
**EFFECT OF TUTORIAL PARTICIPATION ON ACADEMIC
PERFORMANCE AMONG GRADUATES OF THE SCHOOL OF
HEALTH INFORMATION MANAGEMENT, OBAFEMI AWOLOWO
UNIVERSITY TEACHING HOSPITALS COMPLEX, ILE-IFE,
NIGERIA**

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ABSTRACT

Background: Tutorial classes are popular academic support measures designed to enhance students' learning and performance, especially in professional health programs. Although extensively used in the training of Health Information Management, little is known about their effects, including students' perceptions of the experience, in Nigeria. We investigated the influence of tutorial sessions on academic performance among the graduates of the School of Health Information Management, Obafemi Awolowo University Teaching Hospitals Complex (OAUTHC), Ile-Ife, Nigeria.

Methods: We employed a cross-sectional, quasi-experimental pre-test and post-test design to 81 graduates (complete enumeration). Performance data were collected with a performance tracking form that captured perceived scores, actual scores and the results of the Health Record Officers Registration Board of Nigeria (HRORBN) examination. Data were analysed using descriptive statistics and paired comparison at $p < 0.05$. Likewise, we used thematic analysis of focus group data to understand people's perceptions of tutorial experiences and outcomes.

Results: A majority (92.6%) of the respondents attended tutorial sessions, 48.8% attended regularly and 76.6% were satisfied. Quantitative results found that the proportion of students who perceived themselves to achieve a performance above 60% increased from 38.3% before

the tutorial to 66.7% after the tutorial, and the proportion with good (above 60%) actual performance increased from 7.5% to 56.7%. Almost all (98.8%) respondents had good performance in the HRORBN examination. Linear regression analysis found tutorial attendance was a significant predictor of academic performance ($\beta = -0.240$, $p = 0.031$) and accounted for 5.8% of the variance.

Qualitative data supported these findings, with two broad themes identified: overall positive tutorial experience and learning gains. Students reported tutorials were well structured, easy to understand and made complex subjects easier to grasp. Participants also reported an increase in understanding, grades, retention of knowledge, motivation, and readiness for examination.

Conclusion: Tutorials have a strong positive impact on academic outcomes for graduates, as demonstrated by quantitative and qualitative feedback. But it was not a strong predictor, indicating other academic and extraneous variables also play a role.

IMPLICATIONS: Universities should enhance their tutorial programs by providing structured delivery, better tutor-student engagement and incorporating interactive, student-focused practices. Students should also attend regularly and engage actively for optimal academic gains.

1. BACKGROUND

Education is recognised as a crucial element in promoting economic growth and societal progress; however, the education system is still in need of reform to adapt to changing educational needs (1). In general, education is the transfer of knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviours from one generation to another through teaching, debate and research (1). Psychologically, it can be seen as a process, in that it prepares people for their roles in society, as well as a product, in that it produces changes in individuals due to engaging in learning activities (2). Modern educational reforms are increasingly shifting the focus from traditional teacher-centered to learner-centered education, encouraging active participation, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills.

In this context, academic performance continues to be an important measure of educational outcomes. It measures the extent to which learners achieve the desired learning outcomes, taking into consideration a dynamic interplay of personal, teaching, and institutional factors (1). Academic performance is crucial in professional courses like Health Information Management where professional competence is evaluated through professional and

standardised tests and certification (3). So, it is important to have graduates with good academic performance in order to ensure a quality workforce that can deliver services to the health sector and the country as a whole (4).

Tutorial sessions are one of the key teaching and learning approaches to enhance academic performance. Tutorials are structured teaching sessions, involving tutors and individual or small groups of students, intended to offer individualised support and improve learning (2). Tutorials have a long history in education, dating back to before the advent of the classroom and have evolved into various forms such as one-to-one, group and peer tutoring. Tutorials are especially useful in technical subjects where students need extra help in understanding complex topics.

Research underscores the importance of tutorial sessions to enhance academic achievement outcomes. Tutorials provide coaching, mentoring and tutoring which promote academic and personal development (5,6). They also provide practice opportunities, which has been shown to be a key component of learning (7,8,9,10). Despite such evidence-based practices, their use is variable. Teachers often lack knowledge of these strategies, and students tend to adopt less effective learning strategies, which hampers learning (11). This highlights the need for more structured and evidence-based teaching methods such as tutorials.

