



## Research Article

Volume-04|Issue-07|2023

## Factors Contributing to Poor Attendance of Online Classes by Third Year Nursing Students of 2021 Academic Year at the University of Namibia, Oshakati Campus

Ms. Erasmus Kronelia<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Salomo Salomo<sup>\*2</sup>, & Dr. Olivia Emvula<sup>3</sup><sup>1</sup>Registered Nurse, Eenhana, Namibia<sup>2</sup>Lecturer, School of Nursing and Public Health, University of Namibia, Oshakati Campus, Namibia<sup>3</sup>Lecturer, School of Nursing and Public Health, University of Namibia, Main Campus, Namibia

## Article History

Received: 06.07.2023

Accepted: 15.07.2023

Published: 30.07.2023

## Citation

Kronelia, E., Salomo, S., & Emvula, O. (2023). Factors Contributing to Poor Attendance of Online Classes by Third Year Nursing Students of 2021 Academic Year at the University of Namibia, Oshakati Campus. *Indiana Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 4(7), 17-25.

**Abstract:** The purpose of this study was to explore and describe the factors contributing to poor attendance of online classes by third year nursing students. A qualitative, exploratory, descriptive, phenomenological, and contextual research designs were adopted. Data was collected by means of individual interviews from a purposive sample. An interview guide and field notes were used for data collection. All responses were audiotaped and transcribed verbatim. Tesch's method of qualitative thematic analysis was used to analyse data. Two main themes emerged: (i): factors contributing to poor attendance of online classes, and (ii) significance of online classes. Seven sub-themes were identified. Measures to ensure trustworthiness of the data were adopted. Ethical principles were adhered to throughout the study. The study revealed technological, financial, psychosocial, and interpersonal as factors contributing poor attendance of online classes by third year nursing students. The study also established clear sentiments on the significance of online classes to students in terms of knowledge and skills on the use of technology. The study recommended the institution to effectively orient students on how online platforms operate, and to implement an attendance register as a measure to monitor classes' attendance.

**Keywords:** Factors, Attendance, Online Classes, Nursing Students.

**Copyright © 2023 The Author(s):** This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY-NC 4.0).

## INTRODUCTION

In search of better, more cost-effective ways to deliver instructions and trainings, universities have expanded the use of e-learning by introducing online classes. Murray (2016) defines online classes as education that takes place on internet, over a distance and not in a traditional classroom whereby there is physical interaction. One of the recent benefits of online classes was that it has saved the students from risk of transmission of coronavirus (COVID 19) and contributed to the regularity of teaching. Through online classes, students are more exposed to personal space which gives them more chances of exploring their learning world and study at their own pace and acquire more knowledge from reading articles or listening to different audios related to their specific fields of study at any given time and anywhere (Sloan *et al.*, 2020). The aim of online classes is to render adequate knowledge to students and promote quality teaching and learning. Online learning is a well-established learning paradigm which has both theoretical and practical appeals (Jordaan, 2019). It is viewed as an innovative approach for delivering well-designed, learner-centered interactive and facilitated learning environments to anyone, any place, anytime by utilizing the attributes and resources of various digital technologies along with other forms of learning materials suited for the open and distributed learning environment. Since the outbreak of COVID-19, the pandemic has had an unprecedented disruptive on people's lives across the

globe, perhaps the greatest socio-economic disruption and effect on educational systems worldwide leading to many academic institutions to suspend face-to-face classes and migrate to online platforms (Shirvani, 2020).

In United Kingdom, 81.7 % of students adopted to online in their learning career with confidence to use online classes, however 58.1% of students are faced with technical problems during online classes (Mahat, 2020). Poor attendance of online classes is not only experienced in other parts of the world but it is a great concern in African countries too, whereby students absent themselves from attending classes without valid reasons, in spite of a compulsory attendance rule (Jordan, 2019). In Africa, there is a scarcity of evidence highlighting e-learning success stories. Literature has it that, a leading Ghanaian university that played a pioneering role in the adoption of online classes at the turn of the century, had made very little progress a decade later, in spite of the significant investments in ICT infrastructure (Awidi & Cooper, 2015). Among the problems faced by the university was the lack of a clear corporate e-learning strategy and policy. This is consistent with the observations made by Eke (2010) who noted that lack of vision and implementation frameworks contributed to e-learning failure. E-learning initiatives in Africa are often fragmented and not well planned, (Barteit *et al.*, 2019). According to a study conducted in Ethiopia by Carter & Shakwa (2022) student absenteeism results in inadequate learning and poor academic performance.

