

**FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO ABSENTEEISM AND THEIR EFFECTS ON
STUDENT NURSES AT THE LIMPOPO COLLEGE OF NURSING**

By

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Dissertation submitted in fulfilment of requirements for the degree of

Master of Nursing

In the

Department of Advanced Nursing Science

School of Health Sciences

at the

University of Venda

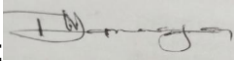
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June 2021

DECLARATION

I, Mamatsharaga Tshinyadzo, hereby declare that the dissertation titled 'Factors contributing to absenteeism and their effects on student nurses at the Limpopo College of Nursing' for the Master of Nursing submitted by me, has not been submitted previously for any other degree at this university or any other institution. It is my original work in design and execution and that all references used herein have been duly acknowledged.

Signature :  Date: 16/06/ 2021

DEDICATION

This study is dedicated to my two sons, Tshililo and Masala Roger Mamatsharaga, my daughter, Uhone Praises Mamatsharaga, my mother Josephine Matamela and all my siblings.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I want to appreciate Almighty God for seeing me through and giving me the wisdom to carry out this research.

I wish to say a very big thank you to my supervisor, Prof N.H. Shilubane and co-supervisor, Senior Prof L.B. Khoza for their support and guidance throughout the study, as well as their kind words which motivated me to work harder towards the completion of the study. Thank you so much.

I also want to acknowledge Dr S. Raliphaswa, Dr A.R Tshililo, Dr I. Ramavhoya, Mrs J. Mafumo, Mrs S Motsharine and Mrs L. Makhado for their assistance and support throughout, which is and will always be appreciated.

A very big thank you goes to my Pastor T.P. Ramahala and his wife, Mrs D.M. Ramahala of the Full Gospel Church of God who supported me continuously in their prayers.

I want to thank my children for giving me a purpose in life, they worked with me throughout this work with patience and understanding during my endeavours to accomplish this study. Also, my mother, who always has and still is putting me first in her everyday prayers; and my younger sisters, Ndiambani Makhavhu and Irene Sigida.

To the former acting vice-principal of Thohoyandou nursing campus, Mrs M.I. Tshiswise, for her love, encouragement and support throughout the study. I am also grateful to all my colleagues who assisted with technical expertise and continuously wished me well throughout the research.

And to my late father, who always wished for all his children to succeed in life. I know that he is celebrating with me wherever he is. May his soul rest in peace.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS

DoH	Department of Health
HDC	Higher Degrees Committee
KZNCNR	Kwazulu-Natal College of Nursing Report
LCoN	Limpopo College of Nursing
REC	Research Ethics Committee
SANC	South African Nursing Council
SANCA	South African Nursing Council Act
SHDC	School of Higher Degrees Committee
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
SRC	Student Representative Council
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America
UHDC	University of Higher Degrees Committee

ABSTRACT

Background

Absenteeism among student nurses is a serious issue for nursing schools worldwide. The literature describes various individual, faculty and socio-environmental reasons contributing to absenteeism among student nurses. In South Africa, the increased rate of absenteeism results in most nurses not completing their studies and consequently leading to a shortage of professional nurses in the country. The purpose of this study was to determine factors contributing to absenteeism and their effects on student nurses at the Limpopo College of Nursing.

Method

The study followed a quantitative approach, using cross-sectional descriptive design. Purposive sampling was used to select three nursing campuses. The systematic sampling method was used to select participants. The target population was student nurses from the three selected nursing campuses in the Limpopo Province. Slovin's formula was used to calculate the number of participants for this study which was 259. A self-administered questionnaire, pre-tested among students with similar characteristics with study participants, was used for data collection. Data was analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 24 to obtain descriptive and inferential statistics. An informed consent form was signed by those who voluntarily agreed to participate in the study. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout the study.

Results

The findings of the study were that more male students than female students were absent. The poor environment on campuses and peer group influence were seen as contributing factors to absenteeism, as well as drug use, interaction with peers, poor security around students' residence, lecturers reading from the book during lectures without explanation, voluntary class attendance, lack of space in the department and the use of teaching strategies.

Key words: Absenteeism, student nurse, college, influencing, nursing.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION.....	I
DEDICATION.....	II
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	III
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS.....	IV
ABSTRACT.....	V
LIST OF FIGURES.....	X
LIST OF TABLES.....	XII
CHAPTER 1: OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY.....	1
1.1 Introduction and background.....	1
1.2 Problem statement.....	6
1.3 Purpose of the study.....	7
1.4 Objectives of the study.....	7
1.5 Significance of the study.....	7
1.6 Definition of concepts.....	8
1.7 Methodology.....	9
1.8 Chapter Outline.....	9
1.9 Conclusion.....	9
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	100
2.1 Introduction.....	100
2.2 Absenteeism.....	11

2.2.1 Types of absenteeism.....	111
2.3 Contributory factors of absenteeism.....	122
2.3.1 Student personal factors.....	12
2.3.2 Institutional factors.....	16
2.3.3 Environmental factors.....	17
2.3.4 Gender factors.....	17
2.3.5 Strategies to reduce absenteeism.....	188
2.3.6 Gaps identified in the reviewed literature.....	19
2.4 Conclusion.....	19
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.	
3.1 Introduction.....	20
3.2 The research setting.....	22
3.3 Study design.....	22
3.3.1 Quantitative research design.....	233
3.3.2 Descriptive design.....	243
3.3.3 Cross-sectional study.....	24
3.4 Research methodology.....	24
3.4.1 The study population.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.5
3.4.2 Sampling and sample of campuses.....	245
3.4.3 Sampling and sample of the participants.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.6
3.4.4 Instrument, validity and reliability.....	257
3.4.5 Data collection.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.8
3.4.6 Data analysis.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.9
3.4.7 Ethical consideration.....	29

3.4.8 Protection of human rights	30
3.4.8.1 The right to self determination	30
3.4.8.2 Informed consent.....	31
3.4.8.3 Principle of justice	31
3.4.8.4 Principle of beneficence	32
3.5 Conclusion.....	32
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS.....	323
4.1 Introduction	333
4.2. Biographic data of the respondents.....	333
4.3 Personal information and absenteeism	377
4.4 Individual factors and absenteeism	388
4.5 Relationship between environmental factors and absenteeism.....	40
4.6 Strategies to reduce absenteeism	42
4.7 Reasons that respondents cited to be likely cause of absenteeism	444
4.8 Types of drugs taken.....	455
4.9 Participant's suggestions of strategies that could curb absenteeism.....	455
4.10 Discussion	466
4.10.1 Biographic data of the participants.....	477
4.10.2 Relationship between Individual factors and absenteeism	488
4.10.3 Environmental factors	488
4.10.4 Stressful situation	499
4.10.5 Financial problems.....	50
4.10.6 Stress due to family matters	50
4.10.7 Medical condition	511

4.10.8 Heavy workload and shortage of staff in the wards leading to students regarded as workforce	522
4.10.9 Poor lecturer-student relationship	522
4.10.10 Lack of motivation by the Lecturers	533
4.10.11 Lecturer’s negative attitude towards the students.....	544
4.10.12 Teaching strategies	544
4.10.13 Shortage of lecturers	555
4.10.14 Learning environment not conducive	566
4.10.15 Students’ attitude towards their lecturers.....	577
4.10.16 Poor living conditions.....	577
4.10.17 Lack of interest in lecturers.....	588
4.10.18 Other personal factors that contributed to student nurse absenteeism.....	58
4.10.19 Strategies to reduce absenteeism	588
4.11 CONCLUSION	60
 CHAPTER 5: THE LIMITATIONS , SUMMARY AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS ,RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION.....	
	611
5.1 Introduction	611
5.2 Limitations	611
5.3 Summary and interpretation of results.....	611
5.3.1 To determine gender factors that contributed to students’ absenteeism.....	622
5.3.2 To determine the factors related to individual students that contributed to absenteeism at the nursing campuses	632
5.3.3 To identify the environmental factors that contributed to students’absenteeism.	Error! Bookmark not defined.
5.3.4 To explore the strategies that can be used to reduce absenteeism.....	633
5.4 Recommendations	644
5.4.1 Nursing practice.....	644

5.4.2 Nursing education.....	655
5.5 Conclusion	655
REFERENCES.....	666
ANNEXURE A: QUESTIONNAIRE	744
ANNEXURE B: CONSENT FORM.....	833
ANNEXURE C: ETHICAL CLEARANCE.....	866
ANNEXURE D: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION (DOH)	877
ANNEXURE E: RESPONSE FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH.....	88
ANNEXURE F: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION THOHOYANDOU CAMPUS	89
ANNEXURE G: RESPONSE FROM THOHOYANDOU CAMPUS.....	900
ANNEXURE H: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION GIYANI CAMPUS	911
ANNEXURE I: RESPONSE FROM GIYANI CAMPUS.....	922
ANNEXURE J: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION SOVENGA CAMPUS	933
ANNEXURE K: RESPONSE FROM SOVENGA CAMPUS.....	944

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Limpopo Province map.....	21
Figure 2: Total number of students who participated in the study.....	34
Figure 3: Students who were absent once in a term.....	34
Figure 4: Students absent once in a term according to levels.....	38

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Student absenteeism statistics (2014–2018).....	6
Table 3.1: Number of students in three selected campuses of Limpopo College of Nursing	26
Table 3.2: Sample size calculation formula.....	27
Table 4.2: Biographical data of participants.....	35
Table 4.3: Personal information and absenteeism (n=119).....	37
Table 4.4: Relationship between individual factors and absenteeism.....	38
Table 4.5: Environmental factors (n=259).....	41
Table 4.6: Strategies to reduce absenteeism.....	43

CHAPTER 1: OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction and background

Student nurse absenteeism is a serious problem globally (Lipscomb & Snelling, 2010). These authors describe absenteeism as missing or failing to attend class without permission to be absent. Abdelrahman and Abdelkader (2017) defined absenteeism as unavailability of a student in the class without permission for the whole day. The same study further revealed that it is evident that absenteeism prolongs study and negatively impacts student performance (Abdelrahman & Abdelkader, 2017). These authors see the lack of interest in studying, in lecturers and subjects as the leading causes of absenteeism. Suhid, Ramal and Kamal (2012) agree that absenteeism is also a problem for lecturers in the United Kingdom (UK).

According to the study conducted in India by Ray, Raju and Singh (2018), absenteeism results in poor academic performance and unsatisfactory learning in those classes that have been missed by students. Furthermore, Ray et al. (2018) assert that absenteeism negatively affects those students who are repeatedly absent, their future becomes vague, and they cannot complete their education. In the United States of America (USA), absenteeism is also problematic as indicated by the study by Demir and Akman Karabeyoglu (2016), who revealed that these low attendance rates predict high-risk factors for future education and academic successes.

A study by Jyoti and Flinsi (2019) in New Delhi found that absenteeism results in poor academic performance and lower achievements to students. This was similar to the study by Nawaz, Hussain, Sarwar et al. (2018), which demonstrated that absenteeism is a serious problem negatively affecting students and resulting in low performance. In the UK, some universities reported students failing to attend their classes and producing bad results. It is noted that more than 50 per cent of those students fail to attend classes mostly on Mondays and Fridays (Lipscomb & Snelling, 2010). The authors further stated that absenteeism is also a significant challenge in Ireland. Also, Hocking (2008) indicated that student absenteeism in Rhode Island is a serious concern to

lecturers. A similar problem of absenteeism is difficulty in the higher educational institutions in Ghana (Hocking, 2008). In Nigeria, absenteeism was regarded as a problem affecting colleges from both developed and developing countries as specified by the study conducted by Okechukwu Chukwu, Yakubu et al., (2017). Furthermore, the same study revealed that most of the students absent themselves from the class due to illness, and some fake illness and family issues.

In countries such as the UK and Malaysia, the literature reported that students are not interested in attending classes (Suhid et al., 2012). The authors further stated that absenteeism becomes a moral and social problem for students, as it is regarded as a behaviour which is against the school rules as stated by circular number 6/1995 from the Ministry of Education.

In Malaysia, it is reported that 24,840 students were absent in 2006 and 21,060 in 2007, respectively (Suhid et al., 2012). Absenteeism affects students' education because, by missing lessons, they can be influenced to take part in alcohol and drug abuse, join gangs, gambling, loiter and participate in free sex. In Malaysia, it appears that the factors contributing to student absenteeism are peer group pressure, fear of being bullied, fear of teachers, developing a hatred of some subjects and a lack of encouragement from the family (Suhid et al., 2012).

According to Shahzada, Ghazi, Nawaz and Khan (2011), absenteeism is a serious issue that needs to be considered in the nursing schools in Sub-Saharan countries. Nigeria also has serious challenges related to absenteeism among students at the higher educational institutions (Fayombo, 2012).

Ishak and Fin (2013) indicated that in Malaysia in 2010, the records reflect about 111,484 cases concerning disciplinary issues, whereas 19,545 cases related to the failure of student nurses to attend class. In 2011, 108,650 students were involved in disciplinary occurrences and 18,550 because of nonattendance. Staying away from school without a good reason can also be an indication of social problems (Ishak & Fin, 2013).

Blandul (2013) defines absenteeism as an absence from school by a student without any consent or agreement from the teacher, while Simsek et al. (2014) explain it as not

going to school. Pehlivan (2011) defines absenteeism as behaviour which occurs naturally during the stages of development of a child. Furthermore, it includes not attending school without any legal motive or failure to attend the school for the whole year without any justification (Pehlivan, 2011). In Romania, sometimes parents are responsible for their children's absenteeism, or it can be an agreement between the child and the parents because other children fail to attend classes with consent from their parents (Blandul, 2013). In countries like France, absenteeism goes together with age. Among 17-year-olds, the average percentage of absenteeism was 2 (two) per cent, and in 19-year-olds 9 (nine) per cent (Blandul, 2013). Absenteeism can be regarded as a massive concern if the statistics for absence from school are more than 80 students in a year.

Absenteeism can be regarded as one of the aspects considered to ensure that the school offers the best education to students. The institution must discover the reasons for nonattendance and ensure this is not due to what the institution offers to students. Lecturers must seek to discover the causes of absenteeism within the school (Sayma et al., 2016). In certain instances, it is not the students absencing themselves from school, but the lecturers who fail to attend. A study conducted in North Carolina by Ost and Schiman (2017) found that most lecturers were absent because the classes they were teaching were too large, that is there were too many students. Lecturers are unable to manage the groups of students they teach because they are uncontrollable as there are too many students crammed into the classroom. This particularly applies to those lecturers with less experience in their subjects. The authors also revealed that some missed their classes because they were not familiar with their new environment. Furthermore, the lecturers' absence appears to affect students' performance negatively (Ost & Schiman, 2017). Other reasons contributing to students' absenteeism include the rudeness of the lecturers, causing anxiety among students who then decide not to attend their classes (Ishak & Fin, 2013).

Absenteeism is a challenge and serious issue in Duzce Province, Turkey, and for education in the country (Sahin, Arseven & Kihic, 2016). Sahin et al. (2016) confirm the importance of students attending their classes regularly for academic achievement,

language and social development. There is more opportunity for success in future for those students who attend their school consistently. Sahin et al. (2016) indicate that students also reach their goals by working with other students and developing skills such as problem-solving. Regular attendance leads to better academic records with good test scores and improved opportunities for employment (Sahin et al., 2016). According to Sahin et al. (2016), students who miss class achieve lower academic marks and fewer opportunities for employment which can result in the development of social and emotional problems during adulthood.

Absenteeism does not only affect the progress of the students but also has a negative effect on the preparation by lecturers who spend time planning lessons for only a few students. Furthermore, it also affects other students within the class. Absenteeism goes hand in hand with bad behaviour (Sahin et al., 2016). (Sahin et al., 2016) study causes of student nonattendance and school dropouts reflected that absenteeism is typically due to the student, family and school.

