



Absenteeism of Some Students in Secondary School in Sokoto East, Nigeria

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Abstract

Education is a right of every child, but Sokoto is suffering from many issues ravaging education; therefore, school/class absenteeism is a major challenge to education in Sokoto. This study aims to evaluate school/class absenteeism in Sokoto East, Nigeria. Survey study types and questionnaires were used. The types/forms of absenteeism engaged by students are students sitting outside classes during class hours (33.3%), "Closing of classes (25.0%), and Students abandoning classes before the closing time (25.0%)". The last form was students completely avoiding schools (16.7%). The submitted reasons behind students' absenteeism in school in Sokoto East, Nigeria, are as follows: Poor supervision of students by teachers (24.0%), Poor supervision of teachers by leaders (18.0%), Insecurity (17.7%), Poor supervision by communities (15.0%), Poor management by administration (12.0%), Lack of enough teachers (8.0%), and corruption (5.3%). Therein, the effects of absenteeism are as follows: Poor education/ academic performance (42.0%), Inability to go to higher education (30.0%), and School dropout (28.0%). The possible solutions for absenteeism are: "Proper monitoring of school by administration (36.7%)", "Proper monitoring by teachers (27.3%)", then "Proper parental monitoring (22.7%)", and the last was "Proper monitoring of school by the community (13.3%)". School and class absenteeism exist, and they tend to affect education and, in turn, the development of the area and state at large. Proper monitoring of schools, students, and teachers is needed from the government, community, and school heads.

Keywords School, Absenteeism, Poor Academic Performance, Parental Monitoring, Poor Supervision

INTRODUCTION

Education involves training a person or group of persons to read, write, and be proficient in specific aspects of life and to be able to conform to acceptable norms of society (Aliero, 2020; Odeniyi & Adeyanju, 2020). Nowadays, education is a pertinent pillar that is required for the growth and development of people, communities, individuals, and societies. The significance of education in the empowerment, progressiveness, and guidance of any person through the course of life cannot be overemphasised (Abubakar & Kwashabawa, 2021; Sarkingobir et al., 2023). Education provides students and learners with a bright future by giving them needed skills and employability or credits to further be educated (Aliero, 2020).

Nevertheless, secondary school education is a second level of education that a person comes in contact with on his way to the advanced education level in Nigeria (Molagun, 2006). It is the invariable relay between primary and tertiary education. It is a system of education where people who finished primary education are enrolled. It is a step that is supposed to leave an indelible good culture of learning and behaviour in respective children. Because at this level, youngsters are trying to develop socially, educationally, physically, morally, and psychologically (Molagun, 2006). This system of education, among other objectives, is intended to make the recipient a

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useful being in society and groom him/her for higher education levels (Molagun, 2006; Kapur, 2019). A student at this level is expected to appreciate the importance of education, acquire traits, consciousness, and resourcefulness, and possess the ability to achieve useful outcomes (Kapur, 2019). In order to have an enriched secondary education, sciences have to be learned at this level. In most cases, this would invariably help citizens and the country at large to compete with peers across different divides of the world (Kapur, 2019). Science at secondary schools helps the students to be up to the task of the changing world for growth and development (Holbrook, 2010; Tambuwal, 2022). Thus, science has to be made a core subject being taught in secondary schools in most cases (Holbrook, 2010; Babajide, 2015). However, many issues are militating the progress of secondary education in Nigeria (Onoyase, 2016; Ike, 2017). Likewise, in Nigeria, the course of many citizens to obtain education, especially at the grassroots secondary schools, is impeded by many factors. One of the challenges faced by education in some instances in the country, and more specifically in Sokoto state, is the issue of students abstaining from classes or schools without any reasonable justification; in turn, this has led to many problems such as depriving the persons and the society the fruits of education (Oke & Tejumola, 2021).

