

Factors Affecting Students' Learning: A Case of Malamulo College of Health Sciences, Malawi

Fyson Kasenga^{1,*}, Anna-Karin Hurtig², Miguel Sebastian²

¹Adventist Health Services (AHS), Blantyre, Malawi.

²Umeå International School of Public Health, Epidemiology and Public Health Sciences, Department of Public Health and Clinical Medicine, Umeå University, Sweden.

How to cite this paper: Fyson Kasenga, Anna-Karin Hurtig, Miguel Sebastian. (2021) Factors Affecting Students' Learning: A Case of Malamulo College of Health Sciences, Malawi. *International Journal of Clinical and Experimental Medicine Research*, 5(2), 149-160. DOI: 10.26855/ijcemr.2021.04.009

Received: January 31, 2021

Accepted: February 28, 2021

Published: March 30, 2021

***Corresponding author:** Fyson Kasenga, Adventist Health Services (AHS), Blantyre, Malawi.

Email: fkasenga@sdpn.org.mw

Abstract

College students worldwide experience multiple challenges during their studies. Majority of them come from diverse backgrounds ranging from social, economic, religious, cultural and spiritual among others. It is therefore, imperative for the tertiary institutions to carefully benchmark what works and what does not so as to offer quality education to the students and create a more solid foundation for their future undertakings. A study on factors affecting students' learning was done at Malawi Adventist University, Malamulo College Health Sciences, Makwasa, Malawi. Data collection exercise was done from April 2017 to March 2018. A total of 219 students undertaking various programmes at the college were studied. The programmes were Clinical Medicine, Public Health, Nursing and Laboratory Medicine. Qualitative methods were utilized to analyze the study findings. Inadequate study resources namely; classrooms, library facilities, teaching and learning aids, books, computers and internet facilities were cited as some of the factors affecting students' learning. Sense of belonging, career guidance, being listened to, counselling and spiritual guidance made the students feel secured. The boarding masters/mistresses, chaplain and deans were rated high for being there for the students. The students' feelings of being well looked after facilitated demand creation and attracted them to join the college. Bullying and teasing were never experienced, the study has established. Based on the study findings, it is recommended that the college should leverage the resource base by initiating robust diverse resource mobilization to match the number of students and the available resources to facilitate effective teaching and learning processes. Active development and planning office should be established at Malamulo to directly address issues pertaining to scarcity of resources. Financial constraint was a limiting factor during the carrying out of the study. However, the study has the strength of establishing factors that affect students' learning at the college, a recipe for determining ways to improve the college operations.

Keywords

Malawi Adventist University, Students, Programmes, Factors, Resources

1. Background

Students in colleges have multiple experiences that are varied in nature worldwide. The situation is never different in sub-Saharan Africa and Malawi is not an exception. It is similar to transitional process whereby one is in be-

tween school environment and the world. At college levels, students learn self-dependency, problem solving and coping mechanisms among others. If not well-managed at this stage, they often suffer from what is described as burn out as established before [1]. In that study, it was found that students had difficulties in achieving emotional stability and openness when they faced challenges. It is such a stressful situation considering their interpersonal relationships coupled with both biological and physiological changes more particularly female students.

At times, there are students from families of low socio-economic status and those from high socio-economic ones. To balance these two extremes becomes a challenge. On the contrary, students from well-established background financially also experience challenges due to some reasons. In this case, challenges may have different origins and may be subjective or objective depending on the perception. Further, challenges may be beneficial or detrimental to one's health. This is where acceptable coping mechanisms come in.

The family upbringing of these students influences them either positively or negatively and this is increased by different programmes they undertake in colleges. All human aspects manifest spheres of life such as social, physical, mental and spiritual dimensions including economic woes among others. In most cases, these human aspects are interdependent and this makes them inseparable. More importantly, human needs must be fulfilled to achieve optimum results as described by Maslow Hierarchy of Needs [2]. Just as an automobile engine cannot move without gasoline, human beings cannot maximize their potential if their needs are not met and this includes students. At times, it is important to get feedback from the students before, during and after college life to help them better. In a study done by Mabuuke et al. [3], students suggested that facilitators need to give comprehensive feedback on their knowledge construction process as well as feedback on other generic skills outside the knowledge domain such as their communication skills within the tutorial, their participation and team work as well as their interpersonal skills and self-evaluation abilities.