Pehlivan (2011) agrees with Sahin et al. (2016) stating that absenteeism does not only impact those who miss the classes but also those who attend classes regularly and affects the school and society as it damages the reputation of the school. The authors identified three categories of factors, namely, personal, family and social, and institutional.

Absence among student nurses remains a huge problem countrywide (Barlow & Fleischer, 2011). There are increased rates of absenteeism in most nursing campuses, and as a result, it contributes to the shortage of nurses available in these countries as students do not complete the course as they fail to meet the stipulated percentage of hours. The training of these student nurses is terminated because they do not attend for the number of hours required in each course for that academic year (Kwazulu-Natal College of Nursing Report, 2011).

According to Abdelrahman and Abdelkader (2017), factors influencing absenteeism were reported to be lack of resources, shortages of lecturers, unavailability of classes, peer group pressure, low self-esteem, lack of interest in the subject chosen, boredom, inferiority complexes, failure to get support from the parents, lack of encouragement by

the lecturers and travelling long distances from home to the campus, socio-cultural, economic and psychological factors. Abdelrahman and Abdelkader (2017) further indicate that the failure of a student to present him/herself in the class for the whole day is considered as absenteeism.

Absenteeism also affects South African nursing schools, college campuses and the universities. According to the rules and regulations of the South African Nursing Council (SANC) guided by Act No 33 of 2005, the students' class attendance is 80 per cent of their training programme and only 20 per cent of absenteeism is allowed.

In this study, absenteeism is when students fail to attend classes and return without proof for a reason for their absence. According to the Limpopo College of Nursing (LCoN) rules and regulations for basic and post basic programmes (2016), students are allowed to take sick leave and must submit a medical certificate within two working days of resuming class. Leave without pay is granted if he/she fails to produce a medical certificate. Students who do not attend class without reporting are considered as being absent and must sign for leave without pay. Furthermore, a student who absents him/herself from class for three consecutive hours is regarded as absent for the whole day, therefore, leave without pay shall apply LCoN rules and regulations for basic and post basic programmes, 2016).

Students must attend and meet the required percentage of training according to the rules and regulations of the SANC and Act 33 of 2005, which also controls Nursing Education in South Africa (Paredes & Ugarte, 2011). Absenteeism rates are monitored and under the control of the campuses and nursing schools as per the requirement of the South African Nursing Council (Act no 33 of 2005) as amended in the SANC R425).

Due to nonattendance, students can fail to accumulate the 4,000 hours of practice within a year as required by the SANC (Act no 33 of 2005). Most students are frequently absent and fail to accumulate the required hours, that is 80 per cent of the total required. This failure to reach the minimum requirements may result in non-compliance and the inability to register with the SANC (Act no 33 of 2005). Also, increased absenteeism rates among the students can result in the extension of their studies.

The high rates of absenteeism is a problem in most of the colleges and universities since it interrupts the teaching and learning environment and affects the overall well-being of other students in the Limpopo Province in South Africa (Magobolo & Dube, 2019). Furthermore, Magobolo and Dube (2019) revealed that poor academic performance and unethical transgressions among student nurses relate to this high rate of absenteeism.

1.2 Problem statement

Absenteeism among students in LCoN is increasing while the SANC expects them to complete their course in time, and this creates challenges. The researcher is employed as a lecturer in one of the LCoN campuses and observed a high rate of absenteeism among student nurses. Some students' duration of training was extended to meet the required hours while others had to terminate because of failing to reach the expected target of stipulated hours per course in a year. This causes additional expenditure for the Department of Health since students are getting stipend monthly until they finish their course.

The total number of students and absenteeism rates from the three selected nursing campuses of LCoN for the 2014–18 academic years are as follows.

Table 1: Student absenteeism statistics (2014–18)

Level	YEAR 2014	YEAR 2015	YEAR 2016	YEAR 2017	YEAR 2018
I	91	87	93	80	92
II	169	175	177	170	166
III	156	168	163	165	158
IV	135	138	142	152	148
Total number of students	551	568	575	567	564

per year					
Number of students absent per year	120	118	134	136	124
Absenteeism percentage per year	21,7%	20.1%	23.3%	23.9%	21,9%

Limpopo College of Nursing (Thohoyandou, Sovenga and Giyani campuses Theoretical Annual Report, 2018)

The absenteeism rate of students if not addressed, it will contribute to increased shortage of professional nurses in the province. As a result of what she observed, the researcher saw the need to investigate the factors contributing to absenteeism and their effects on student nurses at LCoN.

1.3 Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study was to investigate factors contributing to absenteeism among student nurses at the LCoN.

1.4 Objectives of the study

- To determine gender factors that contributed to students' absenteeism.
- To determine the factors related to individual students that contributed to absenteeism at the nursing campuses.
- To identify the environmental factors that contributed to students' absenteeism.
- To explore the strategies that could reduce absenteeism.

1.5 Significance of the study

The increased rates of absenteeism in most nursing campuses contributes to the shortage of nurses available in the country. The findings of this study may help in curbing the scourge whereby students may obtain their diploma within the stipulated period of the course and qualify as nursing professionals who are competent and responsible. The findings may help in reducing the shortage of professional nurses as students may complete their studies in record time. The teaching staff may improve

their approach to teaching and use teaching strategies that may motivate students to learn which could, in turn, produce higher pass rates.

The findings of the study may assist in reducing the costs for students training as students may spend four years instead of five or six years in their training. The production of competent registered nurses may lead to reduction of lawsuits because of incompetent nurse practitioners. Therefore, money allocated/given to claimants as a result of nurses' incompetence can be allocated to other services. Furthermore, the findings will serve as the basis for further studies

1.6 Definition of concepts

- **Absenteeism**

Absenteeism is the act of routinely avoiding work or school with no reason behind (Chisti, 2016). In this study, absenteeism concerns a student's failure to attend the class without permission.

- **Nursing College**

'Nursing college means "a post-secondary educational institution which offers professional nursing education at basic and post basic level where such nursing education has been approved in terms of section 15(2)" (SANC Regulation No R425, 22 February 1985 as amended by No 753 of 22 April 1988). In this study, it represents three nursing campuses which are Thohoyandou, Giyani and Sovenga.

- **Student nurses**

A student nurse is a person registered as such in terms of section 32; (The South African Nursing Council, Nursing Act, 2005 Act No.33 of 2005). In this study, it refers to those students who passed grade 12 and were admitted to the LCoN.

- **Influencing**

An informal strategy used to gain the co-operation of others without exercising formal authority (Berman, Snyder, Kozier & Erb, 2008). In this study it refers to influences that

encourage students to perform certain activities as a result of dissatisfaction in their studies.

- **Nursing**

The act of utilising the environment of the patient to assist him in his recovery and a helping profession which provide services and contribute to the health and wellbeing of people (Geyer, Mogotlane & Young, 2014). In this study it represent a student who has been licenced to practice nursing and end up being a professional nurse after completing the study.

1.7 Methodology

Quantitative approach was followed by the researcher using cross sectional design in order to understand the factors contributing to absenteeism among students in the Limpopo college of nursing. Data was collected from 259 participants through questionnaires. Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 23 was utilised to analyse data. Chapter three will provide detailed information on methods and research design utilised in this study.

1.8 Chapter outline

Chapter 1: Overview of the study.

Chapter 2: Literature review.

Chapter 3: Research methodology.

Chapter 4: Results, analysis, discussion and literature control.

Chapter 5: Summary, limitations, recommendations and conclusion.

1.9 Conclusion

This chapter presented the introduction and the background of the study and statement of the problem. It further presented rationale of the study, significance of the study, purpose and objectives of the study and last but not least the definition of terms. The next chapter presents the literature review.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter provided an orientation to the study, the background of the research topic, problem statement, rationale, purpose and objectives of the study. This chapter presents the search strategy as well as the literature reviewed. According to Brink (2012), a literature review includes all written sources relevant to the topic of interest. A literature review involves finding, reading, understanding and forming conclusions about published research and theory as well as presenting it in an organised manner. In order to achieve this the researcher used the University of Venda library to access variety of electronic databases such as Sabinet, Ebscohost, Science Direct, Web of Knowledge, Sage and African Journals Online as well as Google scholar web site. The search strategy consisted of the following key concepts: Absenteeism, student nurses, college, clinical, teaching and learning.

The inclusion criteria were:

- Studies that explored the factors contributing to students' absenteeism globally, sub-Saharan Africa, and nationally.
- Studies published in peer reviewed journals.
- Studies published in English.

The following were the exclusion criteria:

- Studies that were published in the predatory journals.
- Studies that were published in other languages.

In this study, the literature review aims to examine the relevant information concerning the factors leading to students' absenteeism in LCoN.

The literature review is discussed under the following headings:

- Definition of absenteeism
- Types of absenteeism
- Contributory factors of absenteeism
- Individual/ personal factors

- Institutional factors
- Environmental factors
- Gender factors
- Strategies to reduce absenteeism

After the identification of the topic, the researcher explored the information from the literature on the selected subject and whether it is researchable (Brink, 2012). In this study, the researcher further investigated the causes of absenteeism among students at the nursing campuses.

2.2 Absenteeism

Absenteeism is defined as the absence from work or school or failure to report for duty with or without reason (Mvuseleli, 2015). Thobakgale (2013) outlines absenteeism as a situation whereby a learner absents him/herself from attending a lecture for the whole day, and as an issue concerning nonattendance of classes without a valid reason. Furthermore, she indicated that it could be described as the child who fails to attend the class because he/she does not receive support from the parents 'Child motivated absenteeism is at the volition of the child, due to increased autonomy whereas non-child-motivated absenteeism manifests through influences external to the child, for example, parents keeping the child at home to care for siblings' (Thobakgale, 2013).

2.2.1 Types of absenteeism

There are two types of absenteeism: authorised and unauthorised. Authorised absence occurs when a person is absent from work or school due to sickness, special or annual leave, among others, provided the reason for the absence is reported with a letter or proof such as a certificate when he/she returns from leave. An unauthorised absence is when an individual does not attend work or school without reporting and comes back with no proof for his/her absence.

According to the study conducted by Singh (2015) at KwaZulu-Natal College (2015), absenteeism was classified into three (3) types; sickness, authorised and unexcused absence. Sickness absence is due to illness; authorised absence refers to permitted

nonattendance; for example, study leave. An unexcused absence referred to an absence which was not authorised by an employer or institution.

2.3 Contributory factors of absenteeism

Absenteeism is a problematic issue which affect most of the students, and as a result several factors identified are discussed below:

2.3.1 Student personal factors

Henderson, Hill & Norton (2014) in their study concerning missing school and health stated that a review of chronic absenteeism and student health in Oregon revealed that the use of drugs and alcohol contributed to high rates. The authors indicated that when a student used drugs and alcohol, they are less responsible at school and fail to attend classes properly (Henderson et al., 2014). Gubbels, Van der Put and Assink (2019) further supported this in their research in the Netherlands that revealed that some of the students were absent from their classes due to alcohol and substance abuse and possibly addiction.

The study by Singh (2015) in London found that new students in nursing schools found themselves exposed to new situations they had not previously encountered and did not comprehend. The author further explains that these new students were from secondary schools and accustomed to depending on teachers, unlike the tertiary level, where they are expected to be independent and take responsibility for doing the work. As a result, they were more stressed because they felt unable to cope with the expectations, especially when exposed to the clinical area (Singh, 2015).

Nervousness and depression was another cause of absenteeism among student nurses in several studies (Singh, 2015; Gubbels et al., 2019; Masutha, 2019). Another reason for absence among student nurses as revealed by Gubbels et al. (2019) was fear of attending classes with a large group of students from a secondary level. Furthermore, Singh (2015) showed that many of these students were anxious about whether they could cope with the situation. Many dropped out because of stress in this situation.

Stress-related illnesses were another cause of absenteeism as supported by a study in Limpopo (Masutha, 2019).

The same problem was further revealed in a study conducted in Saudi Arabia by Alreshidi, Alaseeri and Garcia (2019), who demonstrated that most of the students failed to attend their classes due to stressful situations such as family matters and work-related issues, especially in the clinical area where managers in the ward caused most anxiety and stress.

Furthermore, the same study revealed that many students were absent from class due to their heavy workload, which was expected by their lecturers and in the clinical area by their supervisors. Heavy workload as a cause of absenteeism was further supported by the study, which was conducted by Masutha (2019), who indicated that overworking causes stress among students, and they miss their classes. Furthermore, the same study revealed that students were absent due to stress caused by shortages of staff in the clinical areas since students were expected to do more work.

In a study in Malaysia, Suhid, Rahman and Kamal (2012) illustrated that many students were absent from class because their friends influenced them. Thobakgale (2013) in Limpopo further indicated that students frequently miss classes due to the influence of other students, for example, failure to attend classes with no reprimand such as signing for leave without pay. Sometimes they persuaded each other not to attend classes, and often it depended on the type of friends they made during their course of study. Due to inferiority complexes and lack of confidence among students, many were anxious about their training and lacked trust in themselves as they were accustomed to depending on their teachers in secondary school (Singh, 2015). Gubbels et al. (2019) indicated that some of the students were absent from the class because they were engaged in sexual behaviour and influenced by their peers.

Social problem was another cause of absenteeism as indicated by Singh (2015), who revealed that many are absent from classes due to social issues. The study further revealed that most of those students became more stressed due to social problems, and as such, they engaged in alcohol and drug abuse. The same problem was reported by a study conducted in New Delhi by Jyoti and Flinsi (2019), who indicated that most

students failed to attend their classes due to social problems at home. A study by Masutha (2019) regarded social problems as a difficult issue affecting students who were absent from class.

Alreshidi et al. (2019) supported the study by Masutha (2019), who indicated that most of the students were absent from their classes due to social problems. In her study, Masutha (2019) revealed that another cause of absenteeism was because of attending funerals of the relatives and taking care of those family members who are sick. A study in Egypt by Magobolo and Dube (2019) also supported this, stating that some students fail to attend classes due to stress-related social problems and lack of income. Furthermore, the same study revealed that many students were stressed because they would rather be paid as workers during their training and not funded for their studies since most of them were breadwinners. Poverty for some students was another cause of absenteeism as supported by Gubbels et al. (2019).

Singh (2015) indicated that some of those students required serious counselling to cope with the problems that they encountered during training. Furthermore, Singh (2015) supported the study conducted by Masutha (2019), who showed that more stress was evident when students did not want to share their problems with their colleagues. They then became more strained and finally failed to attend their classes and were reported as absent from the class.

Thobakgale (2013), in her study in Limpopo, revealed other causes of absenteeism, such as a lack of knowledge or interest from parents to children on their school progress. Poor progress caused by absenteeism was disclosed and identified as a problem among student nurses in a study by Gubbels et al. (2019). Okechukwu, Nafisa, Habu et al. (2019) agreed that the effect of student nurse absenteeism is one of the reasons for poor progression.

Thobakgale (2013) further indicated that motivation was essential in supporting the student in making good progress and encourage him/her academically. Some students failed to attend their classes because they were not motivated by their parents (Thobakgale, 2013). The lack of a supportive and encouraging influence from another

person was a problem as students could start to feel hopeless and decide to skip classes.

The absence of motivation from parents and lecturers was further supported by the study conducted by Alreshidi et al. (2019) as this contributed to student nurse absenteeism as stated by Gubbels et al. (2019). Other students may miss classes choosing to instead go out with their friends for entertainment due to lack of family support or motivation (Thobakgale, 2013).

Other students gave reasons such as oversleeping as another cause of absenteeism (Thobakgale, 2013). Another cause of absenteeism among student nurses as supported by Okechukwu et al. (2019) confirms that students are absent because they take part in social activities during study time. Thobakgale (2013) notes many other challenges, such as negative attitudes from family members and child abuse. Some students feel that going to school serves no purpose as family members do not consider them as individuals (Thobakgale, 2013). Some students missed class due to poor interpersonal relationships, as noted in the study by Alreshidi et al. (2019).