Namibia went in its first lockdown in March 2020 due to Covid-19 after the government laid down strict measures for each ministry. It was then stipulated in the regulations that online classes should be used as a method of teaching and learning in all higher institutions of learning, whereby the e-learning platform has to be used, however most of the universities in Namibia are not provided with online classes devices which makes majority of students at the universities not to attend online classes (Shikulo & Lekhetho, 2020). In Namibia online classes are at an early stage of development (Carter & Shakwa, 2022). While this transition has been a mixture of both positives and negatives for most private universities in Namibia, the government colleges and universities are still adapting. While technology makes things accessible and easier, it can also be limiting, especially in Namibia, where many students face a challenge in terms of access to the internet (Kaisara & Bwalya, 2021). The purpose of this study was to explore and describe factors contributing to poor attendance of online classes by third year nursing students of the 2021 academic year at UNAM, Oshakati Campus.

## PROBLEM STATEMENT

During 2021 academic year, the researchers had observed a high absence from online classes among third year nursing students at the University of Namibia (UNAM), Oshakati campus. During daily interactions with nursing lecturers, most lecturers expressed concerns with regards to the high number of third year nursing students not attending online classes. As a result of poor attendance, 11% of students could not attain the required 80% attendance of theoretical classes as per UNAM examination policy, therefore resulting in some students (11%) not to qualify for final examination for 2021 academic year. The non-admission of students to sit for final examination due to poor attendance of theoretical classes has resulted in failure of major subjects and as a result, students had to repeat the 2021 academic year. The researchers are therefore concerned whether enough was being done with regards to factors that contribute to poor attendance of online classes among third year nursing students of the 2021 academic. The aforesaid background triggered the research question namely:

*“What are the factors contributing to poor attendance of online classes by third year nursing students of the University of Namibia, Oshakati campus?”*

## METHODS

The study adopted a qualitative, exploratory, descriptive, phenomenological, and contextual designs. A qualitative design was used to gain insight on the factors contributing to poor attendance of online classes (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). An exploratory design allowed the researcher to gain insight into a specific situation, namely, factors contributing to poor attendance of online classes (Polit & Beck, 2012). The descriptive

part of this study comprised of a rich narrative of factors contributing to poor attendance of online classes (Polit & Beck, 2012). Phenomenological design enabled the description of a phenomenon of everyday experience, allowing the researcher to comprehend the meaning of the experiences on the factors contributing to poor attendance of online classes by third year nursing students. The study is contextual in nature because it was conducted at UNAM, Oshakati campus. The purpose of selecting contextual design was to maintain focus on factors factors contributing to poor attendance of online classes by third year nursing students (Creswell, 2014).

## Population

The population of this study consisted of all third-year nursing students of the 2021 academic year at UNAM, Oshakati Campus. The total number of third year nursing students for 2021 academic year were ninety (90).

## Sampling and Sample Size

A non-probability purposive sampling technique was adopted (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Purposive sampling is based on the assumptions that the sampling method will provide the researcher access to some specialized insight or a special perspective, experience, characteristics, or condition that the researcher wishes to understand (Warwick & Lininger, 2017). Eight (8) participants were interviewed, and the sample size was determined by data saturation (Polit & Beck, 2012). The following inclusion criteria applied during sampling namely: (i) all UNAM nursing student nurses at Oshakati campus who were in third year during 2021 academic year, (ii) participation had to be on voluntary basis.

## Data Collection

Data collection was done through individual in-depth face -to -face interviews as the most direct method of obtaining facts and experiences from participants (Maree, 2016). An interview guide was used to enable the researchers to structure the way to conduct interviews. Field notes were used to take note of the non-verbal behaviors and facial expressions expressed by the participants throughout the interviews and to provide evidence that gives meaning and aids in understanding the phenomenon (Brink et al., 2018). A tape recorder was used to record the interviews in order to ascertain an accurate account of the interview which was replayed for transcription (Brink et al., 2018). During data collection, the following central question was asked: *“What are the factors contributing to poor attendance of online classes by third year nursing students of 2021 academic year at UNAM, Oshakati campus?”* Probing questions were asked to encourage and aid the participants to elaborate more on their views and opinions on the factors contributing to poor attendance of online classes (De Vos et al., 2011).