Students' experiences are drawn from different situations, even when they are sick, excited, be it physically, emotionally or socially they can be affected. It is at this time when desired or undesired behavior can be manifested, although both desired forms of behavior can be subjective. However, in this paper, desired behavior is the way of life that is culturally acceptable and vice versa. Students' poor health due to internal or external factors may be life threatening and consequently may prevent them from realizing their goals. It is at this stage where students seek medical attention externally or internally. Deviant behavior such as self-medication which may put them at risk of being drug addicts or death can find its way into them. In the study done in Nepal by Gyawali et al. [4] showed that self-medication was common among medical students. Further, painkillers (73.2%), antipyretics (68%) and antimicrobials (56.2%) were most commonly used for self-medication. This may seem as the tip of the ice berg indicating what is happening in the colleges with long term effects among students even after completion of their studies.

Peer pressure, has been agued as a master mind of the youths' delinquent or illicit behavior. However, youth empowerment at a tender age, acculturation and acquisition of acceptable societal morals seem to influence good behavior in the presence of peer pressure. The association of male and female students with varied moral values particularly in African communities where culture prescribes how men and women should relate to each other may have an integral influence on some students. Both horizontal-student to student relationship and vertical-student teacher relationship may contribute to the overall performance of these students particularly female students in some settings. The significant others in the society form the basis for the acquisition of values and beliefs and in general acculturation and keeps on being passed from one generation to the other.

In addition, it is important to determine the driving forces for students to come into college, is it their personal determination, are they influenced by parents or guardians, is it for the sake of getting education for employment or prestige? The answers to these questions may form the basis for the successful completion of the programmes undertaken by the college students and this transcends to enjoyment of their college life and beyond. This will help them be willing to work in both rural and urban areas and this interest can be factored in during the training as shown by a study done before [5]. In that study, it was found that when college students are well prepared during their professional training to be geared to work in both rural and urban areas, they fit in easily after their studies.

Learning is defined as a relatively permanent change of behavior. It is often reflected into habitual character or the way one does things. It is a two way process and is a continuous journey perhaps until somebody dies. In essence, it means that students, colleges and environment have a part to play among other factors. In order for effective learning to take place, it requires several factors to come into play. The factors include environment, individual determination, physical status and availability of the learning resources such as books and stationery among others. Teacher student relationship is crucial in student learning process. The harmony of these factors creates the enabling environment for effective learning to take place. It is against this background that has necessitated the carrying out of this study. This study aims at exploring factors affecting students' learning at Malawi Adventist University,

Malamulo College of Health Sciences Campus.

2. Methods

2.1 Study area

Malamulo College of Health Sciences (MCHS) is one of the Seventh Day Adventist (SDA) medical institutions in Malawi. It was established in 1936 under Malamulo Adventist Hospital and falls under Christian Health Association of Malawi (CHAM) supported colleges. In total, there are 12 CHAM supported colleges in Malawi of which Malamulo College of Health Sciences is the largest. The college trains allied health workers in various fields and the following programmes are offered with the cadres that follow; Certificate in Clinical Medicine (CCM)—Medical Assistants, Diploma in Clinical Medicine (DCM)—Clinical Officers, Diploma in Laboratory Medicine (DLM)—Laboratory Technicians, Diploma in Nursing and Midwifery Technicians (NMT)—Nurse and Midwifery Technicians. Upgraded diploma in Clinical Medicine for those who initially did Certificate in Clinical Medicine now would wish to become Clinical Officers.

In 2007, Malamulo College of Health Sciences became part of Malawi Adventist University (MAU). MAU has two campuses namely; Lakeview and Malamulo in Ntcheu and Thyolo districts respectively. In 2012, two programmes were introduced at Malamulo College of Health Sciences; Bachelor of Science in Public Health (BSc PH) and Bachelor of Science in Medical Laboratory Science (BSc MLS). Other programmes that will be introduced whose curricula are in the making include Bachelor of Science in Nursing and Midwifery (BSc NM) and Bachelor of Science in Clinical Medicine (BSc CM). The degree programmes are affiliates to the Adventist University of Eastern Africa, Baraton, Kenya.

