TEACHERS’ ABSENTEEISM IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS AND STUDENTS’ ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN MAIDUGURI METROPOLIS, BORNO STATE, NIGERIA

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Abstract
Teacher absenteeism is one of the challenges affecting the educational system in Nigeria today. Information coming from different educational zones, schools, teachers and school boards has shown clearly that teachers are actually exhibiting the attribute of absenteeism during working hours and others do not report to their working stations. The main objective of the study was to determine the impact of absenteeism of public secondary school teachers on students’ academic performance in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State. The study employed a descriptive research design. The population for the study comprised 1435 teachers and 1,734 students of public senior secondary schools in Borno State out of which 80 teachers and 170 students were selected using simple random sampling techniques. Research instruments used to collect data were Questionnaire and Proforma. Questionnaire and Proforma were used to solicit the information about absenteeism and students’ academic performance. The results established that teachers’ absenteeism impacted negatively on students’ academic performance in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State. The findings also revealed that there is no significant relationship between teachers’ absenteeism and students’ academic performance in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State. Based on the results of the findings the researcher concludes that teachers’ absenteeism is a major threat to students’ academic performance as it is found to negatively impact on their performance. The researchers recommend that strong supervision team should be inaugurated to ensure that extant policy on teachers’ absenteeism was strictly followed and implemented. The Borno State Government and Non-governmental Organizations should come up with incentive for dedicated and committed teachers to boost their morale and at the same time motivate defaulters towards committing themselves.

Introduction
Education is a bed-rock for national development either socially, politically or economically. We cannot talk of the education system with a curriculum minus the implementers of the curriculum. Consequently, teachers play a great role in the attainment of educational goals in any given country. In this regard, teachers are responsible for high standards in education and high quality. When one talks about quality education with high standards, it is very hard to leave behind teachers since are the ones who transmit knowledge to the learners and help learners to gain knowledge and skills.

Nigeria’s education system is based on the assumption that teachers and students should be in class every weekday. In other words, the public education system is based on the assumption that teachers and students should regularly attend school. The law governing the system allowed illness or the occasional doctor's appointment, family vacation, special event or crisis to make teachers or students to absent themselves from schools. According FGN (2014) public secondary education should run from Monday to Friday except for some of the private schools.

Teacher absenteeism is widely recognised as a serious problem, particularly in disadvantaged areas, yet there is little systematic research and data on teacher absence in developing nations like Nigeria. Generally, literature discusses the phenomenon of teacher absenteeism on the basis of high-income countries and low-income countries. This research argues that the reasons for teacher absenteeism in developed nations are largely personal matters related to the individual and the rate of absence is relatively low.

Teacher absenteeism is a teacher’s behaviour grounded on physical, psychological and social
reasons to abscond from either school or class which affect students' development negatively. Absenteeism cannot only be a symptom of negative feelings about school but also sourced by many different reasons (Gökyer, 2012). Absenteeism is typically based on total days of school missed, including both excused and unexcused absences (Balfanz & Byrnes, 2012). The Borno State Teaching Service Board (2013) adopted definitions for teachers absenteeism as excused and unexcused absences for use by schools and districts in order to implement the statutory policies and procedures concerning truants, and the reporting of truancy offers the three forms students' absenteeism.

IBIS/NNED (2010) defined Teacher absenteeism as teachers not available in school at the time of visits by the team. This includes teachers who have reported for work and have left for whatever reason before the arrival of the team and teachers yet to report to school. Teacher absenteeism is defined in the study as any type of teacher absence from the classroom; it includes both personal and professional absences (Robinson, 2008). Personally, teacher absenteeism is defined as a deliberate attempt by teachers to initiate absence from the classroom. In other words, the teacher has made the decision to be absent for reasons such as personal illness, family illness, personal business, death in the family, or moving.

