

# **Compulsory Attendance Policy at One Hospitality Institution**

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# Agenda

- History
- Problem
- Purpose of the Study
- Review of the Literature
- Attendance Policy at One Hospitality Institution
- Research
- Findings

# History

- Walnut Hill College
- Doctoral dissertation
- Why Compulsory Attendance?

# Problem

- WHC went from a 2-4 yr institution (800 students)
- Any benefit to students?
- Attendance part of the grade – 15%

# Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to determine the value and necessity of the compulsory attendance policy and if it helps students to succeed academically in lecture courses?

# Review of the Literature

## Theoretical Framework

- Compelling arguments for and against
- **Intrinsic motivation** – goal theory
  - student motivation / turn a goal into action
  - returning student
  - professor's enthusiasm to attend class
  - negative reactions / attitude to compulsion
- **Extrinsic motivation**
  - \$\$
  - improve job position
  - status
  - College – a means to an end

# Review of the Literature (cont)

- **Organizational theory**
  - Control polices / or force
  - Incentives for compliance to inspire behavior
  - However, administration can not “control”:
    - Student and professor engagement
    - Interesting and stimulating
    - Just showing up for class

# Argument for Compulsory Attendance

- Public funding – can not afford not to have attendance policies / trickle down
- Times of the class
- Required in the real world
- Require and they will come
- Teaches discipline
- If they are there, they will learn more

# Argument Against Compulsory Attendance

- Creates negative attitude
- Time to administer
- Students need to be adults
- Not everyone needs to attend to learn
- Learning is not about sitting in a classroom
- Other variables – child day care obligations
- Students need to be responsible for their own attendance

# WHC Attendance Policy

- 30 hrs in semester / 2 credits
- 5 hrs – free – 5% of course grade for each additional hour
- Legal (ACCSCCT)– clock hours vs credit hours (accreditation)

# Research at WHC

- Correlation – Attendance and grades
- Questions:
  - 1) Does the current attendance policy have a significant effect on students attendance behavior?
  - 2) Does the current attendance policy contribute to increased or decreased academic scores for students?

# Participants

- Two hospitality management courses
- 112 students

# Research at WHC

- Correlation – Attendance and grades
- Questions:
  - 1) Does the current attendance policy have a significant effect on students attendance behavior?
  - 2) Does the current attendance policy contribute to increased or decreased academic scores for students?

# Results

- With compulsion 28.33 hrs out of 30
- Without compulsion 25.68
- 2.65 hrs difference
- Significant difference
- Grades 83.13    83.30    .16 higher
- Not significantly different

# A Look at other Hospitality Institutions

- Survey sent in mail and e-mail
- 200 programs in the country
- 548 professors (International Council on Hotel, restaurant and Institutional Education)
- 302 responded – return rate of 55%
- 76% of institutions do not require compulsion

# A Look at other Hospitality Institutions (cont)

- 73% professors took attendance 80-100% of time
- “The more students attend, the more they learn”
- Minimal consensus on the type of compulsion
- 55% indicated that punishment is appropriate

# Attitudes of WHC Students

- Survey of all students
- 69% strongly agree or agree – they feel forced to attend
- Want to be treated like adults
- 63% of students said that most students need compulsion
- 65% indicated that all students should have a choice
- 45% indicated they would attend if professor was interesting
- 90% would still attend if policy was eliminated
- 44% did not like policy

# Attitudes of Faculty

- 50% supported the policy
- 75% believe students need some policy
- 53% support continued compulsion
- 45 to 81 mins per week spent on attendance 11 to 20 hours per semester

# Findings

- Ethical issues – should not always be required (many factors – single parent) – may not be realistic or justifiable
- Needs to be left up to the professor
- Author suggests:
  - test questions from lecture
  - unannounced quizzes
- Small classes with groups / discussion, labs – strong compulsion
- Situational

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QUESTIONS??

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