Administratively, Malawi Union Conference of the SDA Church President is the Chancellor and Chairman of the University Council. Below him is the Vice-Chancellor based at the University head office at Lakeview in Ntcheu. Malamulo College of Health Sciences is headed by the Deputy Vice Chancellor who reports to the Vice Chancellor.

The college aims at providing quality training, evangelism and employee job satisfaction. It exists to provide high quality and wholistic training for health service providers in order to improve health service delivery by emulating Christ's example. The vision of the college is to be among the best high quality training of health service providers in the region.

The college has created demand for training in the country and beyond. Students' enrolment has increased from 100 to over 900 to date and the ratio of male to female students is 3:2. Malamulo College of Health Sciences has 139 employees, of these, 43 are academic staff and the rest are support staff.

2.2 Sampling of informants

Students in their third year of training in Clinical Medicine, Nursing and Medical Laboratory Sciences were the study participants. These students undergo a three year diploma training programme of the field named above. Further, there is a two year certificate programme in Clinical Medicine. Random sampling technique was used to select the study participants.

2.3 Data collection

Interview schedule was designed and used for data collection from April 2017 to March 2018. Male and female students were study participants. Questions from the standardized questionnaires were used from the research data base. Additional questions were formulated using the said standardized questionnaires. A total of 219 students were studied.

2.4 Data analysis

Data were analyzed based on the number of students in the programmes covered. Qualitative methods were used in the analysis process. The hand written notes were managed manually. After thorough reading of all the notes, the content was systematically analyzed for identification of key factors. Responses from the students were grouped according to the objectives of the study. Data were compared to enrich the areas studied and be able to explore factors affecting students' learning at the college.

2.5 Methodological consideration

The first author's prolonged engagement in Malamulo College of Health Sciences, experiences of working with students and data collection activities were crucial for the trustworthiness of the study. To encourage openness

among the participants we explained the issue of confidentiality and also asked the participants to agree not to share information from the discussion outside the group. Since the first author is a Deputy Vice Chancellor as well as a representative of the College Management Team (CMT) we made extra efforts to describe his role in the research process.

In the research team, we held regular peer debriefing and analysis sessions contributing with different competences, beneficial for interpreting the results.

2.6 Ethical clearance

Consent was obtained from Malamulo College of Health Sciences Management Team/Administration Committee. Additional permission was sought from the National Health Sciences Research Council (NHSRC) of Malawi. Further, consent was also obtained from the study participants. The respondents were given their oral informed consent. All the study participants were assured that information given would be treated with strict confidentiality.

3. Results

3.1 Demographic data

3.1.1 Gender

No	Sex	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	Male	60	27.39
2.	Female	159	72.60
Total		219	100

A total of 219 participants were included in the study, of these, 60 (27.39%) were males and 159 (72.60%) females.

3.1.2 How old are you?

No	Age	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	15-19	106	48.85
2.	20-24	79	36.41
3.	25-29	18	8.29
4.	30-34	8	3.69
5.	35-39	4	1.84
6.	40-44	1	0.46
7.	45-49	1	0.46
Total		217	100

A total of 106 (48.85%) study participants belonged to age group of 15-19 whereas 79 (36.41%) belonged to 20-24 age group, 18 (8.29%) belonged to 30-34 age group. Minority of the students belonged to the following age group 4 (1.84%) belonged to 35-39, whereas 1 (0.46%) belonged to age group 40-44, 1 (0.46%) belonged to age group 45-49.

3.1.3 What do you like most during your studies at Malamulo?

No	What was liked most	Frequency	Percentage (%)
0.	Nothing	1	0.48
1.	Food	4	1.90
2.	Accommodation	9	4.29
3.	Teaching/learning	59	28.10
4.	Spiritual nourishment	132	62.86
5.	Others	5	2.38
Total		210	100

Spiritual nourishment 132 (62.86%) was liked by many students, followed by teaching/learning 59 (28.10%)

whereas accommodation 9 (4.29%) food 4 (1.90%) were least liked by the students.

3.1.4 How did you know Malamulo?

No	What was hated most	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	Through a friend	128	59.26
2.	Through my relations	47	21.76
3.	Through media	32	14.81
4.	Others (Specify)	8	3.70
5.	No reason	1	0.46
Total		216	100

Majority of students 128 (59.26%) knew Malamulo College of Health sciences through friends, 47 (21.76%) relations and 32 (14.81%) through media.

