Department of Educational Foundations

Students' tardiness and its effect on teaching and learning at Botho University, Botswana

A Research Essay submitted to the Faculty of Education in Partial Fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of

MASTER OF EDUCATION (Educational Management)

By

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DECLARATION

I declare that this research which is submitted to the Department of Educational Foundations, Faculty of Education of the University of Botswana for the award of the Degree of Masters of Education (MEd) in Educational Management is my own work.

Signed _____   Date_____

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APPROVAL PAGE

This Research Essay has been examined and is approved as satisfying requirements for the partial fulfillment for the Degree of Masters in Educational Management.

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ABSTRACT

Student tardiness in the classrooms has proved to be a significant challenge in the Botho University classroom. In order for this challenge to be addressed effectively, there is need to understand the factors that influence tardiness among the students. This study examined the causes of student tardiness and the effect student tardiness has on students. The study further went on to look at different ways students can be made more punctual in school.

Through a qualitative case study research design, the sampling strategies used were purposive sampling and convenience sampling for the population of Botho University (Gaborone Campus). The data was collected through observations, field notes and individual interviews with student participants.

The research findings revealed that transportation, lack of time management and self discipline, and distance from school contributed significantly to student tardiness. In order to improve student tardiness it is recommended that Botho University should change the starting time of lessons and implement a consistent tardy policy across.

CHAPTER ONE

THE PROBLEM

Introduction

When people come late to any event, whether it is a party, appointment, seminar, church, school or classroom, they disturb the flow of the event. Whatever event a person has failed to be at, at a specific time ends up affecting the entire schedule. If a person is late for a doctor's appointment, for example, the doctor is forced to push the schedule a bit forward to accommodate the late comer hence disrupting other people's timeslots that are to follow the late comer. Similarly in a school setup, lecturers who have students coming in late during their lesson can end up going beyond their scheduled timeslot to accommodate them (going over the material that was already taught in their absence); this can affect the next lesson that follows causing it to start late.

Coming late to class by students not only affects the timeslot, but also affects other students and the lecturer; when the lecturer is in the middle of a sentence, perhaps sharing a valuable point, they will be interrupted or disrupted by the student walking into class late, therefore losing focus on the point they were going to make. Punctuality must be emphasized in students to prepare them for the workplace. Tardiness policies need to exist in schools and be monitored closely to reduce overall students' tardiness.

This chapter will outline the background of the problem, the statement of the problem and the purpose of the study which will be followed by the research questions, limitations, delimitations and definition of terms. The significance of the study will also be discussed on this section.

Background

Tardiness, according to Weade (2004) is "being late for any measurable length of time past the stated or the scheduled start time for work or school"; basically coming late for an event or an engagement. Research shows that in the United States of America (USA) individuals are encouraged to be punctual at the workplace or face the risk of being fired (Weade, 2004). Late coming is a habit that when people are taught at an early age to avoid, might be completely erased. Some researchers in the USA (Marin, 2001; Rivard, 2013; Tyre, Feuerborn & Pierce, 2011) are concerned about student tardiness and the rate at which it is escalating. Most middle schools and high schools have policies in place to control the punctuality issue, but it still affects the daily proceedings. If a class starts late, the instructor might be forced to end it late to accommodate the planned material hence forcing the next lesson that comes after his/hers to start late; hence their day might be disrupted throughout.

Societies view tardiness differently; some do not see it as a problem while others do. In his study Marin, (2001) compared the attributions for punctuality among the American students and the Chilean students and found that Chileans are not as concerned about punctuality as the Americans are. It seems that even when it comes to keeping appointments, the Americans are stricter than the Chileans. Punctuality in the United States is a more important issue than it is in Brazil (Levine et al, in Koslowsky, 2000). In western cultures time is experienced as linear (Ghyoot, 2000) but the Chinese perception of time is cyclical; this affects the planning, where there is no strict adherence to schedules. Instead the Chinese focus on the people and the projects to be completed. But generally speaking the Chinese are quite punctual (Matondo, 2012). According to Lee (nd) the Korean people's concept of punctuality on the other hand is influenced by social status; people who have lower social status keep appointments and even

appear earlier than the appointed time, whereas people who have higher social status do not have to be concerned about being punctual as all affairs are arranged to commence whenever they want. Thus people in higher social status in traditional Korean societies lack the concept of punctuality as they do not have to be concerned with time keeping.

In Africa there is a general perception that schedules are less important than people (Ghyoot, 2000); if a person is on his way to a meeting and gets an unexpected visitor, they will feel socially obliged to greet the visitor and spend time to inquire about the visit; this may result in being late for the meeting. Time is first related to social obligations and professionalism comes later (Matondo, 2012). It is common in Africa (e.g. Ethiopia, Botswana, Nigeria, Ghana) to hear about "African time", which Ezekweslili (n.d) describes as "the perceived cultural tendency, in most parts of Africa, towards a more relaxed attitude to time". According to Umez, (2014) it is well known that an invitation card of a typical African event normally starts very late. In Africa punctuality is valued but not required; one can be early but will be kept waiting for some time before an event can start, or when one comes late it is acceptable even when they do not offer any explanation for their lateness (Foster, 2002). When people come late to any event either they miss the first part of the event or others who came early find themselves stalling whilst waiting for late comers to arrive in order for the event to start. This is a habit that most people, especially in Africa, have and some sayings like "where the runner reaches, the walker will reach eventually" (Matondo, 2012) have been used African societies to accept tardiness, as the important thing to Africans seems to be to arrive, not punctuality.

In a school set up, tardiness can be a problem faced by both lecturers and students; some students come late because the lecturer is always late and some lecturers come late because students are always late. This can easily become a cycle. But when the lecturer is on time,

students who come late for class end up missing important information presented at start of the lesson and on arrival they disrupt other students and lecturers. Botswana has measures in place, in primary and secondary schools, which deal with general student tardiness. From my early years of secondary school, I recall that there was a 'warning bell' that went off five minutes before the 'school commence bell'. This bell (warning bell) was meant to indicate that the school is about to start and all the people who did not make it to school before the 'school commence bell' went off were punished by the teachers on duty. This is one of the many ways secondary school teachers tried to deal with tardy students. From observation most Batswana (like most Africans) are not too concerned about coming to events on time, be it kgotla meetings, parties, or even funerals. Whenever people are told of the time something is supposed to start, they will just dismiss it and come a few minutes after the event has started; some even call it "Africa time" which Umez, (2014) refers to as selective punctuality, justifying that events never start at the given time.

Research is silent on student tardiness in Botswana, whether it be at the primary, secondary or tertiary level. Tertiary students are expected to come to class on time and yet there are no measures in place to ensure they do. When students are tardy, it affects their lecturers and other students. Lecturers may be required to allow tardy students to make up for the work they have missed, which will then require them to restructure their lessons or teach missed material again. Tardiness also takes other students' concentration away from a lecturer's lesson, leading to missed instruction. Botho University is one of the institutions which are very strict when it comes to attendance; there is an attendance policy that indicates that a certain percentage of the students' overall average is affected by class attendance. But the institution does not have a policy addressing student tardiness, yet it has proven to be an issue most lecturers are concerned

about. Students are just verbally discouraged from coming late to class, and some lecturers do not allow them in class when they are tardy. If late coming is not addressed, students will go on to have punctuality problems since they were not taught the disadvantages and the negative impacts tardiness has on their lives.