In their study, Jyoti and Flinsi (2019) asserted that another cause of absenteeism among student nurses was illnesses for those who have chronic conditions like diabetes, asthma, allergies and others, which affect the student and prevent class attendance. The same problem was further supported by Alreshidi et al. (2019), who state that many students were absent from classes due to sicknesses. Magobolo and Dube (2019) and Gubbels et al. (2019) also agree that ill health is frequently the reason for absences, also supported by Okechukwu et al. (2019). Jyoti and Flinsi (2019), indicate that some students were absent because they pretended they were ill. The same study further revealed that absenteeism among students was often because these students have to take care of their children and parents who are ill.

Suhid et al. (2012) indicate that some students are absent because of the teaching strategies used in the classroom that they felt were uninteresting. Some lecturers were unprepared for the classes, and students felt being bored, hopeless and uncomfortable, and no longer attended these classes (Suhid et al., 2012). Thobakgale (2013) found that most campuses experienced this lack of attendance as students did not attend the

classes because their lecturers used the same teaching strategies. Jyoti and Flinsi (2019) agreed that poor teaching strategies cause absence among student nurses as students were bored by the repeated use of the same approaches, and for this reason, many missed class. This was further supported by the study by Magobolo and Dube (2019) and Masutha (2019) who revealed that inferior teaching strategies and the absence of interest by the student in the subject were significant factors for student nurse absenteeism. Furthermore, the same study, which was conducted by Masutha (2019), revealed that teaching strategies and content of the study contributed to student nurse absenteeism. Masutha (2019) further indicated that inadequately prepared lessons were also contributory factors to nonattendance among student nurses.

Negative attitudes of students towards the campus where they study was another factor leading to high absenteeism rates, as noted in the study by Gubbels et al. (2019). Furthermore, the same study mentioned that some students miss their classes because they do not like the lecturers for the subject as supported by Masutha (2019), who stated that poor lecturer-student relationships contributed to student nurse absenteeism.

2.3.2 Institutional factors

According to Henderson and Norton (2014), in a study conducted in Los Angeles, absenteeism was influenced by low resources on that particular campus. The study stated that students sometimes lost interest if resources were not available, for instance, charts, dolls, and other teaching materials that might actively engage them during lectures, and as a result, they were absent from their classes. Also, a lack of space in classrooms to accommodate students stopped them from attending some of the classes/lectures.

Thobakgale (2013) revealed that absenteeism in some of the campuses is due to poor management, and many students do not attend classes because of bad organisation within the institution. Some are absent because lecturers fail to arrive at their classes; therefore, in time, students also do the same (Thobakgale, 2013). Suhid et al. (2012) indicated that sometimes students focused on the school rules developed by the school management and some teaching strategies which seemed boring to them and decided to stay away from school.

Gubbels et al. (2019) add that poor hygiene in the classrooms and debilitated buildings also caused student nurses to miss lectures. Masutha (2019) in this study sustained this view indicating that many students were absent due to the poor functioning, conditions and structure of the building.

2.3.3 Environmental factors

According to the study by Suhid et al. (2012), the students lost focus on learning and teaching strategies due to the uncondusive and challenging learning environment, for instance, untidy classrooms and overgrown and uncared for grounds on campus. This was further supported by Alreshidi, Alaseeri and Garcia (2019), who confirmed that the badly maintained environment was another reason for absenteeism among student nurses. Nursing campuses that are badly maintained and untidy affected students who feel less motivated and obliged to attend classes (Magobolo & Dube, 2019; Gubbels et al., 2019; Masutha, 2019).

2.3.4 Gender factors

Students who fall pregnant, especially those less than 20 years of age, were affected by their pregnancy and failed to attend classes, eventually dropping out of their training (Henderson et al., 2014). Teenage pregnancy continues to be a reason for young girls to leave school due to the stigma or other consequences. Some of them failed to attend classes due to feeling ashamed or suffering from pregnancy-related illnesses or complications (Henderson et al., 2014).

According to Mvuseleli (2015), female student nurses are typically more absent than male student nurses in South Africa. Being a mother while still taking classes was challenging and affected their studies and attendance. The situation worsens when their children fall ill, especially during the rainy seasons. Furthermore, Mvuseleli (2015) indicated that female student nurses were more absent than male student nurses due to stress and physical conditions. The study which was conducted by Okechukwu et al., (2019) revealed that female student nurses were frequently absent from class in order to take care of their small babies at home.

2.3.5 Strategies to reduce absenteeism

According to a study by Doyle, Brien, Timmins et al. (2008) conducted in Ireland, absenteeism could be reduced by using the approach of monitoring the students in the class to avoid the repetition of teaching sessions. In Ireland, attendance records were kept and disciplinary measures enforced for those who were absent without reporting (Timmins & Kaliszer, 2002). Winkler and Sondergaard (2008) indicated that in Uganda, the government uses punishment to reduce absenteeism, but it does not have a serious impact. According to the study by Shahzada, Ghazi, Nawaz and Khan (2011), it was the responsibility of the principal to reduce student absenteeism. The authors further showed that the government of Uganda attempted to motivate students to attend classes and reduce absenteeism by providing free transport and textbooks. In Nigeria, students must attend 75 per cent of the lectures before they were allowed to write the examinations. As a result, policies concerning attendance were developed and applied in Nigeria (Fayombo, Ogunkola & Olaleye, 2012). According to Weideman, Goga, Lopez et al. (2007), at one time in South Africa, the practice of corporal punishment was instigated as one of the strategies to control student absenteeism, but it was not successful.

In the KwaZulu-Natal College of nursing, students who failed to attend 80 per cent of classes were expected to catch up the lost periods under supervision before writing the examination (Nkonzo-Mthembu, 2010). Policies and disciplinary procedures were introduced and developed to deal with absenteeism. Nevertheless, the lack of assessment makes the policies ineffective (Doyle et al., 2007). In the LCoN, students who did not attend 80 per cent of class lectures were not allowed to write their examinations; therefore, according to the LCoN rules and regulations (2009), they should repeat a year of study.

In order to qualify as registered nurses, students must complete 156 weeks of training. Their training programme was extended if their absenteeism was over the minimum limit. Those students who were repeatedly absent from class with noticeable patterns face disciplinary procedures. According to Johnson Croghan and Crawford (2003), in the UK, creating a conducive learning environment and facilitation structures might

make sessions more productive and shorter, and lessen the absenteeism rates. Good relationships between lecturers and management should also motivate students who are encouraged by this cooperation and attend their lectures. The establishment of organisational commitment and student involvement contributed to the reduction of absenteeism amongst student's nurses in China (Davey, Cummings, Newburn-Cook & Lo, 2009). Thobakgale et al. (2013) indicated that absenteeism could be improved by good management on those campuses that developed an infrastructure to teach their students at a higher standard resulting in their graduating as capable and efficient professionals. Furthermore, the authors state that appropriate and effective management could develop strategies and follow an institutional policy of monitoring class attending using registers, which are maintained and kept up to date, could improve attendance. Many students absent themselves from the classes because they are aware that the attendance register is not maintained and their nonattendance will probably not be noted (Thobakgale, 2013).

2.3.6 Gaps identified in the reviewed literature

Few studies have been done on factors contributing to absenteeism on student nurses at a rural college in South Africa.

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter was discussing about the findings from different sources concerning the factors that contributed to student's nurse absenteeism. It was revealed that students are failing to attend their classes due to various factors that are influencing them not to attend their classes, and as a result they ended up not completing their studies in record time. Chapter three will focus on data collection.

CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The previous section discussed the literature review. This chapter discussed the designs and methods of the study which included the study setting. The study used a cross sectional, quantitative descriptive designs. The study methods included the description of the population, sampling and sample, data collection process, validity and reliability of the instrument, data analysis and ethical consideration.

3.2 The research setting

The research setting is the specific place or places where the data was collected (Brink, 2012).

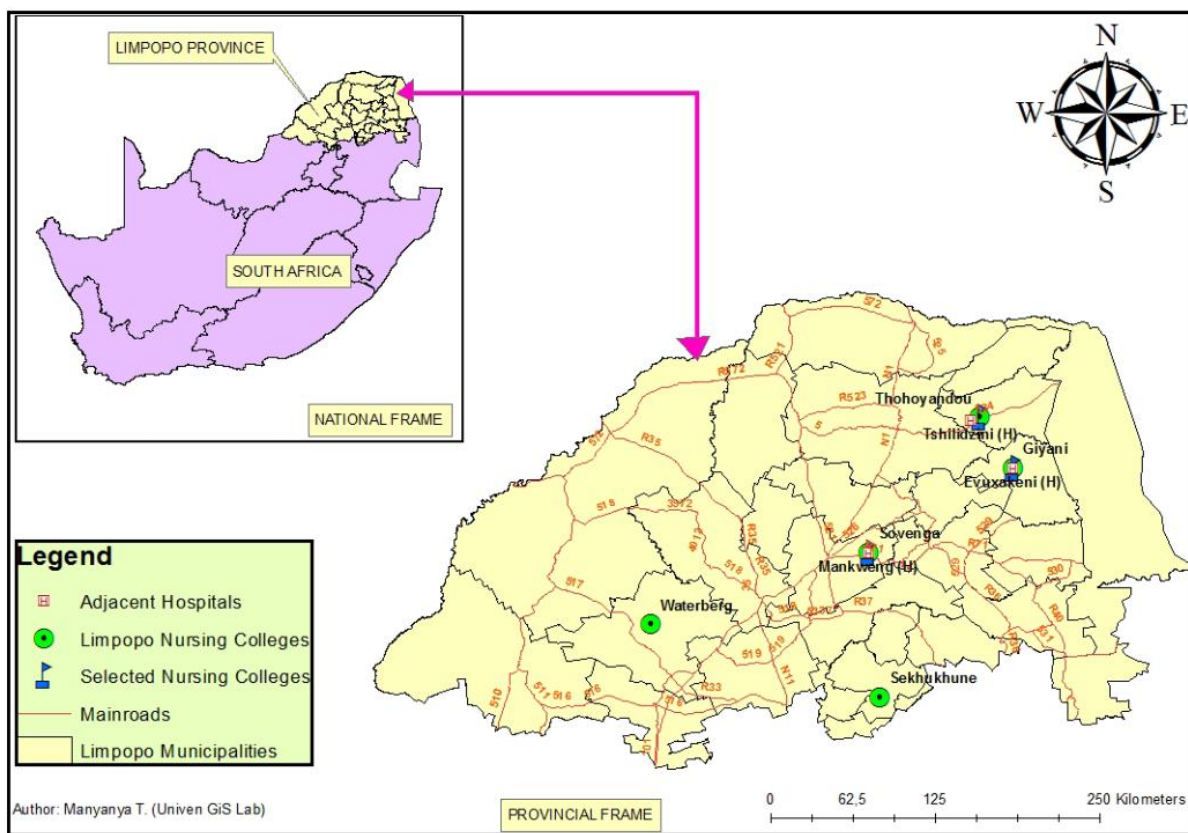


Figure 1: Limpopo Province map

The study was conducted in three selected nursing campuses, Thohoyandou, Sovenga and Giyani in the Limpopo Province. The Limpopo Province is situated in the north-eastern area of South Africa and shares borders with Botswana to the west and northwest, and Zimbabwe to the north, Mozambique to the east and the provinces of Mpumalanga, Gauteng and North West to the south. It forms the link between South Africa and countries in Sub-Saharan Africa. According to the Integrated Development Plan (IDP), the population estimate in 2020 for this province is 5,852,553.

The Limpopo Province is divided into five district municipalities which are:

Vhembe in the northern part of the Limpopo Province, Capricorn between Gauteng and the northern areas of Limpopo and between the north-western areas and Kruger National Park, Waterberg in the south and west of the Limpopo Province, Sekhukhune

lies in the south-eastern part of the province, and Mopani in the north-eastern part of the Limpopo Province.

According to the IDP (2020), the population of Limpopo consists of several ethnic groups distinguished by culture, language and race as follows: 97.3 per cent of the population is black, 2.4 per cent is white, 0.2 per cent is coloured, and 0.1 per cent is Indian/Asian. The province has the smallest percentage and second smallest number of white South Africans in the country and the highest black percentage. Out of these ethnic groups, a percentage was student nurses who were allocated to the LCoN.

There are five nursing campuses in the Limpopo Province: Sovenga, Giyani, Thohoyandou, Waterberg, and Sekhukhune. Three of these five campuses were selected for the study, Thohoyandou in Vhembe District Municipality, Sovenga in the Capricorn District Municipality and Giyani nursing campuses in the Mopani District Municipality. The selected nursing campuses offer the same nursing courses to all student nurses in a four-year diploma programme (R425). The three selected nursing campuses had the following statistics for student nurses in the 2016 academic year: Thohoyandou nursing campus = 230 student nurses, Sovenga nursing campus = 139 student nurses, Giyani nursing campus = 206 student nurses.

3.3. Study design

A research design is “a blueprint for conducting a study that maximizes control over factors that could interfere with the validity of the findings. It guides the researcher in implementing a study in a way that is most likely to achieve the intended goal” (Burns & Grove 2012). Grove and Gray (2013) define a research design as the overall plan for addressing the research, including specifications for enhancing the study’s integrity. The study design should yield the strongest possible evidence to answer the research question (Brink, 2012). In this study, the researcher adopted cross-sectional, quantitative and descriptive designs to determine factors contributing to absenteeism and their effects on student nurses at the LCoN.

3.3.1. Quantitative research design

Quantitative research is a formal, objective, systematic study process which observes, describes and documents aspects of a situation as it naturally occurs (Grove & Gray, 2013). Terre Blanche and Durkheim (2004) define quantitative research as the collection of data in the form of numbers. The researcher used the quantitative method to investigate the factors that contributed to absenteeism rates. According to Polit and Beck (2010), a research design is used to build a study, to collect and analyse information in a systematic manner. By using a quantitative research method, the researcher was able to collect information in a numerical form. In using this method, the researcher could investigate and specify both the dependent and independent variables (DeVos, Strydom, Fouche & Delport, 2012).

The researcher used the literature (Brink, 2012) and similar studies (Fayombo, 2012; Safaa & Abdelkader, 2017) which used qualitative designs and found that the advantages for using the design were strongly supported (Brink, 2012). For instance, it was articulated that the researcher could control information by using the structured procedures, attention could be focused on a small number of concepts, information could be collected in a controlled situation, and information is assembled through formal instruments and structured procedures. It allows for a more extensive study involving a greater number of subjects and enhancing the generalisation of findings (Brink, 2012; Fayombo, 2012; Safaa & Abdelkader, 2017). However, the disadvantages for using the quantitative methods were also discussed and minimised during data collection in this study. For instance, the researcher avoided to collect data from a distance and physically participated in the data collection and distributed the instruments and collected them at the same time in order to maximise responses. Moreover, numeric information was analysed through high inferential statistical procedures which further explained the relationship between variables.

3.3.2. Descriptive design

According to Grove and Gray (2013), a descriptive research study is the exploration and description of phenomena in real life. The purpose of descriptive studies is to provide an

accurate portrayal or account of characteristics of a particular individual, situation, or group. Descriptive studies are a way of discovering new meanings, describing what exists, determining the frequency with which something occurs and categorise information (Burns & Grove 2012). Therefore, this type of research provides an accurate account of the characteristics of particular individuals, situations or groups using numbers (Grove & Gray, 2013). Large numbers of participants can take part in these descriptive studies without any form of manipulation of the situation (Brink, 2012).