3.1.5 Who were you comfortable to meet and share your problems with during your studies at Malamulo?

No	What was hated most	Frequency	Percentage (%)
1.	Chaplain	163	76.53
2.	Boarding Master	33	15.49
3.	Boarding Mistress	11	5.16
4.	Dean of Students	5	2.35
5.	Others (Specify)	1	0.47
Total		205	100

Majority of students 163 (76.53%) were comfortable to meet the Chaplain whenever they had problems for Counselling. Other students went to the Boarding Master 33 (15.49%) and were followed by Boarding Mistress 11 (5.16%)

3.1.6 Educational Guidance/Student Counselling

No.	I have opportunity to get guidance for my learning difficulties	Frequency	Percentage (%)
0	No experience of the topic	9	4.35%
1	I do not agree	23	11.11%
2	I slightly agree	121	58.45%
3	I generally agree	25	12.08%
4	I completely agree	29	14.01%
Total		207	100.00%

Majority of students with learning difficulties slightly 121 (58.45%) received guidance, 29 (14.01%) received complete guidance and the rest did not.

3.1.7 Studying Arrangements

No.	There are enough necessary tools and equipment for studies	Frequency	Percentage (%)
0	No experience of the topic	8	3.83%
1	I do not agree	58	27.75%
2	I slightly agree	37	17.70%
3	I generally agree	11	5.26%
4	I completely agree	95	45.45%
Total		209	100.00%

At least 95 (45.45%) of students reported that the College had necessary tools and equipment for studies and the

rest did not.

3.1.8 Studying Arrangements

No.	Satisfaction to use IT equipment (email and software)	Frequency	Percentage (%)
0	No experience of the topic	16	7.92
1	I do not agree	57	28.22
2	I slightly agree	115	56.93
3	I generally agree	7	3.47
4	I completely agree	7	3.47
Total		202	100.00

At least 57 (28.22%) were satisfied to use IT equipment (emails and softwares).

3.1.9 Studying Arrangements

No.	Classroom arrangements are well organized	Frequency	Percentage (%)
0	No experience of the topic	10	4.85
1	I do not agree	128	62.14
2	I slightly agree	22	10.68
3	I generally agree	16	7.77
4	I completely agree	30	14.56
Total		206	100.00

A total of 128 (62.14%) felt that classroom arrangements were not well organized

3.1.10 Studying (Organization)

No.	I have achieved the objectives that I set for my learning	Frequency	Percentage (%)
0	No experience of the topic	6	2.87
1	I do not agree	21	10.05
2	I slightly agree	27	12.92
3	I generally agree	23	11.00
4	I completely agree	132	63.16
Total		209	100.00

A total of 132 (63.16%) students felt that their objectives were met.

3.1.11 Studying (Organization)

No.	I have received sufficient feedback on my studies	Frequency	Percentage (%)
0	No experience of the topic	8	3.92
1	I do not agree	23	11.27
2	I slightly agree	18	8.82
3	I generally agree	30	14.71
4	I completely agree	125	61.27
Total		204	100.00

At least 125 (61.27%) stated that they were able to receive sufficient feedback on their training.

3.1.12 Student Assessment and Self-Assessment

No.	I am aware of how to proceed if I cannot complete a term/course	Frequency	Percentage (%)
0	No experience of the topic	6	3.19
1	I do not agree	20	10.64
2	I slightly agree	103	54.79
3	I generally agree	24	12.77
4	I completely agree	35	18.62
Total		188	100.00

More than half of students knew how to proceed if they never completed the term or course.

3.1.13 Student Assessment and Self-Assessment

No.	My own assessment of my own achievement matches that of my teacher	Frequency	Percentage (%)
0	No experience of the topic	9	4.52
1	I do not agree	29	14.57
2	I slightly agree	17	8.54
3	I generally agree	107	53.77
4	I completely agree	37	18.59
Total		199	100.00

More than half 107 (53.77%) stated that their achievement matched with that of the teacher

3.1.14 Attitude towards Students

No.	I am treated respectfully by the teachers	Frequency	Percentage (%)
0	No experience of the topic	8	3.90
1	I do not agree	17	8.29
2	I slightly agree	28	13.66
3	I generally agree	29	14.15
4	I completely agree	123	60.00
Total		205	100.00

A total of 123 (60%) stated that the teachers treated them with respect.