Statement of the problem

In tertiary institutions there is no assembly point, where students queue up before the first lecturers begin every morning; individual students just arrive straight to their lessons. This makes it a bit difficult to track the late comers as the lecture halls are sometimes very big and students just sit at the back of the room if there is a back door. In smaller lecture rooms, tardy students can be easily noticed and can disturb the ongoing lecture. Some lecturers often chase students away or do not allow them in class when they are at most ten minutes late, but others do not have a problem even when a student is an hour late; they will just allow them to sit and continue with the lesson.

Students come late due to a variety of reasons and this affects the teaching and the learning process. When one comes late to class they may pull the chairs or push the desks loudly, or whisper to other students asking them about what is being taught, or can even ask the lecturer what they are teaching. This is not only a disruptive behavior, but distractive as those who were concentrating on what the lecturer was saying end up paying attention to the tardy student. The lecturer may also lose concentration when trying to address the tardy students, and forget the points they were going to make.

Tardiness is a problem that a number of lecturers in Botho University are concerned with and there is need to find out what causes the students to be tardy for lessons and how this behavior affects the teaching and the learning process. Strategies have to be put in place at Botho

University to help reduce tardiness amongst students in order to improve punctuality and get them ready for the workplace, where they will be expected to come to work on time every day.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to find out what causes students to come late to class and the effect late coming has on the learning and the teaching process. The study will also take a look at strategies that can be made or pursued at Botho University as a way of improving punctuality and reducing student tardiness in school.

Objectives of the study

The study is aimed at:

1. Determining the factors that cause student tardiness in Botho University
2. Finding out the effects of student tardiness in the teaching and learning process.
3. Determining the measures or strategies that can be put in place to reduce tardiness at Botho University.

Research questions

1. What are the factors that cause student tardiness in Botho University?
2. What are the effects of student tardiness on the teaching and the learning process?
3. What measures or strategies can be put in place to eliminate or reduce student tardiness at Botho University?

Significance of the study

This research is meant to make both lecturers and student aware of the impact student tardiness has in the classroom. It is meant to encourage and improve punctuality among Botho students. Formulating a strategy to reduce tardiness can encourage students to be punctual and

get ready for the workforce environment. If late coming is not addressed in schools, graduates may not know the significance of being on time for anything, but they will be required to do so at the workplace; be it meetings or deadlines for submitting reports. Botho University needs a way of improving punctuality so as to get its students ready for the workplace.

Limitations

There are several limitations that the researcher encountered. One limitation was that the findings of this research cannot be generalized because the sample is small, only 20 student participants were included in the interviewing progress and only 5 classes were observed, of which some students may not have been able to openly recall information needed from them during interviews. Another limitation is that there have been a relatively small number of studies performed on student tardiness; therefore, a review of the literature pertaining to student tardiness did not serve as a strong guide and foundation for this study.

The process of looking for participants to interview could have also been biased as research assistants recommended respondents who were easy or convenient to find, therefore the participants may not have been fully representative. Lastly, there was less time to observe the classes and the behavior of lecturers might have been altered since they were aware that they were being observed; once the researcher left the room the lecturer might have treated or reacted differently towards the late comers than during the researcher's presence.

Delimitations

The study was delimited to interviewing students within Botho University Gaborone Campus, thus the ability to generalize to the entire population of Botho University in other campuses is severely limited. The sample however is similar to the population that attends

sessions in other Universities in Botswana. The study only looked into student lateness and its effects in the teaching and learning process in one tertiary institution even though lateness in some studies has been correlated with absenteeism and student performance.

Definition of terms

- Tardiness - being late for any measurable length of time past the stated or the scheduled start time for work or school.
- Tardy student - student who is late to class.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

The chapter will begin with a brief review of what tardiness is. It will examine the views of other researchers on the reasons why students come late to school, or what causes students to be tardy, and how this late coming affects the teaching and learning process. Some studies will also be used to examine how some countries have been able to improve student tardiness in various schools. And lastly a summary will be prepared in an attempt to relate the research questions to the literature.

What is tardiness?

Some people, especially students, have a tendency of not showing up on time, be it for an appointment or to their regular classes. When someone does not show up on time for an appointment or an event, they can be considered tardy. Tardiness can be viewed as students coming late, not reaching school on time, missing out initial time from the first period and primarily not being present in the time set by the school (Malik, Ladhani & Bhamani, 2006; Moore, 2010). Weade (2004) defines it as being late for any measurable length of time past the stated or the scheduled start time for work or school. Students everywhere in the world are expected to be punctual. Being tardy is the opposite of being punctual. Lateness is synonymous with tardiness (Breeze et al, in Bataineh, 2014). Oxford Advanced Learners' Dictionary, 5th ed, (as cited in Dafiaghor, 2011), explains lateness as a situation where an individual arrives after the proper scheduled time.

Malik et al., (2006) view tardiness as a form of absence because students miss a portion of class regardless of being excused or not. Some lecturers are very strict that when their students comes late to class they end up chasing them away hence resulting in them being absent for the session. When students come late to class they end up disturbing those who were early, so Bataineh, (2014) attributes tardiness to a form of disruptive behavior, since it disturbs the rhythm of the lecture in the process distracting other students paying attention to the lecturer. Though some students can be late by mistake others do it intentionally for various reasons. Being tardy can mean being sluggish or slow (Dafiaghor, 2011) either intentionally or otherwise; some people are raised in relaxed environments and end up not knowing the urgency of doing things fast or on time. Punctuality is one factor that can dictate the quality of a student's performance; that is either being early or tardy can significantly impact the student's performance (Austria, Bulaso, Kani, Magdaraog, & Mutuc, n.d).

Causes of student tardiness

Generally people give various reasons or excuses for coming late, and always want the other person, who has been waiting, to be understanding and forget about their tardiness. Everyone has been late at least once at some point in their lives, be it to a party, meeting, school, office or some event. Many researchers (Matondo, 2012; Lee, nd; Marin, 2001; Ghyoot, 2000; Levine et al, 1980 in Koslowsky, 2000) report that different cultural groups have different practices regarding being on time (White, Valk, & Dialmy, 2011). Many factors have been outlined as mostly likely to influence students to come late to class.

Moore, (2010) looked at best practices that were employed by Georgia High Schools administrators, in USA, to reduce student tardiness. The purpose of his study was to find out the degree of student tardiness in high schools, and to identify strategies which addressed tardiness

problems and reduced occurrences of tardiness. In this study, Moore employed a mixed method approach for the research design; this method according to Vogt, Gardner and Haeffele, (2012) focuses on approaches that cross qualitative and quantitative boundaries. This is mainly used to combine methods that are used with quantitative and with qualitative data. During the first phase of the study, Moore used student tardiness data from selected Georgia school district's database to find out information regarding student tardiness occurrences in the district; this was a quantitative and descriptive approach. For the second phase he used a qualitative and exploratory approach to find out effective strategies used to reduce tardiness, by means of interviews with the stakeholders. This research was carried over a population of ten schools within the Georgia District. Questionnaires, interviews and observations were carried out using random sampling on administrators, lecturers and students. Random sampling is also known as probability sampling or chance sampling, where every item in the population has an equal chance of inclusion (Kothari, 2004).

