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Enamiroro Oghuvbu

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Author(s): [Enamiroro Oghuvbu](#)

Introduction

Absenteeism is major and continuous administrative problem among secondary school students in developing countries. Since the problem is to 70% student home based, there is need for the student/parent to help identify and proffer solutions to this quality disturbing problems that could lead to students' dropout from school.

Ubogu (2004:25) identified illness, permitted leave, voluntary absenteeism, as common forms of absenteeism. Identified causes of absenteeism include: illness, financial hardship, age, social class, geographical area, truancy and institutional influence. School related factors, such as; teachers' attitude, poor administration, high cost of education, illness due to weather condition such as cold, temperature grey days causes absenteeism among students. Harsh school rules and regulations could cause absenteeism i.e. corporal punishment; families where children prepare themselves for school and parent to work. Truancy among students is caused by school-related reasons. Bullied by school staff, boredom, dislike of teachers and avoidance of tests. These are without parents' knowledge (Susan Kirk 2003). School authorities authorized absence for ailments, medical and death in the family. Parent particularly in rural areas keep their children at home for domestic activities on market and community festival days .In crises areas, student absence from school for safety reasons.

Unaccepted absence had a negative effect on peer relationship, which could cause absence. According to Malcolm, Wilson, Davidson and Kirk (2003) teachers identified effects of absenteeism on children are; academic underachievement which increases costs and wastage, difficulty in making friends which could lead to boredom, loss of confidence and engagement in premature sexual activity which could lead to pregnancy resulting in dropout and stress among young careers.

The society suffers as the children of school age hang around in the streets, intimidating other people and stealing properties of those who are in school and other place of work.

Absenteeism and lateness could be reduced by providing; free education, counseling, discipline relevant curriculum and social welfare seminal to students' .The use of electronic registration systems, truancy sweeps, contact with parents, and support for pupils with poor attendance and effective school administration by principals. (Davidson et al 2003) (Ubogun 2004: 160).

Absenteeism could results into poor academic achievement, lost of friends and partners, disruption in

class when absentees return affect the behavior of other students, difficulty in keeping accurate records, reduced ability to meet instructional targets and damaged school reputation. For school community positive relationship to commune in the administration of secondary schools, there is need to identify causes of absenteeism and lateness among secondary schools in Nigeria (Oghuvbu 2002).

Lateness is common among female students than male students. This is as a result of their involvement in domestic activities by their parent. Distance to school, school discipline, family background and school location are among causes of lateness among secondary school students (Emore 2005).

Statement of Problem

Achievement of the goals of secondary education largely depends in the positive dedication to academic work by students and instructional performance of teachers. The continuous existence of the problem of poor academic performance in external examinations, dropout, absenteeism, lateness, and drug abuse among secondary school students is a major task facing educational Administrators. Presently, statistics showed a good percentage increase in the number of quality teachers in secondary schools in Nigeria. Criminal records also revealed that most of those involved are either dropouts or students on school uniform but divert from school for other criminal activities. From the experience of the researcher as a secondary school Mathematics teacher, 70% of students involved in continuous absenteeism dropout of school. Also lateness leads to absenteeism. Analytically, the problem of lateness leads to absenteeism, which results in dropout. These unending problems of dropout, poor academic performance and increase in youth involvement in crimes call for the following questions. What are the causes of absenteeism and lateness among secondary school students in Nigeria?

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised and answered

1. What are the causes of absenteeism among secondary school students in Nigeria?
2. What are the causes of lateness among secondary students in Nigeria?
3. Is there any relationship between causes of lateness and absenteeism among secondary school students?
4. What are the possible solutions to the problems of absenteeism and lateness among secondary school students?

Hypothesis

The following hypothesis were formulated and tested

1. There is no significant difference between the mean perception scores of principals, teachers, parents and students on the identified causes of absenteeism among secondary school students in Nigeria.
2. There is no significant difference between the mean perception scores of principals, teachers,

parents and students on the identified causes of lateness among secondary school students in Nigeria.

3. There is no significant difference between the mean perception scores of principals, teachers, parents and students on the identified solutions to the problems of absenteeism among secondary school students in Nigeria.

4. School location does not significantly influence the mean perception scores of principals, teachers, parents and students on the identified causes of absenteeism and lateness among secondary school students in Nigeria.

