

CAUSES OF ABSENTEEISM AMONG STUDENTS, AS PERCEIVED BY SECONDARY SCHOOL TEACHERS IN KWARA STATE, NIGERIA

Babawale Joseph AFOLABI (Ph.D)

afobabsy2k3@gmail.com

Department of Guidance and Counselling,
Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria.

Oluyemisi Florence AYEMOBA (Ph.D)

ojoyemisi@yahoo.com

Lagos State Universal Basic Education Board,
Guidance and Counselling Unit,
Ibeju/Lekki Local Government Education Authority,
Lagos State, Nigeria.

Busayo Omolade AJIBOLA (Ph.D)

busayo.ajibola@gmail.com

Department of Guidance and Counselling,
Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria.

&

Cecilia Olaitan BABA

babacecilia@gmail.com

Department of Guidance and Counselling,
Faculty of Education, Bingham University, Nasarawa State, Nigeria.

Abstract

Absenteeism is a major problem that poses challenges to teaching and learning and the overall academic performance of students; however, numerous factors account for absenteeism among secondary school students. This study investigated causes of absenteeism among secondary school students, as perceived by teachers in Kwara State, Nigeria. The research design adopted for the study was descriptive survey design. The population comprised all secondary school teachers in Kwara State, which is estimated at 15, 412. The purposive, proportional and simple random sampling techniques, were used to select 378 teachers from the three senatorial districts of Kwara State. The instruments used to collect data for the study is "Causes of Students' Absenteeism Questionnaire (CASAQ)." The instrument was subjected to content validation, while reliability of 0.79 was obtained through test re-test method. One research question was raised and answered in the study, while three null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. The data obtained were analyzed, using percentages, mean, Analysis of Variance and t-test statistics. The result of the study showed that the main causes of absenteeism among secondary school students, as perceived by teachers in Kwara State, include long distance between school and place of residence, teachers' unfriendliness to students and students' lack of commitment to schooling. The result also showed that there was no significant difference in the causes of absenteeism among

students, as perceived by secondary school teachers in Kwara State on the basis of educational qualification, marital status and gender. Based on these findings, it was recommended, among others, that secondary schools should be built within the community and not outskirts of the community, in order to reduce the distance from students' homes and prevent absenteeism; school management should also ensure that there is good relationship between teachers and students, to create students-friendly environment that could reduce absenteeism; in order to engage students in discussions that would help to educate them on the importance of school attendance, teachers, regardless of gender, marital status and educational qualification, should be enlightened more on how to reduce absenteeism among students in secondary school.

Key words: Absenteeism, secondary school teachers, secondary school students.

Introduction

In Nigeria, like in any other developing nations, education is regarded as the route that leads to vocational development, job opportunities, wealth and prestige. Education helps to mould the habits, interest, attitudes and feelings of children. A lot of parents appreciate the need for good education and would leave no stone unturned to see that their children get good quality education. Therefore, they spend much of their fortune to enroll and ensure that their children attend school, in order to bring about positive change in life. Hence, it is then the wish of parents, government and teachers that children of school age should enroll and receive formal education by attending school regularly. However, some students do not attend classes; perhaps some do not seem to understand why they should be in school and attend classes. Such unwholesome practice does affect teaching and learning, academic performance and achievement of educational goals.

Shyaman (2006) opined that most students, especially those in secondary schools, do abandon their classes to visit football viewing centers, game and betting houses, joints where snookers and table tennis games are played and internet cafes. They spend much of their valuable time and resources on activities not relating to school, but elsewhere. Students who are frequently absent, may be putting their future in jeopardy, because regular attendance is one of the key determinants of success in school. However, students who engage in absenteeism could, in one way or the other, attribute it to different causes.

Students' absenteeism is an age long phenomenon that has eaten deep into the social fabrics of the nation. Eaton, Brenner and Kann (2008) opined that a common feature of the Nigerian educational system, especially at the secondary school level, is the issue of absenteeism. Absenteeism is an act of indiscipline which has been causing a lot of problems for the students, teachers, parents and the society at large (Abayomi, 2002). This is because when students are absent from school or classes, it affects the other students, by drawing them back and also truncates the schedule of learning activities, affect the timing slated for the period. This thereby draws back the teacher to explain again what has been taught earlier. Furthermore, parents and guardian also pre-occupy these children at home with doing household chores, engaging in farming activities and hawking, before going to school in the morning, thus resulting in absenteeism in secondary schools.