School administrators, students and lecturers who participated in semi-structured interviews outlined reasons why students are tardy to school. They found the following factors to have an influence on student tardiness among many others. Transportation was identified as one factor that caused students' tardiness; this was influenced by late trains, late parents and colleagues who rode with them to school. Some students miss busses and trains and end up taking a later one, others do not afford the transport (Bataineh, 2014; Shahzada et al, 2011; Jagero, Agak & Ayodo, 2010; Dafiaghor, 2011; Koslowsky, 2000) forcing them to walk longer distances to get to school resulting in them being late.

Moore, found out from administrators and lecturers who identified another factor that influenced student tardiness to be the layout of the school; some lessons are allocated far apart on

the timetable, in different buildings, which forced class switching to be a time consuming activity making students to be late for the next class. Students socialized before classes which made them tardy for the next class. Hallways will be populated by those socializing and made it difficult for others to pass through to the lesson, making them late for the next lesson. Lack of administration and tardy lecturers were also a factor that caused some students to be late. When lecturers themselves come late to class students are reluctant to attend on time, and if the students are late the administrators fail to implement the tardy policy, there is a lot of inconsistency following the tardy policy. But sometimes the lecturer will release students late and cause them to be tardy for the next class. After interviewing some students, Moore found out that others come to school late because the go to bed late and wake up late, so they end up running late trying to prepare for school and at times they do their homework in the morning.

A similar approach will be taken to find out what makes students tardy by means of observation and interviews. In this study students and lecturers will be approached, but not the administrators. Since Botho is a tertiary institution, the reasons or causes for student tardiness may not be the same as those of Georgia District, as it only focused on High Schools. Students are not dropped off by their parents in the morning, for instance, and there are no hall monitors in tertiary that are responsible for ensuring students are in class on time. The result of this study will reveal the circumstances surrounding a different climate, and country.

In another study, Perveen and Kazmi, (2013) revealed that students come late to class because their lecturers are tardy too. The purpose of the study was to look into the relationship between lecturer tardiness and job satisfaction; whether lecturers show up late because they are not satisfied with their job? This study was conducted in Pakistan, involving a sample of 400 female lecturers from both private and government sectors in the Abbottabad district. A job

description index and a punctuality scale were used as measures to gauge the relationship between punctuality and job satisfaction. From the questionnaire handed out, the results showed a positive correlation between job satisfaction and lecturer punctuality, indicating that lecturers who were not happy with their work environment had punctuality problems.

This can be one of the factors that cause students to come late to class. When students observe that their lecturer is always tardy, they can themselves resort to coming late to class since they do not see the point of coming to class when the lecturer is not there yet. In my study lecturers will be observed to see whether they come late to class, and their results will be compared to the students' results to see if there is any correlation. Unlike Perveen and Kazmi, this study will not only focus on female lecturers, but random lecturers whose gender will not be defined.

Effects of tardiness on teaching and learning

There have not been many studies found on the actual effects of student tardiness on the teaching and the learning process. Some authors (Bataineh, 2014; Marxhausen, 2010; Dafiaghor, 2011) have mentioned several effects of student tardiness in their articles though. When a student is tardy, they can disrupt the ongoing proceedings of the class as they walk to their seats, push chairs and tables or even ask about what the lecturer is doing, this behavior disturbs or even annoys others. When the lecturer is making an important point or building the foundation of the lesson, a tardy student can disturb leading a lecturer into forgetting or losing the point they were trying to make. The lecturer may be forced to start the lesson all over again trying to accommodate the tardy student and keep them up to speed; but this can lead other students to think that school and learning are not as important as they are made out to be since when

students are late, the lecturer starts all over again (Bataineh, 2014; Marxhausen, 2010; Etsey in Gakure, Mukuria & Kithae, 2013; Dafiaghor, 2011).

More often than not at the beginning of the lesson lecturers give out valuable information like strategies to tackle specific assignments, or tips towards an upcoming test; students who come late are at the risk of losing out on this valuable information. According to Etsey in Gakure, Mukuria and Kithae, (2013) material taught at the time the student was absent may be difficult to understand later when the student studies alone and may result in the student failing the course or test or assignment. Tardiness could affect the student's performance leading to low marks because of the missed instructions (Bataineh, 2014; Hinrichs, 2010.). In some cases though, lecturers have to restructure their lesson which wastes instructional time as they have to re-teach the already taught material (Marxhausen, 2010; Mtsetfwa, 2006).

Students may have a hard time mastering the routine when they are constantly late; they may have a hard time settling into the routine, resulting in them always being late or they can also feel disconnected with school and may have behavior problems and end up being school dropouts (Marxhausen, 2010). When a student is regularly tardy, the lecturer may think of it as disrespect and start treating the student differently or be hostile towards the student which can lower the student's self-esteem, resulting in them not feeling confident enough to contribute towards class discussions.

In 2006, Mtsetfwa conducted a study with the purpose of finding out what impact time consciousness had on teaching and learning. He used a qualitative approach to find out from lecturers, students and principals, in two schools in South Africa, how time conscious they are, and how it affects the learning and the teaching process. During his research, observations and interviews were conducted with lecturers, students and principals.

It was observed that in one school, both the lecturers and the students were not worried about the tardy bell, when the bell rang everyone proceeded to the assembly point slowly and there was no lecturer to rush the students from the gate to the assembly point; whereas it was the opposite for the other school. During the interviews on how time consciousness affects the learning and the teaching process, some students alleged that those who come late disturb the flow of the lesson as the lecturer diverts his/her attention to them and sometimes forgetting the point he/she (the lecturer) was trying to make. This disturbance starts from the time the tardy students enter the class to the time they settle in after pulling chairs and desks. In the other school, lecturers themselves came late to class which affected the instructional time; they had to spend less time teaching in order to move or shift for the next lecturer/session. Other students thought coming late was disrespectful to both the lecturer and the peers.

Reducing tardiness

Some schools have truancy and tardy policies to help them deal with student absenteeism and tardiness. In their school newsletter, Cowan Elementary, in the USA, outlined a few policies on tardiness intended to discourage students from being tardy; when a student is tardy more than twelve times, the case will be referred to the Pupil Service and Attendance (PSA) Office where an officer will be sent to the student's home and discuss with the parents problems surrounding getting the student to school on time (Cowan Crier, 2007). This policy like any other is meant to influence student behavior with regard to tardiness.

In a study by Egan, (2014) that took place in a high school in New England that had over 2000 students enrolled, 39 were identified to be inexcusably tardy to school for at least ten times in the quarter. The purpose of the study was to find out the effects of an incentive based intervention. Four students, after intense screening of the data collected, were eligible to

participate in a study that took 17 weeks to complete. Egan used food as an incentive to get students to come to school on time; the intervention was called "the Breakfast club" and involved the four students getting free breakfast when they came earlier as a form of motivation. The results from this study were not the desired ones since students needed more than just free food to motivate them to come early to class.

A similar study was carried out, in Gonzaga University in the USA, in 1981 by Hargreaves and McLaughlin; but this one involved students with special needs. Four students were also selected for the study and lecturers had to record their tardiness over a period of time, those who showed improvement were selected to take part in extra curricula activities like skiing, swimming, and bowling. The overall results indicated a positive effect across all four students (Hargreaves & McLaughlin, 1981).

