

Perception of Shanahan University Students on the Implementation of the 80% Attendance Requirement for Examinations

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ABSTRACT: This study examined undergraduate students' perceptions of the implementation of the 80% attendance requirement for examination eligibility at Shanahan University. A descriptive cross-sectional survey design was employed, with data collected from 351 undergraduate students using a structured, self-administered online questionnaire. The survey assessed students' awareness of the attendance policy, perceptions of its necessity and academic impact, barriers to lecture attendance, overall evaluation of the policy, and opinions on exemption allowances. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages.

The findings revealed a high level of awareness of the attendance policy (95.1%), indicating effective institutional communication. However, perceptions of the policy's necessity were mixed, with 48.7% of respondents supporting the requirement, while others expressed neutrality or disagreement. A majority of students (57.9%) reported that the policy did not significantly improve their academic performance. Key barriers to lecture attendance included transportation challenges, health-related issues, academic workload, and timetable clashes. Although overall perceptions of the policy were moderately positive, a substantial proportion

of respondents (71.1%) supported allowing exemptions for legitimate reasons.

The study underscores the importance of implementing attendance policies that balance academic accountability with flexibility. The findings provide empirical evidence to inform institutional policy review and support the development of more equitable attendance frameworks in higher education.

Keywords: *attendance policy, student perception, higher education, academic performance, policy implementation*

INTRODUCTION

Student attendance has long been recognized as a cornerstone of academic engagement and performance in higher education. Universities worldwide adopt attendance policies requiring students to attend a specified proportion of classes before being permitted to sit for examinations, intending to enhance learning outcomes and professional development (O'Malley & Marsden, 2020). In many contexts, an 80% attendance requirement has become a standard eligibility threshold for final examinations, as institutions posit that consistent class attendance fosters academic success, collaboration, and mastery of course content (Smith & Jones, 2019). However, this assumption is not without debate; some research suggests that mandatory attendance may not uniformly predict academic achievement and can introduce unintended disadvantages for certain student groups (Brown & Lee, 2020).

Perceptions of attendance policies are crucial to understanding how such requirements affect student motivation and academic behaviour. Empirical evidence indicates that students' perceptions of strict attendance mandates are mixed: while some recognize the benefits of regular attendance for learning and exam preparedness, others view these requirements as restrictive or misaligned with adult learner autonomy (Taylor et al., 2025). In a multi-disciplinary study of health professions students, a majority expressed support for attendance hurdles, yet many reported that they would maintain high attendance even without compulsory requirements, indicating intrinsic motivation toward learning (Taylor et al., 2025). Similarly, research among nursing students and faculty highlights differing

perspectives on attendance policies, with faculty emphasizing professionalism and students emphasizing flexibility (Johnson et al., 2014).

Despite the growing literature on attendance policies, there remains a paucity of evidence focusing on student perceptions within West African university contexts. At Shanahan University, the implementation of an 80% attendance requirement for examination eligibility provides a relevant case for examining students' views on institutional academic regulations. Understanding these perceptions is important, as student acceptance and engagement can influence compliance, learning outcomes, and policy effectiveness (Parker & Mitchell, 2020). This study utilized a Google Forms survey to collect quantitative data on students' perceptions of the attendance requirement, including perceived benefits, challenges, and its impact on academic performance.

By examining these perceptions, this research contributes to the discourse on attendance policy implementation and student engagement in higher education. The findings are expected to inform institutional decision-making and support the development of evidence-based attendance policies that balance academic standards with student autonomy.

Methods

Study Design

This study employed a descriptive cross-sectional survey design to evaluate undergraduate students' perceptions of the implementation of the 80% attendance requirement for examination eligibility at Shanahan University. The design aligns with STROBE recommendations for observational studies, enabling assessment of exposures (attendance policy) and outcomes (student perceptions) at a single point in time.