3.1.15 Attitude towards Students

No.	Service at the student affairs office is friendly and fast	Frequency	Percentage (%)
0	No experience of the topic	10	4.93
1	I do not agree	46	22.66
2	I slightly agree	20	9.85
3	I generally agree	33	16.26
4	I completely agree	94	46.31
Total		203	100.00

94 (46.31%) of students felt that the services at the students affairs were friendly and fast whereas 46 (22.66%)

stated that they were not.

3.1.16 Premises

No.	My belongings are safe and secure at the institution	Frequency	Percentage (%)
0	No experience of the topic	11	5.39
1	I do not agree	43	21.08
2	I slightly agree	21	10.29
3	I generally agree	110	53.92
4	I completely agree	19	9.31
Total		204	100.00

A total of 110 (53.92%) of students felt that their belongings in the hostel were safe whereas 43 (21.08%) of them stated that their belongings were not safe.

3.1.17 Premises

No.	It is easy for physically disabled people to enter the area and buildings	Frequency	Percentage (%)
0	No experience of the topic	27	13.30
1	I do not agree	33	16.26
2	I slightly agree	96	47.29
3	I generally agree	24	11.83
4	I completely agree	23	11.33
Total		203	100.00

Not easy 96 (47.29%) for disabled persons to enter the area and buildings

3.1.18 Educational Guidance/Student Counselling

No.	I have not noticed anyone being bullied during the school year	Frequency	Percentage (%)
0	No experience of the topic	28	13.59%
1	I do not agree	31	15.05%
2	I slightly agree	8	3.88%
3	I generally agree	14	6.80%
4	I completely disagree	125	60.68%
Total		206	100.00%

Of the students interviewed, 126 (60.68%) noticed that students were bullied.

3.1.19 Cleaning Services

No.	The institution's premises are tidy	Frequency	Percentage (%)
0	No experience of the topic	10	5.03
1	I do not agree	115	57.79
2	I slightly agree	30	15.08
3	I generally agree	26	13.07
4	I completely agree	18	9.05
Total		199	100.00

A total of 115 (57.79%) respondents stated that the institution's premises are not tidy and 18 (9.05%) felt that the premises are tidy

3.1.20 Catering/Canteen Services

No.	The food is good	Frequency	Percentage (%)
0	No experience of the topic	11	5.50
1	I do not agree	41	20.50
2	I slightly agree	28	14.00
3	I generally agree	15	7.50
4	I completely agree	105	52.50
Total		200	100.00

Majority 105 (52.5%) of the participants indicated that food at the cafeteria was good.

3.1.21 Library

No.	The supply of books is sufficient	Frequency	Percentage (%)
0	No experience of the topic	6	3.00
1	I do not agree	141	70.50
2	I slightly agree	23	11.50
3	I generally agree	20	10.00
4	I completely agree	10	5.00
Total		200	100.00

A total of 141 (70.5%) expressed concerns that books in the library were not sufficient.

3.1.22 Library

No.	I can get help in using the library services when I need it	Frequency	Percentage (%)
0	No experience of the topic	3	1.63
1	I do not agree	24	13.04
2	I slightly agree	104	56.52
3	I generally agree	25	13.59
4	I completely agree	28	15.22
Total		184	100.00

A total of 104 (56.52%) students expressed dissatisfaction in that they did not get help on how to use the library when they needed it.

4. Discussion

The study regarding factors affecting students' learning at Malawi Adventist University, Malamulo College of Health Sciences has come up with the highlighted implications that have been discussed in this paper as follows.

The study showed that 85% of the study participants aged from 15-24, 92% were single and 57% of them were not employed before joining the college. This may suggest that the study participants were relatively young school leavers, therefore vulnerable to multiple social challenges, may have been looking for various study or work opportunities and are more likely to work so hard in their studies as established before by Vancea and Utzet [6]. In that study, it was found that there is evidence that young people are especially vulnerable to health problems when unemployed or working in precarious conditions. Active labor market and training programs, social security measures,

improved working conditions and targeted health programs are important for addressing this vulnerability.