Absenteeism among students has been defined as the act of keeping away from school without a legitimate reason and without the permission of one's parents or the school authorities (Herbert,

2006). This describes the behaviour among students, because non-school attendance is a deviant behaviour, it continues to be one of the growing problems that stakeholders, such as counsellors, teachers, and parents, identify amongst students (Kwon Hoo, 2003). It has attracted interest in public discussions among teachers, as well as in educational research since school attendance is of necessity and very important for academic success and moral development of students. Loeber and Farrington (2001) described absenteeism as the gateway to crime and an indicator of future failure.

According to Ezeani (2006), there are three types of absenteeism, which are habitual absenteeism, occasional absenteeism, casual absenteeism. Habitual absenteeism is the type of absenteeism that occurs when a student (truant) constantly and continually absents himself from school without the due knowledge or consent of his parents and school authorities. Habitual truants are mainly those students who miss numerous full days of school academic activities. Their frequency of absenteeism has become a regular behaviour or habit. It is important to note that students who are habitual truants have high chances of falling behind in their school work, declining in their academic performances and even losing their attachment or positive attitudes towards school (Ezeani, 2006).

Occasional absenteeism is the type of absenteeism that occurs when a student does not constantly and continually absent him/herself from school. In this type of absenteeism, the level of absenteeism from school without the permission of parents or school authority, is irregular or not regular. For instance, a child whom the mother prevented from going to school and was kept at home to help care for siblings and the child taken out of school for an out-of-season family holiday e.t.c are all instances of occasional absenteeism (Ezeani, 2006). Casual absenteeism is the type of absenteeism that occurs when the students student's absence from school is by chance. This type of absenteeism or unexcused absence from school is not regular and constant, but happens by chance. For instance, students who remained lurking within sound of the school bell, so that they could attend those lessons, which interested them (Ezeani, 2006).

According to Owodunni (2008), there are four categories of absentees: students being in school, but absent in class; students neither in the classroom nor in the school, but at home; those neither in the school nor at home; and those who absent themselves from classes as a result of the difficulty in the school subjects or dislike for the subject or teacher, these categories are found in secondary schools in Nigeria. These categories of absentees are rampant in Nigerian schools, both at the primary and secondary levels. The situation can definitely not make for functional education for values, skills, knowledge and national development. Absenteeism is, however, a global phenomenon, as it obtains in different parts of the world, to the extent that some countries have legislations against it and courts where absenteeism cases are handled (Owodunni, 2008).

Researchers such as Henry (2007); Eaton, Brener and Kann (2008); Kearney (2008); Dube and Orpinas (2009) indicated that students' absenteeism leads to more serious problems, including bullying, substance abuse, poor academic performance and teenage pregnancy within and outside the school premises. Absenteeism in secondary schools is a situation in which students develop and show adverse attitude and behaviour to learning. Absenteeism is also a sign of maladjustment that requires psychological treatment (Green, 2001). It is an act of indiscipline and this has been causing misunderstanding among adolescence, teachers, parents and the society at large (Abayomi, 2002). Absentees increase their risk of dropping out of school and the effects of high school dropouts are

more likely to be unemployed or involved in crime (Abayomi, 2002). Also, it is important to note that, student absenteeism is a major concern for the stakeholders (parents, teachers and counsellors etc) in secondary schools. Absence by students creates a dead, tiresome and unpleasant classroom environment that makes students who come to class uncomfortable and the teachers irritable (Marburger, 2001).

Indeed, the problem of secondary school absenteeism in recent times is so alarming, and if the issue is not properly handled, it would greatly affect the effort of government in achieving the objectives of secondary education (Healy, 2006). On the causes of absenteeism, researchers differ in their opinion as regards the factors that are responsible for absenteeism. Evidence from reviewed related literature has indicated that the following factors, such as: poor home upbringing, school circumstances, psychological and personality factors, socio-economic situation of the students and societal demands, influence of peer group, social and government influence/factors, are the major causes of absenteeism. According to Gesinde (2004), staying in school is the first step to receiving a good education and in order to achieve academic excellence, the students are mandated by the school authorities, guided by the school laws, to attend school regularly, but due to some factors, such as distance of school location to homes, health issues, economic situation, financial difficulties, fuel scarcity and poor transportation system, some students might absent themselves from formal school activities, which is an act of absenteeism.

