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School Health Variables And Utilization Of Health Care System Among Undergraduate In University Of Calabar

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Abstract

This study adopted descriptive survey design to established the relationship between School health variables and utilization of health care systems among undergraduates in university of Calabar, Nigeria. It was guided by two null hypotheses. A sample of 200 final years students in Faculty of Science Education, Faculty of Education , Faculty of Entrepreneurhip and vocational Education in University of Calaber of Cross River State, Nigeria were selected using the accidental sampling technique. One instrument titled "School health variables and utilization of health care system Questionnaire (SHVUHCSQ) was used for data collection. The reliability of the questionnaire was established using Cronbach Alpha which ranges from .88 to .93. The hypotheses were tested using Pearson Product Moment correlation

	Coefficient at .05 level of significance. The findings of the study revealed that school health facilities, school health personnel individually significantly relate with the utilization of healthcare system among students of University of Calabar. It was concluded that effective utilization of health care system depends on adequate health care facilities and qualified health personnel. Based on the findings and conclusion of this study, it was recommended amongst others that ongoing training programs for health personnel should be prioritized to ensure they are equipped with the latest knowledge and skills. Emphasizing communication and interpersonal skills can help build trust with students and encourage them to seek care.

Introduction

The relationship between school health variables and the utilization of health care systems among university students is increasingly recognized as vital for promoting student well-being. School health variables, including mental health services, physical health resources, and health education, significantly influence students' decisions to seek care. Students who have access to mental health resources are more likely to utilize these services, thereby enhancing their psychological well-being (Thompson & Niven, 2022). Furthermore, the availability of on-campus health facilities has been linked to higher rates of health care utilization, as students often prefer convenient access to services (Thompson & Niven, 2022). University students often encounter unique health challenges, including stress, mental health disorders, and lifestyle-related health issues, which can influence their engagement with health services. Understanding these dynamics is essential for improving health outcomes and promoting effective health service utilization. Kumar and Bhatia (2019) found that mental health significantly affects health care utilization, with students experiencing mental health issues being less likely to seek help. Furthermore, the effectiveness of campus health services plays a crucial role in encouraging students to utilize available resources.

The increasing prevalence of health issues among university students, coupled with their unique lifestyle and academic pressures, raises significant concerns regarding the effective utilization of health care services. Despite the availability of health resources on campuses, many students fail to seek necessary medical attention, which can lead to worsening health

outcomes and impact academic performance (Meremikwu, Ibok, Adie, Idoko, Tawo, & Arikpo, 2022). This underutilization is often influenced by various school health variables, including mental health status, health literacy, and the perceived accessibility of health services. According to Kumar and Bhatia, (2019), mental health disorders are particularly prevalent among college students, yet many do not utilize available mental health services. Furthermore, health literacy plays a crucial role in determining whether students seek care; those with lower health literacy are less likely to navigate health systems effectively (Baker et al., 2016). Additionally, the effectiveness and promotion of campus health services significantly affect students' willingness to engage with these resources (Smith & Thompson, 2022). Understanding the relationship between these health variables and health care utilization is essential for developing targeted interventions that encourage students to seek the care they need, thereby improving their overall health and academic success.

The health and well-being of university students are increasingly compromised by a variety of factors, leading to significant challenges in the utilization of health care services. Despite the availability of health resources on campuses, many students do not seek the necessary medical attention, which can exacerbate health issues and negatively impact academic performance. This underutilization is influenced by multiple school health variables, including mental health, health literacy, and the perceived accessibility and effectiveness of health services (Ibok, & Ntibi, 2020). Given these dynamics, it is essential to understand how these school health variables interact and affect health care utilization among university students. The current trend of events around the world, particularly in public health, has determined and emphasized the need for all countries to provide efficient health care services and ensure effective utilization of this services (Akpa, & Ukpata, 2022). Addressing these issues is vital for developing effective interventions that encourage students to utilize health services, ultimately improving their health outcomes and academic success.

The utilization of health care services among university students is significantly influenced by the availability and quality of school health facilities. Various studies have explored the relationship between these facilities and students' health care-seeking behavior, revealing critical insights into how campus health services impact students' overall health outcomes. A study conducted by Smith and Thompson (2022) examined how the accessibility of on-campus health services affects utilization rates among university students and found that students who perceived the health services as easily accessible were more likely to seek medical attention. This accessibility included factors such as location, hours of operation, and the availability of various health services, including mental health support. Baker et al. (2016) investigated the role of health literacy in the utilization of campus health services and found that students with higher health literacy were more likely to utilize available health resources effectively. Kumar and Bhatia (2019) conducted a study and focused on mental health services and their utilization among university students. The study revealed that despite the presence of mental health resources on campuses, stigma and lack of awareness significantly hindered students from seeking help. The authors recommended that universities enhance the visibility and

promotion of mental health services to improve utilization rates. Duncan and Niven (2018) conducted a study to assessed the effectiveness of various campus health programs aimed at increasing health care utilization and identified availability of health equipment essential for improving health service utilization among students. Parker and Choi (2021) conducted a qualitative study exploring barriers to health care utilization among college students and found that perceived stigma, lack of information about available services, lack of health facilities and concerns about confidentiality were significant barriers.