The fact that these study participants were single, entails that by the time they would be finishing their studies, they may have established long lasting relationships and therefore may require counselling throughout the period of their studies to be useful citizens. Therefore, this calls for the interventions to prevent these young people from getting involved in unpleasant behaviour so as to preserve culture and acceptable morals. These findings are congruent with what was found by another study that interventions can have a positive influence on students' behavior, specifically by reducing social problems such as tobacco use among college students. Further, rigorous evaluations of a wider range of programmes are needed, along with studies that address cultural and ethnic diversity on campuses [7]. In Malawi, youth unemployment is rampant and this is supported by Mphatso et al. [8]. This may imply that investing in skills development in the youth is more likely to be beneficial in long term.

The study revealed that 73% of female students were registered for various programmes at Malamulo College of Health Sciences than male students. This has several implications; it could be that guardians or stakeholders are putting in much effort in educating girl child as the practice has multiple benefits or this may be in line with what is in general population that Malawi population has more females than males and that has trickled down to education sector or it simply reflects the fact that girls are working so hard in their study career as a response to Malawi Campaigns to combat child marriages at all levels in various communities in Malawi. A study done in Malawi, showed that for girls, being out of school was strongly associated with earlier sexual debut, pregnancy and marriage and therefore interventions have been put in place to improve the education levels of the girl child [9].

The study has established that 77% of students chose to join Malamulo College of Health Sciences because of good reputation and stated that they would continue wooing support for the college to encourage others to come to this college for their studies in future. This is encouraging and may suggest that students who graduate from Malamulo College of Health Sciences continue to do well wherever they go to work and they may be able to speak well about the College. Additionally, the findings may imply that when a college manages the students well, the likelihood of attracting many students joining that particular college increases. Students' choices are influenced by many factors including role models and positive stereotypes as established by a study done before [10]. In that study, it was found that primary care students cited primary care orientation, diversity of patients and activities, role models and mentors, interaction with patients, and overall medical school culture as having influenced their choice. The non-primary care students cited lifestyle, controllable hours, opportunities to do procedures, therapeutic urgency and effect, active tempo, exciting settings, and intellectual challenge. Further, role models influenced primary care career choice much more than non-primary care career choice, and often served to refute negative stereotypes.

It has come out from this study that no bullying (61%) was being practiced at Malamulo College of Health Sciences at least from the study population. As a Christian College bullying is being discouraged since the college seeks to encourage equal opportunities for all, tolerance and coexistence among students and staff of all walks of life ensuring that there is no discrimination regardless of varied backgrounds. Bullying in places of higher learning is detrimental and unacceptable as it affects students' learning abilities. The finding may imply that this good news may have spread to many people within and outside Malawi and may be one of the reasons and a recipe why many students like to join Malamulo College of Health Sciences. Literature has it that bullying is the most common form of school violence and is associated with a range of negative outcomes, including traumatic responses [10].

The Chaplain and the deans of men and women respectively were rated high (77%) in terms of attending to the spiritual and social needs of the students, the study has established. The reasons given were the fact that they are able to keep the secret, approachable, ability to listen and coupled with spiritual atmosphere created by the nature of their work. Respect and listening to people and let alone to students are vital in any place where people live and are very necessary in places of high learning and Malamulo College of Health Sciences is not an exception. This may suggest that having good listening skills and respecting people are vital and may influence trust between students and faculty including chaplains and deans. As health workers, spiritual intervention is important in influencing patients' health as established by a study done before [11]. While spiritual nourishment appears positive in this study, in another study, it was found that participants reported wide-ranging spiritual concerns spanning existential, psychological, religious and social domains. Further, spirituality supported coping, but could also result in framing illness as punishment [12].

Education guidance with adequate information given to the students was available at Malamulo College of Health Sciences as shown by this study. However, teaching aids and classrooms were viewed as inadequate. This has several implications in that students may feel supported despite lack of adequate education resources and may strive to work hard in their studies, their studies may be affected, this may necessitate the College leadership to look for additional resources to address these problems. However, in this study, students were able to achieve their

learning objectives amidst scarce resources as supported by others before [13]. In that study, students did not manage to have successful training in their studies due to lack of resources. As such there is need for the diversification of resource base.