5. Gender does not significantly influence the mean perception scores of principals, teachers, parents, and students on identified causes of absenteeism and lateness among secondary school students in Nigeria.

Methods and Procedure

The design of this study was a descriptive research. Independent variables were identified causes lateness and absenteeism; and dependent variables were possible solutions to the causes of absenteeism and lateness among secondary school in Nigeria.

Population and Sample

The six thousand, nine hundred and forty- four (6,944) secondary school principals, one hundred and ninety –three thousand, three hundred and forty- eight (193,348) teachers, all students and their parents in the thirty-six states that made up the Federal Republic of Nigeria during the 2005/2006 academic session constitute the target population of their study.

A sample of 17,417 respondents made up of 432 principals, 5760 teachers 5760 parents and 5760 secondary school students was drawn using the stratified and cluster sampling techniques to select eighteen (18) states, three (3) from each of the six (6) geopolitical zones that made up the thirty six (36) states of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, four hundred and thirty two (432) secondary school from each selected state made up twenty schools from each State used in this study.

The sample was made up of 3456 each of female teachers, parents and students (10368), 2204 each of male teachers, male parents and male students (6612) with 78408 (45%) rural, semi-urban 4356 (25%) and 52272 (30%) Urban teachers. Only teachers with five years and above teaching experience and Senior Secondary Students were used this study.

The instrument for data collection was a thirty items questionnaire patterned after four likert point scale. The instrument was first administered on 50 each of a set of teachers, parent, students and 20 principals within an interval of two weeks. The result of this test re-test reliability was 0.75. This was also a measure of interval constituency of the instrument. Hence the coefficient of 0.75 is indications of strong inter items relationship and validity of the instrument. Descriptive statistics, percentage was used to identify principals, teachers, parents and students perceptions on the causes and possible solutions to the problem of absenteeism and lateness among secondary school students in Nigeria.

The parametric statistics product involved correlation coefficient and analysis of variance was used in the analysis of the research questions and five hypotheses.

Collection of Data

Each subject was scored on the basis of his/her responses to the statement scoring was done in order of strongly agree (SA) 4, Agreed (A) 3, Disagree (D) 2, and strongly disagreed (SD) 1.

Results

Research Question 1: What are the causes of absenteeism among secondary school students in Nigeria?

Table 1. Identified causes of Absenteeism among secondary school students in Nigeria.

S/N	ITEMS	PRINCIPALS		TEACHERS		PARENT	
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
		Score	Score	Score	Score	Score	Score
		%	%	%	%	%	%
1	Parent engagement of students at home	799 77	495 72	6423 72	10389 75	6422 73	6537 47
2	Cultural activities market or festival days	618 60	436 63	5781 66	10326 75	3356 38	6359 46
3	When they don't offer subject on the time-table for the day	683 66	460 66	4635 53	9223 67	5651 64	6142 44
4	Parent poor financial condition non provision of instructional facilities.	649 63	545 79	5800 66	10472 76	5625 64	6745 49
5	Teachers non-commitment to	650	508	4999	9369	5210	10092

	the teaching of their subjects	63	73	57	68	59	73
6	Poor health condition	730	501	6436	10875	5378	10506
		70	72	73	79	61	76
7	Lack of food	626	421	5063	8938	4875	9266
		60	61	57	65	55	67
8	Involvement in drug misuse	601	406	5258	9306	5572	6913
		58	59	60	67	63	50
9	To avoid corporal punishment by senior students	621	438	5592	9677	5272	6100
		60	63	63	70	60	44
10	Involvement in commercial activities on school days	655	448	5548	10484	5422	6496
		63	65	63	76	62	47
11	Lack of transportation	713	495	5283	9875	5439	10094
		69	72	60	71	62	73
12	Inadequate accommodation for private reading in school –no library facilities	552	457	4540	8710	5122	9304
		53	66	52	63	58	67
13	To avoid corporal punishment by teachers	557	480	5285	8446	5052	8709
		54	69	60	61	57	63
	Total	8454	6090	70643	126090	68396	103263
		57.9	67.7	61.7	70.2	59.7	57.4

Question 2: What are the causes of lateness among Secondary School Students in Nigeria?