According to Gupta and Lata (2014), causes of school absenteeism are lack of interest in school subjects, poor teaching skills of the teacher, unfavorable learning environment, uncondusive interpersonal relations between students and teachers in schools, poor infrastructural facilities in school, teacher absenteeism, school location, poor socio-economic background of the student, use of drug and alcohol by the student, peer group influence, health issues and inferiority complex within student and lack of transportation etc. However, Robert and John (2014) revealed a dimension on causes of absenteeism, which includes lack of scholastic requirements, household work, lack of interest in education, hunger at school/lack of mid-day meals, sexual harassment at school, long distance to school, illness or disease, loss of parent or close relative, peer influence, and harsh punishment at school. Those who were affected include children from poor families, children living far from school, female students, orphans, disabled, male students, and children living with single parent as reported by the respondents during the study.

In Nigeria, especially in the rural areas, some parents of low socio-economic status often engage their children in farming and petty trading during school periods, especially during the rainy season, which encourages absenteeism (Olomofe, 2008). School factors are not ruled out of the possible causes of absenteeism among students in schools in Nigeria. Some teachers have been found to be very unfriendly and hostile to their students; that is why this study is limited to moderating variables such as educational qualification, gender, and marital status. In some cases, some teachers skip classes for personal daily activities; thus, leaving the students unattended to, or being occupied by regularly monitored class activities. Such behaviours of teachers encourage absenteeism among students (Olomofe, 2008; Ikiroma, 2010).

It is, however, clear that absenteeism is a major issue that needs to be addressed appropriately, so that students can attain a higher level of educational performance, reduce dropout rate and thuggery in

the society. The respondents will comprise the teachers (secondary school parents, teachers and counsellors), because they have direct relationship with the students. In view of the foregoing, the researcher examined the causes of absenteeism among students, as perceived by secondary school teachers in Kwara State.

Statement of the Problem

The school is an agency established to mould the habits, interest, attitudes and feelings of students and transmit the societal norms, culture, values and traditions from one generation to another. Despite this, many students still deliberately stay away from school and classes. This situation is highly worrisome, because of the attendant consequences such as poor academic performance, school dropout, drug abuse, thuggery, maladjustment, violence, criminality, incarceration, delinquency and teenage pregnancy. Thus, it has been established that absenteeism is a cog in the wheel of teaching and learning.

Many researchers have worked on issues concerning absenteeism. For instance, Rama, Anitha and Reddy (2014) carried out a survey based survey-based study on causes of absenteeism among primary school children in Baireddypalli Mandal of Chittoor District, India. The findings of the study revealed that the students had a very low significant difference towards causes for their absenteeism from school. Ubogu (2004) conducted a study on the causes of absenteeism and dropout among secondary school students in Delta Central Senatorial District of Delta State. The study identified illness, as one of the factors influencing students' absenteeism. Robert and John (2014) conducted a study on students' absenteeism: A silent killer of universal secondary education (use) in Uganda. Their findings enumerated the various causes of absenteeism, to include lack of scholastic requirements, household work, lack of interest in education, hunger at school/lack of mid-day meals, sexual harassment at school, long distance to school, illness or disease, loss of parent or close relative, peer influence, and harsh punishment at school.

Aluko (2015) carried out a study on determinants of absenteeism in selected L.G.A's in Ife/Ijesha Senatorial District of Osun State, Nigeria. The findings revealed that the analysis of this study showed that there is significant relationship between socio-demographic characteristics and absenteeism. It was also revealed that there is a significant relationship between age and absenteeism, as well as marital status and absenteeism.

Musa (2014) also carried out a research research on absenteeism and academic performance of secondary school students in Ogun State, Nigeria. The study discovered that peer group factors, socio economic background of the students and poor academic performance of students were contributory factors to absenteeism in secondary schools. In addition, respondents were similar based on marital status and educational qualifications, but difference on family size, gender and years of experience.

Although, several researchers have carried out studies on absenteeism using different variables, locations and respondents, however, to the best of the researcher's knowledge, not much has been carried out on causes of absenteeism among students as perceived by secondary school teachers in Kwara State. This is a major gap which the research intends to fill.