Absenteeism is a good elicitor of a drain in the human capital needed for the proper growth and development of a nation. When a student abandons school with a truth or false excuse, absenteeism is committed. Absenteeism is regarded as a pattern when a student regularly misses school (Musa & Mbeya, 2022). Due to the absenteeism behaviour of some students, many children roam about in the streets and risk being inflicted by many societal problems. Due to absenteeism, students develop a norm of poor interest in education. Students suffer underachievement in their academic performance at schools, many supposed-to-be skilled personnel are lost due to school absenteeism, and many higher institutions or specialisations are underutilised because of school absenteeism (Oghuvbu, 2008; Ibrahim et al., 2021; Hiliya et al., 2022). Many factors elicit absenteeism by acting individually or in a synergetic manner. For example, the school environment may affect students' interest in coming to school, violence, poverty, and poor teaching methods (Musa & Mbeya, 2022). As reported by various studies obtained from different places across the world, socioeconomic status, illness, distance to school, housework, hunger, harassment, hard punishment at school, poor parental supervision, financial problems, and bad peers are some factors linked to school absenteeism (Bamgboye et al., 2017; Ada et al., 2019; Musa & Mbeya, 2022). resultantly, the menace of absenteeism causes an increase in social vices such as prostitution, substance abuse, early marriage, juvenile delinquency, suicide, violence, theft, school dropout, etc. (Musa & Mbeya, 2022)

Particularly, in Sokoto, education is being challenged by a lot of factors. Among others, low enrollment of students in schools is an order of the day and, in turn, leads to poor success in education (Bello et al., 2017). A related study by Abubakar et al. (2022) relates the menace of female student dropouts in the state mainly due to early marriage, poverty, and lack of motivation, among others. Sokoto et al. (2018) reiterated that *Almajiri* schools carved out to neutralise the issues of out-of-school children in the state are challenged by misconception, poor school attendance, and ineffective translation of the program. Therefore, many children who ought to be in the school are still wandering about (Sokoto et al., 2018). In another study, abandoning schools was described as a major thing that impedes the security of this country (Musa, 2018). A survey in Tambuwal local government resolved that for effective teaching to be done, there is a need for effective supervision of teachers by their heads as well to fill the gap in education in the area (Hiliya et al., 2022). From the surfed studies, it can be deduced that Sokoto state is experiencing a number of issues ravaging education delivery; however, there exists a scarcity of data regarding school/class absenteeism in the state, more particularly in Sokoto East schools. Therefore, it is indeed better to evaluate the school/ class absenteeism in schools in

Sokoto East, Nigeria. The objective of this study is to evaluate the school/ class absenteeism in schools in Sokoto East, Nigeria.

Research questions

The research questions for this study are as follows:

1. What are the forms of absenteeism in Schools in Sokoto East, Nigeria?
2. What are the reasons for absenteeism in secondary schools in Sokoto East, Nigeria?
3. What are the effects of absenteeism in secondary school in Sokoto East, Nigeria?
4. What are the solutions to absenteeism in secondary school in Sokoto East, Nigeria?

LITERATURE REVIEW

School absenteeism- is a situation whereby a child or children or group of adolescents are absent/miss school for no lawful excuse. Other authors regard school absenteeism as any form of missing school (Allen et al., 2018). On the other side, class absenteeism is the behaviour of absenting class by a child or children despite being present in school, usually due to lawful or unlawful reasons (Nakpodia & Orien, 2011; Allen et al., 2018; Kearney et al., 2022).

The causes of this behaviour can be complex – some arise from the individual, some arise from the family (such as improper parental care), some come up from government lapses (e.g., poor monitoring of school activities, poor infrastructure) or community lapses (poor monitoring of school activities). School factors are also harmful, such as corruption and improper supervision by teachers or school heads, which is another factor behind absenteeism (Demir & Akman Karabeyoglu, 2015; Lowanshi, 2019; Hiliya et al., 2022).

RESEARCH METHOD

Study Area

The study was carried out in Sokoto state, Nigeria. Sokoto State is located in the extreme Northwest corner of Nigeria; it lies between latitudes 11E and longitude 4N, bounded in the East by Zamfara State, in the North by Niger Republic, and in the west by Kebbi State. It is within the savannah region with scanty vegetation and shrubs. Two intermit rivers cut across the State, i.e., River Sokoto and River Rima, with a confluence at Wamakko, move southwest and finally discharge into River Niger (Hamza et al., 2023).