**Data Analysis**

Content analysis method was used to analyze data as recommended by Creswell (2014). A coding system was used whereby each study participant was given a code. A Tesch’s method of data analysis was used by adhering to the eight (8) steps (Creswell & Creswell 2018). Discussions between the researchers and the independent coder were held at which consensus was reached upon the identified themes and sub-themes. Direct quotations from participants were used in support of themes. Literature control was done to ensure trustworthiness of the study (Polit & Beck, 2012). Measures to ensure trustworthiness of the data were considered as discussed below.

**Trustworthiness of the Data**

Trustworthiness of the data refers to the way of ensuring data for quality or rigor in a qualitative study (Brink *et al.*, 2018). In this study, the following criteria for developing trustworthiness of a qualitative study were considered namely: credibility, transferability, dependability, confirmability, and authenticity of the study. Credibility was ensured by prolonged engagement and persistent observation with the participants during interviews (Polit & Beck, 2012). The researcher spent three months’ time in data collection to obtain data saturation (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Triangulation was used by utilizing different methods to collect data simultaneously (Polit & Beck, 2012). Transferability was achieved through thick description (Jooste, 2018). The study methodology employed and questions that were asked in interviews were revised by the researcher supervisor as to ensure dependability. Confirmability was achieved through presenting findings exactly as collected from the participants, and not the researcher’s biases, motivations, or perspectives (Shikalepo, 2021). Instruments that were used were tested first prior the interview to see if they are functioning in order to produce quality results. Literature control was done to confirm the study findings. Authenticity was established as the researcher seek reassurance that both the conduct and evaluation of research are genuine and credible not only in terms of participants’ lived experiences on factors contributing to poor attendance of online classes but also with respect to the wider political and social implications of research (Jooste, 2018). Similarly, the researcher maintained authenticity through persistent observation during interviews.

**Ethical Considerations**

A formal approval to conduct the study with resolution number: DEC/OSH/253/2022 was obtained

from the University of Namibia’s Decentralized Ethical Committee, Oshakati campus. Further, additional approval with reference number KE2020 was granted by the Ministry of Health and Social Services. The following three (3) fundamental ethical principles guided this study, namely: principle of respect, principle of beneficence and principle of justice (Shikalepo, 2021). The principle of respect was taken into consideration by obtaining full informed consents from participants after explanation of objectives and benefits of the study (Creswell, 2014). No participant was forced to participate in the study. Participants were permitted to withdraw from the study at any point they wanted to, without being asked to offer an explanation. To ensure beneficence, no physical or medical experiments that may cause harm to participants were performed during the study. As for the principle of justice, the selection of participants was solely based on the reason related directly to the research problem and not because they were readily available and easy to manipulate (Malaudzi *et al.*, 2019). Similarly, the recruitment of participants was done based on the inclusion criteria (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The results of this study are based on the transcriptions of the interviews conducted with eight (8) third year nursing students of 2021 academic year at UNAM, Oshakati campus. The interviews intended to explore and describe the factors contributing to poor attendance of online classes by third year nursing students of 2021 academic year at UNAM, Oshakati campus. Participants were identified through non-probability purposive sampling (Shikalepo).—With participants’ permissions, an audio recorder was used to capture data during the interviews to ensure that all data was transcribed verbatim as participants verbalized their experiences. The following central question was posed to participants: “*What are the factors contributing to poor attendance of online classes by third year nursing students of 2021 academic year at UNAM, Oshakati campus?*” All recorded data for each interview were transcribed verbatim. Two themes were identified through data analysis: (i) factors contributing to poor attendance of online classes, and (ii) different experience on online classes. Each theme was discussed and verified with the direct quotes of what the participants have said and controlled by the literature. Table 1 form the basis for discussion of the themes identified by data analysis.

**Table 1:** Themes and sub-themes

Themes	Sub-themes
1. Factors contributing to poor attendance of online classes	1.1. Technological factors 1.2. Financial factors 1.3. Psychosocial factors 1.4. Interpersonal factors
2. Significance of online classes	2.1. Reduction of Covid-19 spread

\*Corresponding Author: Dr. Salomo Salomo

---

2.2. Creation of opportunities

2.3. Gaining of knowledge and skills on the use of technology

---

### **Theme 1: Factors Contributing to Poor Attendance of Online Classes**

This theme is composed of participants' descriptions and perceptions on the factors contributing to poor attendance of online classes. Online classes refer to sessions conducted on internet whereby students learn in a fully virtual environment (Shirvani *et al.*, 2020). In this study, participants identified the factors contributing poor attendance of online classes such as; technological factors, financial factors, psychosocial factors, and interpersonal factors. The following sub-themes were identified under the theme: factors contributing to poor attendance of online classes.