According to Williams (1999), Weller (1996), Wadesango and Machingambi (2011) teachers who are critical and have high expectations for management, positive attitudes and behaviours affect students' dedication to school positively. However, authoritarian attitudes, lack of communication and high expectations from school can cause absenteeism (Ataman, 2001). In most cases teachers are to be role models to their students. This partly explains why teachers who are the basic element in producing quality education of a nation. Teacher absenteeism is a global challenge and it has a negative implication on students like depriving learners an opportunity to learn.

Due to this challenge, the delivery of quality education is in critical situation since teachers are the key element in making the delivery of quality education. Studies have also shown that teacher absenteeism is a global challenge mostly facing developing countries as compared to developed countries. For instance Hubbell, (2008) observed that, in developing countries, the teacher absenteeism rate is above 40% while in developed countries it is as low as 10%.

Consequently, it can have negative effects on an entire school system from lowering students' achievement and attendance to damaging the school reputations to broader economic losses (Haris van Keuren, 2009). Recognizing that teacher absenteeism affects the equity of education access for students and functions as a school-based determinant of their academic success, the U.S. Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights included teacher absences as a new item on its biennial Civil Rights Data Collection survey in 2009 (Miller, 2012). Teacher absenteeism drains school resources and increases administrative time spent on replacing classroom and managing attendance (Obeng-Denteh, Yeboah, Sam & Monkah, 2011). For example, researches have revealed that, some 10% to 24% of recurring primary education expenditures worldwide is lost to teacher absenteeism, including an estimated $16 million in Ecuador and up to $2 billion in India (World Bank, 2012, as cited in AfDB. 2013). In the United States alone, an estimated $4 billion is tied up in compensating for teacher absenteeism (Miller, 2012).

Abadzi (2009) cited in Lee, Goodman, Dandapani & Kekahio (2015) believe that in emergent nations teacher professional levels and age-related seniority contribute to high absence rates. This is in agreement with the study conducted in Indonesia whereby, highly educated teachers and headmasters exhibited higher absence rates than grade teachers (for example, teachers who teach subjects other than physical education and religion) (Lee, Goodman, Dandapani & Kekahio, 2015).

Much attention has been focused on the attendance of children in schools and the impact that frequent student absences have on student learning (Finlayson, 2009). However, the same attention needs to be focused on the attendance of teachers who are charged with the responsibility of teaching these children. Therefore, there is a need to carry out an investigation on the impact of absenteeism of public secondary school teachers on students' academic performance in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State, Nigeria.

The objectives of the study are to determine the impact of teachers’ absenteeism in public secondary schools on students’ academic performance in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State, Nigeria and the relationship between teachers’ absenteeism and students’ academic performance in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State, Nigeria.
Literature review
Melissa (2011) relationships between teacher attendance and student scores on the tennessee comprehensive assessment program achievement test in east Tennessee. The study revealed significant relationship between teacher attendance and student scores on the tennessee comprehensive assessment program achievement test in east Tennessee. This means that teachers absenteeism greatly affect the students' academic performance in that locality. Bui (2005) found that teacher absenteeism affects a student's college attendance. The more hours that teachers spent teaching increased the likelihood of college attendance for their students, while frequent absence from school decreased the likelihood of college attendance (Bui, 2005).

Miller et al., (2007) a study of fourth grade students' performance in North Carolina on state mathematics achievement tests given annually in May found a small but significant negative impact on student math scores attributable to teacher absences. Mashaba and Maile (2018) investigated factors underlying teacher absence in disadvantaged communities. The study used qualitative methods and data was collected through semi-structured interviews. The findings reveal that the schools are ineffective in curbing and reducing teacher absenteeism due to insufficient policy measures. A research conducted by Tao, (2013) relationship between teachers' absenteeism and students' academic performance in Tanzania secondary schools. The study revealed that teachers in Tanzania acknowledged that they had to even leave the school during the teaching day to look for other work. This comes as a result of dissatisfaction with the teaching job.

