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Teacher Absenteeism and Academic Performance of Secondary School Students in Ilorin West Local Government Area, Kwara State

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Abstract

Teacher absenteeism is a hindrance to schools as an organization in the sense that it hinders the achievement of goal and objectives of the organization. Teachers are like souls of the school and the nation as a whole that is why this study examines the effect of teachers' absenteeism on the academic performance of secondary school students in Ilorin west local government area Kwara state. The objective of the study among others was to identify the causes of teacher absenteeism in areas under study. Six research questions were raised and one hypothesis was formulated to guide the study. The study was limited to secondary schools in Ilorin west. Descriptive research of survey type was adopted for this study. The population for the study comprised four selected secondary schools in Ilorin out of which three schools were selected as sample. Furthermore; hundred respondents were selected using stratified random sampling technique. Data collected were analyzed using simple percentage, mean and Pearson product moment correlation statistics. The hypothesis formulated was tested at 0.05 level of significance. The finds of the study reviewed that teachers' absenteeism is caused mostly by unattractive class room environment, physical factors and home factors, and that the level of teacher absenteeism in the area under study is considered low. Therefore, the study concluded that teacher absenteeism is a contributing factor to poor performance of secondary school students in Ilorin west LGA. Based on the findings the following recommendation was made among others, that a conducive work environment should be made available and that teachers should be highly motivated in their

jobs so as to increase their enthusiasm to work and avoid all forms of laziness.

Keywords: Absenteeism, Teacher, Students, Academic, Performance

Introduction

It has been observed that when a teacher is absent from class, it has effect on the students, the more the number of teachers absent, the more negatively it affects students' academic performance. Teachers are like the soul of the school as well as the nation, because a nation cannot rise above the quality of its teachers. Whatever anybody becomes is as a result of teachers effort, be it politically, educationally, socially and all the rest. That is why teacher absent in the class repeatedly has great impact on the students and therefore should be treated with all seriousness.

Absenteeism is a serious problem confronting schools all over the world. It brings about untold hardships to colleagues and reduction in productivity, this is so because when a teacher is absent from class, it is not only the students that are affected but other teachers who will be deployed to cover up for the absent teacher, which at the end of the day impedes colleagues performance, thus reduced workforce and in turn decreased productivity. Absenteeism hinders an organization from achieving its corporate objectives. There are so many reasons to teachers' absenteeism, while some are cogent others are not, but whatever be the reason to request absence from school, it should be noted that the end result is awful because it unleashes hardship on other teachers and impedes students learning. The most common reason for teacher absenteeism is illness (Abadzi, 2007) which is the major cause of teachers' absence. Teachers may be absent from classes, seminars, conferences, workshops and symposiums, all these are channeled towards making a better teacher, but most at times teachers give reasons for taking leave of absence from programmes designed to develop their potentials maximally. Whatever the reason for absent, it must be noted that it has the same effect on students' academic performance. Bownes (2001) interchangeably used the terms sickness absence and absenteeism, he suggested that a teacher who is absent from duty does so due to sickness or lack of mental ability. Absenteeism can be seen from the view of an employee's choice, that is, it could be voluntarily or involuntarily in the sense of unavoidability.

Teachers absence from duty are most of the times accompanied by

certificate of evidence or medical reports to show that such an individual was actually ill, but most at times these evidences are fake and are shown in order to escape scrutiny from the concerned authority. Clearly enough, illness contribute to involuntary teacher absenteeism, decrease in workforce that leads to how productivity level and finally low students' performance in standard examination, but it must be noted that some of the reasons given for being absent are avoidable but because of the compensation that teachers seek a more creative way to substantiate their reasons and defend their claims. Abadzi (2007) further noted that some teachers use avoidable reasons to do so during the year would lead to loss of their entitlement without any form of compensation.

Pressure within the work environment could be a source of stress or source of teachers' burnout as stress level increases, the job becomes burdensome and morale is lowered leading to decrease in motivation. These scenarios make teachers to develop negative attitude toward their job, they become uncommitted and what follows next is constant absenteeism at work. According to Bruno (2002) high teacher absenteeism tends to lower the morale of the remaining teachers, thus causing them to eventually leave their job.