Research Design

The study design was a descriptive survey that allowed the researcher to have an in-depth understanding of the perception of the respondent (Sarkingobir et al., 2023).

Target Population and Sample Size

The population includes students and teachers that are in the school drawn from Sokoto, Nigeria. The sample size of 300 was calculated using a Raosoft calculator at a margin of error of 5%, a 95% confidence limit, and a response distribution of 100%. Thus, 300 respondents involved students at schools in Sokoto East, and teachers were enrolled for the study using simple random sampling because qualitative data focus on quality, not the much quantity provided saturation is anticipated (Sarkingobir et al., 2023).

Data Collection and Analysis

Data was collected with the aid of a structured questionnaire that elicits questions in its various sections. Section A elicits responses on characteristics of respondents; section B elicits responses on forms of school/class absenteeism among students in the school; section C asks about the reasons and effects of absenteeism; and the last section investigates responses about

solutions to the menace. The data collected was analysed using descriptive analysis, and the X² test was applied at a 0.05 significance level.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic characteristics of respondents of the study

Table 1. Demographic characteristics of respondents

Parameter	Frequency	Percentage
Religion Islam	300	100.0
Tribe Hausa/ Fulani	300	100.0
Education Degree	101	33.7
Higher National Diploma	49	16.3
Students	150	50.0

Source: Fieldwork 2023;

Table 1 outlines the demographic characteristics of respondents of this study; therewith, all the respondents are Muslims, Hausa/ Fulani, and males (100.0%). The education was degree (33.7%), Students (50.0%), and lastly higher national diploma (16.7%). From this, it can be submitted that the respondents are teachers and students who know best on the issue of student absenteeism in schools, and most of the respondent teachers had teacher qualifications for the discharge of their duties.

Research question one: what are the forms of absenteeism in School in Sokoto East, Nigeria?

Table 2. Manifestation of absenteeism in secondary school in Sokoto East, Nigeria

Forms of absenteeism	Frequency	Percentage	X ² test/P-value
Students sitting outside classes during class hours	100	33.3	16.667/0.008
Some classes were closed	75	25.0	
Students abandoning classes before the closing time	75	25.0	
students completely refusing to come to school sometimes	50	16.7	
Total	300	100.0	

Source: Fieldwork 2023

Table 2 significantly ($p < 0.05$) outlines the types/ forms of school/class absenteeism shown by the students of the observed school in Sokoto East, Nigeria. The most submitted form was students sitting outside classes during class hours (33.3%), and others were: "Some classes were closed (25.0%)" and "Students abandoning classes before the closing time (25.0%)". The last was

students completely refusing to come to school sometimes (16.7%). Despite the consideration of education as fundamental to all human activities (Sunday et al., 2022), this result (indicated in Table 2) has shown that some students abandon classes or schools, a revelation that was corroborated by Oke & Tejumola (2021) that school dropout was a scourge on education at global and local levels. In a similar study, school-based related factors that are linked to students' absenteeism in school were revealed in a Turkey study. Some of them are similar to the results in Table 2; for example, schools convey less information to students on the importance of attendance because the school environment is not conducive, are some of the parables of school factors causing absenteeism (Demir & Karabeyoglu, 2016).

Research question two: what are the reasons for absenteeism in secondary school in Sokoto East, Nigeria?