Academic performance is also recognised as a dynamic longitudinal process influenced by interactions between students' characteristics, such as their motivation, commitment and resources, and their academic environment (12,1). Academic engagement and commitment are enhanced by positive academic experiences such as supportive learning environment and effective teaching strategies, which in turn enhance learning performance. In this vein, tutorial sessions play a key role in strengthening student engagement and meeting their individual needs.

While the benefits of tutorials are well documented, there is a lack of empirical evidence on their impact on students and graduates of Health Information Management programs, especially in Nigeria (13). This is a knowledge gap in a field of study that is highly specialised and with its attendant academic rigours as often required in the professional certification examinations. Insight into the relationship between tutorial participation and academic performance in this field is crucial to enhance academic strategies and performance.

As such, this study aims to describe tutorial participation and compare academic performance before and after tutorial participation among the graduates of the School of Health Information Management, Obafemi Awolowo University Teaching Hospitals Complex

(OAUTHC), Ile-Ife, Nigeria. This, in turn, offers empirical evidence on the importance of tutorial sessions in improving academic performance in this niche educational setting.

2. Statement of the Problem

Student academic performance remains a critical measure of educational quality, reflecting student, teacher and institutional learning outcomes. Yet, research shows that the cognitive and academic performance of African students, including Nigerians, is still lagging behind the global standard, with a negative trend over the years (2). In Nigeria, the Health Records Officers Registration Board of Nigeria (HRORBN) has lamented low performance in professional qualifying tests, which affects the delivery of quality health information management professionals (14,15). While tutorial programs have been implemented in many institutions as an academic enhancement strategy to enhance academic performance, the benefits of these programs for students in the field of Health Information Management is unclear. Continued issues with poor attendance, ineffective tutorial sessions, low student motivation and poor peer support continue to impede the potential benefits of these programs, and other factors, such as study habits and motivation and tutorial quality, may also influence performance (12,1).

Although tutorial sessions have been introduced in institutions like the School of Health Information Management, OAUTHC, there is little empirical research showing the effectiveness of tutorials on improving academic performance of graduates. Specifically, scant literature exists about how tutorials affect performance, particularly the mediation of study habits and motivation, moderation of attendance and tutorial quality, as well as the contextual factors of learning resources and institutional support (13). This absence of context-specific evidence restricts the capacity of educators and policymakers to plan and implement evidence-based, effective tutorial programs that can improve academic and professional outcomes of Health Information Management graduates in Nigeria.

3. General Objective

To describe tutorial participation and academic performance among graduates of the School of Health Information Management, OAUTHC.

Specific Objectives

1. To describe the level of participation in tutorial sessions among graduates.
2. To describe academic performance levels before tutorial participation.
3. To describe academic performance levels after tutorial participation.

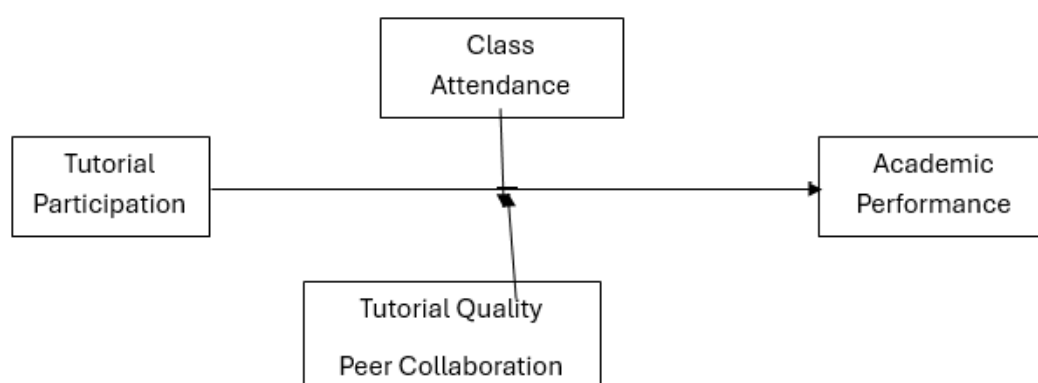
4. Hypothesis

H₀₁: Tutorial sessions have no significant impact on academic performance.

5. Conceptual Framework

This study is based on a framework that explores the association between tutorial participation (independent variable) and academic performance (dependent variable) among students who graduated from the School of Health Information Management, OAUTHC. Academic performance is measured in pre- and post-tutorial terms to evaluate the impact of tutorial sessions.