Research Question

A research question was raised to guide the conduct of the study thus:

1. What are the causes of absenteeism among students, as perceived by secondary school teachers in Kwara State?

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide the conduct of this study:

1. There is no significant difference in the causes of absenteeism among students as perceived by secondary school teachers in Kwara State, on the basis of educational qualification.
2. There is no significant difference in the causes of absenteeism among students as perceived by secondary school teachers in Kwara State on the basis of marital status.
3. There is no significant difference in the causes of absenteeism among students, as perceived by secondary school teachers in Kwara State on the basis of gender.

Methodology

Research Design

The research design that was adopted for this study is the descriptive survey. Descriptive survey is a research method which enables a researcher to obtain the opinions of a representative sample of a target population, so as to be able to draw inferences on the entire population. It is regarded as appropriate for this study; the design has the advantage of covering a wide scope of respondents from whom a great deal of information can be obtained on absenteeism from large population.

Population, Sample and Sampling Procedure

The population for this study consisted of 15,412 secondary school teachers in the service of Kwara State (Kwara State School Census Report, 2016) while the target population comprised of teachers drawn from secondary schools in Kwara State, Nigeria. Using the Research Advisor (2006) a sample size of 378 at 95% confidence level and 5% margin of error was recommended for the population size of this magnitude; hence 378 teachers were sampled for the study out of 15,412. In selecting the representative sample for this study, the researcher adopted the purposive, proportional and imple random sampling techniques.

At stage one, purposive sampling technique was used to ensure total spread within the State by deliberately selecting two Local Government Areas (LGAs) from each senatorial district, specifically the LGAs with highest number of teachers.

At stage two, proportional sampling technique was used to select the sample size from each LGA already selected, based on the number of teachers. It went thus: Moro (27%), Edu (26%), Ilorin West (34%), Ilorin South (26%), Ifelodun (13%) and Irepodun (13%); See table 1 for the proportional sampling.

At stage three, random sampling technique was used to select teachers in each of the selected schools, based on different strata such as gender, marital status and educational qualification.

Table 1: Number of Secondary School Teachers in Kwara State and Sample Size

L.G.A/ Senatorial Districts	Local Government	Population	Proportional Percentage (%)	Sample Size
KWARA NORTH				
	MORO*	663	7	27
	EDU*	636	7	26
	PATEGI	325		
	BARUTEN	309		
	KAIAMA	249		
KWARA CENTRAL				
	ILORIN WEST*	3102	34	129
	ILORIN SOUTH*	2337	26	98
	ILORIN EAST	2020		
	ASA	1003		
	OFFA	812		
KWARA SOUTH				
	IFELODUN*	1146	13	49
	IREPODUN*	1132	13	49
	OYUN	696		
	ISIN	384		
	EKITI	311		
	OKE-ERO	287		
TOTAL		15,412	100	378

SOURCE: Kwara State School Census Report, 2016

Instrumentation

Oladejo (2006) described instrumentation as the process of selecting or developing measuring devices appropriate to a given problem. The main instrument that was used to obtain relevant data for this study, is a researcher-developed questionnaire. For the purpose of this study, a questionnaire titled “Causes of Students' Absenteeism Questionnaire” (CASAQ) was used to collect relevant data from the respondents. The instrument has two sections (A and B). Section A deals with personal data such as gender, educational qualification and marital status, while section B contains items on causes of absenteeism. The questionnaire was patterned after an adapted four point four-point Likert-type rating scale format of Strongly Agree (S.A, 4 points), Agree (A, 3 points), Disagree (D, 2 points) and Strongly Disagree (S.D, 1 point).

Validity

In the light of this, the content validity of the instrument was determined by giving the questionnaire to the researcher's supervisor and four other five lecturers in the Department of Counsellor Education, for vetting and assessment. Sequel to their corrections and suggestions, necessary amendments were made and the final draft was submitted to the supervisor, after which it was adjudged suitable for this study.

Reliability

A reliable instrument can be trusted to repeatedly measure required traits consistently and precisely. To ensure the reliability of the instrument, the test-re-test method was adopted. The researcher administered the CASAQ instrument on 20 teachers who did not form part of the respondents for the study; after an interval of four weeks, the same instrument was re-administered to the same set of teachers. The two sets of scores obtained were computed and correlated, using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation formula. The result yielded a correlation coefficient of 0.79 at 0.05 alpha level. Based on this, the instrument was adjudged reliable and suitable for the study.