#### **Sub-Theme 1.1: Technological Factors**

Most of the participants expressed that one of the contributing factors to poor attendance of online classes is technological factors where students use to experience poor internet connections therefore, leading to dropouts in attending the online classes. Technological refers to anything that is related to or characterized by technology (Hornby, 2014). Most participants verbalized that lack of knowledge on how to use electronic devices and how to load the browsers lead to most of them not to attend online classes. This is evidenced by the following expressions from one of the participants:

*"The network was tripping and sometimes just loading very slowly making it hard for us to access lessons. TN mobile cards were not working well in some towns like Ondangwa, so you are forced to buy data bundles which are not even enough for all the modules" [P1].*

The following participants had these to say:

*"The first factor I can say is poor network, like the network is just tripping. Another factor is less data which are not enough. The third factor is that, not all students have access to smartphones or other electronic devices such as computers to attend classes" [P2].*

*"You are trying to attend and when you are turning on your data they are not working properly so, that means you will miss the lesson" [P3].*

Another participant had this comment:

*"There is lack of high quality learning devices because some students do not quality learning devices like cell phones or computers, the PC, basically the laptop. They do not possess those learning devices which results in missing attending online classes" [P6].*

When participants were asked to describe the factors contributing to poor attendance of online classes, most of them pointed out technological, financial, psychosocial, and interpersonal factors. Most participants expressed that they were not conversant with

the usage of electronic gadgets because they were not exposed to them prior to joining tertiary institutions. Majority of participants pointed out that they lack knowledge and skills on how to use electronic devices and how to load the browsers which led to most of them to miss online classes. Other participants expressed their experiences on poor internet connections resulting in dropouts from online classes. In agreement with the above sentiments from participants, a study conducted by Muthuprasad *et al.* (2021) on challenges faced by students during online learning, revealed that students have faced technical problems during online classes whereby most of them reported technical issues like poor network connectivity, power cuts, broadband issue, poor audio, and video quality. A similar study conducted by Adeoye *et al.* (2020) on the impacts of COVID-19 on e-learning among tertiary education system in Nigeria revealed lack of devices needed to facilitate online classes as among the factors that contributes to poor attendance of online classes by students.

In agreement with the above sentiments from participants, a study conducted by Muthuprasad *et al.* (2021) on challenges faced by students during online learning, revealed that students have faced technical problems during online classes whereby most of them reported technical issues like poor network connectivity, power cuts, broadband issue, poor audio, and video quality. A similar study conducted by Adeoye *et al.* (2020) on the impacts of COVID-19 on e-learning among tertiary education system in Nigeria revealed lack of devices needed to facilitate online classes as among the factors that contributes to poor attendance of online classes by students.

#### **Sub-Theme 1.2: Financial factors**

Financial has to do with anything pertaining to monetary receipts and expenditures (Hornby, 2014). In this study, most participants expressed that, financial factors such as lack of money to buy devices needed to attend online classes, insufficient money to buy data to attend online classes are some of the factors that contributed to poor attendance of online classes at their university.

Most of the participants expressed that, lack of money to buy devices and data required for online classes has immensely contributed to poor attendance of classes. This finding is somewhat consistent with the results of a study conducted in Nigeria by Adeoye *et al.* (2020) that revealed that absenteeism from online classes is associated with lack of devices needed to facilitate online classes. Similarly, a study conducted by Shikulo & Lekhetho (2020) at UNAM, main campus, revealed that most students do not attend online classes because they do not have functional devices to attend the online classes as well as lack of data to connect to online

lessons. These findings are like of this study whereby during interviews, finance was strongly pointed out by participants as one of the factors contributes to poor attendance of online classes.

This is evidenced by the following expressions from the participants.

One participant expressed:

*"We lack financial means and as a result we do not have data bundles to enable us to stay connected for long on the platform in order to attend classes. The data bundles that UNAM gives us can finish before the new data bundles are loaded because we are only given once at the beginning of the month"* [P4].

One participant had this to say:

*"The data that UNAM provide to students is not enough so, sometimes students find themselves in a difficult financial situation to buy data, which is very costly"* [P5].