Excessive pressure is placed on other teachers who are regular at work when the number of absenteeism increases, which is extra demand, made on teachers which bring about stress and stress leads to reduce productivity. Miller, Murmane, and Willett (2003) as well as Shiron at Rosenblatt (2006) agreed that when teacher absenteeism is reduced has the effect of improving or increasing teacher productivity and when policy is changed it could reduce teacher absenteeism rates.

Furthermore, it is perceived that school administration does not provide adequate support for teachers. The welfare of teachers are most looked down upon and as a result, teachers become depressed, stressed out and burned out. To respond to this problem, they take leave absence as the best bet since it has authority backing it. Teachers consider being absent from work as the best remedy for stress and workload challenges. According to Haberman (2005) and Ertan Kirmakci (2011) teaching is a very stressful job requires the teacher be highly alert to conduct his task properly. When a teacher attitude of commitment is supported by the administration it will go a long way to reduce absenteeism.

A healthy relationship among teachers, principals, vice-principals, supervisors and all other stakeholders within the school environment can impact high productivity while the reverse can bring low morale, stress, lack of commitment to job and finally absenteeism from work (Hilton, Shendan, Clary and Whiteford, 2009). It is clear with the above submission that stress and burnout which are seen as factors that increase demand on the teachers through excess workload, societal demand, poor team work, abridged relations, autocratic leadership style and level of job satisfaction result in high teacher absenteeism.

The rate at which teachers absent themselves from work has raised so many concerns among stakeholders of Education. This problem is great concern due to the excruciating pain it has deposited on the society. This problem has led to decline in the quality of education received by learner. A study carried out by Clotfelter, Ladd and Vigor (2007) confirmed that teacher absence is associated with lower student achievement in schools. Teachers' absenteeism also results in students absent from class not having the teacher in the classroom to avert classes. This assertion is supported by Chandhury, et al (2005) that as teacher absence increased by 10% it led to a decrease in student test scores by 0.02 standard deviation and a 1-8% decrease in students attendance. Clotfelter et al (2007) were of the view that teacher absenteeism causes an increase in students' misbehavior thereby causing administrators to concentrate more of the school resources in handling disciplinary issues.

Students who study in a very conducive environment usually have successful education experience compare to their counterparts who study in a disrupted, unfriendly and unconducive environment. However, teacher absences brings about discontinuity, distortiveness and disturbance in the sequential arrangement of learning experiences because, an unprepared teacher is deployed to stay in as a substitute for the absent teacher. Also, teachers continuous absent from class would bring damage to students' motivation to learn (Bruno, 2002).

Statement of the Problem

The continuous fallen in the students' academic performance in the national examinations in Nigeria has been a concern to many on what could be a problem. Among other the researcher observed the rate of teachers' absenteeism in schools in the recent times has a source of concern to education stakeholders, and for the fact that teacher

absences has contributed to this problem has made it an object of bigger concern. Implication of this is that students will develop bad attitude like absenteeism, truancy and indiscipline which directly or indirectly affect their academic performance. Teachers various point in time in different institutions have devised means of absenting themselves from work to the detriment of the learners, that is why this study is set to investigate the effect of teachers absenteeism on students' academic performance in Ilorin West Local Government Secondary Schools.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to investigate the effect of teachers' absenteeism on academic performance of secondary school students in Ilorin West Local Government. Other specific objectives are:

- (1) To identify the causes of teachers absenteeism in the Ilorin West Local Government.
- (2) To determine the level of teachers absenteeism in the Ilorin West Local Government Secondary Schools.
- (3) To examine the level of students' academic performance in Ilorin West Local Government Secondary Schools.
- (4) To recommend solution to the identified causes.

Research Questions

To guide this study, the following research questions were raised:

1. What are the causes of teacher absenteeism in Ilorin West Local Government Secondary Schools?
2. What is the level of students' academic performance in Ilorin West Local Government Secondary Schools?
3. What are the solutions to the identified causes of teachers' absenteeism?

Research Hypothesis

H₀: There is no significant relationship between teacher absenteeism and students academic performance in Ilorin West Local Government Secondary Schools.

Research Methodology

Descriptive research of survey type was adopted for this study. The population for the study comprised all teachers of secondary schools in

Ilorin-west Local Government Area. Furthermore; hundred respondents were selected using stratified sampling technique. Questionnaire tagged "Teachers' Absenteeism Questionnaire" (TAB) was used to obtain information from the respondents while, Proforma named "Students' Academic Performance Proforma" (SAPP) was used to obtain students' West African Examination Certificate (WAEC) result. Data collected were analyzed using simple percentage, mean and Pearson product moment correlation statistics. The hypothesis formulated was tested at 0.05 level of significance.