In another study by Marvul, (2010) an intervention was designed to affect minority male attendance and truancy in a school in Florida, USA. The research was based on forty male students who were observed through attendance registers to have many absent days from school; the intervention included monitoring attendance and notifying parents when a student was absent, tardy, or truant; participation in a moral character class; and participation in club sports teams. This study proved that a program that provides support and respect significantly reduced student absenteeism and antisocial behaviors, and increased attitudes and commitment toward school.

Summary

Tardiness can be influenced by a range of factors. Several authors have outlined causes of tardiness to range from cultural background to behavior problems, some students come late to

class because they do not see the urgency of going early to class when others do so out of no choice. Transportation issues, sleeping late and waking late, having classes allocated at far apart buildings, early start times, having lecturers or administrators who do not emphasize the tardy policy, and having lecturers themselves showing up for class late are some of the reasons but not all that can influence students to come late to class.

When people come late, especially to class, they can distract the entire class, the lecturer might need to stop or pause for a bit to allow the student to make their way to their seat, but this might compromise the flow of the delivery as the lecturer might forget the important point they were trying to make. In some instances where a lecturer is time conscious, they can end up having an unpleasant relationship with the regularly tardy student. Students need to be taught about the importance of punctuality to prepare them for the workforce environment where punctuality can have an effect on their overall performance.

Lastly, several researchers have looked into several strategies of dealing with student tardiness. One major strategy that was common to most researchers was intervention; this was carried out in several ways including giving rewards to those who showed improvement in their punctuality. These interventions use some form of incentive to motivate and encourage the tardy students to come on time or at least improve their tardy habit. There has not been any study in Botswana focusing on tardiness as a problem. No interventions or any other strategies are put in place in tertiary institutions to address the issues of tardiness although some school policies are more focused on student attendance in itself not late coming. The literature has revealed the causes of student tardiness, its effects and the measures that have been put in place, by several institutions, to reduce student tardiness or improve student punctuality.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this research is to find out the causes and effects of student tardiness on the learning and the teaching process, and to also find out the measures that can be taken to reduce or eliminate tardiness among students at Botho University. This chapter outlines all the methods and procedures that were used throughout the study for data collection. An explanation on the decision for the population of the study, the sampling and the instrumentation are given in this section.

Research design

A qualitative case study method was used as a strategy of inquiry where the researcher explored comprehensively the views of individuals who often come late to class on student tardiness in general. Qualitative research is characterized by the collection and analysis of textual data by means of surveys, interviews of individuals or focus groups, conversational analysis, observation, ethnographies (Mack, Woodsong, MacQueen, Guest & Namey, 2005; Ritchie & Lewis, 2003), and by its emphasis on the context within which the study occurs. Detailed information was collected using a variety of data collection procedures over a continued period of time. For this study, the phenomenon under investigation was student tardiness and its effect on learning. A qualitative approach was suitable for this particular research since tardiness has never been addressed in Botho University, so views and opinions of the selected sample needed to be explored to uncover the untold narrative.

Population of the study

The target population of the study is the Botho University students and lecturers in the Gaborone campus. Population is the group that the researcher wants to make a generalization about (Vogt et al, 2012). Botho University has students ranging from part-time, fulltime, undergraduates and post graduates in five different faculties.

Sample

Purposive sampling or non-probability sampling was used for selecting the participants. This type of sampling achieves representativeness as the researcher selected a purposive sample that represents a broader group of cases as closely as possible (Teddlie & Yu, 2007). The sample included undergraduate students from different classes who had been identified to have been tardy at least once a week from the time data collection started. A total of twenty (20) students were interviewed from four different faculties; five students were randomly chosen to take part in the interview from each faculty.

For the purpose of seeing student and lecturer reaction towards a tardy student, five (5) lecturers were observed during their lessons at the convenience of the researcher; convenience sampling was used for the observation process. Classes that were observed were those that did not conflict with the researcher's, own timetable, given that the researcher also had her own classes to teach. Sampling saves time as it is only meant for selecting representatives from the entire population as opposed to getting information from the entire population (Kumar, 2005).

Data collection strategies

The researcher used semi-structured interviews and observations for collecting data from the selected sample. Semi-structured interviews allowed the participants to elaborate their views

and with that provided more flexibility and the ability to extract more information from the participant. Semi-structured interviews permit scope for individuals to answer questions more on their own terms than the standardized interview would permit, yet still provides a good structure for comparability over that of the focused interview (Maxwell, 2013). Interviews are the most suitable approach for studying complex and sensitive areas as the interviewer has the opportunity to prepare a participant before asking sensitive questions and to explain complex ones to them in person (Kumar, 2005; Creswell, 2003; Dawson, 2009*)*

Twenty individual interviews were conducted with the student participants; these were selected after observation of their late coming. They were mainly interviewed to find out what caused them to be tardy, how they think tardiness affected their learning and what could they do to improve their tardiness tendencies. One interview guide was prepared for all the students interviewed, where it was necessary to enquire further different students were asked different questions to further elaborate their answers. Permission to use a digital audio device was requested from participants before each interview took place, this was mainly to avoid distortion of participants views by only writing their answers on pen and paper. Each interview session lasted for approximately fifteen minutes and was conducted in English.

Observations were done mainly to identify the lecturers and student behavior towards those who are tardy to class. Five classes were conveniently observed after seeking permission from the lecturers the previous day. An arrangement to come to the lecturer's class was made prior to the observation and the observation was a non participant one; lecturers who agreed to be observed were informed that these observations were solely for the researcher's benefit, and that their identities would not be revealed to management.

Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted for the interview guide. This was mainly to identify and rectify any challenges that would be encountered during the process of interviewing participants. In this study interview guides were pilot tested with two students that I teach at Botho University having the same attributes as the study participants. These two were observed to have been late for a period of a month in that particular class. During the interview with the two participants separately, the researcher observed that two consecutive questions produced the same outcome so they were incorporated into a single question. The duration of the interview was observed to be no more than 15 minutes, so other potential participants were informed of this when they were asked to participate.

Trustworthiness of the Data

According to Vogt et al, (2012) trustworthiness is used by qualitative researchers to tackle the issue of reliability and validity. Trustworthiness is the degree of confidence qualitative researchers have in their data, assessed using the criteria of credibility and dependability (Polit & Beck, 2012). Credibility according to Polit and Beck, (2012) is the confidence in the truth of data and the interpretation of them; credibility can be achieved through triangulation and peer examination. In this research, data was triangulated and peer examined. Data triangulation involves collecting data from more than one source to for the purpose of verifying multiple perspectives (Henning, Van Rensburg & Smit, 2004). In this study, data was collected through individual interviews and non participant observation, and this data was compared, to understand the views and behavior of participants. Another way of ensuring trustworthiness of the data was through peer (colleague) review of the instrument (which in this study was the interview guide)

and my findings as they emerged. To increase dependability of the findings, a detailed explanation of data collection and analysis is provided throughout the study.

Ethical considerations

The researcher asked permission from the relevant gatekeepers to gain access to the University for conducting the research. A letter from the University of Botswana was handed to the identified gatekeeper of the University. All the lecturers to whom the observation was done on their class were informed of such, and all the participants were told about their involvement, and advised that they are not forced to take part. The individuals' personal details were not given to the researcher in order to keep participants strictly confidential; they were only referred to as student 1, student 2, student 3 and so forth throughout the interview.