Study Setting and Population

The study was conducted at Shanahan University among registered undergraduate students across multiple faculties and academic levels. The university enforces an institutional policy mandating a minimum of 80% lecture attendance as a prerequisite for sitting semester examinations.

Eligibility Criteria

Inclusion criteria comprised registered undergraduate students of Shanahan University who had experienced the enforcement of the 80% attendance requirement, provided informed electronic consent, and completed the survey in full. Exclusion criteria included postgraduate students, newly admitted students not yet subjected to attendance monitoring, incomplete survey submissions, and duplicate or invalid responses.

Sampling and Recruitment

A Google Form structured questionnaire shared through students-WhatsApp platform, over five days was used to recruit respondents from consented registered undergraduate students of Shanahan University. Participation was anonymous.

Data Collection Instrument

Data were collected using a structured, self-administered questionnaire designed and administered through Google Forms. The instrument consisted of closed-ended items structured into sections assessing awareness of the attendance policy, perceived necessity and fairness, perceived academic impact, barriers to lecture attendance, overall policy perception, and opinions on exemption allowances. Likert-scale response options were used to quantify perceptions.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical principles for research involving human participants were observed. Participation was voluntary, confidentiality was maintained, and no personally identifiable information was collected. Data were stored securely and used exclusively for academic research purposes.

Data Collection Procedure

The online questionnaire was accessible for a seven day collection period. An introductory information sheet explained the study objectives, assured anonymity, and emphasized voluntary participation. Completion and submission of the questionnaire implied informed consent.

Bias and Study Size

Potential sources of bias included self-selection and response bias, inherent in voluntary online surveys. These were mitigated by anonymous data collection and neutral wording of questionnaire items. The final sample size reflected all valid responses received during the data collection period.

Statistical Analysis

Data were exported from Google Forms into spreadsheet software for cleaning and analysis. Descriptive statistics, including frequencies and percentages, were used to summarize responses. Results were presented using charts and graphical visualizations to aid interpretation.

Results

Figure 1 shows that awareness of the 80% attendance policy was very high, with a 95.1% of students reporting awareness of the requirement.

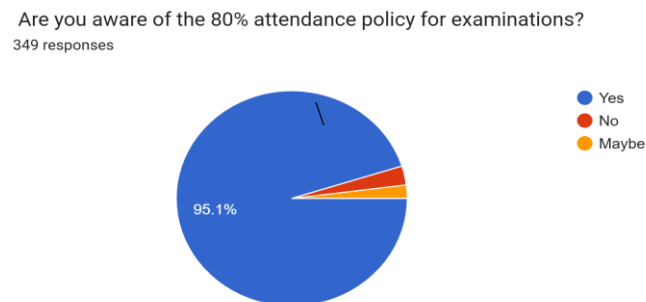


Figure 1. Students' awareness of the 80% attendance policy.

As shown in Figure 2, 48.7% of respondents agreed that the policy was necessary, 23.1% disagreed, and 26.9% were neutral, indicating mixed perceptions.

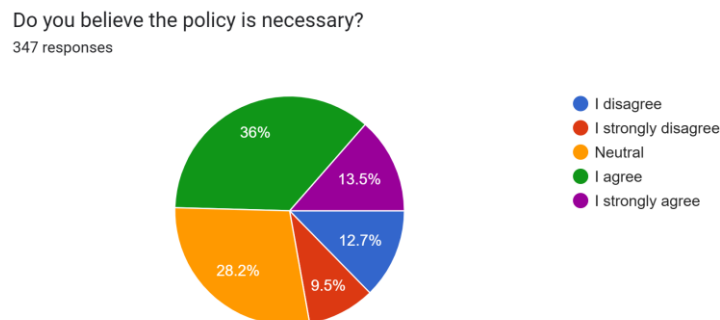


Figure 2. Students' perception of the necessity of the attendance policy.

Figure 3 indicates that most students (57.9%) reported that the attendance policy did not significantly improve their academic performance.