The role of school health personnel in influencing the utilization of health care services among university students has garnered significant attention in recent research. Studies have shown that the presence, training, and engagement of health personnel directly impact students' health-seeking behaviors and overall health outcomes (Akpa & Akah, 2020). A study conducted by Smith, Thompson, and Lewis, (2018) to explore how the presence of trained health personnel on campus affects students' willingness to utilize health services and found that students who interacted regularly with health professionals were more likely to seek medical care when needed. Kumar and Bhatia (2019) examined the influence of mental health personnel on students' utilization of mental health services and found that the availability of trained counselors and psychologists significantly increased the likelihood of students seeking mental health support. The study highlighted the need for universities to prioritize mental health staffing to address the rising incidence of mental health issues among students. In a systematic review, Lee et al. (2020) assessed the impact of health personnel training on service utilization and found that well-trained health staff, who were knowledgeable about student health issues, were more effective in encouraging students to access health services.

A study conducted by Johnson and Adams (2021) investigated how the perceived quality of care provided by health personnel influences students' utilization of health services and found that students who perceived the care they received as high quality were more likely to return for additional services. This perception was closely linked to the interpersonal skills and approachability of health personnel. Parker and Choi (2021) identified barriers related to health personnel that hindered students from utilizing health services. Their qualitative study revealed that students often felt intimidated by health personnel or were concerned about the confidentiality of their health issues. The authors suggested that training in communication and empathy for health personnel could help mitigate these barriers and improve service utilization.

Purpose of the study

The main purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between school health variables and utilization of health care system among undergraduate in university of Calabar. Specifically, the study seek to established

i. The relationship between school health facilities and utilization of healthcare system among students of University of Calabar.

ii. The relationship between school health personnel and utilization of healthcare system among students of University of Calabar.

Statement of hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated for the study:

1. There is no significant relationship between school health facilities and utilization of healthcare system among students of University of Calabar.
2. There is no significant relationship between school health personnel and utilization of healthcare system among students of University of Calabar.

Research Methods

The study area was University of Calabar, Calabar Cross River State, Nigeria. The research design used for this study was the descriptive survey design. The descriptive research design is concerned with describing the characteristics of a particular individual, group or organization. The sampling techniques adopted for this study accidental sampling technique. Accidental random sampling, also known as convenience sampling, is a non-probability sampling technique where individuals are selected based on their availability and willingness to participate rather than through a random selection process. This method was used since most of the students were not available at the time of conducted a research and even some that were available were not willing to participated in the exercises. The researcher only used those that are available and were willing to participated in the research study. The instrument used for data collection was the questionnaire titled " School Health Variables and Utilization of health care Services(SHVUACS) ". The instrument was developed by the researcher with the help of the two expert in business Education Department and to experts in human kinetic department. The questionnaire contained two sections A and B. Section A was designed to elicit information from respondents' demographic variables such as gender while section B is an 28 items four points scale designed to measure the sub-variables of the study. Each item required the respondent to indicate the frequency of his or her various opinions under strongly agree, agree, disagree and strongly disagree. The face and content validity were established by using two experts in Test, Measurement and Evaluation; in the faculty of Education, and two expert in business education department both from University of Calabar. The expert certified that the instrument (questionnaire), was face and content validity and could be used for the study. To established the reliability of the instrument (questionnaire) through Cronbach alpha reliability, a trial testing was done using 50 students from the department that was not part of the study in University of Calabar examine the internal consistency which give the reliability indices ranges .88 to .93 indicated that the research instrument was reliable. The hypotheses formulated to guide the study were appropriately tested using a Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient at .05 level of significance for the two hypotheses.

Presentation of results

The result of the analysis is presented in tables 1 and 2. The hypotheses were tested at .05 significant level.

Ho_1: There is no significant relationship between school health facilities and utilization of healthcare system among students of University of Calabar. The independent variable in this hypothesis is school health facilities while the dependent variable is utilization of health care system . In testing this hypothesis, mean, standard deviation of between school health facilities and utilization of healthcare system were computed, compared and correlate using Pearson Product Moment Correction . The results are presented on Table 1.