Procedure

Four students were selected to assist with identifying possible participants for this study. Since there are four undergraduate faculties, the four assistants were asked to provide five names each of the students who'd have arrived late to any random lesson on any random day and inform them of the study and ask if they would like to be participants. On agreement to be part of the study the participant's signed a consent form and an arrangement/appointment was made by the assistants to meet the researcher for the interview. These interviews were conducted in a quiet private meeting room; no two participants were scheduled at the same time. The interviews took two weeks to complete. Once the participant got in the room, the researcher introduced herself and the purpose of the study, and made sure the participants knew that the information they would be sharing during the interview would be strictly for the purpose of the research, and would not affect their grade in any way. The participants were also made aware of the audio recording device that would be used during the interview. The interview was an open ended one,

allowing participants to elaborate and explain their viewpoints. Once the interview ended the participants were thanked and allowed to leave the meeting room.

For the observation part of data collection, five random lecturers on random timetable slots were approached and asked if they were willing to be observed to contribute to the study. The observation was mainly to find out how student tardiness affects them and what they did when they faced such situations where a student was late to class. For the selected day of observation, the researcher sat at the back of the class and watched the behavior of the lecturer and the students for almost twenty minutes at the beginning of class, and recorded the findings in the form of note taking. After twenty minutes the researcher walked out of the room.

Data Analysis

Qualitative data was analyzed in a descriptive and continuous manner which started with the actual data collection. The data was transcribed, presented and analyzed according to the research questions and any emerging themes. Before the data was analyzed, the researcher transcribed all interviews, observations, and field notes. The process of transcribing allowed the researcher to become acquainted with the data (Henning, et al, 2004). The researcher created a Microsoft Excel file for the interviews, and a Microsoft Word file for the observations and field notes. All files were saved in the researcher's laptop for which she was the only one who had access to them. The researcher used the meaning of analysis context as the unit of analysis for coding and also looked for description and themes. This means that the data was not coded sentence by sentence or paragraph by paragraph, but coded for meaning.

Once the data was transcribed, it was then coded, analyzed, interpreted and verified. The process of transcribing the interviews helped the researcher to gain more understanding of the

subject from repeatedly listening to and reading the transcribed interviews. Coding the data began once all the data was fully transcribed. The data was then analyzed, categorized and organized into themes and further sub-themes which emerged through the coding process. The themes which emerged were assigned a specific code accordingly. The next stage involved interpreting the data by identifying any reoccurring themes throughout and highlighting any similarities and differences in the data. The final stage involved data verification, this process involved a process of checking validity of understanding by rechecking the transcripts and codes again.

Summary

A qualitative case study design was selected for this study because it provided a means to conduct an in depth investigation on the causes and effects of student tardiness. The study was conducted at Botho University in Gaborone campus. Purposive sampling was used to select participants for the interviews, as it only focused on those who came late for those specific days. For observations, convenience sampling was used mainly because of easy availability of potential participants. A sample size of 20 participants was selected through purposive sampling strategies. Individual interviews with late comers were used to gather data for the study. A pilot test of the interview guides was conducted with 2 participants from the researcher's class to verify the dependability of the questions and improve them. For data trustworthiness the data was peer examined and triangulated. Gate keepers and participants were informed of the nature of the study before any data collection took place. In analyzing the data, thematic analysis was used to analyze data from the individual interviews.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Introduction

This chapter presents an analysis and interpretation of the data that were collected from the individual interview as well as the observations conducted for the purposes of the study. The aim of the chapter is to identify themes that have emerged from the study and describe them. The analysis of the data was based on the research questions that enquired about factors that cause students to be tardy, the effects tardiness has on students and strategies that can be put in place to reduce student tardiness in Botho University.

The main themes that emerged from analyzing the data based on the first research question are (a) reliability of transport and traffic to school, (b) personal and family responsibilities, (c) time management, and (d) attitude towards the lecture. From the second research question that focused on the effects of tardiness on learning and teaching, the themes that emerged are (e) difficulty catching up in class, and (f) miss important content taught. And lastly the themes that emerged to address the third and last research question about the strategies to reduce student tardiness are (g) time management and self discipline, (h) adjustment of school start and finish time, (i) implementation of late coming policy, (j) student education on importance of punctuality, and (k) lecturer's reaction towards late coming in Botho University.

Research question 1: Causes of student tardiness in Botho University

Reliability of transport and traffic to school

With regards to the causes of tardiness, most students expressed that there is shortage of reliable transportation to school sometimes. The common mode of public transport that is used by the students is a combi and most of the participants lamented that there is always a problem with the combi. One student mentioned that they are usually late to lessons that start around 12 pm since there are not enough people on the road looking to board the combi; so the driver drives slowly looking for passengers along the route making it impossible even if one was early, to be on time for the lesson.

Others talked about the traffic, especially in the morning, saying that the queuing makes it impossible to come on time. There are many people commuting to Gaborone from nearby settlements, this causes a lot of traffic into the city, even if one does not use public transport you end up stuck in the long queues. One student who stays outside the city also mentioned that the transport is not very reliable early in the morning especially in winter for the 7 am classes:

> M   d   d   r d   d   r it' d r
> d   r   r   r   r
> r   r   d
> d   d

Personal and family responsibilities

One of the participants expressed that she sometimes takes care of her little cousin when her parents are not around, meaning that in the morning she has to get the cousin ready before she (herself) goes to school. This leads to her being late, as she prepares the little girl some breakfast, bathes her and makes sure she goes to school, making her rush for the combis which
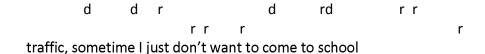
sometimes get delayed. Another participant mentioned that she was late only once because she had scheduled a doctor's appointment before class but got delayed at the doctor's office; causing her to be late.

Time management

"Sometimes it is difficult to stick to one thing and focus on finishing it when I am getting ready for school", one participant said when asked about why she comes late to class sometimes. Others mostly mentioned that they sleep late and wake up late, and they end up rushing trying to prepare themselves for school. One mentioned that since his 7am lesson is on Mondays and Wednesdays, he finds it difficult to attend the Monday lesson on time because of the weekend; it is difficult to get back to the week routine after the weekend; he wakes up late on Mondays because of that:

M   d   r d   d r   d   '
              r   M   d

Attitude towards the lecturer

The subject being taught, how it is taught, and who teaches it may influence the students' tardiness. When students do not like the lecturer and the subject they may take less interest in being punctual. One participant said she is sometimes late because of delays on the way to school, but her lecturer does not want to listen to reason, they always chase away late comers. So sometimes when she thinks about coming to school she just drags her feet and sometimes she just doesn't want to come to school because of the lecturer:

d   d r   d   rd   r r
              r r   r   r
traffic, sometime I just don't want to come to school

Research question 2: Effects of student tardiness in class

Difficulty catching up in class

There are many ways students believe tardiness affects their learning; a few students mentioned that when you come late, obviously you find the lesson in progress and it is difficult to catch up. When you find the lecturer has already started teaching, you become confused throughout the lesson as it can be difficult to catch up and some lecturers do not go over the covered topics again. One finds themselves disturbing others trying to catch up; asking them questions about what is being done. Some lecturers will just continue without revisiting the subtopics that have already been taught during the time one is not in class. One of the participants went on to say that late coming is even more felt when you find other students writing a test:

> r r   d   d r   r
>   r   ther students' time elapses; so when I am thirty
>   d   r   r   r
> r   d   r