Procedure for Instrument Administration and Data Collection

Before the administration of the instrument, the researcher obtained the approval of the Ethical Review Committee of the University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria. Furthermore, the researcher collected letters of introduction from the office of the Head of Department of Counsellor Education, Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria. The letters were given to the principals of the schools that were used for the study. These letters helped in facilitating the assistance of the vice principals, Heads of Department and school counsellors in the respective schools selected. The researcher thereafter distributed and retrieved the completed questionnaire forms from the respondents who consented to participating in the exercise. A total of 378 questionnaire forms were administered to teachers in 12 selected schools within the three senatorial districts in Kwara States.

Procedure for Scoring the Instrument

The researcher scored the completed instruments, using the scoring key provided for each item. Section A, which consists of three items dealing with demographic data was scored and analyzed statistically using frequency counts and percentage. In scoring section B, which consists of Causes of Students' Absenteeism, an adapted four point likert-type rating scale format was used, with the highest score for any item being four (4) and the lowest being one (1) thus: Strongly Agree (S.A, 4 points), Agree (A, 3 points), Disagree (D, 2 points) and Strongly Disagree (S.D, 1 point). Therefore, to score the instrument, the researcher categorized the causes of absenteeism among secondary school students in Kwara State, Nigeria, into two: major and minor, with the score range of these levels being 2.5- 4.0 were considered as having higher or major causes for absenteeism, while those who scored below 2.5 were considered as having lower or minor causes for absenteeism at secondary school level. Therefore, the mean score will be 2.5 that is $(4+3+2+1) / 4$ which is the benchmark.

Method of Data Analysis

The data obtained were statistically analysed, using percentages, means and ranking order for the descriptive data of respondents and research questions. Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was used to test hypotheses one and two, while t-test statistical method was used to test hypothesis three at 0.05 level of significance.

Results*Demographic Data*

This section presents the results of data obtained from the respondents in frequency counts and percentages.

Table 2: Distribution of Respondents by Educational qualification

Educational qualification	Frequency	Percentage (%)
NCE	101	26.7
First Degree	210	55.6
Postgraduates Degree/M.Ed./M.Sc.	67	17.7
Total	378	100.0

Table 2 revealed that out of the 378 respondents that participated in the study, 101 representing (26.7%) of the respondents had NCE certificates, 210 representing (55.6%) of the respondents had First Degree certificates, while 67 representing (17.7%) of the respondents had Postgraduates Degree/ M.Ed./ M.Sc. This implies that the majority of the respondents had First Degree certificates in this study.

Table 3: Distribution of the Respondents by Marital Status

Marital Status	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Single	108	28.6
Married	268	70.9
Divorced	2	0.5
Total	378	100.0

Table 3 revealed that out of the 378 respondents that participated in the study, 108 representing (28.6%) of the respondents were single, 268 representing (70.9%) of the respondents were married, while 2 representing (.5%) of the respondents were divorced. This implies that the majority of the respondents in this study were married.

Table 4: Distribution of the Respondents by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	142	37.6
Female	236	62.4
Total	378	100.0

Table 4 reveals that out of the 378 respondents that participated in the study, 142 representing (37.6%) were male, while 236 representing (62.4%) were female. This shows that the majority of the respondents in this study were female.

Answering of Research Question

One research question was raised and answered using mean rating, while the hypotheses formulated were tested with the use of Analysis of Variance and the independent t-test statistical tools.

Research Question 1: *What are the causes of absenteeism among students as perceived by secondary school teachers in Kwara State?*

Table 5: Rank Order of Causes of Absenteeism among Students as Perceived by Secondary School Teachers in Kwara State

S/N	School absenteeism by students is caused by:	Mean	Rank Order
1	long distance between school and place of residence	3.43	1 st
12	teachers' unfriendliness to students	3.42	2 nd
3	students lack of commitment to schooling	3.42	2 nd
5	students' truancy and indiscipline	3.29	4 th
4	deviance/maladaptive behaviour of the students	3.23	5 th
6	overburdening household chores by parents	3.20	6 th
7	dislike of teaching style by the students	3.09	7 th
8	students who have financial difficulties	2.76	8 th
20	frequent use of corporal punishment by teachers	2.71	9 th
19	use of abusive words on students by teachers	2.62	10 th
14	lack of school materials, such as pen, pencil, exercise book, recommended text books, school uniform etc.	2.55	11 th
2	students going to bed late, thereby waking up late	2.54	12 th
10	non-punctuality on the part of teachers	2.47	13 th
11	poor sanitary facility in school	2.21	14 th
16	skipping of classes by teachers	2.21	14 th
18	unsafe school environment	2.19	16 th
15	poorly ventilated classrooms	2.16	17 th
17	poor transportation system from home to school	2.07	18 th
13	low self-esteem of students	1.97	19 th
9	students who lack parental supervision	1.87	20 th