Another participant added:

*"During academic year, we did not have data... [looking up] and no money in most cases, however the university provided us with data even though the SIM cards were not that fast. We really suffered financially ... [shaking her head]"* [P8].

In agreement with the above sentiments from the participants, a study conducted by Adeoye *et al.* (2020) in Nigeria revealed that absenteeism from online classes is associated with lack of devices needed to facilitate online classes. Another study conducted by Shikulo & Lekhetso (2020) at the University of Namibia, main campus, revealed that most students do not attend online classes because they do not have functional devices to attend the online classes as well as lack of data to connect to online lessons.

### **Sub-Theme 1.3: Psychosocial factors**

Most participants expressed that psychosocial factors are some of the factors that contribute to poor attendance of online classes. Psychosocial refers to the interrelation of social factors and individual thoughts and behaviours (Murray, 2016). In this study, participants expressed that family members use to send them here and there during the time they supposed to attend classes, as a result they end up not attending their online classes fully. On the other hand, participants explained that the noise from bars in their locations have been a destructor from attending online classes as the noise use to be too much.

The following quotes are evident of what participants expressed:

*"The noise from the location we are living use to be too much, therefore, even if you want to attend your online classes you will not hear anything and you will only be left with one option of not attending*

*the classes because it will be of no use to attend [P2].*

Another participant added:

*"Another factor can be environment, during online classes we use to attend lessons from home were our parents use to make us cook and do other house chores during the time we were supposed to be attending lessons. So, it was very difficult to attend online classes as most of use ended up giving up on attending classes [P3].*

In support of the above expressions, another participant had this to say:

*"There are too many bars in our locations [shaking his head while looking down]. You hardly hear anything due to noises from these bars. Sometimes you are also tempted to go to bars, consequently missing classes. It just too much here. [P6].*

A study conducted by Yukselturk & Bulut (2019) in Turkey revealed that most students do not attend online classes because of distractions in their environments such as much people's movements, loud music from the surrounding as well as disturbances from siblings. The study also revealed that lack of control of students by lecturers as one of the factors that affects online classes by most of the students. A study on the impacts of COVID - 19 on e-learning among tertiary education system in Nigeria by Adeoye *et al.* (2020) revealed that most students do not attend online classes due to lack of conducive environment for online learning. Furthermore, the study revealed that distractions at homes such as doing home chores and attending to social events have also caused most of the students not to attend online classes as required.

In this study, most participants expressed psychosocial as some of the factors that contribute to poor attendance of online classes. Murray (2016) defines psychosocial as the interrelation of social factors and individual thoughts and behaviours. In this study, participants stressed that the home environments in which they live are not conducive for learning due to destructive loud music from nearby establishments such as churches, bars and restaurants. According to participants, loud music from nearby establishments makes it difficult for them to concentrate during online classes as most of the time they hardly hear what is being presented by lecturers.

### **Sub-Theme 1.4: Interpersonal factors**

Interpersonal refers to anything related to relationships or communication between people (Hornby, 2014). In this study, participants expressed that most of the students do not attend online classes due to interpersonal factors. Some participants express that negligence, ignorance and laziness among students contributed to poor attendance of online classes. Most participants stated that some students do not attend

online classes due to lack of interest in online classes. This is evidenced by the following expressions from one of the participants:

*“Sometimes it is just ignorance. You do not want to attend a certain module and you ignore that” [P3].*

Another participant stated the following:

*“We also have lack of interest. Online classes are just discouraging. Most of the time you cannot just..., you cannot just... [looking up] access classes as internet is tripping and if you log in, once you disconnect it becomes very hard to connect again and then you miss out on the content that was being taught” [P4].*

Another participant added:

*“We experienced laziness in students during this time. Ahm..., students tend to be sleeping during the times of lessons. I can say it is also one of the major factors contributing to poor attendance [P5].*

One participant explained that:

*“Some students also sleep. Instead they will be sleeping while the class is on which results in them not attending classes. These are factors [yawning]” [P6].*

In support of sleepiness as one of the contributing factors to poor class attendance, this is what some of the participants had to add:

*“Students never set alarms; they just oversleep. There is also no attendance register, which means a lot of students can miss classes because no role calls are done” [P7].*

*Sometimes you just let the lecturer know that you are attending but then you just escape and go back to sleep. And, much of the online sessions are not that interesting because you are not seeing the lecturer in person. So, you simply go back to bed” [P8].*

Literature has it that most of the students do not attend online classes because of ignorance (Shikulo & Lekhetho, 2020). A study by Ilonga et al. (2020) on assessment of the challenges experienced by students studying through online and distance learning at higher education institutions in Namibia during COVID-19, revealed that students do not attend online classes because of their poor time management, negligence, and ignorance. In this study, participants pointed out negligence, ignorance, and laziness among students as drivers to poor attendance of online classes.