Missing out on important content taught

When students are late some lecturers do not allow them in class for the whole lesson, they just chase them away; this ultimately would mean the student is absent from class for the entire session and they miss out on the important information that is being taught then as one student said:

> hen you come late, the whole lesson that remains you don't get any learning
> since you'd be chased out or absent, you miss out on the important points
> for lecturers that don't kick you out you find the topic halfway through when you

d   d   nd you can't get some concepts, some topics you have to
d r   d   r r

Other participants also showed that they were agreeing with this, mentioning that even if the lecturer does not chase you out, by the time you get in class there would be so much that one has missed and the lecturer would not re-explain some concepts which at times are difficult to understand on your own. One misses a lot in the first fifteen minutes of class; mostly announcements, objectives, and the recap of the previous class is made at the beginning of the lesson which if you are late you will miss.
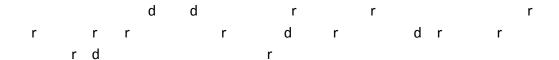
Research question 3: Strategies to reduce student tardiness

Time management and self discipline

The majority of the participants felt one of the ways to improve their classroom tardiness tendency was through time management and self discipline. One mentioned that she had to prioritize her school schedule and find time to do other things at the time that did not conflict with the school time; this is the same student that identified her cause of tardiness to be the doctor's appointment at one point. Some students reported that to prevent one from being late to morning classes, they have to sleep early and wake up early, and during their preparation to school, they should focus on only preparing themselves not get distracted by the radio or the television as one put it:
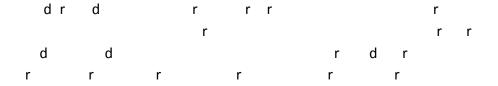
d   r   r   r   r
d   d   r   r

One participant mentioned that although public transport is a problem since they stay far from school, they can try to leave earlier than they normally do and if anything rely on other public transport (lifts) because even if they went early and waited for the combi, by the time it got to their boarding place it would be already full forcing them to wait longer on the bus stop. Another student revealed that perhaps they could prepare for school a day before and give themselves allowance of about thirty minutes to be at school before the lesson starts. When asked to elaborate on that she said:

Adjustment of school start and finish time

When asked about what the university can do to encourage students to come on time to class, most of the participants stated time change as one of the strategies. Participants felt like 7.00 am is just too early to start the first lesson; instead of school starting at 7.00 am, it could be adjusted to 7.30, 8.00, or 8.30 am. Some say by adjusting the starting time, maybe more students will come on time and not have the excuse of the lesson being too early and waking up late. Understanding that this is a tertiary institution with its own specific rules, one student went on to say:

Implementation of the late coming policy

One of the strategies that came up was that there should be a specific range of minutes that the lecturers allow students in before starting to teach, and that lecturers need to be consistent with how they treat late comers. Some lecturers chase away students when they are late, others don't. There were two participants who believed that students who come late should be punished so as to encourage them to be more punctual next time. When asked about the mode of punishment, one participant said:

```
r r      d    r   r                    d
     d      r                              r   M    d
r       M   d                    r   r d   r
      d r                  r
```

Most participants were worried about the inconsistency of lecturers when it comes to late coming especially for the 7.00 am class, saying that it is not fare that when you and your friend belong to different classes and you are both late, their lecturer allows them it and you are chased out by your lecturer or made to wait a long time outside before you give up and leave. Without disputing the idea of lecturers being strict one participant said:

```
r r      d    r                        d       r           r
          r            d            d
r r            d    r
```

Student education on importance of punctuality

One of the participants suggested that communication about the effects of late coming should be shared with students; that students should be told about how attendance affects their sponsorship status. Another participant went on to say some students may not be aware of how

important being on time is, there could be counseling sessions for most students so that they are educated on the importance of coming to school on time. Although lecturers can be strict, but they could first sit down with the student and explain how punctuality is relevant.

Lecturer reaction towards late comers

One of the interview questions posed at participants was to give an overview of what their lecturers do to them or others when they come late to class; basically they were to describe the overall lecturer reaction towards the students who show up after the lecturer has started teaching. Most participants mentioned that their lecturers chase them out depending on the amount of minutes they are late, this varies from one lecturer to another. The number of minutes students are allowed to show up late ranges from 5 to 30 minutes; so your lecturer will chase you away depending on the specific rule they individually have for their classes. Some students reported that their lecturers are very strict on time and they do not care if you are one minute late or one hour late, they will not allow you in. Another set of participants mentioned that if you tell your lecturer why you are late and your reason is acceptable, the lecturer will allow you in but with a warning. The last set of students mentioned that their lecturers especially for the 7 am classes, don't have a problem with students coming in late, they will just continue teaching and ignore the late comers but having allowed them in.

Observation results

Observation of five random classes was conducted to find out the overall student and lecturer behavior towards student tardiness. The first class that was observed started at 7 am. At exactly 7 am the researcher stepped into the class and went straight to the back, there were 20 students seated and the lecturer was not yet in the class. The students were just talking among themselves and the lecturer only came in 10 minutes later. She greeted the students and

introduced the lesson objectives, as she was talking one student walked in and went to take a seat. The lesson continued and after about 15 minutes (7.15am) another student just walked in and the lecturer ignored the student. Two other students came in 2 minutes later and just walked past the lecturer to their seats. The observer waited for another 10 minutes but there was no other student showing up, so she walked out of the class.

The second class to be observed started at 9.30am. By the time the researcher got in the class at 9.35am everyone was seated and the lecturer was already introducing the lesson. For the next 20 minutes the observer was in class no one came in, it seemed like all the students had already come to class or those who were not there were just absent. The researcher left the class. The third class to be observed was at 2.30 pm. On the way to the class the researcher noticed there were many students in the hallways and it was difficult to maneuver around the students. Some were getting out of lessons; others were waiting to get into the classes. By the time the hallways and stairs cleared it was already 5 minutes into the lesson time. The class that was observed was situated on the second floor, when the researcher got into the class the lecturer was not yet in class. Students were still settling in around 2.40 pm but the lecturer was still not in class. The lecturer showed up at 2.45 pm and closed the door behind him; he greeted the students and started teaching. There were two students who waited outside the door as if they wanted to get in 5 minutes after the lecturer showed up (at 2.50 pm) but then they just stood outside. It was time for the researcher to leave the class and as I closed the classroom door I asked the boys what they were doing waiting around the door, they responded by saying they are not allowed in class when they find the lecturer already teaching, but they were hoping the lecturer sees them and allows them in.

For the fourth and fifth classes to be observed, the lessons started at 9.30am and 5pm respectively. The researcher and the lecturer came in at the same time and the lecturer started by going around the class talking to some students, then introduced the topic of the day. As the students who arrived late came in, the lecturer interacted with them generally telling them not to show up late next time. The 9.30 am lecturer was opening the classroom door and paused in her teaching to give attention to the late comers when they showed up, telling them that they were disturbing the class and should not do that again. For the 5.00 pm class, the lecturer was asking the late comers why they were late, and after they mumbled something to him, he allowed them in.

All these observations were only 20 minutes long, but as the researcher was leaving the floor, she observed there were still some students going in the direction of the classes, not particularly sure which class they were going to. Field notes were taken with guidance of the observation guide attached in the appendix section at the end of this report.