Result and Discussions

Research Question One: What are the common causes of teachers' absenteeism in Ilorin-West Local Government Secondary School?

Table 1

Causes of Teachers' Absenteeism in Ilorin-west Local Government Secondary Schools

S/N	Items	Mean	Rank
1.	Physical Factors	1.24	2 nd
2.	Personal Attitude	1.24	
3.	Classroom Environment	1.39	1 st
4	Home Factors	1.14	3 rd

Result in Table 1 shows the common causes of teachers' absenteeism in Ilorin-west Local Government Secondary Schools. As shown in the analysis, classroom environment is the most causes of teachers' absenteeism. This means that when classroom is hot, too noisy, and uncomfortable, when teacher lacks classroom management skill and unable to instill discipline in his or her students, such teacher is liable to absent his or herself from school. Ranked next to classroom environment is physical factor, followed by home factor, students-related reasons and personal attitude respectively. These contradict Abadzi (2007) who said the most common reason for teacher absenteeism is illness.

Research Question Two: What are the other causes of teachers' absenteeism in Ilorin-West Local Government Secondary Schools?

Research Question Two: What is the level of teachers' absenteeism in Ilorin-West Local Government Secondary School?

Responses on teachers' absenteeism in Ilorin-west Local Government Secondary Schools were summed and subjected to percentage analysis. This minimum, maximum and range score of the respondents were 26, 52 and 26. The range was divided by the two level (high and low) and the cut off was 13. Scores between 26-39 and 40-52 are categorized as high and low respectively.

Table 2

Level of teachers' absenteeism in Ilorin-West Local Government Secondary Schools

Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
High Level	8	8.0
Low Level	92	92.0
Total	100	100

Table 2 presented the level of teachers' absenteeism in Ilorin-West Local Government Secondary Schools. As shown in the table 8 (8%) of the respondents have high level of absenteeism, while 92 (92%) recorded low level of absenteeism. This means that the level of teachers' absenteeism in Ilorin-west Local Government Secondary Schools was low.

Research Question Three: What is the level of students' academic performance in Ilorin-west Local Government Secondary Schools?

Students' academic performance in Ilorin-west Local Government Secondary Schools were summed and subjected to percentage analysis. The minimum, maximum and range score of the respondents were 16, 80 and 64. The range was divided by the three levels (high, average and low) and the cut off was 21. Scores between 16-37, 38-59 and 60-80 are categorized as high, average and low performance respectively.

Table 3

Level of students' academic performance in Ilorin-west Local Government Secondary Schools

Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
High Performance	51	51.0
Average Performance	39	39.0
Low Performance	10	10.0
Total	100	100

Table 3 presented the level of students' academic performance in Ilorin-West Local Government Secondary Schools. As shown in the table 51 (51%) of the respondents have high level of academic performance, 39 (39%) have average academic performance, while 10 (10%) recorded low academic performance. This means that the level of students' academic performance in Ilorin-West Local Government Secondary Schools was moderate.

Research Question Four: What are the solutions to the identified causes of teachers' absenteeism in Ilorin-West Local Government Secondary Schools?

Table 4
Solutions to the Identified Causes of Teachers' Absenteeism in Ilorin-west Local Government Secondary Schools

S/N	Statements	Mean	Rank
1.	Close supervision/Assessment	3.92	9 th
2.	Sensitizing/Guidance and Counselling/Training	4.00	3 rd
3.	Create conducive school climate	4.08	2 nd
4.	Government to employ adequate substitute teachers/reduce responsibilities	3.92	9 th
5.	Timely motivation and incentive programme	4.19	1 st
6.	Introduce attendance register	4.00	3 rd
7.	Improve remuneration	4.00	3 rd
8.	Workable leave policies	3.92	9 th
9.	Improve infrastructure	4.00	3 rd
10.	Strengthening performance contract	3.89	13 th
11.	Co-curricular activities/seminars, meeting to be conducted on weekend/vacation	3.89	15 th
12.	Introduction of full free secondary education	3.78	15 th
13.	Security/job assurance	3.89	15 th
14.	Discourage teachers from performing non-school activities	3.89	15 th
15.	Creating rehabilitation centres	3.78	20 th
16.	Enlighten teachers on how to take care of their overall well-being	3.78	20 th
17.	Ensure conducive classroom atmosphere for teaching and learning	3.89	15 th
18.	Sensitize the society on the evils of absenteeism	3.88	19 th
19.	Inform students on the need to be respectful to their teachers and stop deviant behaviour	3.78	20 th
20.	Give extra attention to those who are constantly having health problems	3.90	14 th
21.	Lay emphasis on how academic success is very much dependent on their teachers' attitude to work.	3.97	8 th