## **Theme 2: Significance of Online Classes**

Apart from expressing the factors contributing to poor attendance of online classes, participants also stressed the significance of online classes as they prevent the spread of COVID - 19 among students at the

university, creating opportunities to replay lessons that they have missed, and gaining of knowledge and skills on the use of technology. Participants stated that during online classes, they use to be taught while at home and not in contact with other students in classrooms where COVID-19 is likely to spread at high speed. Other participants added that online classes helped in reduction of COVID-19 as students do not use to travelling long distances in public transports where they can pick up the COVID-19 virus. A study conducted by Imran and Asghar (2019) in Pakistan revealed that online classes are important because it helps in cut of COVID-19 spread chains as students and lecturers do not stay in overcrowded areas for a long period of time where they can transmit COVID-19 to one another. The study also revealed that COVID-19 cases were suppressed since students no more travel in public transports where the chances of contracting COVID-19 use to be high. The sub-themes identified under this theme are as follow:

### **Sub-Theme 2.1: Reduction of COVID - 19 spread**

On this sub-theme, participants expressed that online classes are significant because they minimize the spread of COVID-19 as students are not confined to overcrowded and risky areas. Participants stated that during online classes, they use to be taught on-line while at home and not in contact with other students in classrooms where COVID-19 is likely to spread at high speed. Other participants added that online classes helped in reduction of COVID-19 as students do not use to travelling long distances in public transports where they can pick up the COVID-19 virus. This is evidenced by the following quotes from participants:

*“During that time of COVID-19, online classes prevented overcrowding which was one of the drivers to increased numbers of COVID-19 positive cases” [P2].*

Another participant added:

*“Online classes also save money because you do not need to travel to campus in cabs where you might find people infected with COVID-19 and get infected too. So, if you have you simply attend online classes which is very much safe” [P3].*

One participant also expressed that:

*“Online classes were very important because it prevented us from gathering at campuses which results in increases number of COVID-19 cases among students. It also reduces the in interaction between students and the lecturer” [P6].*

A study conducted by Imran & Asghar (2019) in Pakistan revealed that online classes are important because it helps in cut of COVID-19 spread chains as students and lecturers do not stay in overcrowded areas for a long period of time where they can transmit COVID-19 to one another. The study also revealed that COVID-19 cases were suppressed since students no

more travel in public transports where the chances of contracting COVID-19 use to be high. Another similar study conducted by Jordaan (2019) revealed that online classes are significant because they reduce the spread of COVID-19.

### **Sub-Theme 2.2. Creation of Opportunities**

Under this sub-theme, participants explained the significance of online classes as it helps in creation of various opportunities. Some participants stated that online classes provided them with opportunities to screenshot slides which they think are more important or which contains content which they think they might forget. Other participants expressed that online classes gives extra opportunities to students to replay the audios that were uploaded during the lessons anytime the feel doing so. Participants stated that with online classes, they were able to google the meaning of certain difficult terms which they did not understand during the lessons, plus they were also given extra opportunities to google topics in more details during the presentation.

This is evidenced by the following expressions from one of the participants:

*"I said it is important because it provides students with extra opportunities to have access to google search. Meaning, while the lecturer is presenting, students can search for more about the topic being presented" [P2].*

Another participant stated the following:

*"During online classes, we were given opportunities to replay the audios that the lecturers have uploaded during our leisure times" [P4].*

In support of the above sentiments, other participants added:

*"Some lecturers only give little information, so with online classes can sneak out of online classes platforms to google terminologies which are troublesome. However, with face-to-face classes, you will never have that opportunity. Online classes are full of opportunities" [P6].*

*"During online classes, students were able to replay during their free times the audios uploaded by the lecturers during the lessons. By the end of the day, you understand almost everything presented" [P8]*

According to a study conducted by Kaisara & Bwalya (2021) on the challenges faced by students during COVID-19 in Namibia, students are given increased options. Students are not required to travel to campuses for course schedule on on specific dates and time, students can enroll in the courses they are most interested in, no need to rearrange schedules in order to grow their professions (Kaisara & Bwalya, 2021). Another similar study conducted by Shikulo & Lekhetho (2020) revealed that students benefited more during online classes because they were able to google more on

topics which they do not understand plus they were able to replay audios uploaded on their e-learning platforms.

