number of attendance after the implementation	Percentage of improve attendance	Descriptive Equivalent Rating
678	1053	55%	Good

3.4. Significant Difference of Student's Attendance

Data in table 4 show that the mean score of the students' attendance without intervention is 17.84 while with intervention mean is 27.70. The non-attendance learners that were exposed to the intervention have greater effect over the non-attendance learners that were not exposed on the said intervention. It means that the use of the intervention increased the students' number of attendance.

Table 4. Significant Difference of Student's Attendance

	With intervention	Without intervention
Mean	27.70	17.84
t Stat	22.57	
t Critical one-tail	1.67	
t Critical two-tail	1.99	

4. Discussion

4.1. Most Prevalent Causes of Absenteeism

Table 1 shows that health was ranked first. It means that health issue is the most prevalent cause of absenteeism. This implies that health conditions are often a barrier to a student attending school in LNHS, thus it can contribute to often absenteeism. This result was comparable to the research of Menia (2014) where she stressed out that the highest contributor to absenteeism was a health-related. On the other hand, the primary cause of absenteeism based on the data of the guidance office is mostly health-related issues. It only means that the data from the guidance office, the researcher's findings, and the result of the different studies were the same.

A teacher-Related factor was ranked last on the list. The teacher related factor is not a factor on the causes of absenteeism. The researcher inferred that teachers are doing their work religiously and monitor attendance regularly. This finding can be supported by the study of Thornton, Darmody and McCoy (2013) that monitoring the child's school attendance can sustain school attendance.

4.2. Total Frequency of Absences

Table 2 shows that the frequency of absences before and after the implementation of the intervention was improved. This only indicates that the intervention is a successful program to reduce the number of cases of absenteeism among the non-attendance learners. The result can be supported from the study of Peek (2009) that intervention is the most effective means for modifying the school attendance.

4.3. Percentage (%) of Student with Improved Attendance

Moreover, Table 3 would tell that there was a notable change in the percentage of absences before and after the implementation of the intervention. It implies that there is a remarkable decrease in the percentage of absences among the respondents. Since the CBAM is a solid policy to combat absenteeism, this could be linked with the study of Railsback (2004) that the most effective strategy school can implement to reduce rates of absenteeism is to create a solid absenteeism policy. The researcher inferred that collaboration among parents, teachers, administrators, and stakeholders is so effective to decrease the number of cases of absences among non-attendance learners in Luna National High School.

In addition, there is an evident of improvement after the intervention was implemented, it could be further inferred that the effort and hardships of the attendance action team were fruitful. This result was comparable to the idea of Baker, Sigmon, and Nugent 2001, that a successful intervention creates partnerships among schools, families, social workers, outside organizations, the community and sometimes law enforcement. When students are exposed to such intervention, the non-attendance learners feel that they are important learners in a classroom.

3.4. Significant Difference of Student's Attendance

Lastly, Table 4 shows the t-test computation. This means that there is a significant difference before and after the implementation of the intervention since the computed t- stat is greater than the computed t-critical two tail value at 0.01 level of significance. This implies that there is a remarkable increase in the number of attendance of the students when the intervention program is applied. Likewise, it confirms that the intervention produced a positive effect on the attendance of the students. The result can be supported by the study of Spradlen, Cierniak, Shi, and Chen (2012) that a local partnership between the families, community, and school can improved student's attendance.

It can be further exemplified that a referrals system, a system where parents, teachers, and guidance counselor communicate has a good effect in solving the problem of absenteeism. The claim of the researcher can be supported by the study of Menia (2014) that the referral system can reduce the rate of absenteeism.

5. Conclusions

The health-related factor which includes toothache, stomachache, headache, fever, and diarrhea is the topmost cause of absenteeism. The frequency of absences and the percentage of absences were reduced after the intervention program was implemented. Habitual use of the intervention is commendable to reduce the number of cases of absences. Absenteeism cannot be stopped but can be significantly reduced.

The intervention program is effective in minimizing or reducing the number of cases of absences among the students. The Collaborative-Based Approach Manual (CBMAM) as an intervention to reduce absenteeism is recommended for use among non-attendance learners.

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