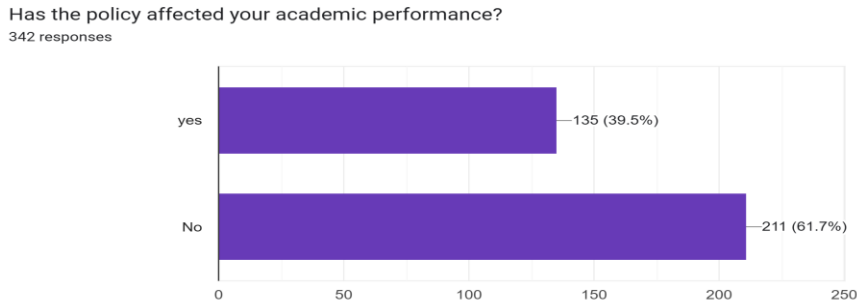


Figure 3. Perceived effect of the attendance policy on academic performance.

According to Figure 4, the major barriers to lecture attendance were transportation difficulties, health challenges, academic workload, and timetable clashes.

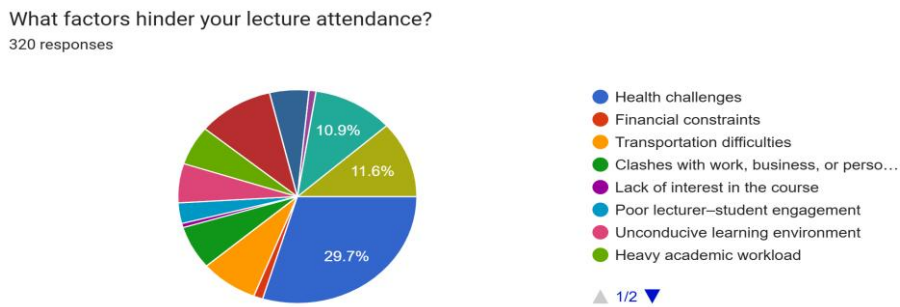


Figure 4. Reported barriers to lecture attendance.

Figure 5 demonstrates that overall perception of the policy was moderate, with 24.8% rating it as fair, 34.9% as neutral, and 13.5% as very fair.

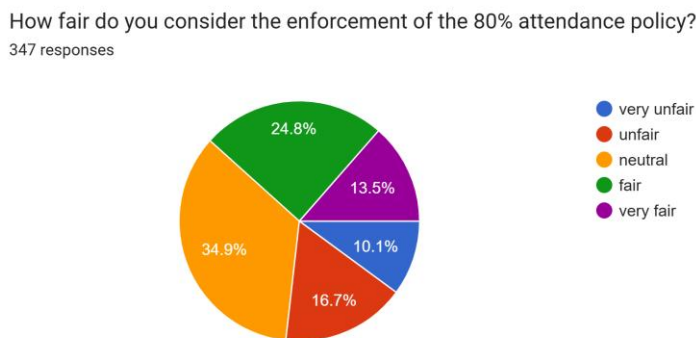


Figure 5. Overall student perception of the attendance policy.

As illustrated in Figure 6, 71.1% of respondents supported allowing exemptions for legitimate reasons.

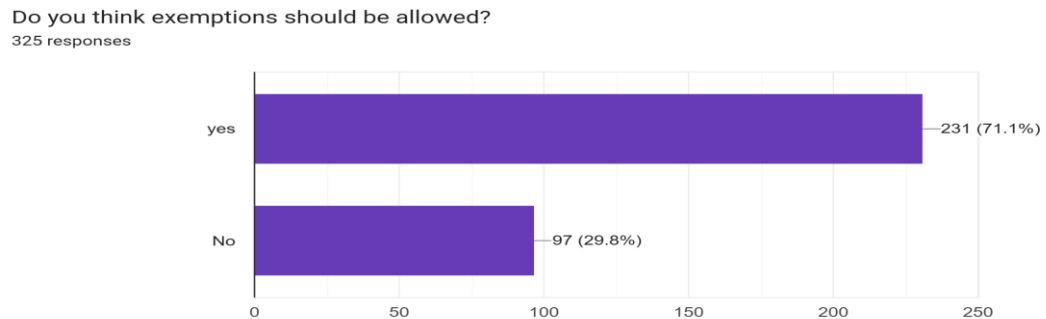


Figure 6. Student opinions on allowing exemptions to the attendance policy.