Table 1: Person Product Moment Correlation of the relationship between school health facilities and utilization of healthcare system (N= 200)

Variables	N	Mean	SD	r-value	p-value
School health facilities	200	19.874	2.564	.812	.000
Utilization of health care system	200	29.987	3.988		

*Significant at the .05 level, df =198

The result presented on Table 1 shows the high positive significant relationship between school health facilities and utilization of healthcare system (r=.812; p=.000). With this result, the null hypothesis was rejected while the alternative was retained at the 0.05 level of significance. The positive r-value indicated that the more adequate and available of school health facilities , the more effective uutilization of health care system tend to be. On the other hand, when there is no adequate school health facilities , the decrease in uutilization of health care system tend to be.

Ho_2: There is no significant relationship between school health personnel and utilization of healthcare system among students of University of Calabar. The independent variable in this hypothesis is school health personnel while the dependent variable is utilization of health care system . In testing this hypothesis, mean, standard deviation of between school health personnel and utilization of healthcare system were computed, compared and correlate using Pearson Product Moment Correction . The results are presented on Table 2.

Table 2: Person Product Moment Correlation of the relationship between school health personnel and utilization of healthcare system (N= 200)

Variables	N	Mean	SD	r-value	p-value
School health personnel	200	18.876	2.675	.865	.000
Utilization of health care system	200	29.987	3.988		

*Significant at the .05 level, df =198

The result presented on Table 2 shows the high positive significant relationship between school health personnel and utilization of healthcare system (r=.865; p=.000). With this result, the null hypothesis was rejected while the alternative was retained at the 0.05 level of significance. The positive r-value indicated that the more qualified school health personnel they have in schools , the more effective uutilization of health care system tend to be. On the other hand, when there is no adequate qualified school health personnel, the decrease in uutilization of health care system tend to be.

Discussion of findings

The result of hypothesis one revealed that there is a significant relationship between school health facilities and utilization of healthcare system among students of University of Calabar The utilization of health care services among university students is significantly influenced by the availability and quality of school health facilities. The finding agreed with a study conducted by Smith and Thompson (2022) who examined how the accessibility of on-campus health services affects utilization rates among university students and found that students who perceived the health services as easily accessible were more likely to seek medical attention. The finding is in line with the finding of Baker et al. (2016) who investigated the role of health literacy in the utilization of campus health services and found that students with higher health literacy were more likely to utilize available health resources effectively. The finding is in agreement with the finding of Kumar and Bhatia (2019), Duncan and Niven (2018). The finding agreed with the finding of Parker and Choi (2021) who conducted a qualitative study exploring barriers to hesalth care utilization among college students and found that perceived stigma, lack of information about available services, lack of health facilities and concerns about confidentiality were significant barriers.

The result of hypothesis two revealed that there is a significant relationship between school health personnel and utilization of healthcare system among students of University of Calabar The role of school health personnel in influencing the utilization of health care services among university students has garnered significant attention in recent research.

The finding is In line with a study conducted by Smith et al. (2018) to explored how the presence of trained health personnel on campus affects students' willingness to utilize health services and found that students who interacted regularly with health professionals were more likely to seek medical care when needed. The finding agreed with the finding of Kumar and Bhatia (2019) who found that the availability of trained counselors and psychologists significantly increased the likelihood of students seeking mental health support. In a systematic review, Lee et al. (2020) assessed the impact of health personnel training on service utilization and found that well-trained health staff, who were knowledgeable about student health issues, were more effective in encouraging students to access health services. The finding agreed with a study conducted by Johnson and Adams (2021) to investigated how the perceived quality of care provided by health personnel influences students' utilization of health services and found that students who perceived the care they received as high quality were more likely to return for additional services.

Conclusion

The effective utilization of health care systems among university students is significantly influenced by the quality of school health facilities, the competence of health personnel, and the overall quality of health services provided. When health services are accessible, of high quality, and staffed by trained professionals, students are more likely to engage with these resources. Based on the finding of the study, it was revealed that school health facility, school health personnel significantly relate with utilization of health care system among university students

Recommendations

Based on the finding and conclusion of the study, the following were recommended

1. Universities should invest in continuous quality improvement initiatives for health services. This includes regular assessments of service quality, incorporating student feedback, and implementing best practices in health care delivery to ensure high standards of care.
2. Ongoing training programs for health personnel should be prioritized to ensure they are equipped with the latest knowledge and skills. Emphasizing communication and interpersonal skills can help build trust with students and encourage them to seek care.
3. Government and school administrators should there is adequate and functional health for utilization of hare care services in the university.

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