The study has established that information, communication and technology resources were inadequate at Malamulo College of Health Sciences. This is orchestrated by inadequate books and journals in the library including slow internet connectivity. This may suggest that students at Malamulo College of Health sciences are experiencing learning difficulties and need additional financial resources to upgrade internet, buy additional books and information and technology (IT) equipment. A study done in Nigeria, radiology residents were concerned about lack of modern imaging tools, facilities at their centres, as well as opportunities for exposure overseas, and the likely impact of these on their training and the future of the specialty [14].

It was encouraging to note from the study that students were able to get sufficient feedback (61%) from their teachers and vice versa making their teaching learning effective and beneficial. These findings suggest that a more structured small-group learning-teaching format can be implemented for younger students while at the same time allowing more flexible organization for senior students. The finding has been supported by Tricio et al. [15]. Peer feedback has been widely reported in the medical education literature as a teaching intervention in collaborative learning settings, with learning gains reported for students who receive and provide peer feedback. Further, in this setting, peer feedback has been demonstrated to provide valuable formative feedback on professional behaviors and skills. This implies that much as they get feedback from teachers, they also get feedback from their peers. Therefore, study groups among students are vital in facilitating students' learning in colleges.

Treatment by faculty and staff including the College Principal was expressed as acceptable as shown by the study. This implies that the culture at Malamulo is good, need to be maintained and may facilitate additional prospective students to join Malamulo. This is contrary to what was found by a study done before [16]. In this study, it was found that there were times when student nurses felt that they had been treated unfairly by various members of the healthcare team during their clinical placements. Unfairness was related to being ignored and unsupported or being used as additional hands and having their supernumerary status ignored. Student nurses want to have feelings of belonging in the clinical area and value enthusiasm for teaching from mentors. Nursing students are identified as a group who are at particular risk of bullying. Numerous studies have examined students' experiences of bullying in clinical contexts by qualified nurses; however, there has been far less attention to the bullying that occurs in academic settings where the perpetrators are university staff and other students.

It was worrisome that 54% of students expressed the feelings of unsafe especially with their belongings as established by the study. This may imply that students' hostels need adequate security, students themselves need to be very responsible in keeping or looking after their own property safely, and they need not to keep their valuables in the hostel such as large sums of money or expensive equipment so to say.

Much as the quality of food prepared by the cafeteria was good, the study has shown that the quantity of meals given to students is not enough. This may suggest that inadequate preparation of food is made by the cooks, or the portions given to the individual students is relatively not proportional as other students might be getting more than others.

4.1 Limitations

The limitations of the study included inadequate financial resources, timing and the fact that some students were getting ready to leave for their field attachments. However, the study has strength in that it was able to assess the factors that affect students' learning at Malamulo College of Health Sciences during their stay. It was important to note that the outcome of what is going well and what is not has come out clearly.

4.2 Conclusions

A study on factors that affect students' learning at Malawi Adventist University, Malamulo College of Health Sciences has revealed important findings. The college has created demand for training. This has made young men and women to undergo programmes at the college. The Christian aspect at the college has positively impacted increased students enrolment at the college. This is simply because the programmes are beneficial to the communities within Malawi and beyond. Inadequate infrastructure, teaching and learning materials and human resources pose a challenge as it becomes certainly difficult to meet the demand that has already been created by the college.

It is against this background that the college needs to leverage the resources to meet the growing needs of the college in terms of infrastructures, human resources, teaching and learning resources among others. Perhaps diversification of sources of income base through innovative means such as coming up with income generative activities

(IGAs) might seem to be beneficial to the college in long term.