3.3.3. Cross-sectional study

The research design is a set of logical steps taken by the researcher to answer the research question (Brink, 2012). Cross-sectional studies are typically quantitative and aim to provide a broad overview of a representative sample of a population (Mouton, 2018). Cross-sectional statistical techniques reduce data to manageable proportions by summarising them. The technique describes various characteristics of the data from the study. Cross-sectional techniques also involve measures of central tendency and variability such as mode, median, mean, modal percentage, range, standard deviation and some correlation technique. A cross-sectional design was used to describe the factors that contributed to absenteeism at the LCoN. The study is cross-sectional since data was collected from levels I–IV at the same time (Burns & Grove, 2012).

3.4 Research methodology

Burns and Grove (2012) refer to research methodology as the techniques used to structure a study and to gather and analyse information in a systematic way. The authors define research methodology as “the process or plan for conducting the specific steps of the study” (Burns & Grove, 2012). Grove and Gray (2013) refer to research methodology as the techniques used to structure a study and to gather and analyse information in a systematic way and further guiding the process or plan for conducting the specific steps of the study.

3.4.1 The study population

The study population is the entire group or object of interest to the researcher or that meet the criteria under investigation for the research (Brink, 2012). The target population has to be accessible by the researcher, for instance, individuals who are within a state, city, hospital or nursing units such as patients or students (Grove & Gray, 2013). In this study, the target population was all student nurses who were receiving education and training at the three selected nursing campuses (Thohoyandou, Sovenga and Giyani) in the Limpopo Province.

3.4.2 Sampling and sample of campuses

De Vos et al (2012) define sampling as the process of selecting a portion of a population to represent the entire population. Whereas, a sample consists of elements of the population considered for actual inclusion in the study or a subset of measurements drawn from a population in which the researcher is interested (De Vos et al., 2012)

Sampling involves the selection of a group of people, events, behaviours, or other elements to be included in the study (Grove & Gray, 2013). According to Wood and Haber (2018), sampling is the selection of participants that are relevant to the study. Sampling involves the selection of a group of people, events, behaviours, or other elements to be included in the study (Grove & Gray, 2013). According to Wood and Haber (2018), sampling is the selection of participants or objects that are relevant to the study. Purposive sampling was used to select the three campuses of LCoN which offer the R425 nursing programme (SANC). De vos et al., (2012) define purposive sampling as the type of sample which is constructed on the researcher's judgement which can serve the purpose of the study best which compose of elements that have the most characteristics of the population. Only three campuses were purposively selected out of five to comprise a sample of the study because these campuses educate and train student nurses in all levels, namely one to four whereas, the other two campuses only admit levels one and two.

The researcher wrote the names of the total population alphabetically and selected them systematically until the required number for the sample was reached (Brink, 2012).

3.4.3. Sampling and sample of the participants

The study used a probability systematic sampling method ensures that every participant in the list of population is selected using a starting point selected randomly (Grove, Burns & Grey, 2013). A table of numbers was drawn, and the selection carried out following the selected sampling intervals. If the sampling interval is three, then the number selected would be between one and 575 (which was the total population of the study) until the required sample of 259 was reached.

The researcher listed the names of the student nurses in three lists, one for each campus according to their levels of study and in alphabetical order. Those who participated in the study were selected systematically; ensures that every participant in the list of population is selected using a starting point selected randomly. And that is every third participant was selected until reaching the required sample number of 259. In this study, the researcher sampled 89 student nurses from the Thohoyandou nursing campus, 85 student nurses from the Giyani nursing campus and 61 student nurses from the Sovenga nursing campus as indicated in Table two below. From the total number as indicated from Slovin's formula below, 10 per cent was added to the sample size which was 24 to make allowances for non-responses which concluded a sample of 259 as indicated in Table two.

Table 3.1: Number of students in three selected campuses (Thohoyandou, Sovenga and Giyani) of Limpopo College of Nursing.

Name of campuses	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Total number of students per campus	Number of students sampled per campus	%
1.Thohoyandou	30	75	66	59	230 students	89	40%
2.Giyani	30	66	60	50	206	85	35.8%

					students		
3.Sovenga	33	36	37	33	139 students	61	24.1%
					Total = 575 students	235 + 10%	100%
						Total sample = 259	

Table 3.2 Sample size calculation formula

<p>Slovin's formula</p> <p>n= sample size</p> <p>N= Total number of students</p> <p>e= Margin number (0.05)</p>	$n = \frac{N}{1 + (Ne^2)}$ $n = \frac{575}{1 + (575 \times 0.05^2)}$ <p>n = 235</p>
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3.4.4 Instrument, validity and reliability

The instrument was developed based on a comprehensive literature review of similar research studies (Fayombo, 2012; Safaa & Abdelkader, 2017). In this study, the validity of the questionnaire was assured by using questions from various instruments that had been used in other similar studies to formulate the multiple choice questions. The instruments were also subjected to evaluation and approval of the methodology by research experts in the subject. The service of a statistician was used to check if the structure of the instrument and the formulated items were in line with the objectives of the study. The help of nurse educators' experts in the field of nurse training were sought for to establish face and content validity. Face validity determines that the instrument measures what it is supposed to measure based on the perceptions of experts in the field (Brink, 2012). To ensure face validity, the researcher has to ensure that the information within the instrument relates to the objectives and literature review. According to Brink (2012), content validity assesses whether the instrument represents all the components of the variable being measured. The tool was evaluated by the study

supervisors who further represented the School Higher Degrees Committee panel to ensure its validity and whether the instrument was adequate to cover the objectives.

The pre-test was conducted in one of the nursing campuses within the Limpopo Province with 45 student nurses sampled to participate. The purpose of the pre-test was to analyse if there were any difficulties in the interpretation of questions, measured the length of the questionnaire and ensured a high standard of validity, accuracy, reliability, objectivity, and ethical standards essential in the questionnaire. Questions which were found to be confusing were rephrased to make it possible for the instrument to yield the same results. The sample had characteristics that represent the population of nursing students being investigated. This was done by administering the questionnaire twice to the same participants. The first set of responses was compared with the second set by calculating the correlation coefficient, which was 0.05, to ensure the reliability of the instrument. The results of the pre-test added value in the refinement of the research instrument before it were finally administered. The refined questionnaire comprised of four sections namely 1) Biological data; 2) Individual and personal factors; 3) Environmental factors and 4) strategies to reduce absenteeism.

3.4.5 Data collection

Data collection is the gathering of information to meet the specific objectives of the study (Burns & Grove, 2012). Data was collected using a questionnaire consisting of nine pages to be completed by the participants in 45 minutes. The researcher gave the questionnaires to the student nurses and clarified the expectations. The questionnaires were distributed and collected at the same time of completion by the participants. A follow up for students who were not present at the time of data collection was done the following two weeks. The researcher realised the use of questionnaires as being a rapid and efficient method of collecting data from a large number of student nurses from the three selected nursing campuses, student nurses' names were omitted from the questionnaires to ensure anonymity in this study and lastly, the collection process allowed every student nurse the same amount of time to answer all questions. At the same time, the researcher was aware that using a questionnaire also had some

disadvantages. For example, despite the researcher' presence, I was unable to use probing strategies to obtain in-depth answers; the participants could not elaborate or ask for clarification of questions, or could fail to answer some of the items, and the participants might not be representative of the population since all students at various levels did not participate (Brink 2012). To lessen the impact of these disadvantages, care was taken to develop a questionnaire that was statistically validated followed by conducting a pre-test.

3.4.6 Data analysis

Data analysis is a technique used to minimise, organise and provide meaning to data (Burns & Grove, 2013). Data was cleaned, loaded and analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences version 24. Data was cleaned in such a way that all irrelevant values like duplicate and useless pieces of data was removed from the system. Data was then validated and analysed accurately. After that it was loaded using the name of the column whereby a variable was inserted by typing the name of the variable under the name of the column. Then Chi-squared test and tables were used to present the analysed data and test for associations between personal characteristics and absenteeism. Furthermore, Multiple Logistic Regression analysis determined the probability of students being absent in relation to whether they agree or disagree with personal factors, environmental factors and proposed strategies presented on the questionnaire.

3.4.7 Ethical consideration

The research proposal was submitted to the School of Higher Degrees Committee (SHDC), from there to the UHDC and then to the Research Ethics Committee (REC) of the University of Venda for approval. After approval, the letter was submitted to the Department of Health (Limpopo Province) and the head of each nursing campus where the study would be conducted. Participants received complete information about the study so that they had a clear understanding before they decided to volunteer to participate (Brink, 2012). An informed consent form was signed by those participating in the study (see Annexure A). Confidentiality and anonymity were upheld throughout the

study, and ethical considerations maintained according to the following principles (Brink, 2012).

3.4.8 Protection of human rights.

Researchers and reviewers of research have an ethical responsibility to recognize and protect the rights of human research subjects (Brink, 2012). These rights include the right to self-determination, privacy, anonymity and confidentiality, fair treatment and the right to protection from discomfort and harm (Burns & Grove, 2012; Grove & Gray, 2013). It is a researcher's responsibility to avoid, prevent or minimize harm to study participants. This may be physical, emotional, social or financial harm. It is unacceptable to expose study participants to experiences that may result in serious or permanent harm. The research must be terminated at any stage if the researcher is of the opinion that continuation would result in injury, death, or undue distress to study participants (Grove & Gray, 2013). Furthermore, participants should be protected against exploitation by researchers. These considerations were safeguarded in this study. Participants were reassured that their participation in the study or the information that they would provide, would not be used against them. The special researcher-participant relationship that the two entered into was not exploited (Grove & Gray, 2013).

3.4.8.1 The right to self-determination.

This is based on the ethical principle of respect for persons and their human dignity. The right to self-determination means that subjects are informed about the proposed study and allowed to voluntarily choose to participate or not to participate, without the risk of incurring adverse consequences. The right to self-determination includes freedom from coercion of any type. This includes explicit or implicit threats of penalty for failing to participate in a study or excess rewards from agreeing to participate in a study. Subjects are also accorded the right to withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. These rights may be violated when the subject is coerced to participate in the study or when deceptive methods are used to make one participate in the study (Burns

& Grove 2013; Grove & Gray, 2013). These rights were given due consideration in this study.

3.4.8.2. Informed consent

Obtaining informed consent from study participants is particularly important for safeguarding human subjects and protecting their right to self-determination. Informed consent means that participants have adequate information regarding the research, comprehend the information, and have the power of free choice. This information enables participants to either consent or decline to participate in the study (Brink, 2012). Informed consent was obtained from all the informants before embarking on the study. The purpose and objectives of the study were explained to the participants and participants were assured that their participation is voluntary. Participants were under no circumstances coerced into participating in the study.

3.4.8.3 Principle of justice

The practice of fairness was ensured when selecting the participants for the study. Participants were selected systematically from the three selected nursing campuses. Privacy and confidentiality were maintained at all times throughout the study (Brink, 2012). No cameras or videos were used during data collection.

In any research, the rights of the participants to privacy, anonymity and confidentiality must be respected (Grove & Gray, 2013). The students were assured/convinced that all information on the questionnaire was confidential, and their names did not appear on the questionnaires. Students have the right to fair treatment with the following aspects: All students were selected systematically. The researcher explained all expectations and ensured that each student understood the benefits and purpose of the study. Participation was voluntary. Student nurses were allowed to withdraw at any time during the study if they wished to do so. The researcher emphasised the benefits for the students in participating in the study. The researcher's contact details were made available to the students so that they could contact the researcher if they had any

questions. The nature and the purpose of the study were explained before distributing the questionnaire. Questionnaires were personally delivered and collected by the researcher.

3.4.8.4 Principle of beneficence

The right to protection from discomfort and harm is based on the ethical principle of beneficence, which holds that one should do good and, above all, do no harm (Burns & Grove 2012). The participants might have experienced exhaustion and psychological discomfort when completing questionnaires, but during the pre-test the questionnaire was judged to be simple and easy to complete.

3.5 Conclusion

This chapter focused on the study design and methodology that were used to gather information from the respective participants. It also highlighted ethical issues. The next chapter will focus on the presentation of the research findings of the study and data analysis.

CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses and discusses the results. Data was collected from three campuses, Thohoyandou, Sovenga and Giyani. Two hundred and fifty-nine (259) participants sampled out of 575 students, participated voluntarily. Data was collected in class using questionnaires. A total number of 259 questionnaires were distributed to the participants who responded positively. After data collection, the data was analysed and is presented below. The questionnaire was a 4 point Likert Scale of agree, strongly agree, disagree and strongly disagree, but the responses was done only on agree and disagree due to the fact that I combined agree and strongly agree to become agree, and again disagree and strongly disagree to become disagree. That is the reason why in my discussion I focus only on agree and disagree.

4.2. Biographic data of the respondents

A total of 259 targeted participants participated in the study, with a 100 per cent response rate. Among the participants, 206 were females and 53 were males, see figure 1. Of the 259 participants, 59 consumed alcohol and (8) eight took drugs. From the 259 participants who were part of the study, 119 were absent from class at least once in the term, see figure 2 below.

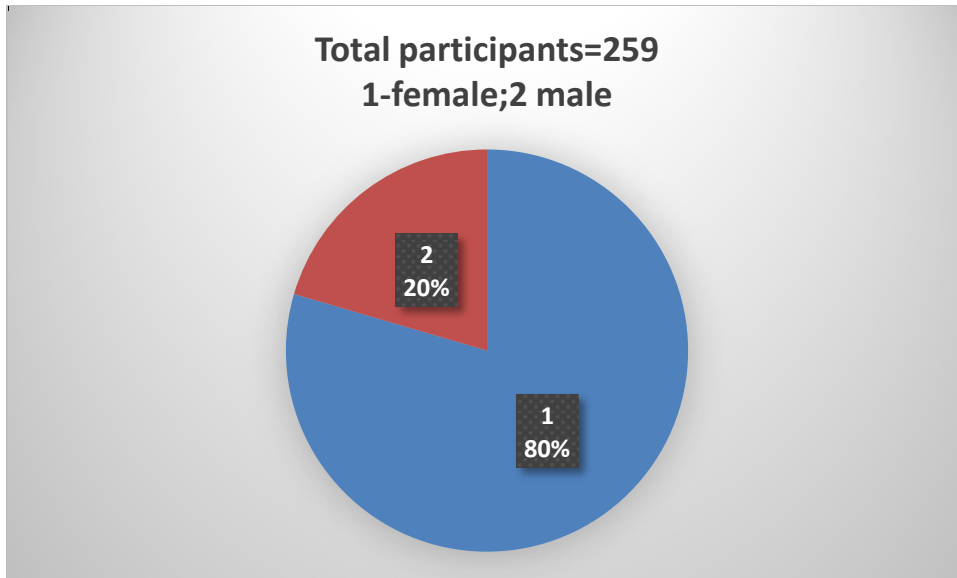


Figure 2: Total number of students who participated in the study.

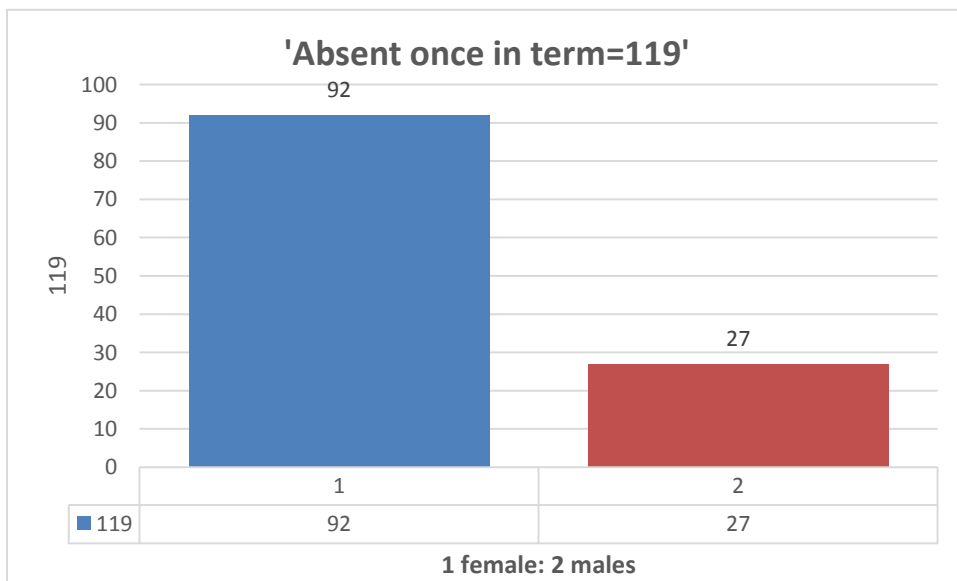


Figure 3: Students who were absent once in a term.