Table 2: Identified Causes of Lateness among Secondary School Students in Nigeria

S/N	ITEMS	PRINCIPALS		TEACHERS		PARENT		S
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	N
		Score %	Score %	Score %	Score %	Score %	Score %	S %
1	Going late to bed because of watching films and home night movies	594 85	869 84	7261 83	1170 86	6348 72	10783 78	5
2	Wake up late in the night	590 85	849 82	6625 76	1170 85	1851 84	11197 81	5
3	Parent engagement in domestic activities in the morning	524 76	710 69	3759 43	10576 77	1635 74	10368 75	5
4	Distance to school	521 75	700 68	6611 64	10403 75	1829 83	11059 80	5
5	Walking to school	453 65	582 56	3438 40	9674 70	1433 65	11750 85	5
6	Traffic problems on way to school	465 67	608 59	6673 63	8071 58	4320 49	6221 45	5
7	Avoiding morning	469	610	5176	9681	4761	8986	6

	assignments by senior students	68	59	59	70	54	65	
8	Avoiding punishment during assembly by teachers	445 64	638 62	5516 63	9084 66	5554 63	6246 45	5
9	Most teachers come late to school	437 63	613 59	5283 60	5301 60	5301 60	10230 74	4
10	Keeping friends who are not students	476 69	555 54	6057 69	9514 69	4937 56	10783 78	5
	Total	4974 71.6	6734 73.8	56399 62.3	99634 7.13	37969 66.	97623 70	5 4

Research Question 3

Is there any relationship between causes of lateness and absenteeism among secondary school students in Nigeria?

Table 3: Summary of Pearson r on the Relationship between Causes of Lateness and Absenteeism among Secondary School Students in Nigeria.

Variables	N	Summation	Sum of Squares	$\sum AL$	Cal r	r^2
Relationship	17,412	A =43,9,628 L =1,801,673,478	1,901,512,422 1,801,673,478	326,858,989	0.1715	2.94

Since calculated $r = +0.1715$ and coefficient of determination of 2.94, it revealed a weak positive corrective. Then coefficient of determination (2.94) showed that only 2.94% of the causes of lateness influence the causes of absenteeism. Hence there is no significant relationship between causes of absenteeism and lateness among secondary school students in Nigeria.

Question 4: What are the Possible Solutions to the Problems of Lateness and Absenteeism among Secondary School Students?

Table 4: Identified Possible Solutions to the Problems of Lateness and Absenteeism among Secondary School Students in Nigeria.

S/N	ITEMS	PRINCIPALS		TEACHERS		PARENT		ST
		Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	Ma
		score %	Score %	Score %	Score %	Score %	Score %	sc
1	Corporal punishment should be given to students involved	657 63	522 75	6688 76	12145 88	6092 69	9244 67	60 (
2	Parents should not disturb their children from going school	638 62	499 72	6492 74	12138 88	6303 72	9972 72	60 (
3	Students should attend schools close to their homes	597 58	467 63	6278 71	10715 78	5704 65	8786 64	50 (
4	More boarding schools should be established by government and private individuals.	611 59	511 74	5850 66	12242 89	5863 67	8640 63	50 (
5	Teachers	664	544	6448	12623	6647	10888	60

	should provide students with instructional materials	64	79	73	91	75	79	7
6	Parents should provide students with instructional materials	673 65	524 76	6310 72	12249 89	6277 71	9743 70	6%
7	School heads and community members should supervise students activities at home and between the home and school	607 59	510 74	6052 69	11666 84	6118 69	8765 63	5%
8	Library facilities should be provide in secondary schools	660 64	505 73	6732 76		6550 74	10535 76	6%
9	Activities of senior students and junior students should be supervised by teachers	678 65	529 76	7286 83	87	6480 74	10181 74	6%
10	Teachers involved in immoral affairs with students	706 68	547 79	6921 79	12478 90	6550 74	10909 79	6%

	should be dismissed							
11	Those involved in the selling of bad drugs and immoral films should be persecuted	659 64	548 79	6171 70	12533 91	6515 74	9556 69	6%
12	Parent should check their children in school regularly	614 59	578 84	6259 71	12866 93	6339 72	10514 76	6%
	Total	7764 62	6252 75	77487 73	145833 88	75438 71	117733 71	73%

TOTAL: 581983 70%, Grand Total Maximum = 835,776 i.e. 69,648x 12

Item Maximum = 69,648 i.e. 17412 x 4

Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference between the mean perception scores of principals, teachers, parents and students on the identified causes of absenteeism among secondary school students in Nigeria.