The study is premised on the idea that higher participation in structured tutorials contributes to improved academic performance through enhanced learning, reinforcement of classroom lectures and increased engagement in learning activities (16,17). This means tutorial participation should impact on academic performance in a pre- and post-tutorial environment.



Source: Field Data

6. Theoretical Framework (Constructivist Theory)

The theory of constructivism was developed in the late 1970s by Lev Vygotsky and Jean Piaget and it suggests learners actively construct their knowledge from experience and interaction. Learning, as described by Fosnot (1996) and Steffe and Gale (1995) (3), is an active process, where individuals construct their understanding by interacting with new knowledge and revising their existing knowledge. Jonassen (18) also notes new knowledge is built on prior knowledge.

In the context of this study, constructivist theory offers an explanation for how participating in tutorials is an interactive learning process. Through tutorial sessions, students are able to engage with tutors and peers, course content and their understanding of complex concepts.

This supported interaction in the Zone of Proximal Development (19) enables students to develop from dependency to independence. This facilitates enhanced learning outcomes through active learning and guidance.

7. METHODS

A quasi-experimental pre-test and post-test study design was used to assess the influence of tutorial participation on academic performance of graduates of a health information management training program in Southwestern Nigeria.

Participants were graduates who completed structured tutorial sessions as part of their training and for whom academic performance data were available before and after participating in the tutorial sessions. A sample of 81 graduates who satisfied the inclusion criteria (attended tutorial sessions and had pre- and post-performance scores) were selected through complete enumeration sampling.

The data collection tool was an academic performance tracking form which captured the pre- and post-tutorial scores, including perceived scores, actual scores related to CBT and indicators of performance in the licensing examination. Academic performance was determined as percentage scores in levels.

Data were sourced from retrieval of academic records from the institution's database and tutorial attendance records. Data access was after obtaining ethical approval and consent.

The instrument was validated by experts, and the data were checked for reliability of academic records. Descriptive statistics were used to analysedata and a paired sample t-test was used to compare academic performance before and after tutorials using SPSS version 30.0 ($p < 0.05$).

8. RESULTS

Table 1: Socio-Demographical Characteristics of the graduated students of SHIM, OAUTHC, Ile-Ife, Osun State.

Variable	Frequency (n=81)	Percentage (%)	Statistic
Sex			Mean = 1.2346 SD = 0.4547 Chi-Square = 2.188 DF = 3 P = 0.534
Male	14	17.3	
Female	67	82.7	
Age Group			Mean = 1.8272 SD = 0.3805 Chi-Square = 4.907 DF = 6
18-25	63	77.8	
26-35	17	21.0	
36-45	1	1.2	

			P = 0.556
Level of Education			Mean = 1.7407
OND	21	25.9	SD = 0.4410
HND	60	74.1	Chi-Square = 11.915
			DF = 3
			P = 0.008
Employment Status			Mean = 1.1013
Unemployed	71	89.9	SD = 0.3036
Employed	8	10.1	Chi-Square = 1.354
			DF = 3
			P = 0.716

Sociodemographic status (mean score + SD) = 5.90+1.58

The socio-demographic profile of the respondents in Table 1 reveals a higher number of females (82.7%) than males (17.3%). But there was no significant variation in sex distribution ($\chi^2 = 2.188$, $p = 0.534$). With regard to age, most of the respondents were between the ages of 18-25 years (77.8%), followed by 26-35 years (21.0%) and only a few of them were in the 36-45 years age category (1.2%). This age distribution was not statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 4.907$, $p = 0.556$).

In terms of educational attainment, the majority of respondents had HND (74.1%) while a few had their OND (25.9%). This was statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 11.915$, $p = 0.008$), suggesting that there was a significant variation in educational level among respondents. In terms of employment, most respondents were unemployed (89.9%) with a minority being employed (10.1%). But this was not statistically significant ($\chi^2 = 1.354$, $p = 0.716$).

In summary, the results indicate that the respondents were mostly young, females, HNDs and generally unemployed, with the only statistically significant variation in socio-demographic differences for educational level. Further, the sociodemographic status score was relatively high (mean = 5.90 $\pm$ 1.58), suggesting that respondents were fairly similar in terms of the sampled socio-demographic variables.

Table 2: To describe the level of participation in tutorial sessions among graduates of the School of Health Information Management, OAUTHC.