Of those that were absent, 27 were males while 92 were females. The majority of participants in the first year of study had the highest rate of absenteeism, with 73 per cent being absent at least once a semester. Males had a higher absenteeism rate as compared to females with 51 per cent and 45 per cent respectively. Over 80 per cent of

those that take drugs have been absent at least once per semester. These findings are captured in Table 4.2 below.

Table 4.2: Biographical data of participants

Gender							
Absent		Males	Females	Total (%)			
No		26 (49.1)	114 (55.3)	140 (54.1)			
Yes		27 (50.9)	92 (44.7)	119 (45.9)			
Total		53 (100)	206 (100)	259 (100)			
Level of Study							
Absent	1	2	3	4	Total		
No	22 (73.3)	46 (45.5)	22 (55)	50 (56.8)	140 (54.1)		
Yes	8 (26.7)	55 (54.5)	18 (45)	38 (43.2)	119 (45.9)		
Total	30 (100)	101 (100)	40 (100)	88 (100)	259 (100)		
Number of times Absent that week							
Absent	0	1	2	3	4	5	Total
No	140	0	0	0	0	0	140 (54.1)

Yes	41	44	25	4	3	2	119 (45.9)
Total	181 (69.9)	44 (17.0)	25 (9.7)	4 (1.5)	3 (1.2)	2 (0.8)	259 (100)
Number of times absent per semester							
Absent	1	2	3	4	5	Total n (%)	
	47 (39.5)	39 (32.8)	15 (12.6)	8 (6.7)	10 (8.4)	119 (100)	
Alcohol Consumption							
	Consumes Alcohol	Do not Consume Alcohol	Total				
No	27	113	140				
Yes	34	85	119				
Total	61	198	259				
Drug Use							
	Uses Drugs	Does not use Drugs	Total				
No	1 (12.5)	139 (55.4)	140 (54.1)				
Yes	7 (87.5)	112 (44.6)	119 (45.9)				
Total	8 (100)	251 (100)	259 (100)				

4.3 Personal information and absenteeism

Drug use was significantly associated with nonattendance as the p-value was less than 0.05, as shown by most of those taking drugs being absent at least once in a semester. These findings are presented in Table 4.3 below.

Table 4.3: Personal information and absenteeism (n=119)

Variable	Characteristic	Frequency (n=119)	Percentage	χ^2 P-Value
1. Gender	Female	92	77	0.413
	Male	27	23	
2. Level of Study	Level 1	8	6	0.060
	Level 2	55	46	
	Level 3	18	15	
	Level 4	38	33	
3. Alcohol Consumption	Yes	34	28.5	0.111
	No	85	71.5	
4. Drug Use	Yes	7	1	0.017
	No	112	99	

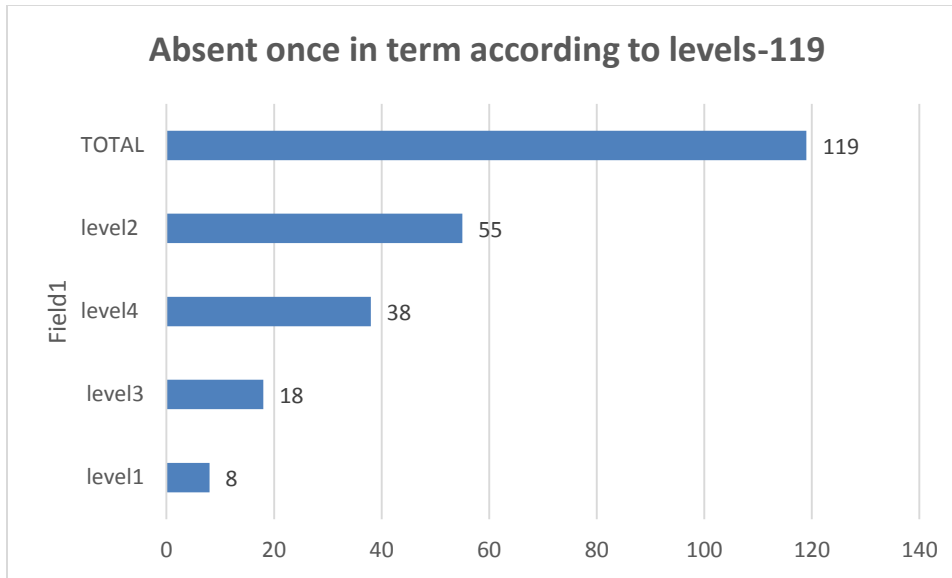


Figure 4: Students absent once in a term according to levels

4.4 Individual factors and absenteeism

The only individual factor that was associated with absenteeism was 'interaction with peers'. Those who disagreed that their interaction with peers influenced absenteeism were 0.589 times more likely to be absent compared to those that agreed that interaction with peers influences absenteeism. These findings are presented in Table 4.4 below.

Table 4.4: Relationship between Individual factors and absenteeism

Outcome variable was absenteeism					
Absent because of:	Response	n (%)	MLR-OR	95% (CI)	MLR-P-Value
1. Drug abuse	Agree	82 (31.66)	***		
	Disagree	177 (68.34)	0.538	0.272-1.066	0.076
2. Stressful situation	Agree	220 (84.94)	***		

	Disagree	39 (15.06)	0.490	0.512-2.659	0.713
3. Financial problems	Agree	106 (40.93)	***		
	Disagree	153 (59.07)	0.682	0.381-1.219	0.196
4. Family problems	Agree	230 (88.80)	***		
	Disagree	(29) 11.20	2.236	0.819-6.105	0.116
5. Medical conditions	Agree	238 (91.89)	***		
	Disagree	21 (8.11)	2.443	0.780-7.647	0.125
6. Alcohol abuse	Agree	145 (55.98)	***		
	Disagree	114 (44.02)	0.673	0.355-1.274	0.224
7. Relationship problems	Agree	119 (45.95)	***		
	Disagree	140 (54.05)	1.360	0.757-2.445	0.303
8. Heavy workload	Agree	195 (75.29)	***		
	Disagree	64 (24.71)	0.535	0.273-1.049	0.069
9. Interaction with peers	Agree	100 (38.61)	***		
	Disagree	159 (61.39)	0.589	0.356-0.976	0.04
10. Family commitments	Agree	200 (77.22)	***		
	Disagree	59 (22.78)	0.849	0.429-1.679	0.637
11. Lack of interest in some subjects	Agree	148 (57.14)	***		
	Disagree	111	1.028	0.656-1.869	0.929

		(42.86)			
12. Lack of responsibility	Agree	173 (66.80)	***		
	Disagree	86 (33.20)	1.517	0.839-2.741	0.168
13. Poor lecturer-student relationship	Agree	174 (67.18)	***		
	Disagree	85 (32.82)	0.753	0.397-1.431	0.387
14. Lack of motivation by the Lecturers	Agree	152 (58.69)	***		
	Disagree	107 (41.31)	0.951	0.508-1.780	0.874
15. Imitating the Lecturers	Agree	64 (24.71)	***		
	Disagree	195 (75.29)	0.851	0.434-1.670	0.640
16. Lecturers negative attitude	Agree	191 (73.36)	***		
	Disagree	68 (26.64)	1.184	0.585-2.397	0.639

4.5 Relationship between environmental factors and absenteeism

Two variables 'poor security around student nurse residence' and 'reading from the book and no explanations by the Lecturer' were significantly associated with absenteeism. Participants who disagreed that 'poor security around student nurse residence' were 0.326 times more likely to be absent as compared to those that agreed. Furthermore, participants that disagreed that 'reading from the book and no explanations by the Lecturer' contributed to absenteeism were 1.971 times more likely to be absent as compared to those who agreed with the statement. These findings are presented in Table 4.5 below.

Table 4.5: Environmental Factors (n=259)

Outcome variable was Absenteeism					
Absent because of:	Response	n (%)	MLR-OR	95% (CI)	MLR-P-Value
1. Lecturer Teaching Strategy / Method	Agree	130 (50.19)	***		
	Disagree	129 (49.81)	0.598	0.324-1.101	0.099
2. Poor Management of Institution	Agree	116 (44.79)	***		
	Disagree	143 (55.21)	0.239	0.379-1.383	0.328
3. Poor Housing and shortage of rooms	Agree	81 (31.27)	***		
	Disagree	178 (68.73)	0.690	0.345-1.383	0.296
4. Shortage of learning material	Agree	111 (42.86)	***		
	Disagree	148 (57.14)	0.940	0.483-1.828	0.854
5. Shortage of lecturers	Agree	53 (20.46)	***		
	Disagree	206 (79.54)	0.937	0.404-2.172	0.879
6. Overgrown external environment	Agree	73 (28.19)	***		
	Disagree	186 (71.81)	1.089	0.523-2.307	0.805
7. Class environment not conducive	Agree	90 (34.75)	***		
	Disagree	169 (65.25)	1.556	0.771-3.142	0.217
8. Old buildings and classes	Agree	76 (29.18)	***		
	Disagree	183 (70.82)	0.524	0.249-1.105	0.090

9. Poor security around student nurse residence	Agree	46 (17.76)	***		
	Disagree	213 (82.24)	0.326	0.136-0.779	0.012
10. Unpleasant and unwelcoming atmosphere by the Lecturer	Agree	106 (40.93)	***		
	Disagree	153 (59.07)	1.079	0.564-2.065	0.817
11. Reading from the book and no explanations by the lecturer	Agree	170 (65.64)	***		
	Disagree	89 (34.36)	1.971	1.053-3.691	0.034

4.6 Strategies to reduce absenteeism

The findings of this study suggest that there is a relationship between variables: 'voluntary class attendance, enough space in the department, and use of different teaching strategies' with being absent. Participants who disagreed that voluntary class attendance influences absenteeism were 0.542 times more likely to be absent as compared to those that agreed.

Participants that disagreed with the fact that enough space in the department contributed to absenteeism were 4.785 times more likely to be absent compared to those that agreed. Lastly, Participants who disagreed that the use of different teaching strategies could contribute to absenteeism were 3.331 times more likely to be absent as compared to those that agreed with the statement. These findings are presented in Table 4.6 below.

Table 4.6: Strategies to Reduce Absenteeism

Outcome variable was Absenteeism					
Absenteeism can be reduced by:	Response	n (%)	MLR-OR	95% (CI)	MLR-P-Value
1. Monitoring student nurses	Agree	207 (79.92)	***		
	Disagree	52 (20.08)	0.619	0.303-1.264	0.188
2. Disciplinary measures like punishment	Agree	129 (49.81)	***		
	Disagree	130 (50.19)	1.018	0.582-1.782	0.950
3. Voluntary class attendance	Agree	168 (64.98)	***		
	Disagree	91 (35.02)	0.542	0.309-0.953	0.033
4. Disqualification of students that use drugs and alcohol	Agree	80 (30.89)	***		
	Disagree	179 (69.11)	0.709	0.392-1.284	0.257
5. Termination of those who fall pregnant during the course	Agree	33 (12.74)	***		
	Disagree	226 (87.26)	0.799	0.333-1.867	0.590
6. Having all prescribed books	Agree	207 (79.92)	***		
	Disagree	252 (0.08)	0.917	0.465-1.809	0.802
7. Introduction of policies and disciplinary procedures	Agree	196 (75.68)	***		
	Disagree	63 (24.32)	1.221	0.629-2.370	0.556
8. Various teaching	Agree	226(87.26)	***		
	Disagree	33 (12.74)	0.901	0.368-2.204	0.819

materials made available					
9. Enough space in the department	Agree	238 (91.89)	***		
	Disagree	21 (8.11)	4.785	1.376-16.632	0.014
10. Improved lecturer –student interaction	Agree	241 (93.05)	***		
	Disagree	18 (6.95)	0.941	0.295-2.996	0.918
11. Use of different teaching strategies	Agree	241 (93.05)	***		
	Disagree	18 (6.95)	3.311	1.145-9.880	0.027
12. Employment of more Lecturers	Agree	214(82.63)	***		
	Disagree	45 (17.37)	1.125	0.530-2.3890	0.759
13. Course content to be well presented	Agree	245 (94.59)	***		
	Disagree	14 (5.41)	1.308	0.304-5.636	0.718

4.7 Reasons that participants cited to be likely cause of absenteeism

Students mentioned these as reasons that lead to absenteeism:

Favouritism by lecturers; lack of motivation by lecturers; the 80 per cent expected attendance rate; heavy workload and long hours; failure to wake up on time; preparing for tests and exams; family problems causing stress; stage fright during presentations; forcing the student to answer questions when they do not know the answer; heavy workload; negative attitudes of lecturers towards students; students not granted maternity leave; lecturers discriminating against some students by lecturers; lecturers bullying students; too lazy to attend class; some students prefer self-study to lecture methods; entertainment; misunderstanding of SANC rules and regulations and personal plans.

4.8 Types of drugs taken

The most common drug that was listed by those taking drugs was marijuana. One participant mentioned medication.

4.9 Participant's suggestions of strategies that could curb absenteeism

Students suggested the following to curb absenteeism; monitoring of student nurses which was supported by 207 students (79.92%); disciplinary measures like student punishment supported by 129 students (49.81%); voluntary class attendance supported by 168 students (64.98%); disqualification of students that use drugs and alcohol supported by 80 students (30.89%); termination of those who fall pregnant during the course of the study as supported by 33 students (12.74%); having all prescribed books could curb absenteeism as supported by 207 (79.92%) students ;

The introduction of policies and disciplinary procedures was supported by 196 students (75.68%); various teaching materials to be made available 226 students (87.26%); additional space to be made available supported by 238 students (91.89%); improved lecturer-student interaction indicated as a strategy to curb absenteeism 241 students (93.05%); use of different teaching strategies 241 students (93.05%); employment of more lecturers supported by 214 students (82.63%) and there was an indication that course content should be better presented 245 students (94.59%).

Students to be given enough time to do revisions; student's social problems require attention; learning materials like blackboards, computers and learning videos should be made available; lecture time to be reduced; presentations not to be included in teaching strategies; the number of periods must be reduced; lecturers to reduce the amount of work given to students.

Lecturers to motivate students to study harder and ask them more questions so that when they do not understand they receive the help they need; there must be counselling sessions for those who are struggling to pass the tests with low marks and

those with family problems and in time of bereavement and that students should be given time to rest.

Those who are absent themselves from classes should be disciplined by giving them extra class activities to keep them busy; class attendance should be voluntary; create a therapeutic learning environment; feedback by lecturers given to students after presentations; students to be given extended leave; creation of interaction between facilitators and students; lecturers not to force students to answer questions when they do not know the answers.

Students need time for recreation; students to be given family responsibility leave; leave days should be increased; the lecturers need to be more welcoming; rewards for students who obtain 100 per cent attendance; lecturers to respect the students; students to be allowed to use their home languages in class; and the learning environment to be more conducive for learning.

4.10 Discussion

As indicated from the analysis of the data, the results showed that male students (51%) were more absent compared to female students (45%). This was in line with the study conducted by Kiran, Muhammad, Hajra et al. (2018), in Pakistan who discovered that the statistics of absenteeism were higher for males as equated to females. The Chi-squared test was used for analysis to test for associations between personal characteristics and absenteeism. The total number of participants who participated in the study was 259, giving a 100 per cent response rate. Among those, 119 students (45,9%) were absent from class at least once in the term. Students mentioned several reasons for their absenteeism from the class.