Summary

The purpose of this chapter was to highlight the findings which emerged on account of the interviews that were carried out. From the findings of this research study it is clear that tardiness can affect individual students differently. The three research questions have been addressed in this section, and interviews with the participants show that they all have different reasons for coming late to class. The major reasons or factors that influence students to being late to class was the transport especially in the morning, although some students mentioned that they sleep late and wake up late; they struggle to find reliable consistent transport to school as others stay outside Gaborone and are forced to hike from private motorists. The second research

question looked at the effects of tardiness on the learning process; and most participants agreed that when one is late, it is often difficult to catch up on what is being taught at the time and one can end up having missed the important content that was taught during their absence. The last research question had mixed emotions about what the University could do to reduce students' tardiness. Some felt punishment was appropriate while others felt though the lecturers should be strict; they shouldn't jump to chasing late comers from the lesson before they even hear their reasons. Others felt that there should be consistency among all the lecturers of the University; if they chase them away they should all do so. Lastly observations were conducted to see what lecturers and students do when others or they are late for class.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overview

The purpose of this study was to find out what causes students classroom tardiness and the effects it has on the learning and the teaching process. The study also looked at strategies that can be taken in Botho University as a way of improving punctuality and reducing student tardiness in school. This chapter provides an interpretation of the findings obtained; it will illustrate why the findings are relevant to the research and relate the findings to other research carried out. The findings of this study are based on the interpretation and analysis of data obtained through the process of semi-structured interviews of 20 participants who are currently studying at Botho University. The following research questions guided this study:

What are the factors that cause student tardiness?

How does student tardiness affect the teaching and the learning process?

What strategies can be put in place at Botho University to reduce student tardiness and encourage punctuality?

Discussion of findings

From the semi-structured interviews conducted with the students, several themes have emerged as indicated in the previous chapter. The following section will discuss these previously identified themes grouped into the main research questions.

Factors influencing student classroom tardiness

The major complaint that most participants mentioned was the lack of reliable transport to school. As some stay outside the city, they mentioned that it is difficult to get public transport on time for morning classes. Morning classes start at 7 am and if someone stays outside Gaborone, say Ramotswa as one student mentioned, the bus service only starts at 6 am but since they stay far from the bus starting point by the time it comes to their bus stop it is already full so they have to wait for another one or start hiking which sometimes is unsuccessful and they end up coming late to class. Though transportation and traffic in the morning can cause serious delays on the road, some students find it difficult to wake up on time in the morning. Sometimes students sleep late and wake up late which forces them to rush in the morning which can result in them being late. If you wake up late and there is no transport to school or there is too much traffic on the roads, you are definitely bound to come late to class. Transportation as a reason for being late was also revealed in the literature review by a number of researchers (Bataineh, 2014; Shahzada et al, 2011; Jagero, Agak & Ayodo, 2010; Dafiaghor, 2011; Koslowsky, 2000) to be one major factor causing students' tardiness; this was influenced by late trains, late parents and colleagues who rode with them to school. Some students miss busses and trains and end up taking a later one. Still on public transport, midday transport has been identified by one participant as a problem. She mentioned that the combi drivers have a tendency of looking for potential passengers slowly on the road. So when one is aboard combi early they end up delaying because of the driver driving slowly.

Another theme that emerged to be an influence in student tardiness was personal and family responsibilities. One of the participants expressed that she sometimes takes care of her little cousin when her parents are not around, meaning that in the morning she has to get the

cousin ready before she (herself) goes to school. As these students are young adults, they are bound to have responsibilities that are either personal or family related. Some students delay during the process of getting ready to school because they have other matters to take care of, making them run late and causing them to be tardy. The third theme focused on time management. When one wakes up late and does not allocate their time well, they may end up running around not knowing what to do. As one student mentioned that, it was difficult to focus on doing one thing and finishing it off when getting ready for school. The assumption is, there may be distracting factors like watching tv and listening to the radio that can make a person not realize that time is being lost even when someone woke up on time. Waking up early and sleeping early can help students be on time to school if they knew how to avoid distracting themselves with other things when preparing to go to school. Students may have a hard time mastering the routine when they are constantly late; they may have a hard time settling into the routine, resulting in them always being late or they can also feel disconnected with school and may have behavior problems and end up being school dropouts (Marxhausen, 2010). When a student is regularly tardy, the lecturer may think of it as disrespect and start treating the student differently or be hostile towards the student which can lower the student's self-esteem, resulting in them not feeling confident enough to contribute towards class discussions.

Lastly, though there are many factors that emerged, some students have a hard time embracing their lecturers and subjects. The subject being taught, how it is taught, and who teaches it may influence the students' tardiness. When students do not like the lecturer and the subject, they may take less interest in being punctual. Perhaps they would want to arrive in class when the lecturers have already introduced the subject or are halfway through the lesson. Because attendance registers at Botho University are marked everyday and they actually affect

the overall mark at the end of the semester, students may feel they just have to show up in class to mark themselves present even if they have no interest in the subject being taught, or if they do not like the lecturer teaching the subject. Student's attitude towards their lecturers can greatly influence their attitude towards the subject being taught and their general behavior towards the particular lesson. One participant said she is sometimes late because of delays on the way to school, but her lecturer does not want to listen to reason, they always chase away late comers. So sometimes when she thinks about coming to school she just delays and sometimes she just doesn't want to come to school at all.

Effects of student classroom tardiness

There are two major reasons that have been extracted from the interviews that were conducted with students with regard to how they felt being tardy affects them and others in class. Some students mentioned that they have a difficult time catching up when they arrive late to class. When something was scheduled to start at a particular time and you arrived late, chances are you will find that thing having started and you may have a difficult time catching up. If a test is scheduled to take 1 hour to complete and student comes 30 minutes late, they only have 30 minutes to complete the test, which may not be enough, so it will be difficult for the late student to catch up.

The other theme that emerged was missing the important content taught at the beginning of the lesson. When students are late some lecturers do not allow them in class for the whole lesson, they just chase them away; this ultimately would mean the student is absent from class for the entire session and they miss out on the important information that is being taught. This is in agreement with Malik et al., (2006) view of tardiness as a form of absence because students miss a portion of class regardless of being excused or not. The authors continue to mention that

lecturers are very strict that when their student comes late to class they end up chasing them away hence resulting in them being absent for the session. And when students are absent, they obviously miss the entire content of that lesson.

According to Etsey in Gakure, Mukuria and Kithae, (2013) material taught at the time the student was absent may be difficult to understand later when the student studies alone and may result in the student failing the courses or test or assignment. One of the participants mentioned that there may be tips about the examination or tests; recapitulation from previous lesson and just general announcements that one will miss when late for class. Other participants also showed that they were agreeing with this, mentioning that even if the lecturer does not chase you out, by the time you get in class there would be so much that one has missed. More often than not at the beginning of the lesson lecturers give out valuable information and students who come late are at the risk of losing out on this valuable information.

Strategies to reduce student tardiness

Like the other research questions, several themes emerged relating to the last research question on ways in which students and the University could improve on student tardiness. All the findings from these various themes have been discussed in the following section. A majority of the participants felt one of the ways to improve their classroom tardiness tendency was through time management and self discipline. The results indicate that some students felt a sense of responsibility on their side, that perhaps if they could discipline themselves to finding enough time to get ready for class and prioritizing the school schedule, they could avoid being tardy. Though sleeping early, waking up on time, preparing for class the previous day may be helpful to avoid rushing in the morning not knowing where the assignments are or what to wear to school; there could always be a problem with the public transport and traffic as some students

mentioned. The transport system may not favor some students, especially those who stay outside the city, because by the time they get to the city there may be a lot of traffic forcing them to be late for class. Even if they wake up early, one student mentioned that the public transport gets to his bus stop full and he has to wait for the next one or rely on lifts from private transport.