Participation in Tutorial Programs (F= 81)	Frequency	Percentage
Did you participate in the tutorial sessions offered by the school?	75	92.6
Yes	6	7.4
No		
How often did you attend the tutorials?	14	17.5
Rarely (Less than 25%)	9	11.3
Occasionally (25%-50%)	18	22.5
Frequently (51%-75%)	39	48.8

Always (Above 75%)		
How satisfied were you with the tutorial sessions?	3	3.7
Very Dissatisfied	1	1.2
Dissatisfied	15	18.5
Neutral	34	42.0
Satisfied	28	34.6
Very Satisfied		

The results presented in Table 2 show that the level of attendance in tutorial sessions among the graduates of the School of Health Information Management, OAUTHC, is high. The majority (92.6%) of respondents indicated they attended tutorials.

Patterns of attendance also indicate high participation, as nearly half (48.8%) of the respondents were consistent in their attendance (over 75%) and about one-fifth (22.5%) were frequent. A minority reported that they attended occasionally (19.0%) or rarely (9.8%).

In terms of satisfaction with the tutorial sessions, they were well received, with the majority of respondents expressing satisfaction. In particular, more than three-quarters (76.6%) reported satisfaction or very satisfaction, and only a very small proportion reported dissatisfaction.

In summary, the results indicate that tutorial participation was common, attendance was generally consistent, and few were dissatisfied with the tutorials among the graduates.

Table 3: To determine the academic performance levels of graduates before and after participation in tutorial sessions.

Academic Performance	Before Tutorial		After Tutorial	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
Perceived Score	1	1.2	0	0
Below 40%	14	17.3	4	4.9
40%–50%	35	43.2	23	28.4
51%–60%	31	38.3	54	66.7
Above 60%				
Actual Score	34	50.7	11	16.4
Poor	28	41.8	18	26.9
Average	5	7.5	38	56.7
Good				
HRORBN Score			1	1.2
Poor			0	0
Average			80	98.8
Good				

Table 3 presents an improvement in the performance of graduates after attending tutorial sessions.

Based on perceived scores, a large proportion of respondents improved their academic performance as the percentage of above-60% score increased from 38.3% to 66.7% before and after the tutorials, respectively, and the percentage of lower scores decreased, thus confirming a positive shift in performance.

Likewise, in terms of actual scores, there was a significant improvement, with the percentage of respondents with good performance rising from 7.5% before the tutorials to 56.7% after, while the number of respondents with poor performance dropped significantly.

Also, professional examination (HRORBN) performance was extremely high with almost all respondents (98.8%) classified as good, only a small proportion as poor.

In conclusion, the results indicate that attendance at the tutorial sessions was related to a significant improvement in perceived and actual academic performance, and excellent performance in professional certification examinations.

Test of Hypotheses

H₀₁: Tutorial participation does not significantly predict academic performance among graduates.

Table: 4						
Model	Sig.	Unstandardized			Standardized	
		Coefficients			Coefficients	
		B	Std. Error		Beta	t
1	(Constant)	1.033	.334	3.096	.003	
	Tutorial Participation	-.240	.109	-.240	-.2199	.031
a. Dependent Variable: Performance Improvement						

R=0.240, R²=0.058, Adjusted R²= 0.046, F=4.834, P < 0.05

The regression analysis was carried out to test the hypothesis that tutorial participation significantly predicts academic performance of the graduates of the School of Health Information Management, OAUTHC.

The regression analysis results in Table 4 reveal that tutorial participation is a significant predictor of academic performance, with a coefficient (β) of -0.240, a t-value of -2.199 and a p-value of 0.031. This suggests that variation in tutorial participation is significantly linked with variation in the academic performance of the respondents.

The model fit statistics show that the tutorial participations have a low but significant explanatory power with an R value of 0.240 and an R² value of 0.058, implying that 5.8% of

the variance in academic performance is accounted for by tutorial participation. The adjusted R^2 (0.046) also indicates that the model is still low but stable in terms of explanatory power, even when adjusted for sample size.

The F-statistic ($F = 4.834$, $p < 0.05$) also indicates that the model is statistically significant, which means that tutorial participation as the independent variable is a significantly better predictor of academic performance than a model without predictors.

The unstandardised coefficient ($B = -0.240$) further shows that a change in tutorial participation is associated with a change in academic performance. While the coefficient is negative, this is due to the way the variable was coded, and not a decrease in academic performance; the significance and magnitude of the relationship is what matters.