In this study, participants expressed that online classes gives extra opportunities to students to replay the audios that were uploaded during the lessons anytime the feel doing so.

A study conducted by Shikulo & Lekhetho (2020) revealed that students benefited more during online classes because they were able to google more on topics which they do not understand plus they were able to replay audios uploaded on their e-learning platforms. On the other hand, many of the participants expressed that; online learning made their learning easier because they gained more knowledge and skills on downloading the audios and listen to them during their leisure time. Some participants appreciated online classes as they helped them gain knowledge on time management. In agreement with participants' expressions, a study conducted by Ilonga *et al.* (2020) revealed the importance of online classes to students as it helps them acquire knowledge from the coursework and sharpen their management skills. Another study conducted by Yukselturk & Bulut (2019) revealed that online classes helped students to gain different perspectives, and develop their thinking skills.

### **Sub-Theme 2.3. Gaining Of Knowledge and Skills on the Use of Technology**

Gaining of knowledge and skills has to do with awareness or familiarity acquired through experience or education (Hornby, 2014). This sub-theme describes the participants' expressions on the significance of online classes that was introduced due to COVID-19 pandemic. Majority of the participants expressed that; online learning made their learning easier because they gained more knowledge and skills on downloading the audios and listen to them during their leisure time.

Some participants appreciated online classes as they helped them gain knowledge on time management. This is evidenced by the following expressions from one of the participants:

*"Before I was introduced to the online classes, I was very poor on the use of technology but now I am very confident to navigate the Moodle system. We also use to be guided by our Information and Technology Technician at campus on how to access online lectures. Now I can confidently do it alone without being assisted [P1].*

*"As a student, I can now proudly say that my knowledge on the use of technology has significantly improved after the introduction of online classes. COVID-19 has also brought along some benefits.... [laughing while looking up] [P7]*

Another participant had this to say:

“Although I had a laptop, I hardly use it due to lack of technical know-how. Since I have started attending online classes, you can now see me using my laptop so frequently. Online classes have really improved my skills in terms of technology” [P4].

A participant whose time management was improved after attending online classes had this to say:

“Online classes have improved students’ time management skills. Students have learned to manage time because during online classes you are given a test within a short period of time, therefore you have to manage your time effectively in order to complete those tests within the allocated time slot. This has also improved the thinking capacity of students because you must think very fast to finish that test in that given time [P6].

In agreement with participants’ expressions, a study conducted by Ilonga et al. (2020) revealed the importance of online classes to students as it help them acquire knowledge from the coursework and sharpen their management skills. Another study conducted by Yukselturk & Bulut (2019) revealed that online classes helped students to gain different perspectives, and develop their thinking skills. Similarly, the study revealed that online classes teach students how to manage time better and permits students to learn more efficiently.

## CONCLUSION

The findings of the study reveal technological, financial, psychosocial, and interpersonal as the factors contributing poor attendance of online classes by third year nursing students of the 2021 academic year at UNAM, Oshakati campus. The study also established clear sentiments on the significance of online classes to students in terms of knowledge and skills on the use of technology. The study recommended UNAM to sufficiently increase the amount of data bundles on students’ SIM cards that can last for an entire month, and family members to take up the responsibility of assisting students financially for students to be able to buy additional data bundles. Similarly, UNAM should orientate students on how online platforms operate and how they can be utilised to prevent connection failure that leads to poor attendance of online classes. A strict attendance register during online classes should be implemented by lecturers as a measure to monitor classes attendance by students.

## Acknowledgements

The authors would like to extend their appreciation to all participants for their valuable contributions. The authors also extend their appreciation to the University of Namibia and the Ministry of Health and Social Services for approving the study.