The study found that there were specific areas which were statistically significant. However, some areas were not significant but perceived as critical by the researcher and found as significant in studies conducted in various countries. The current study used the p-value of 0.05 to determine the level of significance and found that interaction with peers (0.04), poor security around student nurse residence (0.01), reading from the

book and no explanations by the lecturer (0.03), voluntary class attendance (0.03), enough space in the department (0.01) and use of different teaching strategies (0.02) contributed to the high rate of absenteeism among student nurses. The relationship between individual factors and absenteeism which were perceived to be critical in South Africa and significant in studies conducted in other countries such as stressful situations, heavy workloads, poor lecturer-student relationships, alcohol abuse and lack of interest in nursing were measured and found insignificant in the current study.

4.10.1 Biographic data of the participants

The results of this study revealed that there was a higher absenteeism rate among males compared to females as displayed in Table 4.2. However, Magobolo and Dube (2019) found no correlation between gender and absenteeism in their study in South Africa. The current study also revealed that there was no relationship between absenteeism and age (0.413), as all students were absent on the same average irrespective of their age group. The findings were similar to those from the study conducted by Kiran et al. (2018), in Pakistan who indicated that absenteeism had nothing to do with age since all students were found to be absent equally, irrespective of age. Similarly, the studies conducted by Abdelrahman and Abdelkader (2017) in Egypt, Magobolo and Dube (2019) and Kiran et al. (2018) found no correlation between absenteeism and age. In contrast, the study conducted in India by Ray et al. (2018) found that students who were more often absent were those above 20 years of age compared to those who were aged 20 and below.

The level of students affects nonattendance, as shown in Table 4.2, as participants in the first year had the highest rate of absenteeism with 73 per cent being absent at least once a semester. This was in line with the study which was conducted by Kiran et al. (2018), who revealed that the level I students were more absent than other levels. In their study, Ray et al. (2018) agreed that most absenteeism occurred in level I students compared to other levels. This corresponded with the study conducted by Kiran et al. (2018), and Magobolo and Dube (2019), who reported that level one students are more absent as compared to other levels.

4.10.2 Relationship between Individual factors and absenteeism

- **Interaction with peers**

The current study found that interaction with peers (0.04) was significant to be the cause of absenteeism amongst student nurses at the LCoN, as indicated in Table 4.4. Peer group influence and conflicts due to unstable relationships among student nurses were an issue contributing to absenteeism. It could be possible that level 1 students might be influenced by senior students while trying to settle in the new environment. A study in India found that most of the students were influenced by their peers, who persuaded them to focus on leisure things instead of focusing on their studies (Majeed, 2019).

The current study showed that competition was another problem encountered by student nurses, as revealed by some participants. There was an indication that other students were the breadwinners in the family and some were orphaned and supposed to take care of their siblings, and as a result, they did not have enough money to cater for themselves compared to their peers and were absent from class. Their absence was caused by rejection by peers, as indicated by one study in Egypt (Abdelrahman & Abdelkader, 2017).

4.10.3 Environmental factors

- **Poor security around student nurses' residence**

The current study found that poor security around student nurse residences was significant (0.012) as a contributing cause of student nurse absenteeism. The finding could be attributed to the fact that student belongings were sometimes stolen from the nurses' home, and consequently, students were absent from the class in order to take care of their belongings.

- **Reading from the book and no explanations by the lecturer**

Another significant factor for nonattendance in the current study was the lecturer reading from the book without explanation (0.034) as indicated in Table 4.5. These students were absent from lecturers since they were bored listening to the lecturer reading from the book without clarification. A similar study conducted in India further indicated that students absent themselves from their classes due to lecturers not explaining the subject of their lecture (Majeed, 2019). Similarly, Kiran et al. (2018), in Pakistan, revealed that students were not satisfied by lecturers who prefers to use the same teaching strategy.

4.10.4 Stressful situation

Many student nurses are absent from classes due to stressful situations, as indicated by the current study. It was further specified that some students were more stressed because they did not understand the course content, which the lecturer could not explain. Magobolo and Dube (2019) agree and indicate that some of the students happen to be absent from class due to family problems which lead them to be more stressed. The current study indicated that academic challenges such as family matters interfere with studies and contribute to stressful situations because students cannot concentrate on their learning as shown in Table 4.3 under individual factors and absenteeism. This agreed with studies in India and South Africa in that found students' absence was influenced by family matters, for instance, separation of parents as they were stressed and failed to attend the class (Magobolo & Dube, 2019; Abu Ruz, Al-Akash & Jarrah, 2018; Shellenbarger & Hoffman, 2016).

Furthermore, sickness, the thoughtlessness of lecturers and work overload contributed to students' increased stress level which led to absenteeism from their classes (Okechukwu, Nafisa, Habu et al., 2017), in Nigeria. Similarly, Kanwal, Riaz et al. (2017), in their study in Pakistan, asserted that stressful situations could have a negative impact and lead to high rates of absenteeism.

Tiredness because of the heavy workload and not having enough time to rest was another cause of stress (Muhammad, Hajra & Syed, 2018). The authors also found that

students miss class due to stress caused by fear of evaluation/assessment and doing presentations in class. Majeed (2019) agreed, stating that due to poor progress after writing a test, students become stressed and decided to miss class. It was further indicated that some students happen to be absent from class to cope with their workload causing a stressful situation. The lack of interest in lectures was another cause of absenteeism, as shown in the current study. In contrast, Ray, Raju and Singh (2018), in their study in Elk Grove Village, found that other students were more stressed when returning to their rooms due to being late which was not the case in the current study.

4.10.5 Financial problems

The current study revealed that 106 (40.93%) participants supported and indicated that students have financial problems causing absenteeism rates as shown in Table 4.4. It was further indicated that stipends were no longer used to buy their prescribed books but given to their families at home since most of the students were breadwinners. Furthermore, the little money they received for their books was not adequate to maintain their siblings or families. This was asserted by Okechukwu et al. (2017), who signified that some students especially girls were absent from class to take care of their babies since they did not have babysitters available due to their financial problem. The study by Magobolo and Dube (2019) revealed that students worried about not being paid even though they lived in nurses' residence and received stipends for school fees.

4.10.6 Stress due to family matters

Another cause of absenteeism confirmed by 200 participants (77.22%) is family problems. Some students were the breadwinners who took care of their siblings and parents and had responsibility for the whole family. This was in line with the study conducted by Shellenbarger and Hoffman (2016) in India, who indicated that most students were absent from class due to family matters, such as taking care of their babies and parents. Also, Abdelrahman and Abdelkader (2017) agreed that students in unstable relationships and those taking care of their babies were often absent from their class.

Muhammad et al. (2018), in their study in Europe, also demonstrated the same findings. Students were frequently absent from their classes to attend to family matters, especially those with babies and support them when they needed medical attention. Muhammad et al. (2018) stated that some students cared for their parents, who could not take care of themselves when they were ill. Furthermore, students were absent from their classes to attend funerals of their loved ones. The study was further supported by Ray et al. (2018) in Elk Grove Village as students were unable to attend class due to family problems such as funerals.

The study by Magobolo and Dube (2019) in South Africa reveals that most students are absent from the class to attend to family matters at home, like taking care of their parents who were unable to take care of themselves. Furthermore, the same study showed that student absence increased in those students committed to family issues. In his research, Majeed (2019) also indicated that many students were absent from their classes due to personal problems. The study was further supported by Jyoti and Flinsi (2019) in Nepal, who indicated that home-related problems were the main cause of absenteeism among student nurses.

4.10.7 Medical condition

The current study showed that minor illnesses like flu was another cause of absenteeism among student nurses, as shown in Table 4.4 and supported by 238 participants (91.89%). Furthermore, it specified that students were concerned about being recorded as absent from the class even though they produced sick leave certificates to validate their absence but were absent from the class without any notification to their lecturers. Demir and Karabeyoglu (2016), in their study in London, revealed that many students who stay away from class due to ill health continue to be absent after they recover. Furthermore, some students took sick leave because they are busy with their commitments.

The authors demonstrated that even though other students played sick, most of the students were absent from their classes due to sickness. This was supported by Kanwal et al. (2017), who revealed that absenteeism for many student nurses was caused by sickness and affected their academic progress. Magobolo and Dube (2019) also

demonstrated that students failed to attend their studies due to physical illness. Furthermore, Muhammad et al. (2018) indicated that some of the students were suffering from chronic diseases and were absent from class almost every month, and it increased the rate of absenteeism.

4.10.8 Heavy workload and shortage of staff in the wards leading to students regarded as workforce

The majority of the participants mentioned their heavy workload as another reason for absence (75.29%) in Table 4.4. When students had too much work without being given enough time to rest, they became stressed and did not attend class. Also, students provided a workforce to cover the shortage of nurses in the hospital wards leading to tiredness, and consequently, some students failed to wake up in time and ended up being absent from class.

The current study was in line with Takase, Niitani, Imai et al. (2019) in Hindawi who revealed that students absent missed class due to tiredness as a result of overwork since they were treated as an additional workforce due to the shortage of staff. This was also in line with the study by Van Graan, Williams and Koen (2016) in *Gesondheid* who found that students were absent because they were treated unfairly by their supervisors in the wards. The authors further demonstrated that students' off duties requisitions were not considered (Van Graan, Williams & Koen, 2016).

Similarly, Othman and Nasuridin (2019), in their study in Malaysia, found the burden of work given to students by lecturers as the main cause of their absenteeism. The authors also stated that this amount of work reduced students' motivation which contributed to their absence from the class. The study conducted by Leta, Haymanot and Yawendwosen (2019) in Ethiopia also revealed that most students' absenteeism was the result of incorrect treatment where they feel they are the workforce.

4.10.9 Poor lecturer-student relationship

Poor lecturer-student relationships were a great concern of students, as indicated in Table 4.4 from the current study, which was supported by 174 participants (67.18%). It was regarded as one of the major causes of absenteeism since many students do not

attend because of poor relationships with their lecturers. Furthermore, there was an indication that lecturers do not like those students who were absent from their classes, and these students do not progress well in their studies. Studies conducted by Karabeyoglu (2016), in Stockholm and Ada et al. (2019), in Nigeria, found that lack of respect for lecturers and students as well as poor relationships contributed to student nurse absenteeism. Mothobi (2017) revealed in his study conducted in Lesotho that students were ill-treated and not considered as human beings by their lecturers. Poor lecturer-student relationships, as indicated in Table 4.4, was regarded as another cause of absenteeism as supported by the study by Washeya (2018).

4.10.10 Lack of motivation by the Lecturers

There was evidence from the current study that lecturers were not supporting and motivating the students regarding their studies. Lack of student motivation by lecturers was regarded as a contributing factor to student nurse absenteeism as supported by 152 participants (58.69%) and illustrated in Table 4.4. Furthermore, it should be emphasised that there is a period of study to be undertaken by lecturers to facilitate learning. A study conducted in Jordan by Ruz, Akash and Jarrah (2018) revealed that absenteeism could affect both the academic achievement and the progress of the students and that motivation and encouragement should be emphasised to these students to use the opportunity to study harder. The same study found that students were not willing to attend their classes since they did not receive convincing motivation from their lecturers. This agreed with the study by Khalid (2017) in Saudi Arabia, who revealed that students had no motivational rewards for success in their studies.

More effort should be placed on motivating students to attend their classes. According to Khalid (2017), incentives for best performance among students could assist in reducing the absenteeism rate. Similarly, the lack of motivation can lead to poor performance and increase absenteeism rates (Khalid, 2017). This was in line with Karabeyoglu (2016), who stated that without motivation, there is more absenteeism and poor performance among student nurses. Students motivation can curb absenteeism rates among student nurses as indicated by the study conducted by Forte (2017) in Scholar Works.

4.10.11 Lecturer's negative attitude towards the students

Lecturers' attitudes were reported as another reason for students' absenteeism by 73.3 per cent of the participants (Table 4.4). This study also revealed that some lecturers mistreated the students. The current study emphasised that lecturers should accommodate all students without any discrimination, give them moral support, assist them in all spheres of learning and respond positively without showing any negativity in order to facilitate a better learning environment.

Takase et al. (2019) concur with this as they indicated that student nurses are greatly concerned that the lecturers may have negative attitudes towards them. Also, the lecturers' negative manner discourages students from learning, threatens them and affects their progress. The origin or cause of the lecturers' negative attitude was unknown and not stated in this study. It could be possible that lecturers demonstrated such attitudes in response to students' use of language that was unfamiliar to them as students tend to speak their local language which is not understood by lecturers when they communicate. This could cause frustration on both sides and results in excess discipline from the lecturer, which could then lead to nonattendance by these students (Leta et al., 2019).

The current study was further supported by Washeya (2018), in Namibia who showed that students were absent from their class because they were badly treated by their lecturers and lack support and motivation from lecturers. Washeya (2018) further indicated that lack of communication due to negativity among students and lecturers was a problem which contributed to absenteeism and that lecturers developed favouritism amongst student nurses.

4.10.12 Teaching strategies

For a lecture to be more effective, lecturers were supposed to use different teaching strategies to improve the learning environment, as indicated in the current study. This study showed that different teaching strategies motivated students to participate actively reducing the rate of absenteeism. Furthermore, students were concerned about boring teaching strategies, like reading from the book without any further explanation, which was mentioned by 65.6 per cent of participants as a factor in missing class. This was in

line with Takase et al. (2019), who indicated that lecturers were supposed to add value to the class and poor teaching strategies were another cause of student nurse nonattendance. Therefore, lecturers should add additional knowledge when lecturing that is not available in the books in order to make learning more effective.

The same study further indicated that students were concerned about lecturers who do not prepare for lectures. A lecturer who reads from the book without further clarification appears as if he/she did not prepare for the lecture. This demoralised the students, and they believed it was as if they were doing it on their own since they did not understand what was being presented, and it was not explained. Research shows that careful and thorough preparation for a lesson makes the class more interesting and productive when coupled with the use of different teaching methods which improves learning through a better understanding of the content. Also, Leta et al. (2020) agreed noting that the students' boredom was often the result of inadequate teaching strategies that failed to motivate the students to learn.

Furthermore, in this study, some students stated that lecturers must stop misusing students by giving them extra work for presentation. The current study found that lecturers failed to explain the subject adequately, and it was suggested that they add more valuable content to their lectures to avoid discouraging students. Furthermore, the same study showed that the failure to use different teaching strategies or consistent instruction could lead to student frustration and confusion, leading to absenteeism. As a result, lecturers should use different teaching strategies so that lectures are more interesting and can be easily understood by the students.

4.10.13 Shortage of lecturers

A shortage of lecturers was reported as a cause of absenteeism by 20.6 per cent of the participants. Students expressed their feelings of dissatisfaction, specifying that they were expected to do the work of the lecturers since lecturers did not explain or teach the work in a manner that all students could understand. This resulted in the students having to do additional work to ensure they understood the content of the lecture, and they felt this should be the responsibility of the lecturer. Furthermore, lecturers should distribute the work among themselves rather than putting pressure on students by

increasing their workload and expecting them to do continuous presentations, which should have been undertaken by the lecturers.

The study was supported by Gemuhay, Kalolo, Mirisho et al. (2019) in Hindawi who revealed that student nurses failed to attend their classes because they were expected to do the work of the lecturers. The authors further indicated that the work allocated for lecturers was distributed to students due to the lack of lecturers. Therefore, this study suggests that the Department of Health and Department of Social Development must ensure that there are adequate lecturers and reduce this shortage and decrease excessive absenteeism among student nurses. A study by Knoster (2016) in Washington revealed that a shortage or lack of lecturers hinder students' success.