Table 5 indicates that the main causes of absenteeism among students, as perceived by secondary school teachers in Kwara State were, long distance between school and place of residence which has a mean score of 3.43, Teachers' unfriendliness to students and Students who lack commitment to schooling which has a mean score of 3.42 respectively, Students truancy and indiscipline which has a mean score of 3.29, Deviance/maladaptive behaviour of the students which has a mean score of 3.23, Overburdening household chores by students which has a mean score of 3.20, dislike of teaching style by the students which has a mean score of 3.09, Students who have financial difficulties which has a mean score of 2.76, Frequent use of corporal punishment by teachers which has a mean score of 2.71, Use of abusive words on students by teachers which has a mean score of 2.62, Lack of school materials such as pen, pencil, exercise book, recommended text books, school uniform etc. which has a mean score of 2.55, Students going to bed late, thereby waking up late which has a mean score of 2.54, while other statements had mean score below 2.50. It could, therefore, be inferred that, there are several causes of absenteeism among students as perceived by secondary school teachers in Kwara State, because 12 out of the 20 items have mean score from 2.50 and above. Thus, those items that had mean score from 2.50 and above are the causes of absenteeism as perceived by secondary school teachers while the item that scored below 2.50 are not necessarily causes of absenteeism.

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis One: *There is no significant difference in the causes of absenteeism among students as perceived as perceived by secondary school teachers in Kwara State, on the basis of educational qualification.*

Table 6: ANOVA Summary of Difference in the Causes of Absenteeism among Students as Perceived by Secondary School Teachers in Kwara State on the Basis of Educational qualification

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean of Squares	Cal. F	Crit. F	p-value	Decision
Between Groups	159.91	2	79.95	1.13	3.00	0.33	H_0
Within Groups	26647.36	375	71.06				Not Rejected
Total	26807.26	377					

Table 6 shows a critical F-value 3.00 with calculated F of 1.13, p-value of 0.33 and 0.05 alpha level. Since p-value 0.33 is greater than 0.05 alpha level, hypothesis one is thus not rejected. This implies that there was no significant difference in the causes of absenteeism among students as perceived by secondary school teachers in Kwara State on the basis of educational qualification.

Hypothesis Two: *There is no significant difference in the causes of absenteeism among students as perceived by secondary school teachers in Kwara State on the basis of marital status.*

Table 7: ANOVA Summary of Difference in the Causes of Absenteeism among Students as Perceived by Secondary School Teachers in Kwara State on the Basis of Marital Status

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	df	Mean of Squares	Cal. F	Crit. F	p-value	Decision
Between Groups	112.405	2	56.20	0.79	3.00	0.46	H_0
Within Groups	26694.854	375	71.19				Not Rejected
Total	26807.259	377					

Table 7 shows a critical F-value 3.00 with calculated F of 0.79, p-value of 0.46 and 0.05 alpha level. Since p-value 0.79 is greater than 0.05 alpha level, hypothesis two is thus not rejected. This implies that there was no significant difference in the causes of absenteeism among students as perceived by secondary school teachers in Kwara State on the basis of marital status.

Hypothesis Three: *There is no significant difference in the causes of absenteeism among students as perceived as perceived by secondary school teachers in Kwara State on the basis of gender*

Table 8: Mean, Standard Deviation and t-test Analysis of Difference in the Causes of Absenteeism among Students as Perceived by Teachers in Kwara State on the Basis of Gender

Gender	No	Mean	Std.	df	Cal.t-Value	Crit. t-value	p-value	Decision
Male	142	53.23	7.78	376	0.31	1.96	0.76	H₀₃ Not Rejected
Female	236	53.51	8.82					

Table 8 shows that male respondents had a mean score of 53.23 with standard deviation 7.78, while female respondents had a mean score of 53.51 with standard deviation of 8.82, the calculated t-value was 0.31 while its p-value is 0.76 and the degree of freedom (df) is 376 at alpha level of 0.05. Since p-value 0.76 is greater than 0.05 alpha level, hypothesis three is thus not rejected. This means that there was no significant difference in the causes of absenteeism among students as perceived by teachers in Kwara State on the basis of gender.