Overall, the results indicate that tutorial participation is a significant predictor of academic performance for graduates, but its power to explain academic performance is weak, suggesting that there are other factors beyond the model that may contribute to academic performance. As such, the null hypothesis (H_{01}), which states that tutorial participation does not significantly influence academic performance is rejected.

9. Qualitative Reports

9.1 Qualitative Findings

This chapter reports on the qualitative focus group discussions (FGDs) with seven groups of graduates. The researchers examined two key topics: (i) overall view of tutorial sessions and (ii) impact of tutorial on academic performance. Two major themes emerged from the thematic analysis: (i) general experience of tutorial sessions and (ii) influence of tutorials on academic performance.

9.2 Theme 1: General Perception of Tutorial Sessions

Graduates' responses reveal that the overall experience of tutorial sessions was positive. Well-run sessions, simplification of content, effective teaching and learning value were identified as sub-themes.

Table 5: Theme 1 – Overall Experience of Tutorial Sessions.

Sub-theme	Frequency
Positive general experience	10
Well organized sessions	6
Simplified explanations	5
Very effective teaching	2
Educative experience	2
Well expressed lectures	2

Very nice experience	2
Really helpful sessions	2
Perfect delivery	2

Participants reported that tutorial sessions were most often positive learning experiences. A key theme was that tutorials were structured and organised, which aided learning.

One student noted that the tutorials were "well organised and simplified, making difficult topics easier to understand" whereas another noted tutorials were "very effective and helped cover topics not understood in class".

Also, some students highlighted being taught well saying that lectures were "well expressed and easy to follow", while others described the sessions as "educative and very helpful for academic development".

The results suggest that well-organised and delivered tutorials played a pivotal role in student learning.

9.3 Theme 2: Effect of Tutorials on Academic Performance

This theme focuses on the impact of tutorials on academic performance. The sub-themes include: improved academic performance, better understanding, better retention, motivation and preparation for exams.

Table 6: Theme 2 - Effect of Tutorials on Academic Performance.

Sub-theme	Frequency
Improved performance	7
Improved grades	6
Increased understanding of course content	1
Improved knowledge retention	3
Helped study wider	5
Introduced new knowledge	2
Motivated learning	2
Prepared students for exams	1
Contributed to academic success	1
Simplified difficult topics	1
Added to existing knowledge	1
Helped relate to questions	1
Improved learning comprehension	1

9.4 Narrative of the Findings

High ratings were given for the effects of tutorial sessions on academic performance. The most common reported benefits were academic performance and/or grades.

One participant reported that tutorials “helped me study harder and better understand some concepts which I did not previously understand and helped improve my grades in the license examination.” Another participant said that tutorials “helped me study wider and prepared me for CBT examinations”.

A number of participants highlighted enhanced cognitive functioning (memory and learning). A respondent reported that tutorials “helped improve knowledge retention and allowed better understanding of topics.”

Additional benefits included motivation and confidence building: tutorials “acted as a motivator to study and increased my confidence for the examination.”

The results suggest that tutorials have benefited cognitive, examination and academic confidence.

10. DISCUSSION

This study shows that the level of tutorial participation among graduates of the School of Health Information Management (SHIM), Obafemi Awolowo University Teaching Hospitals Complex (OAUTHC) is high and has a positive relationship with academic performance. The quantitative findings reveal that the majority of study participants engaged in tutorial sessions, regularly attended them and were satisfied with the quality of the tutorials. This is reinforced by the qualitative data, in which respondents consistently reported that tutorial sessions were well structured, productive and helpful in the understanding of complex course content. This quantitative and qualitative evidence shows tutorial sessions are popular and regarded as effective learning experiences. This is in line with the constructivist view that learning is improved through interaction and engagement (3,19), and also supports the views of Bedada (2) and Guerra-Martin (5) who emphasised the value of guided instruction in enhancing learning.

The research also shows a tangible enhancement in academic performance after engaging with tutorials, with perceived scores, academic achievement and professional examination results increasing. The progression from lower to higher performance levels following tutorial sessions indicates that tutorials are important for bridging classroom learning and improving understanding. This is confirmed by the qualitative data which suggests students felt they had improved their grades, gained a better understanding of the course content, were able to retain more information and were better prepared for their exams. This finding is in line with previous research which has emphasised the effectiveness of tutorials in encouraging repeated practice and learning (7,8,9,10), but conflicts with Dunlosky (11), who

reported that students tend to adopt less effective learning strategies in the absence of formal academic support. In this respect, it seems that the tutorial programme has offered such opportunities.