The current study indicated that other students were not accustomed to studying on their own and as a result, it was a challenge for them since they had to do the work without assistance due to the shortage of lecturers. The shortage of lecturers as another cause of absenteeism among student nurses was further supported by Leta et al. (2019), who also indicated that students were overloaded with work. The study by Van den Oetelaar, Van Stel, Van Rhenen et al. (2016), in the BMJ Open showed that workload management methods could assist and curb shortages of lecturers and consequently reduce the absenteeism rate.

4.10.14 Learning environment not conducive

It was revealed that the environment was not conducive to learning and the outside setting was overgrown and untidy as supported by 73 participants (28.19%) (Table 4.5). Furthermore, students were concerned about the environment on the campuses in that they felt they were not safe since the environment was unkempt and dirty. Also, the classroom environment was not good for learning, as shown in Table 4.5. Some of the students revealed that their state of health does not allow them to be in this type of setting because of their current illnesses, and consequently, they were absent from class.

This was supported by the study by Washea (2018), who revealed that a favourable environment could influence the students to stay and attend their classes leading to lower absence rates. The same study also agreed that an uncomfortable class

environment was a serious problem for students. This was supported by Takase et al. (2019), who indicated that the poor conditions of the building, and, therefore, the classes and other educational structures like laboratories contribute to student absenteeism. Furthermore, the study discovered that a bad atmosphere and noisy environment where students were unable to concentrate during lectures was regarded as problematic. Furthermore, poor laboratory settings made the students lose focus and concentration on their lessons.

4.10.15 Students' attitude towards their lecturers

The attitude of students towards their lecturers was significant compared to other studies and causes of absenteeism, even though it was not significant in the current study. Gubbels et al. (2019) demonstrated this in their study in the Netherlands where this lack of respect towards their lecturers was evident, including how they were addressed. Gubbels et al. (2019) further maintained that students attitudes to their lecturers contributed to absenteeism and students must learn and be guided on how to improve their communication with their lecturers to build better relationships and improve the learning environment.

According to the study conducted by Washea (2018), another cause of absenteeism by student nurses was because they develop negative attitudes and behaviours towards their lecturers. This was supported by the study conducted by Knoster (2016), which also revealed that a lack of interest in schoolwork had more influence on students who then developed negative attitudes towards their lecturers.

4.10.16 Poor living conditions

In this study, poor living conditions (Table 4.5) are noted by 81 participants (31.27%) as another cause of absenteeism. Most rooms in residences are described as filthy, and some students attempted to clean their rooms and failed to attend some lessons. This was supported by News Editor February (2019), who stated that the living conditions at the residence were poor.

4.10.17 Lack of interest in lecturers

Some students (57.14%) are not interested in their lecturers, as illustrated by participants in Table 4.4. They were not interested in the subjects or their lecturers. Also, Knoster (2016) indicated that most students were absent from class due to a lack of interest in their lecturers. The study by Takase et al. (2019) revealed that some lecturers rarely look at the students while they are in class and from this, the students understood that the lecturer was not interested in them and they became less interested in their lecturers. The same study further revealed that some lecturers indicated that they were not interested in teaching, which discouraged the students and further caused them to lose interest in their lecturers.

4.10.18 Other personal factors that contributed to student nurse absenteeism

Marijuana was found to be the most common drug listed by 82 students (31.66 %) which contributed to student nurse absenteeism. Those who use them indicated that they have addiction and that after taking those drugs they overslept and as a result they ended up not attending the class. There is one participant who indicated that he uses certain drugs for treatment and after taking them he became drowsy and fail to attend the class.

4.10.19 Strategies to reduce absenteeism

- **Voluntary class attendance**

In the current study, 64.9 per cent of students indicated that it was better to attend classes voluntarily since most of them were not interested in attending classes on a full-time basis. Students were more interested in self-studying rather than being pushed to do the work. The reason for not wanting to attend classes was not stated; possibly because the classes were too big, and students believed they did not benefit from attending such classes. The findings agreed with a study conducted in Egypt which indicated that class attendance was not compulsory in colleges, where students attend their theoretical lecturer in large classrooms, and it was difficult for lecturers to identify

the number of students who were absent in that period (Abdelrahman & Abdelkader, 2017).

Similarly, Noor, Rifat and Farhat (2018), Pakistan, Majeed et al. (2019), and Okechukwu et al. (2017) found that most students preferred voluntary class attendance and to study on their own than attending classes, especially when the weather was favourable for them and they could do their errands. In contrast, self-study and voluntary class attendance were discouraged by some studies as they contribute to poor academic success (McGahee, 2019; Ruz, Akash and Suhail, 2018).

- **Enough space in the department**

Most of the students in the current study stated that there was no enough space in some of the campuses because some classrooms were not big enough to accommodate them in large numbers and their rooms were too small. Since their classes were overcrowded and too small for them to move freely, students could not concentrate during lectures, and as a result, many did not attend and made provisions to study on their own. Furthermore, it was indicated that although their rooms were small, they said that it was better to study in their rooms rather than staying in an overcrowded class. Abdelrahman and Abdelkader (2017), in Egypt, stated that in Minia University, the students faced the problem that there are not enough classrooms to accommodate them, particularly for the larger classes, resulting in nonattendance. The study was further supported by Ada et al. (2019), who indicated that many students were absent due to the unfavourable conditions of the buildings and insufficient space.

- **Use of different teaching strategies**

A single teaching strategy was considered as another cause of absenteeism, as indicated in Table 4.6. Furthermore, 241 participants (93.05%) stated that lecturers were failing to use different teaching strategies and as a result, students ended up falling asleep in class since they found it boring. It was further specified that various teaching materials were supposed to be available (Table 4.6) to encourage interest and reduce nonattendance among student nurses and this was not the case. This study

revealed that availability of teaching material motivated students as well as simplified lectures so that students could understand the lecture with ease as improved understanding of a subject made it less difficult to forget. The study further emphasised that before the presentation of content, lecturers should ensure that teaching materials and lesson plans are well prepared.

Furthermore, to encourage the students, different teaching strategies are essential, and study materials must be available. Therefore, college educators must make use of different teaching methods to limit the rate of absenteeism among students. This was strongly asserted by Abdelrahman and Abdelkader (2017), who found that there was no clarification of course content by lecturers who presented the information to the students. The same study further indicated that failure to use different teaching strategies and unavailability of teaching materials contributed to students' nurse absenteeism.

4.11 CONCLUSION

The results of the study revealed that student nurse absenteeism from the three selected nursing campuses, Thohoyandou, Giyani and Sovenga in the LCoN was relatively high, as indicated in Table 4.2. This was highlighted by the factors which contributed to absenteeism and effects on student nurses' absenteeism at LCoN. The study underlined most of the factors which were related to the motives for absenteeism amongst student nurses. The most prevalent findings of the study, among others, were failures to use different teaching strategies by lecturers, student's heavy workload, lecturers' attitudes, poor lecturer-student relationship and unconducive class environment. The next chapter presents the limitations, summary and interpretation of the results and recommendations.

CHAPTER 5: THE LIMITATIONS, SUMMARY AND INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, data was analysed, and research findings were discussed. This chapter focuses on the recommendations, conclusion and summary of the study. This study aimed to investigate factors contributing to absenteeism (in class) amongst student nurses in the LCoN. A quantitative research method and cross-sectional research design were used with 259 participants taking part in the study, and data collected through questionnaires.

5.2 Limitations

Time was the only stressful issue which delayed the study. This was because the students were not in the same area during data collection. Since they were in different campuses, it was so stressful and time consuming to reach them. Having to follow-up at various student campuses contributed to the delay of data collection. Stationary was also a problem since some of the students made mistakes while completing the questionnaire and requested another one. There were some interferences by lecturers while students were busy completing the questionnaire and it was time consuming.

5.3 Summary and interpretation of results

This section concludes the findings of the study, as discussed in chapter four under the following objectives:

- To determine gender factors that contributed to students' absenteeism.
- To determine individual factors that contributed to absenteeism for students at the nursing campuses.
- To identify the environmental factors that contributed to students' absenteeism.
- To explore strategies to reduce absenteeism.

5.3.1 To determine gender factors that contributed to students' absenteeism

5.3.1.1 Biographical data of the participants

After analysis, the findings of the study revealed that male students were more absent than females from classes, although other studies indicate that in some area, females were more absent than males.

5.3.2 To determine individual factors that contributed to students' absenteeism at the nursing campuses

- Interaction with peers

The findings of this study discovered that peer group influence was a contributing factor to absenteeism. The issue of competition between student nurses was a problem, especially for those who are breadwinners and depend on their stipend for their living.

- Students' attitude towards their lecturers

Students' attitudes were also a cause of absenteeism as supported by the participants from other studies, although not significant from the current study. Some students developed negative attitudes and hated their lecturers, and then missed class. Some students who were absent from the class mentioned a lack of interest in the subject taught by that particular lecturer. Also, the laziness and reluctance of the students to do the work was another cause of absenteeism.

- Stressful situation

The findings of the study showed that some students decided to stay away from their classes due to stressful situations that they encountered within their classes and homes like sickness of parents or guardian, the heavy workload created by their lecturers and being turned away if they were late for class. The results of the study also showed that stressful situations were due to family matters, particularly for female students with small babies who missed class to take care of them. The results also showed that unstable relationships, taking care of the siblings in case of those who were orphans and attending to family matters were the highest cause of stress.

- Financial problems

The results of the study showed that many students were absent from their classes because they did not have the money to buy their books and pay tuition fees since the money or stipend that they received was used to support their families as most of them were breadwinners at their homes.

- Medical condition

The findings of the study showed that some students were absent from their classes due to their medical conditions. Many students have chronic conditions that cause them to miss class, however, some pretend to be sick and fail to attend class. The results revealed that absenteeism is a major problem for these students. Some missed class almost every month due to their chronic conditions, and this affects the progress of their studies.

5.3.3 To identify the environmental factors that contributed to students' absenteeism

- Poor security around student nurse residence

The results demonstrate that many student nurses were absent from their classes so that they could take care of their belongings, which were not safe in their rooms and often stolen due to the poor security service at the nurses home.

- Learning environment not conducive

Some participants revealed that students were concerned about the poor environment around the campuses. These include the overgrown environment where there were snakes in some areas, old buildings on specific campuses, dusty and dirty classrooms, which some students could not tolerate due to their chronic respiratory conditions.

5.3.4 To explore the strategies that can be used to reduce absenteeism.

- Voluntary class attendance

The results of the study revealed that students were interested or preferred to study on their own rather than attend class and wait for a lecturer to teach them for the allocated period. Most of the students believed it was more interesting to study on their own. Others mentioned that it was hard to understand a lecturer in a big class which was congested and uncontrollable.

- Enough space in the department

The findings of the study revealed that some students indicated that some classes were too small for the large groups of students and they would prefer to be allowed to do self-studies and that would reduce the absenteeism rate.

- Use of different teaching strategies

The results of the study showed that the use of different teaching strategies could reduce absenteeism rates. Research showed that the use of a variety of teaching methods stimulate students' interest and enhances learning. It should be noted that student-centred approaches encouraged active participation by students and promotes learning.

5.4 Recommendations

In order to deal with absenteeism, the researcher suggests the institutions consider the following based on the results of this research.

5.4.1 Nursing practice

Courses on blended teaching are required to assist teachers to use both student-centred and traditional methods to motivate students. Counselling sessions should be available for those students with small babies who are breadwinners within their homes in that the stipends allocated are for learning materials such as prescribed books. It should be emphasised that these payments are meant for training purpose. Counselling sessions should also be conducted for students using drugs so that they are aware of the importance of their studies. Voluntary class attendance considered so that students are motivated to attend the class willingly and have enough time to study. The importance of education to be highlighted to students as well as avoiding the problems of peer group influence.

5.4.2 Nursing education

The department should ensure that campuses have enough lecturers to facilitate students learning. The management of the campus should ensure that lecturers are doing their work correctly and not overloading the students. The department should ensure that debilitated buildings renovated to ensure that students are in a safe environment. The department should arrange in-service training for lecturers on how to communicate with students and practice gender equality for all students. Furthermore, lecturers should ensure that they do not discriminate between students. Students are individuals who are entitled to fair treatment like any other person. Emphasis should be made within campuses to ensure that there are good lecturer-student relationships.

Lecturers should ensure that those students who make good progress are encouraged in order to enhance learning and reduce absenteeism among those who have been absent so that they attend class. Incentives or certificates should be awarded to those making good progress, especially those who obtain marks of 80 per cent and above. Lecturers should observe and assess students who are in stressful situations and refer them to relevant people for counselling sessions to assist these students in attending their classes without any disruptions. Lecturers must use different teaching strategies to stimulate learning and to reduce absenteeism. The department should ensure that there is enough security service on the campuses to monitor the entire property while students are in class so that students can attend without concern about the safety of their belongings.

5.5 Conclusion

This research used a quantitative approach utilising questionnaires as a method of collecting data from the participants on three campuses, Thohoyandou, Giyani and Sovenga. According to this study, absenteeism is an enormous challenge in all the campuses in the Limpopo Province. It is expected that these findings will assist various in reducing the absenteeism of nursing students in the LCoN as well as other similar nursing colleges in South Africa.

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ANNEXURE A: QUESTIONNAIRE

Student name: Mamatsharaga Tshinyadzo Student Number: 11542646

University of Venda –school of health – Master of Nursing degree.

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Read and answer all questions.
2. Do not write your name or student number on this questionnaire.
3. Do not tear any page.
4. Mark with an **X** in the appropriate space.

EXAMPLE

X

PARTICIPANT

CODE

G

SECTION 1: BIBLIOGRAPHICAL DATA

1.1 GENDER

MALE	FEMALE

1.2 AGE

What is your age?

--

1.3 LEVEL OF STUDY

LEVEL 1	LEVEL 2	LEVEL 3	LEVEL 4

SECTION 2.1: INDIVIDUAL/PERSONAL FACTORS

Indicate whether the following factors contribute to absenteeism by putting a cross (x) on your chosen answer.

QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
2.1.1 Drug abuse is the main cause of absenteeism.				
2.1.2 Most students are absent due to stressful situation.				
2.1.3 Other students have financial problem that' is the reason why they absent themselves from their classes.				
2.1.4 Family problems can be regarded as another cause of absenteeism				
2.1.5 Some students absent themselves from class due to medical conditions.				
2.1.6 Alcohol abuse is another cause of				

absenteeism.				
2.1.7 Another cause of absenteeism amongst students is relationship problem.				
2.1.8 Students are experiencing heavy workload from the class and as a result they plan to be absent.				
2.1.9 Some other students feel good when they are interacting with their peers outside rather than attending their classes.				
2.1.10 Some students plan to be absent from their classes due to family commitments.				
2.1.11 Students absent themselves from class due to lack of interest to some of the subjects that are being facilitated in the class.				
2.1.12 Lack of responsibility is another cause of absenteeism to some of the students who don't have any interest to attend their				

classes.				
2.1.13 Poor lecturer-student relationship can be the cause of absenteeism.				
2.1.14 Poor teaching strategies can cause student absenteeism.				
2.1.15 Lack of motivation by the lecturers can be the cause of absenteeism to some of the students.				
2.1.16 Some of the students are trying to copy the style of the lecturers who absent themselves from the class.				
2.1.17 Some of the lecturers develop negative attitude towards the students.				