Table 5: Summary of ANOVA on the Identified Causes of Absenteeism among Secondary School Students in Nigeria.

Sources of Variance	Sum of Squares	Df	Variance (MS)	F Cal.	F. Crit.	Decision

Among	247388.9	3	82,462.96	0.2963	2.68	Result not sign. Accept Ho
Within	4,845,266,803	17408	278,335.64			
Total	4,845,514,192	17411	2783018.85			

Since F calculated is less than F critical value i.e. $0.2963 < 2.68$, accept null hypothesis. There is no significant difference between the mean perception scores of principals, teachers, parents and students on the identified causes of absenteeism among secondary school students in Nigeria.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference between the mean perception scores of principals, teachers, parents and students on the identified causes of lateness among secondary school students in Nigeria.

Table 6: Summary Table of ANOVA on the Identified Causes of Lateness among Secondary School Students in Nigeria.

Sources of Variance	Sum of Squares	Df	Variance (MS)	F Cal.	F. Crit.	Decision
Among	791,430.84	3	263,810.28	0.9038	2.68	Result not sign. Accept Ho
Within	5081459305	17408	61528.19			
Total	5082250736	17411	291,898.54			

Since F calculated is less than F critical value i.e. $0.9038 < 2.68$, accept null hypothesis. There is no significant difference between the mean perception scores of principals, teachers, parents and students on the identified causes of lateness among secondary school students in Nigeria.

Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference between the mean perception scores of principal, teachers, parents and students on the identified solutions to the problems of absenteeism and lateness among secondary school students in Nigeria.

Table 7: Summary of ANOVA on Identified Solutions to the Problems of Absenteeism and Lateness among Secondary School Students in Nigeria.

Sources of Variance	Sum of Squares	Df	Variance (MS)	F Cal	F Cri.	Decision

Among	374603	3	124867.7	2.0294	2.68	Result not signt. Accept Ho
Within	1,071,082,818	17408	61528.19			
Total	1071457421	17411	61,539.11			

Since F calculated value of 2.0294 is less than f critical value of 2.68 result is not significant, accept null hypothesis. There is no significant difference between the mean perception scores of principals, teachers, parents and students on the identified solutions to the problems of absenteeism and lateness among secondary school students in Nigeria.

Discussion

The study revealed poor condition of health, lack of transportation parent poor financial condition, inability of parent to provide instructional materials and teachers non-commitment to the teaching of their subjects as causes of absenteeism. Going late to bed because of watching films and home movies, resulting into wake up late in the morning, distance to school and keeping friends who are not students are causes of lateness among secondary school students in Nigeria. These findings are consistent with those of Ubogu (2004), Heather Malcolm, Valerie Wilson, Julia Davidson and Susan Kirk (2003).

Identified solutions to the causes of absenteeism and lateness were teachers should be punctual and regular in school, activities of Senior and Junior students should be supervised by teachers, parents should check their children in school regularly, library faculties should be provided in school to engage students during their free periods and punishment should be given to students involved in continuous absenteeism and lateness by school administrators.

The result of this study showed that both the school authority and parents are involved in the factor that generates absenteeism and lateness among students. There is no significant difference between the views of principals, teachers, parents and students in the identified causes and possible solutions to the problems of absenteeism and lateness among secondary school students in Nigeria as revealed in this study. Also the causes of absenteeism are not significantly related to causes of lateness. The study revealed that only 2.94% of the causes of lateness influences absenteeism that is students are not absent from school because of distance wake up late or keeping friends who are not students. However, poor parent financial status could result to lateness and absenteeism.

The finding of this study could help reduce the problems of absenteeism and lateness since the four groups involved in the creation, management and control of these problems have no significant difference in the identification of causes and possible solutions to these structural quality and societal disturbing problem, which affects the educational system in Nigeria.

Conclusions and Recommendations.

Poor health conditions, parent poor financial condition, parent engagement of students at home, lack of transportation and avoidance of corporal punishment by teachers are causes of absenteeism

Going late to bed, because of watching films, waking up late, parent engagement in domestic activities in the morning and distance to school, causes lateness. Corporal punishment should be given to students involved, parents should encourage their children to be regular at school, provision of more boarding schools, teachers should be supervised by the Ministry of Education officials and parents should check their children in school regularly are some possible solutions to the problems of absenteeism and lateness in secondary schools in Nigeria.

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