Figure 7 presents the overall student rating of the attendance policy, which reflects cautious acceptance rather than extreme approval or rejection.

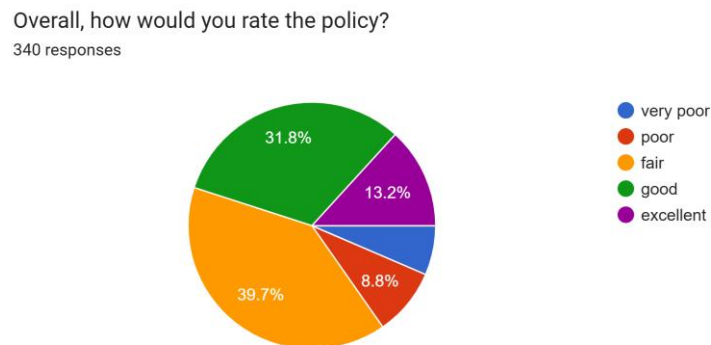


Figure 7. Overall student rating of the attendance policy

Discussion

The survey revealed that approximately 95.1% of students were aware of the 80% attendance requirement. This high level of awareness indicates effective policy communication by the university. Research indicates that attendance policies tend to have greater visibility and effect when clearly communicated, though perceptions of usefulness can vary (Smith & Allen, 2014). Studies also show variability in attitudes toward attendance requirements across institutions, with some students welcoming clarity and others feeling constrained by mandates (Smith & Allen, 2014). Approximately 48.7% of students agreed that the policy was necessary, while about 23.1% disagreed and 26.9% remained neutral. These mixed perceptions mirror prior

research suggesting that although attendance policies can improve attendance behaviour, they often generate ambivalence among students who question their fairness or necessity (Johnson et al., 2024). About 57.9% of respondents indicated that the attendance policy did not significantly affect their academic performance. This suggests that students do not uniformly perceive a direct link between mandatory attendance and improved academic outcomes, consistent with findings by Lee et al. (2023). Respondents identified transportation challenges, health problems, workload, and timetable clashes as significant barriers. These structural constraints align with earlier findings that external factors strongly influence attendance decisions (Brown & Taylor, 2020). Overall perceptions were moderate, with approximately 24.8% rating the policy as fair, 34.9% as neutral, and 13.5% as very fair. This cautious acceptance reflects preferences for balanced and flexible policy approaches (Smith & Allen, 2014). A clear majority of respondents (approximately 71.1%) supported allowing exemptions for legitimate reasons, aligning with previous research emphasizing fairness and flexibility in attendance policies (Clark & Nguyen, 2025).

Conclusion

This study assessed undergraduate students' perceptions of the 80% attendance requirement for examination eligibility at Shanahan University. Findings revealed high awareness of the policy, reflecting effective institutional communication. However, perceptions of the policy's necessity and academic value were mixed, with many students reporting no strong perceived link between mandatory attendance and improved academic performance. Structural barriers, including transportation challenges, health issues, workload, and timetable clashes, were identified as significant constraints to lecture attendance. Despite these challenges, overall perceptions of the policy were moderately positive, indicating cautious acceptance. Strong support for exemptions highlights students' preference for flexibility and fairness in policy implementation.

Future research should examine the relationship between attendance requirements and objective academic outcomes using longitudinal or mixed-methods approaches. Qualitative and comparative studies across institutions may further clarify how

flexible attendance models can address structural barriers while maintaining academic standards.

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