Methodology
The mixed research design was used in this study. The populations for this study were all students and teachers of Maiduguri Metropolis comprised of 1435 teachers and 1,734 students of public senior secondary schools in Borno State out of which 80 teachers and 170 students were selected using simple random sampling techniques. The questionnaire was tagged as “perception of teachers’ absenteeism on students’ academic performance”. The questionnaire were structured in such away that The instrument has Cronbach Alpha values of $\alpha=0.937$. The data were analysis using Frequencies, Percentages, Mean, standard deviation and Pearson Products Moment Correlation Coefficient tests were used in order to evaluate the data.

Results and discussion
Question one: What is the impact of Teachers Absenteeism on Students Academic Performance?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Cumulative Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreed</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>23.8</td>
<td>68.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>31.3</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total;</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The table which is on Perception on impact of teachers’ absenteeism and students’ academic performance in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State, Nigeria revealed that 31.3% (25 of the teacher) of the respondents strongly agreed that teachers’ absenteeism have negative impact on students’ academic performance. In the other hand 20 of the respondents also believed that teachers’ absenteeism have no impact of academic performance of students.

Hypothesis One: There is no significant relationship between teachers absenteeism and students’ academic performance in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State, Nigeria.
Table 2 correlation analysis Teachers Absenteeism and Students' Academic Performance in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State, Nigeria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>P-value</th>
<th>r-value</th>
<th>Dec.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers Absenteeism</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>2.6625</td>
<td>1.12445</td>
<td>0.445</td>
<td>-0.087</td>
<td>Sig</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students' Academic Performance</td>
<td>170</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.7375</td>
<td>1.05235</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 indicates a no significant relationship between teachers’ absenteeism and students’ academic performance in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State, Nigeria. This is because the probability value (P = 0.445) is greater than alpha value of 0.05 level of significance at a correlation index of r = -0.087 and standard deviation and mean (1.12445 and 2.6625) respectively. Hence, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between teachers’ absenteeism and students’ academic performance in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State, Nigeria is hereby accepted and conclude that absenteeism of teachers does not really determine the academic performance of students in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State, Nigeria.

Discussion

Research question one is on the impact of teachers’ absenteeism and students’ academic performance in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State, Nigeria. The study revealed that teachers’ absenteeism had an impact on students’ academic performance. This is in line with study carried out by Agustin (2016) on impact of teachers’ absenteeism on students’ academic performance in public secondary schools, United State. The study revealed that teachers’ absenteeism has both negative and positive impact on students’ academic performance but in favour of negative. Results of this thesis show that the effect of teacher absenteeism is positive (meaning it leads to fewer students passing the AP exams), but that the magnitude decreases when additional control variables are added to the model. Research also shows that when a teacher is absent from the classroom, student learning is disrupted. Finlayson (2009) finds that when a teacher is repeatedly absent, student performance can be significantly impacted negatively. Her study shows that the more days a teacher is out of the classroom, the lower their students score on every test.

Hypothesis one stated that, there is no significant relationship between teachers’ absenteeism and students’ academic performance in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State, Nigeria. The study revealed that there is no significant relationship between teachers’ absenteeism and students’ academic performance in Maiduguri Metropolis, Borno State, Nigeria. This finding is in disagreement with Agustin (2016) which revealed that teacher absenteeism is a strong predictor of student test scores, and that teacher absenteeism has a direct negative impact on student learning.

Conclusion

Based on the results of the findings the researcher concludes that teachers’ absenteeism is a major threat to students’ academic performance as it’s found to negatively impact on their performance.

Recommendation

Based on the above findings the following recommendations were made;
- The researchers recommend that strong supervision team should be inaugurated to ensure policy on teachers’ absenteeism was strictly follow and implemented. The Borno State Government and Non-governmental Organization should come up with incentive for dedicated and committed teachers to boost their morale and at the same time motivate others (defaulters) towards committing themselves.

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