## REFERENCES

1. Adeove, I. A., Adanikin, A. F., & Adanikin, A. (2020). COVID-19 and E-learning: Nigeria tertiary education system experience. *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Applied Science*, 2454-6194.
2. Awidi, I. T., & Cooper, M. (2015). Using management procedure gaps to enhance e-learning implementation in Africa. *Computers & education*, 90, 64-79.
3. Barteit, S., Jahn, A., Banda, S. S., Bärnighausen, T., Bowa, A., Chileshe, G., & Neuhann, F. (2019). E-learning for medical education in Sub-Saharan Africa and low-resource settings. *Journal of medical Internet research*, 21(1), e12449.
4. Brink, H., van der Walt, C., & Van Rensburg, G. (2018). *Fundamentals of research methodology for healthcare professionals* (4th ed.). Cape Town.
5. Carter, K., & Shakwa, G. (2022). Flipping the Post-COVID Online Classroom in a Professional Development Program at the Namibia University of Science and Technology. In *Handbook of Research on Transformative and Innovative Pedagogies in Education* (Pp. 93-111). IGI Global.
6. Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4th Ed.). Sage Publications.
7. Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches*. Sage Publications.
8. De Vos, A. S., Strydom, H., Fouche, C. B., & Delpont, C. S. L. (2011). *Research at grass roots: For the social sciences and human service professions* (4th Ed.). Van Shaik.
9. Nneka Eke, H. (2010). The perspective of e-learning and libraries in Africa: challenges and opportunities. *Library Review*, 59(4), 274-290.
10. Hornby, A. S. (2014). *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (7th Ed.). London: Oxford University Press.
11. Ilonga, A., Ashipala, D. O., & Tomas, N. (2020). Challenges Experienced by Students Studying through Open and Distance Learning at a Higher Education Institution in Namibia: Implications for Strategic Planning. *International Journal of Higher Education*, 9(4), 116-127.
12. Imran, T., & Asghar, S. (2019). Factors influencing dental students attendance in lectures in private dental colleges of Karachi. *Pakistan Oral & Dental Journal*, 39(2), 189-194.
13. Jooste, K. (2018). *The principles and practice of nursing and health care: Ethos and professional practice, management, staff development, and research* (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.). Hatfield, South Africa: Van Schaik Publishers.
14. Jordaan, Y. (2019). Influencing factors on lecture attendance at a tertiary institution. *South African Journal of Higher Education*, 23(1), 98-112.
15. Kaisara, G., & Bwalya, K. J. (2021). Investigating the E-learning challenges faced by students during



- COVID-19 in Namibia. *International Journal of Higher Education*, 10(1), 308-318.
16. Mahat, K. (2020). Students' perception and on online education in India during COVID-19 pandemic. *Social Sciences & Humanities Open*, 3(1), 100-101.
  17. Malaudzi, F. M., Mokoena, J. D., & Troskie, R. (2019). *Basic nursing ethics in practice* (3rd Ed.). Johannesburg, South Africa: Heinemann Publishers (Pty) Ltd.
  18. Maree, J. G. (2016). *First step steps in research* (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.). Pretoria, South Africa: Van Schaick Publishers.
  19. Murray, J. (2016). *Oxford English dictionary*. UK: Oxford University Press.
  20. Muthuprasad, T., Aiswarya, S., Aditya, K. S., & Jha, G. K. (2021). Students' perception and preference for online education in India during COVID-19 pandemic . *Social Sciences & Humanities Open*, 3(1), 100-101.
  21. Polit, D., & Beck, c. (2012). *Nursing research: Genarating assessing evidence for nursing practice*. New York: Walters Kluwer.
  22. Rundell, M. (2012). *Macmillan English dictionary* (2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.). United Kingdom: Macmillan Education.
  23. Shikalepo, E.E. (2021). *Basics of educational research: A qualitative perspective*. International University of Management: Windhoek.
  24. Shikulo, L., & Lekhetho, M. (2020). Exploring student support services of a distance learning centre at a Namibian university. *Cogent Social Sciences*, 6(1), 175-266.
  25. Shirvani Dastgerdi, A., Sargolini, M., Broussard Allred, S., Chatrchyan, A., & De Luca, G. (2020). Climate change and sustaining heritage resources: A framework for boosting cultural and natural heritage conservation in Central Italy. *Climate*, 8(2), 26-29.
  26. Sloan, D., Manns, H., Mellor, A., & Jeffries, M. (2020). Factors influencing student non-attendance at formal teaching. *Studies in Higher Education*, 45(11), 2203-2216.
  27. Warwick, D., & Lininger, C. (2017). *The sample survey*. McGraw-Hill.
  28. Yukselturk, E., & Bulut, S. (2019). Gender differences in self-regulated online learning environment. *Journal of Educational Technology & Society*, 12(3), 12-22.]

#### **CONFLICT OF INTERESTS**

The authors have no competing conflict of interest to declare.