While the results demonstrate a positive impact of tutorial participation, the regression analysis shows that tutorial participation accounts for a relatively small percentage of variance in academic performance ($R^2 = 0.058$). This implies that although tutorial participation is a significant predictor of academic performance, it is not the only factor at play. This is consistent with the view that academic performance is influenced by a complex interaction of characteristics, behaviours and experiences (12,1). The model's low explanatory value suggests that other factors such as learning strategies, motivation, attendance rates and tutorial quality should be taken into account, potentially moderating or mediating the impact of tutorial participation on academic performance.

The qualitative results shed more light on how tutorials impact on performance. Students reported that tutorials improved their understanding, made topics easier and boosted their exam confidence. This is a reflection of the constructivist theory, in which knowledge is built through interaction, discussion and facilitation (18,3). The tutorials' role in fostering collaborative learning, building on prior knowledge, and supporting exam-focused learning further contributes to the improved academic and professional examination performance. These results align with Glomo-Narzoles (6), who emphasised the role of tutorials in promoting cognitive and academic development, especially in "niche" areas.

In summary, the results indicate that tutorials are a valuable academic support tool, which plays a key role in improving academic performance of Health Information Management graduates. But its effects are not isolated, and work in concert with other academic and non-academic factors. The congruence between quantitative gains and qualitative experiences adds to the validity of the results, and the relatively weak explanatory power of the regression model highlights the need for a more holistic view of academic performance. These findings offer empirical evidence for enhancing tutorial support and complementing it with other evidence-based academic strategies to improve learning in health-related educational institutions.

11. Theoretical Application

The findings can be easily explained through the constructivist theories proposed by Lev Vygotsky (19) and Jean Piaget which assert that learning is an interactive process during which knowledge is actively constructed through interaction and based on existing

knowledge. The findings of improved academic performance after participating in tutorials support the view of David Jonassen (18), that learning builds on existing knowledge through meaningful learning activities. Tutorials, as demonstrated in the findings, offered an interactive environment for students to interact with tutors and other students, to discuss complex concepts and reinforce learning, which enabled learning in the Zone of Proximal Development. This is consistent with the claims of Catherine Fosnot (20) and Leslie Steffe and Jerry Gale (21) that learning is a knowledge-construction process that involves reflection and interaction. However, the existence of constraints such as resource constraints and inconsistent teaching suggests that although a constructivist environment was partially facilitated, contextual factors may have acted as barriers to implementing active learning strategies and, as a result, may have moderated academic performance.

12. CONCLUSION

This research explored the impact of tutorial attendance on academic achievement of School of Health Information Management, OAUTHC, Ile-Ife graduates. This study found high participation and satisfaction rates with tutorial sessions, and a significant increase in the perceived and actual academic performance and professional examination results after participating in tutorials. While participation in tutorial sessions was a strong predictor of academic performance, the relationship was weak, suggesting other academic and personal factors are involved in predicting student outcomes. In conclusion, tutorial sessions were found to be a valuable academic support mechanism that supports learning, retention and examination readiness among graduates of Health Information Management.

13. RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The School of Health Information Management, OAUTHC should improve the framework and implementation of tutorial programs through regular timetabling, tutor preparation and teaching guidelines to improve effectiveness and consistency.
2. Lecturers and tutors should use more interactive, student-centred tutorial teaching approaches, such as discussions, problem solving and feedback activities to enhance student learning.
3. Students and graduates should be encouraged to attend and participate regularly in tutorial sessions, and establish good academic habits to enhance learning.

4. Managers and HRORBN should include scheduled tutorial attendance as part of the training and accreditation standards of Health Information Management to enhance the success of professional examination results.
5. Policy makers and educational administrators should ensure the availability of resources, such as teaching aids and conducive learning facilities to support the delivery of tutorial courses in health training institutions.

14. Limitations of the Study

The study focused only on graduates of one school and may limit the ability of the study findings to be applied to other Health Information Management schools in Nigeria. Also, the study used available academic records and self-reported satisfaction survey results which may create measurement and reporting bias. The sample design is also an issue, as it constrains the ability to make causal inferences over time between tutorial attendance and performance.

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