2.1.18 Apart from the questions above , which personal factors do you think contribute to students' absenteeism-----

2.2 PERSONAL LIFESTYLE

Mark your answer using a cross (x)

2.2.1 How many times have you been absent in a week?

0	1	2	3	4	5 +

2.2.2 How many times have you been absent in a semester?

0	1	2	3	4	5+

2.2.3 Do you consume alcohol?

YES	NO

2.2.4 Do you take any drug?

YES	NO

If yes, specify (remember that others regard prescribed medication as drugs)

SECTION 3: ENVIROMENTAL FACTORS

QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
3.1Is poor teaching strategy a				

cause of students' absenteeism?				
3.2 Absenteeism amongst student nurses is caused by shortage of resources.				
3.3 Students fail to attend their classes due to poor management of the institution.				
3.4 Poor housing and shortage of rooms in students nurses residential area is another cause of absenteeism.				
3.5 Some other students fail to attend their classes due to shortage of learning materials.				
3.6 Shortage of lecturers contributes to the causes of student nurse absenteeism.				

3.7 Students are failing to attend their classes due to the fact that the external environment is bushy.				
3.8 The class environment is not conducive enough for learning due to poor ventilation.				

3.9 Old buildings and classes influence the students to be absent from their classes.				
3.10 Security is poor around student nurses residence and that is the cause of absenteeism.				
3.11 The environment is not conducive for learning.				
3.12 The attitude of lectures towards the students affects interaction and the type of relationship established in the classroom.				
3.13 Poor interpersonal relationships in the classroom between the lecturer and the student.				
3.14 Failure to establish a pleasant atmosphere of welcoming the students during the learning session by the lecturer.				
3.15 Reading from the book without any further explanation by a lecture can contribute to absenteeism.				

3.16 Are there other information apart from those that has been specified above that can contribute to environmental factors, if the answer is **YES**, then specify -----

SECTION 4: STRATEGIES TO REDUCE ABSENTEEISM.

QUESTIONS	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
4.1 Student absenteeism could be improved by monitoring of student nurses.				
4.2 Disciplinary measures like punishment can reduce student absenteeism.				
4.3 Students are supposed to be given the opportunity to attend their classes voluntarily.				
4.4 Students who engage themselves in substance abuse, e.g. drugs and alcohol, to be disqualified.				
4.5 Termination of those who fall pregnant during the course of their studies.				
4.6 Students are supposed to have all the prescribed books.				

4.7 Introduction of policies and disciplinary procedures can reduce student absenteeism.				
4.8 Teaching materials and resources like charts, dolls and so many other resources to be available.				
4.9 The department has to ensure that there is enough space to accommodate the required number of students.				
4.10 Interaction between the student and a lecturer to be improved.				
4.11 Different teaching strategies to be used.				
4.12 More lectures to be employed to avoid more work load to the students.				
4.13 Course content to be well presented so that it is well understood by the students.				

4.14 Apart from the strategies that has been stipulated above, what are other strategies to be done to reduce absenteeism-----

ANNEXURE B: CONSENT FORM

RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

UNIVEN Informed Consent

Appendix B

LETTER OF INFORMATION

Title of the Research Study : Factors contributing to absenteeism and their effects on student nurses at the Limpopo College of Nursing.

Principal Investigator/s/ researcher : Mamatsharaga Tshinyadzo, Qualification: Bachelor of Nursing Honours in Administration.

Co-Investigator/s/supervisor/s : Supervisor: Prof N.H Shilubane

: Co-supervisor: Prof L.B Khoza

Brief Introduction and Purpose of the Study:

Outline of the Procedures: Participants have to complete self-administered questionnaire. Levels I to IV will have to complete a questionnaire in their own classrooms. Questionnaires to be completed in class. Likert scale will be constructed where the students will indicate their respond with an **X**. Questionnaires to be completed within 45 minutes.

Risks or Discomforts to the Participant: None

Benefits: The study findings may assist student in obtaining their diploma in nursing (general, psychiatric, community) and midwifery in record time, thereby curbing the shortage of professional nurses. The findings of the study may help the lecturers to use various teaching strategies or blended learning approach. The study findings may help the nursing directorate by ensuring that inspections are conducted on campuses and

lecturers are performing their duties properly so that they produce quality professional nurses who will provide quality patient care. Based on the findings enough lecturers and classrooms may be provided, and conducive environment created for effective teaching to take place.

Reason/s why the Participant May Be Withdrawn from the Study: None.

Remuneration: None

Costs of the Study: None

Confidentiality: No names of participants will appear on the questionnaire or anywhere in the study.

Research-related Injury: None

Persons to Contact in the Event of Any Problems or Queries:

Please contact the researcher on 0763620570 my supervisor tel. no. 015 962 8713 or the University Research Ethics Committee Secretariat on 015 962 9058. Complaints can be reported to the Director: Research and Innovation, Prof GE Ekosse on 015 962 8313 or Georges Ivo.Ekosse@univen.ac.za

General:

Potential participants must be assured that participation is voluntary and the approximate number of participants to be included should be disclosed. A copy of the information letter should be issued to participants. The information letter and consent form must be translated and provided in the primary spoken language of the research population

CONSENT

Statement of Agreement to Participate in the Research Study:

- I hereby confirm that I have been informed by the researcher, Mamatsharaga Tshinyadzo about the nature, conduct, benefits and risks of this study - Research Ethics Clearance Number: SHS/19/PDC/02/0402
- I have also received, read and understood the above written information (*Participant Letter of Information*) regarding the study.
- I am aware that the results of the study, including personal details regarding my sex, age, date of birth, initials and diagnosis will be anonymously processed into a study report.

- In view of the requirements of research, I agree that the data collected during this study can be processed in a computerized system by the researcher.
- I may, at any stage, without prejudice, withdraw my consent and participation in the study.
- I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and (of my own free will) declare myself prepared to participate in the study.
- I understand that significant new findings developed during the course of this research which may relate to my participation will be made available to me.

Full Name of Participant	Date	Time	Signature
I,.....

Mamatsharaga Tshinyadzo herewith confirm that the above participant has been fully Informed about the nature, conduct and risks of the above study.

Full Name of Researcher
 Date..... Signature.....

Full Name of Witness (If applicable)
 Date Signature.....

Full Name of Legal Guardian (If applicable)
 Date..... Signature.....

ANNEXURE C: ETHICAL CLEARANCE

**RESEARCH AND INNOVATION
OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR**

**NAME OF RESEARCHER/INVESTIGATOR:
Mrs T Mamatsharaga**

**Student No:
11542646**

**PROJECT TITLE: Factors contributing to
absenteeism and their effects on
student nurses at the Limpopo
Province Nursing College.**

PROJECT NO: SHS/19/PDC/02/0402

SUPERVISORS/ CO-RESEARCHERS/ CO-INVESTIGATORS

NAME	INSTITUTION & DEPARTMENT	ROLE
Prof NH Shilubane	University of Venda	Supervisor
Prof LB Khosa	University of Venda	Co - Supervisor
Mrs T Mamatsharaga	University of Venda	Investigator - Student

**ISSUED BY:
UNIVERSITY OF VENDA, RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE**

Date Considered: February 2019

Decision by Ethical Clearance Committee Granted

Signature of Chairperson of the Committee:

Name of the Chairperson of the Committee: Senior Prof. G.E. Ekosse



University of Venda

PRIVATE BAG X5050, THOHYANDOU, 0950, LIMPOPO PROVINCE, SOUTH AFRICA
TELEPHONE (015) 962 8504/8313 FAX (015) 962 9060

"A quality driven financially sustainable, rural-based Comprehensive University"

UNIVERSITY OF VENDA
DIRECTOR RESEARCH AND INNOVATION
2019 -03- 07
Private Bag X5050 Thohoyandou 0950

ANNEXURE D: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION (DoH)

P.O. Box 2074
Lwamondo
0985

Head of department
Limpopo College of Nursing
Private bag x9538
Polokwane
0700

RE: REQUEST FOR APPROVAL TO CONDUCT THE RESEARCH STUDY

Dear sir/Madam

I, Mamatsharaga Tshinyadzo (Student no: 11542646) a master's student in the Department of Advance Nursing Science of the University of Venda hereby request for permission to conduct a study entitled: Factors contributing to absenteeism and their effects on student nurses at the Limpopo College of Nursing.

The purpose of this study is to investigate factors contributing to class absenteeism and their effects on student's nurses at the Limpopo College of Nursing.

All information gathered in the study will be kept strictly confidential. A respondent's decision to participate in the study will be voluntary and he/she can withdraw from the study at any time.

I trust my request will meet with your approval. Thanking you in advance for your cooperation.

Yours Sincerely

Mamatsharaga T.....Date.....

Student no: 11542646

E-mail: matamelarebecca00@gmail.com

Cell.0763620570

ANNEXURE E: RESPONSE FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH



LIMPOPO
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Ref: LP_201902_016
Enquiries: Stander SS
Tel: 015 293 6650
Email: research.limpopo@gmail.com

Mamatsharaga T

University of Venda
Private Bag x 5050
Thohoyandou
0950

Greetings,

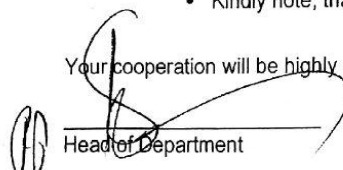
RE: FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO ABSENTEEISM AND THEIR EFFECTS ON STUDENT NURSES AT THE LIMPOPO PROVINCE NURSING COLLEGE

Permission to conduct the above mentioned study is hereby granted.

1. Kindly be informed that:-

- Research must be loaded on the NHRD site (<http://nhrd.hst.org.za>) by the researcher.
- Further arrangement should be made with the targeted institutions, after consultation with the District Executive Manager.
- In the course of your study there should be no action that disrupts the services, or incur any cost on the Department.
- After completion of the study, it is mandatory that the findings should be submitted to the Department to serve as a resource.
- The researcher should be prepared to assist in the interpretation and implementation of the study recommendation where possible.
- The above approval is valid for a 1 year period.
- If the proposal has been amended, a new approval should be sought from the Department of Health.
- Kindly note, that the Department can withdraw the approval at any time.

Your cooperation will be highly appreciated.


Head of Department

02/04/2019
Date

Private Bag X9302 Polokwane
Fidel Castro Ruz House. 18 Colleea Street. Polokwane 0700. Tel: 015 293 6000/12. Fax: 015 293 6211.

The heartland of Southern Africa – Development is about people!

ANNEXURE F: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION THOHYANDOU CAMPUS

P.O. Box 2074

Lwamondo

O985

Thohoyandou Nursing Campus

P/bag x919

Shayandima

0945

Dear sir/madam

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT THE RESEARCH STUDY

I, Mamatsharaga Tshinyadzo (Student no: 11542646) a Master's Student in the Department of Nursing Science at the University of Venda hereby request for permission to conduct a study entitled: Factors contributing to absenteeism and their effects on student nurses at the Limpopo College of Nursing.

The purpose of this study is to investigate factors contributing to absenteeism (in class) and their effects on student's nurses at the Limpopo College of Nursing.

All information gathered in the study will be kept strictly confidential. A respondent's decision to participate in the study will be voluntary and he/she can withdraw from the study at any time.

I trust my request will meet with your approval. Thanking you in advance for your cooperation.

Yours Sincerely

Mamatsharaga T.....Date.....

Student no: 11542646

E-mail:matamelarebecca00@gmail.com

Cell.0763620570

ANNEXURE G: RESPONSE FROM THOHYANDOU CAMPUS



LIMPOPO
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH LIMPOPO COLLEGE OF NURSING: THOHYANDOU CAMPUS

To: Ms Mamatsharaga T

FROM: Acting Vice Principal

Thohoyandou Campus

ENQ: Ms Tshiswale MI

DATE: 24 April 2019

RE: PERMISSION TO COLLECT RESEARCH DATA

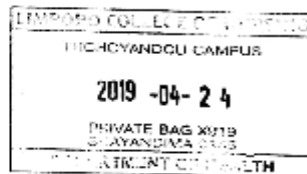
1. The above matter bears reference.
2. Permission to conduct research at Thohoyandou Campus is hereby granted.
3. Research should be conducted in such a way as not to interfere with the college programmes and learning of students.
4. After completion of your study submit findings to Thohoyandou to serve as resource.

Your cooperation in this regard will be appreciated.

Regards,



Acting Vice Principal



Private Bag X919, SHAYANDIMA, 0945, Vhembe District
Next to Tshilidzini Hospital along Punda Maria Road
Tel: (015) 964 1516/8 . Fax: (015) 964 1517
Website: <http://www.limpopo.gov.za>

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ANNEXURE H: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION GIYANI CAMPUS

P.O Box 2074
Lwamondo
O985

Giyani Nursing Campus
P/bag x 9658
Giyani
0826

Dear sir/madam

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT THE RESEARCH STUDY

I, Mamatsharaga Tshinyadzo, (Student no: 11542646) a Master's Student in the Department of Nursing Science at the University of Venda hereby request for permission to conduct a study entitled: Factors contributing to absenteeism and their effects on student nurses at the Limpopo College of Nursing.

The purpose of this study is to investigate factors contributing to absenteeism (in class) and their effects on student's nurses at the Limpopo College of Nursing.

All information gathered in the study will be kept strictly confidential. A respondent's decision to participate in the study will be voluntary and he/she can withdraw from the study at any time.

I trust my request will meet with your approval. Thanking you in advance for your cooperation.

Yours Sincerely

Mamatsharaga T.....Date.....

Student no: 11542646

E-mail:matamelarebecca00@gmail.com

Cell.0763620570

ANNEXURE I: RESPONSE FROM GIYANI CAMPUS



LIMPOPO
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH LIMPOPO COLLEGE OF NURSING: GIYANI CAMPUS

25-05-2019

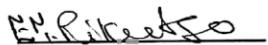
**MS. T. MAMATSHARAGA
P.O BOX 2074
LWAMONDO
0985**

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT A RESEARCH STUDY: YOURSELF

Permission is hereby granted for you to do a research study as requested on your letter dated 23-04-2019.

Please arrange a date with the campus, ensure adherence to ethical principles and not to disrupt classes.

Yours Truly



E.T Rikhotso
Vice Principal

Private Bag X9658 GIYANI, 0826
Tel: (015) 812 0330/1/2 or (015) 812 0123/0213 Fax: (015) 812 0123
Website; <http://www.limpopo.gov.za>

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ANNEXURE J: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION SOVENGA CAMPUS

P.O. Box 2074
Lwamondo
O985

Sovenga Nursing Campus
P/bag x 1114
Sovenga
0727

Dear sir/madam

RE: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT THE RESEARCH STUDY

I, Mamatsharaga Tshinyadzo, (Student no: 11542646) a Master's Student in the Department of Nursing Science at the University of Venda hereby request for permission to conduct a study entitled: Factors contributing to absenteeism and their effects on student nurses at the Limpopo College of Nursing.

The purpose of this study is to investigate factors contributing to absenteeism (in class) and their effects on student's nurses at the Limpopo College of Nursing.

All information gathered in the study will be kept strictly confidential. A respondent's decision to participate in the study will be voluntary and he/she can withdraw from the study at any time.

I trust my request will meet with your approval. Thanking you in advance for your cooperation.

Yours Sincerely

Mamatsharaga T.....Date.....

Student no: 11542646

E-mail:matamelarebecca00@gmail.com

Cell.0763620570

ANNEXURE K: RESPONSE FROM SOVENGA CAMPUS



LIMPOPO
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
LIMPOPO COLLEGE OF NURSING
SOVENGA CAMPUS

To: Ms Mamatsharaga T
From: Acting Vice Principal
Sovenga Campus
ENQ: Phosa RG
Date: 07 May 2019

**RE: FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO ABSENTEEISM AND THEIR EFFECTS ON
STUDENT NURSES AT THE LIMPOPO PROVINCE NURSING COLLEGE**

1. The above matter bears reference
2. Permission to conduct the above mentioned research study at Sovenga Campus is hereby granted
3. Research should be conducted in a manner that will not disrupt student learning
4. After completion of the study the findings should be submitted to Sovenga Campus to serve as a resource

Your cooperation is highly appreciated

Regards,

: 07/05/2019
Acting Vice Principal