References

- [1] Lin, C. C., Lin, B. Y., Lin, C. D. (2016). Influences of clerks' personality on their burnout in the clinical workplace: a longitudinal observation. *BMC Med Educ.*, January 28;16(1): 30. doi:10.1186/s12909-016-0553-0.
- [2] MacLeod, S., Musich, S., Hawkins, K., Alsgaard, K., Wicker, R. E. (2016). The impact of resilience among older adults. *Geriatr Nurs.*, Jul-Aug 2016; 37(4): 266-72. doi: 10.1016/j.gerinurse.2016.02.014. Epub 2016 Apr 4.
- [3] Mabuuke, A. G., Louw, A. J., Van Schalkwyk, S. (2016). Utilizing students' experiences and opinions of feedback during problem based learning tutorials to develop a facilitator feedback guide: an exploratory qualitative study. *BMC Med Educ.*, January 11: 16(1): 6. doi:10.1186/s12909-015-0507-y.
- [4] Gyawali, S., Shankar, P. R., Poudel, P. P., Saha, A. (2015). Knowledge, Attitude and Practice of Self-Medication Among Basic Science Undergraduate Medical Students in a Medical School in Western Nepal. *J. Clin Diagn Res.*, December: 9(12):FC17-22. doi: 10.7860/JCDR/2015/16553.6988. Epub 2015 Dec 1.
- [5] Kapanda, G. E., Muiruri, C., Kulanga, A. T., Tarimo, C. N., Lisasi, E., Mimano, L., Mteta, K., Bartlett, J. A. (2016). Enhancing future acceptance of rural placement in Tanzania through peripheral hospital rotations for medical students. *BMC Med Educ.*, Feb 9:16(1):51. doi: 10.1186/s12909-016-0582-8.
- [6] Vancea, M., Utzet, M. (2017). How unemployment and precarious employment affect the health of young people: A scoping study on social determinants. *Scand J Public Health*, 45(1): 73-84. doi: 10.1177/1403494816679555.
- [7] Murphy-Hoefer, R., Griffith, R., Pederson, L. L., Crossett, L., Iyer, S. R., Hiller, M. D. (2005). A review of interventions to reduce tobacco use in colleges and universities. *Am J Prev Med.*, 2005 Feb; 28(2): 188-200.
- [8] Mphatso Kamndaya, Lawrence, N. Kazembe, Jo Vearey, Caroline W. Kabiru, Liz Thomas. (2015). Material deprivation and unemployment affect coercive sex among young people in the urban slums of Blantyre, Malawi: A multi-level approach. *Health Place*, 33: 90-100. doi: 10.1016/j.healthplace.2015.03.001.
- [9] Glynn, J. R., Sunny, B. S., DeStavola, B., Dube, A., Chihana, M., Price, A. J., Crampin, A. C. (2018). Early school failure predicts teenage pregnancy and marriage: A large population-based cohort study in northern Malawi. *PLoS One*, 14; 13(5): e0196041. doi: 10.1371/journal.pone.0196041.
- [10] Burack, J. H., Irby, D. M., Carline, J. D., Ambrozy, D. M., Ellsbury, K. E., Stritter, F. T. (1997). A study of medical students' specialty-choice pathways: trying on possible selves. *Acad Med.*, 72(6): 534-41.
- [11] Yang, C., Sharkey, J. D., Reed, L. A., Chen, C., Dowdy, E. (2018). Bullying victimization and student engagement in elementary, middle, and high schools: Moderating role of school climate. *Sch Psychol Q.*, 33(1): 54-64. doi: 10.1037/spq0000250.
- [12] Candy, B., Jones, L., Varagunam, M., Speck, P., Tookman, A., King, M. (2012). Spiritual and religious interventions for well-being of adults in the terminal phase of disease. *Cochrane Database Syst Rev.*, (5): CD007544. doi: 10.1002/14651858.CD007544.pub2.
- [13] Selman, L. E., Brighton, L. J., Sinclair, S., Karvinen, I., Egan, R., Speck, P., Powell, R. A., Deskur-Smielecka, E., Glajchen, M., Adler, S., Puchalski, C., Hunter, J., Gikaara, N., Hope, J. (2018). Patients' and caregivers' needs, experiences, preferences and research priorities in spiritual care: A focus group study across nine countries. *Palliat Med.*, 32(1): 216-230. doi: 10.1177/0269216317734954.
- [14] Adeyekun, A. A. (2010). Residents' perception of postgraduate radiology training in Nigeria. *West Afr J Med.*, (5): 314-7.
- [15] Tricio, J., Montt, J., Orsini, C., Gracia, B., Pampin, F., Quinteros, C., Salas, M., Soto, R., Fuentes, N. (2018). Student experiences of two small group teaching formats: seminar and fishbowl. *Eur J Dent Educ.* doi: 10.1111/eje.12414.
- [16] Jack, K., Hamshire, C., Harris, W. E., Langan, M., Barrett, N., Wibberley, C. (2018). "My mentor didn't speak to me for the first four weeks": Perceived Unfairness experienced by nursing students in clinical practice settings. *J Clin Nurs.*, 27(5-6): 929-938. doi: 10.1111/jocn.14015. Epub 2018 Jan 17.