

WCES 2014

## Attendance Dilemma In Two Culturally Different Contexts

Linda Green<sup>a\*</sup>, Gul Celkan<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Middle Georgia State College, Macon, Georgia, USA

---

### Abstract

This study will focus on attendance policies implemented at tertiary institutions of education and their impact on students. The role of all the stakeholders was considered to find the underlying causes of failure to attend classes, albeit attendance is a requirement in most institutions of higher education. Lectures, motives, and performance are interrelated. Therefore, the questionnaire designed to elicit responses from students is designed to seek how students feel about this correlation. Most research indicates there is a significant relation between lectures and motivation that leads to better performance. The main objective of this paper will be to see how the population of this study views this matter. It is a known fact that students' perceptions of college attendance policies at times contradict those of the instructors. Therefore, the questionnaire will be administered to students in various contexts. Since cross cultural studies yield more comprehensive results, the population of this study will be comprised of students in the United States as well as in Turkey.

© 2015 The Authors. Published by Elsevier Ltd. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>).

Selection and peer-review under responsibility of the Organizing Committee of WCES 2014

*Keywords:* Attendance; attendance policies; tertiary education; student and instructor beliefs

---

### 1. Introduction

Attendance has always been a highly controversial issue at the tertiary level, not only among faculty and students, but between faculty and students as well. Each and every tertiary institution of education has its own policies regarding attendance; however, is it possible to claim a campus wide policy can be implemented? Would it be fair to state the institutional policy makers consider the interests of all the stakeholders while wording these regulations? Preliminary research conducted by the authors of this paper has shown that not much research has been carried out on this issue that entails, along with it, a significant dilemma. Based upon experience and observations, attendance has evidently always been a major reason for discussion at the end of each and every semester between the instructor and the student, especially when it involves a pass or fail situation. Some of the literature states that,

---

\* Linda Green, Tel: +1 478 788 1239.  
E-mail address: [lindagreen44@att.net](mailto:lindagreen44@att.net)

“Student attendance contributes to superior classroom management, and meeting legal and moral professional responsibilities” (Petress, 1996). Even after fifteen years, the beliefs of some, if not most instructors, seem to agree with this statement. Students gain ethical values that will benefit them greatly when they join the work force. While in their early college years, students may not take this seriously and even go as far as questioning the validity of such attendance requirements, but once out in real life situations where they witness the discipline and promptness expected of them, they do appreciate being imposed such rules while still in school. There has always been and will continue to be concerns about student absenteeism. A study carried out by Barlow and Fleischer, (2011) in Britain “explores the issue of poor attendance and why a significant number of students seem to have difficulty in engaging fully with their studies in order to become critical and autonomous learners”. The researchers of this paper delved so deeply into this issue that even the role of all the stakeholders (like the role of government policy, institutions, educators, students, schools and parents) was considered to find the underlying causes of failure to attend classes, albeit attendance is a requirement in most institutions of higher education. Woody Allen was once quoted saying, “80% of success is showing up.” He surely did not imply school attendance; what he meant had a vast coverage: all professions, all businesses. A study carried out by Clay and Breslow, (2006) at the MIT that included all the undergraduate students indicated that the lectures’ quality and clarity, conflicting deadlines for other classes, the professor’s use of relevant examples, and ability to engage and entertain students were significant factors in deciding whether to attend classes.

## 2. Background of the study

Most research indicates there is a significant relation between lectures and motivation that leads to a better performance. Therefore, a questionnaire has been designed to elicit responses from students to see how they feel about this correlation. The characteristics of the student population play a major role in absenteeism records. Due to the changing times, needs are changing as well; hence students, more often than not, find themselves in the work force while attending college/university. Therefore, strict attendance policies are at times a hindrance to their desire to have a college degree. Since these students are considered adults, should attendance not be their responsibility rather than that of the course instructors? Students attend college to receive an education so as to ensure a career path for themselves in the future. However, do they find themselves entrapped by the attendance policies of the colleges or do such rules impact their lives in a positive way? The current paper evolved bearing these issues in mind, and will try to pinpoint the attitudes and beliefs of students in diverse settings toward this issue. Therefore, the researchers have chosen to question students from two culturally different contexts. The population of the study will be students from the U.S. and from Turkey. Based on the preliminary readings and informal discussions that took place in and beyond the classroom settings, it is the expectancy of the researchers that most students will want less strict attendance policies enforced, since these jeopardize students’ pursuit of education in certain circumstances.

## 3. Literature Review

Is student absenteeism an issue? Will it be justifiable to claim that high attendance rates are indicators of the schools’ having a welcoming climate? Such questions were presented by the Center for Public Education. The same study also states that since attendance policies vary across schools, each institution has to be evaluated within its own context. Neither the students nor the faculty can deny the fact that the former should be willing to learn and actively participate in class while the latter should facilitate the process of learning and address the student needs (Dykstra, et al). In his article on student motivation, Lumsden, (1994) suggests that motivation related to a student’s desire to participate in the learning process involves extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. He then ties these in with factors that are related to classroom attendance rates. Classroom practices adopted by faculty vary depending on the situation, but when it comes to policies adopted by the college, to what extent does faculty have the right to enjoy academic freedom. *The 1940 Statement of Principles on Academic Freedom and Tenure* states that freedom is essential in protecting the rights of the instructor while also granting the student the freedom in learning. This is closely related to the survey questions used in this study to show how students today perceive this freedom. There is no doubt that the issue regarding mandatory attendance policies will always raise questions and perhaps receive less answers than anticipated. This topic will always continue to generate debate not only among faculty, but between faculty and students as well. Verbeeten and van Hoof in their article question whether students should be penalized for failing to attend all classes. They see the students as customers who pay for a product and therefore have a

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/1109383>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/1109383>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)