Another theme that emerged was to adjust the school starting time. Most participants argue that if the school starting time was adjusted especially in winter to start at a later time, perhaps there could be an improvement with the rate at which students come late to class. Since the first lesson starts at 7 am, a majority of the participants suggested the start time could be adjusted from 7.30 am to 8.30 am for the first lesson. None of the literature read mentioned time adjustment as a possible solution to tardiness. But perhaps if the start time was adjusted in the winter season to be different from the summer start times more students would find it easier to come to school on time, because others say it is too dark outside and they fear walking to the bus stop when it is dark outside.

Some students mentioned the unfairness of throwing others out from the class when they are late, saying that other lecturers do not chase away late comers while others do. This inconsistency made participants think there should be a standardized way of treating the tardy. A tardiness policy could help students know the consequences of being late to class. If Botho University implements a tardiness policy, it could define how students who are late should be treated. The policy could help both staff and students to understand the sort of reaction or behavior that is expected of them regarding tardiness. The participants also expressed that students needed to be educated on the effects of tardiness. The school needs to put something in place that will educate students on tardiness and motivate them to improve. Several studies (Hargreaves & McLaughlin, 1981; Egan, 2014; Marvul, 2010) show that interventions have been

put in place as a way of encouraging students to come early to school. These researchers conducted incentive based interventions to encourage the tardy to come on time to school. One participant mentioned that lecturers should individually inform students about tardiness effects and help them be on time.

Lecturer reaction towards late comers

One other theme that emerged from the interview and observation was the lecturer reaction towards late comers. During the interview with students the researcher posed one of the questions to find out what the lecturers do about those who come late to class, this question was based on the second research question that talked about the effects of student tardiness on teaching and learning. So when asked about what their lecturers do when students are late, most participants mentioned that their lecturers chase them depending on the amount of minutes they are late, this varies from one lecturer to another. The amount of minutes students are allowed to show up late ranges from 5 to 30 minutes; so your lecturer will chase you away depending on the specific rule they individually have for their classes. This also relates to the inconsistencies that students mentioned going back to the notion that there should be a policy implemented to address late coming. The researcher also noticed these inconsistencies during observation; some lecturers did not allow students in after a particular time, others did not seem to be bothered by the late comers at all, they continued teaching and just ignored the late comers. Though the observations were only 20 minutes long there was no way of telling if more students showed up to the classes after the researcher left. But the assumption is that for the classes that lecturers chase people away after only being late for 5 minutes, the lecturer still did not allow people after being 20 minutes late, even though there were still students going up and down the stairs as the researcher was leaving the building.

Conclusion

The analysis of the research data revealed several factors that cause students to be late for school. It was identified that most students who participated in this study were tardy mainly because of transportation challenges. Students staying far from school find themselves constantly late to class because transport is not reliable or there is too much traffic. Another major influence of late coming was identified to be general time managements, some students felt they could not easily prioritize their responsibilities or duties when getting ready for school.

The study also looked at the effects of student tardiness on teaching and learning and revealed that important content coverage and announcements that are made at the beginning of the class are difficult to get when one is late. Even if a colleague may relay the message, there may be something important that the tardy would have missed. And essentially most participants mentioned that when one is late it is difficult to catch up with the rest of the class since the lecturer will not give you any attention.

Lastly, it has been revealed that there could be strategies put in place to reduce tardiness among the students of Botho University. Students can be encouraged to be on time by informing them about the importance of punctuality; there could be policies set in place to define what should or should not be done when a student is late to class instead of being inconsistent. From observation, lecturers behave differently when students show up late for their classes, some chase them while others ignore them. Participants also felt like perhaps the start time especially in winter should be increased to a later time instead of using the same time as in summer.

Recommendations

This research study attempted to increase awareness on the causes of student tardiness at Botho University and its effects on learning and teaching. There should be a similar study to deal with a larger sample and compare how other Universities in Botswana view the issue of student tardiness, or if at all it is something that the Universities are concerned with.

- Lecturers and Administrators should also be involved as participants to establish their views and thoughts on the causes and solutions to student tardiness, in order to also establish if at all they are indeed concerned about this issue.

- Botho University needs a standardized tardiness policy that both students and lecturers will use to control and reduce student tardiness tendencies since lecturers followed their own personal discretion concerning the treatment of late comers.

- There is a need for the Gaborone City Planners to look into the transportation system in Gaborone, to see whether it can be improved to accommodate the growing needs of passengers especially commuters from nearby villages.

- During winter the start times for the University should be adjusted to accommodate those who stay far since it is hard to get to the bus stops in the dark, and the transport mode delays.

- There should be interventions in a form of counseling that can be established to address tardiness and encourage students to improve punctuality. Any form of intervention to groups of students can help them improve their late coming tendencies.

- Further studies to establish the correlation between classroom tardiness and student performance can be done to see whether student tardiness has any effect on student overall performance.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Informed Consent Letter

Botho University
P O Box 501564
Gaborone

April, 2015

Hello,

My name is Keitumetse Kgosi, and I am currently a Masters student at University of Botswana. I am conducting research on the effects of student tardiness and ways to reduce it in Botho University

You are being asked to participate in a project that will be used to learn about student tardiness. If you agree to be part of the project, you will be interviewed individually. I will also ask you questions about how you feel about tardiness at your school. It will take 15 minutes for the interviews to be completed.

All of the answers that you give me will be kept in a locked cabinet in a room in my office, and only I along with my lecturer, Dr Dambe, will see your answers. We are not going to put your name on the answers that you give us, so no one will be able to know which answers were yours. Please call or SMS me on 71422397 so that we make an appointment.

Thank you!

Keitumetse Kgosi MEd Candidate
University of Botswana

If you understand the information above and want to take part in the interviews, please sign your name on the line below:
Yes, I will participate in this project: _____

APPENDIX B

Interview guide for students

1. How many times have you been late to class this semester?

2. Do you find any lessons and/or timeslots in your timetable most difficult to attend on time?

3. Do you have any reasons for coming late to class? What makes you come late to class?

4. What does your lecturer do when you or others come late to class? How does your lecturer react?

5. How do you think late coming affects you as a student?

6. What do you think you can do to improve your punctuality?

7. What can Botho University do to ensure students come to class on time?

APPENDIX C

Observation guide for the classroom

1. The time the lesson is supposed to start

2. The number of students seated by the time the lesson is supposed to start

3. The actual time the lecturer comes into class

4. The number of students seated by the time the lecturer comes into class

5. The time the lecturer actually begins the lesson

6. The number of students when the lecturer starts to teach.

7. Are the students walking into class after the lecturer begins?

8. What is the lecturer's reaction towards late comers?

9. Does the lecturer stop/pause to address the tardy?

10. What is the other students' reaction towards the late comer?

11. How many minutes from the beginning of the lesson is the last tardy allowed into class?

12. Is the tardy student able to catch up on what the lesson is on (especially practical lessons)?

13. How is the interaction between the lecturer and the tardy (does the lecturer re-teach the already taught material to the tardy?)

14. Is there any advice given to the tardy to ensure improvement?