Discussion of the Findings

The findings of this study revealed that the main causes of absenteeism among secondary school students as perceived by teachers in Kwara State, are long distance between school and place of residence, teachers' unfriendliness to students and students who lack commitment to schooling. The result of the findings is in line with the findings of Amalu and Abang (2015), which revealed that as a result of long distance from home to school and difficult terrain, students are tempted to be absent. Also Also, the result of the finding identified lack of interest in school activities. It is in line with the findings of Elliot, Kratochwill, Littlefield Cook and Travers (2000), who stated that interest is an enduring characteristic expressed between a person and a particular activity or object. However, a child who lacks interest in school activity will not be motivated to learn, so he will stay away from school to engage in any activity that interests him/her most. What is your own take concerning the outcome of the study? We need to hear your own voice

Also, findings of this study revealed that there was no significant difference in the causes of absenteeism among secondary school students as perceived by teachers in Kwara State on the basis of educational qualification. This supports Musa (2014) who found no significant difference in the expression of respondents on prevalence of absenteeism, based on educational qualification. The results of this finding indicate that regardless of the educational qualification of the respondents, there was no difference in the perception of the secondary school teachers on the causes of absenteeism among students. This reason could be that since teachers in secondary schools are aware of the causes of absenteeism; their perception on the issue is likely to always be similar regardless of educational qualification.

Furthermore, the findings revealed that there was no significant difference in the causes of absenteeism among secondary school students as perceived by secondary school teachers in Kwara State on the basis of marital status. This corroborates Musa (2014) who found no difference in the expression of respondents on prevalence of absenteeism and truancy, based on marital status. This reason could be that since individual of the society are aware of the level of absenteeism, their perception on the issue is likely to always be similar, regardless of marital status.

Finding shows that there was no significant difference in the causes of absenteeism among students as perceived by secondary school teachers in Kwara State on the basis of gender. This

implies that male and female secondary school teachers in Kwara State were not different in their perceptions on the causes of absenteeism among secondary school students. This contradicts Musa (2014) who found a significant difference in the expression of respondents on prevalence of absenteeism and truancy based on gender. The findings of this study also contradict Aluko (2015) which stated that there was significant relationship between gender and absenteeism among secondary school students.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, the main causes of absenteeism among students, as perceived by secondary school teachers in Kwara State was as a result of long distance between school and place of residence, teachers' unfriendliness to students and students who lack commitment to schooling. Also, there was no significant difference in the causes of absenteeism among students as perceived by secondary school teachers in Kwara State on the basis of educational qualification, marital status and gender.

Recommendations

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

- Public secondary schools should be built in newly developed areas, within the community and not outskirts of the community, in order to reduce the distance from students' homes and prevent absenteeism.
- The PTA, in conjunction with the government, should provide buses or any other means that can enhance transportation to schools.
- School management should also ensure that there is good relationship between teachers and students, to create students-friendly environment that could reduce absenteeism.
- Guidance and counselling should be made top priority in secondary schools. In order to engage students in discussions that would help to educate them on the importance of regular school attendance.
- School authority, in conjunction with parents, should ensure adequate punishment for acts of absenteeism
- Teachers, regardless of gender, marital status and educational qualification, should be enlightened more on how to reduce absenteeism among students in secondary school.

APPENDIX A

UNIVERSITY OF ILORIN
FACULTY OF EDUCATION
DEPARTMENT OF COUNSELLOR EDUCATION
CAUSES OF STUDENTS' ABSENTEEISM QUESTIONNAIRE (CASAQ)

Dear Respondent,

This questionnaire is designed to elicit information on the causes of absenteeism among students as perceived by secondary school teachers in Kwara State, Nigeria. It is primarily for research purposes and your responses will be treated with strict confidentiality. Kindly feel free to respond to the items as honestly as possible.

Thank you for your anticipated cooperation.

Afolabi, B. J.
(Researcher)

Section A: Personal Data

Direction: Kindly put a tick (✓) in the spaces provided to indicate your response.