Key: 0-2.99 = not a solution
3.0-5.0 = solution

Table 4 presented the solutions to the identified causes of teachers' absenteeism in Ilorin-West Local Government Secondary Schools. Based on the analysis, solution to causes of teachers' absenteeism are timely motivation and incentive programme (mean = 4.19); creation of conducive school climate (mean = 4.08); sensitizing/guidance and counseling/training (mean = 4.0); introduction of attendance register (mean = 4.0); improved remuneration (mean = 4.0); strengthening performance contract (mean = 4.0); laying emphasis on how academic success is very much dependent on their teachers attitude to work (mean = 3.97); close supervision/assessment (mean = 3.92); employ adequate substitute teachers/reduce responsibilities (mean = 3.92); and others, all the identified solution recorded mean scores above the benchmark of 3.0. Shiron and Rosenblatt (2006) opined that when policy is changed it could reduce teacher absenteeism rates

Hypotheses Testing

The hypothesis formulated for this study was tested and the results obtained are presented on the table below.

Hypothesis One: There is no significant relationship between teachers' absenteeism and students' academic performance in Ilorin-West Local Government Secondary Schools.

In order to test the hypothesis, responses on teachers' absenteeism and students' academic performance in Ilorin-West Local Government Secondary Schools were analysed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The result of the Pearson Product Moment Correlation is reported in Table 5.

Table 5

Teachers' absenteeism and students' academic performance in Ilorin-West Local Government Secondary Schools.

Variable	N	r-cal.	p-value	Remark
teachers' absenteeism	100	0.04	0.712	Not Significant
Students Performance	100			

exhibition of improper behavior all of these include the achievement of school objectives.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study the following recommendations were made:

1. Government should make provision for more fundings of schools, so that the necessary facilities would be provided, because there is need to care for the aesthetic aspect of the school, since an appealing environment motivates even a lazy employee to carry out his/her job.
2. The school should ensure job security of teachers, so as to cultural absenteeism that results due to teachers leaving their jobs to look for other jobs for fear of being relieved of the duties.
3. The government should motivate teachers and provide adequate incentives to help keep teachers on their jobs.
4. Schools should be more serious with the use of attendance register which must be signed by teachers when they enter the school and when they leave the school premises, this will help in monitoring teachers movement and the rate at which they absent themselves from school and also help to keep in school since they are aware that their movement is being monitored.

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Result in Table 5 show t-calculated value of 0.04 and p-value of 0.712 which is greater than 0.05 ($0.712 > 0.05$). Since 0.712 is greater than 0.05 alpha level of significance, the null hypothesis was accepted. This means that there is positive but not significant relationship between teachers' absenteeism and students' academic performance in Ilorin-West Local Government Secondary Schools. This is supported by Clotfelter, Ladd and Vigor (2007) that teacher absence is associated with lower students' achievement in schools. Also, Shiron and Rosenblatt (2006) agreed that when teacher absenteeism is reduced it has the effect of improving or increasing teacher productivity.

Summary of Findings

Based on the analysis of the findings above, the following can be deduced:

1. The most common causes of teachers' absenteeism are classroom environment, physical factors and home factors.
2. The level of teachers' absenteeism in Ilorin-West Local Government Secondary Schools was low.
3. Solution to causes of teachers' absenteeism are timely motivation and incentive programme; creation of conducive school climate; sensitizing/guidance and counseling/training; introduction of attendance register; improved remuneration; strengthening performance contract; laying emphasis on how academic success is very much dependent on their teachers' attitude to work; close supervision/assessment; employ adequate substitute teachers/reduce responsibilities and others.
4. There is positive and not significant relationship between teachers' absenteeism and students' academic performance in Ilorin-West Local Government Secondary Schools.

Conclusion

This study concluded that the poor performance of students can be hinged upon the teachers' absenteeism from work. Teachers are like souls of the school their frequent absent causes untold hardship to colleagues and students poor academic performance as well as

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