1. Educational qualification: NCE (); First Degree (); Postgraduate Degree/M.Ed/MSc ().

2. Marital Status: Single (); Married (); Divorced ().

3. Gender: Male (); Female ().

Section B: Causes of Students' Absenteeism Questionnaire (CASAQ)

Direction: Kindly indicate your response to each of the following statements by ticking (✓) the appropriate column using the key: SA- Strongly Agree; A-Agree; D-Disagree; SD-Strongly Disagree.

S/No	School absenteeism by students is caused by:	SA	A	D	SD
1.	long distance between school and place of residence				
2.	students going to bed late, thereby waking up late				
3.	Students' lack of commitment to schooling				
4.	deviance/maladaptive behaviour of the students				
5.	students truancy and indiscipline				
6.	overburdening household chores by parents				
7.	dislike of teaching style by the students				
8.	students who have financial difficulties				
9.	students' who lack parental supervision				
10.	non-punctuality on the part of teachers				
11.	poor sanitary facility in school				
12.	teachers' unfriendliness to students				
13.	low self-esteem of students				
14.	lack of school materials such as pen, pencil, exercise book, recommended text books, school uniform etc.				
15.	poorly ventilated classrooms				
16.	skipping of classes by teachers				
17.	poor transportation system from home to school				
18.	unsafe school environment				
19.	use of abusive words on students by teachers				
20.	frequent use of corporal punishment by teachers				

APPENDIX B**TABLE:** Number of Secondary School Teachers by Gender in Kwara State

LGA/ SENATORIAL DISTRICTS	LOCAL GOVERNMENT	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL
KWARA NORTH	PATEGI	292	33	325
	BARUTEN	266	43	309
	EDU	547	89	636
	KAIAMA	176	73	249
	MORO	394	269	663
KWARA CENTRAL	ASA	602	401	1003
	ILORIN EAST	896	1124	2020
	ILORIN SOUTH	710	1627	2337
	ILORIN WEST	1151	1951	3102
	OFFA	309	503	812
KWARA SOUTH	IREPODUN	492	640	1132
	ISIN	213	171	384
	IFELODUN	594	552	1146
	OKE-ERO	159	128	287
	OYUN	317	379	696
	EKITI	184	127	311
TOTAL		7302	8110	15412

SOURCE: Kwara State School Census Report, 2016

APPENDIX C
RESEARCH ADVISOR

Required Sample Size[†]

Population Size	Margin of Error				Margin of Error			
	5.0%	3.5%	2.5%	1.0%	5.0%	3.5%	2.5%	1.0%
10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10	10
20	19	20	20	20	19	20	20	20
30	28	29	29	30	29	29	30	30
50	44	47	48	50	47	48	49	50
75	63	69	72	74	67	71	73	75
100	80	89	94	99	87	93	96	99
150	108	126	137	148	122	135	142	149
200	132	160	177	196	154	174	186	198
250	152	190	215	244	182	211	229	246
300	169	217	251	291	207	246	270	295
400	196	265	318	384	250	309	348	391
500	217	306	377	475	285	365	421	485
600	234	340	432	565	315	416	490	579
700	248	370	481	653	341	462	554	672
800	260	396	526	739	363	503	615	763
1,000	278	440	606	906	399	575	727	943
1,200	291	474	674	1067	427	636	827	1119
1,500	306	515	759	1297	460	712	959	1376
2,000	322	563	869	1655	498	808	1141	1785
2,500	333	597	952	1984	524	879	1288	2173
3,500	346	641	1068	2565	558	977	1510	2890
5,000	357	678	1176	3288	586	1066	1734	3842
7,500	365	710	1275	4211	610	1147	1960	5165
10,000	370	727	1332	4899	622	1193	2098	6239
25,000	378	760	1448	6939	646	1285	2399	9972
50,000	381	772	1491	8056	655	1318	2520	12455
75,000	382	776	1506	8514	658	1330	2563	13583
100,000	383	778	1513	8762	659	1336	2585	14227
250,000	384	782	1527	9248	662	1347	2626	15555
500,000	384	783	1532	9423	663	1350	2640	16055
1,000,000	384	783	1534	9512	663	1352	2647	16317
2,500,000	384	784	1536	9567	663	1353	2651	16478
10,000,000	384	784	1536	9594	663	1354	2653	16560
100,000,000	384	784	1537	9603	663	1354	2654	16584
300,000,000	384	784	1537	9603	663	1354	2654	16586

Confidence = 95%

Confidence = 99%

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