Table 3. Reasons for absenteeism in secondary school in Sokoto East, Nigeria

Reasons of absenteeism	Frequency	Percentage
Poor supervision of students by teachers	72	24.0
Poor supervision of teachers' by leaders	54	18.0
Insecurity	53	17.7
Poor supervision by communities	45	15.0
Poor management by the administration	36	12.0
Lack of enough teachers	24	8.0
Corruption	16	5.3

Source: Fieldwork 2023

Table 3 relates the reasons behind students' absenteeism in school in Sokoto East, Nigeria. The reasons are in order of percentage as follows: Poor supervision of students by teachers (24.0%), Poor supervision of teachers by leaders (18.0%), Insecurity (17.7%), Poor supervision by communities (15.0%), Poor management by administration (12.0%), Lack of enough teachers (8.0%), and corruption (5.3%). In a study related earlier, poor school or government administration, the poor commitment of teachers to their responsibilities, and family-related issues are among the factors that cause school/class absenteeism in Nigeria (Oghuvbu, 2008) like the findings of this study (as indicated in table 3). In a similar vein, as revealed by Aliero (2020), lack of parental care about education is one of the major factors that cause some students or children to leave school or classes, which was in the same vein with one reason stated in Table 3. Likewise, as indicated in this study (Table 3), the nature of teachers, when teachers are not doing their job of proper teaching, proper monitoring, and being student-centred, there is a tendency for some students to abscond classes or schools entirely. Another reason is when the community pay less attention to the running of their schools, some students or teachers or management of schools behave irresponsibly to the effective running of the school, a factor that causes some students to leave school or classes (Aliero, 2020).

Research question three: What are the effects of absenteeism in secondary school in Sokoto

East, Nigeria?

Absenteeism is a major factor in education in Nigeria (Aliero, 2020); therefore, the effects that result from the issue are many. However, Table 4 significantly ($p < 0.05$) shows the effects of absenteeism in secondary schools in Sokoto East, Nigeria, as perceived by the respondents. The effects are in the order of percentages as follows: Poor education/ academic performance (42.0%), Inability to go to higher education (30.0%), and School dropout (28.0%). On the same page as this study (indicating the effects of school/class absenteeism) in Sokoto, another study shows the inability of the students involved to be employed because they lack the skills needed, reduction in personal and national economy, and a lack of trained people to man many endeavours of life (Aliero, 2020; Oke & Adewale, 2021). Similarly, Demir & Karabeyoglu (2016) stated that school absenteeism negatively affects the learning and experience of students. It is a menace that reduces the success of students, puts much load on teachers, students face difficulties due to absenteeism, absentee students set a bad example to other regular students, and it leads to low academic achievement as well (Demir & Karabeyoglu, 2016).

Table 4. Effects of absenteeism in secondary school in Sokoto East, Nigeria

Effects of absenteeism	Frequency	Percentage	X ² test/P-value
Poor education/ academic performance	100	42.0	10.320/0.0057
Inability to go to higher education	90	30.0	
School dropout	84	28.0	

Source: Fieldwork 2023

Research question four: What are the solutions to absenteeism in secondary school in Sokoto East, Nigeria?

Table 5. Possible solution of absenteeism in secondary school in Sokoto East, Nigeria

Solution	Frequency	Percentage	X ² test/P-value
Proper monitoring of school by the administration	110	36.7	33.973/0.001
Proper monitoring by teachers	82	27.3	
Proper parental monitoring	68	22.7	
Proper monitoring of school by the community	40	13.3	

Source: Fieldwork 2023

Table 5 significantly ($p < 0.05$) shows the possible solutions suggested by the respondents on how to tackle the issues of students abstaining from schools or classes. The most submitted solution was "Proper monitoring of school by administration (36.7%)" then "Proper monitoring by teachers (27.3%)", then "Proper parental monitoring (22.7%)" and the last submitted response was "Proper monitoring of school by the community (13.3%)". Indeed, the issue of school/class absenteeism is a great problem for education in this country. Therefore, it is pertinent to seek ways to redress the scourge or ameliorate its effects/ occurrence. This study has found (in Table

5) some of the ways to tackle the menace in the affected school or relations, which were in agreement with some solutions like parental care and monitoring of their children about their schooling, proper supervision of students by teachers, school heads should be up to the task of supervising and monitoring the activities of teachers and students as well (Inuwa & Yusof, 2014; Cheema, 2021; Oghuvbu, 2008; Sunday et al., 2022). Likewise, in a Kaduna study in Nigeria, solutions to the menace of abandoning classes by students were mentioned in relation to this work indicated in Table 5. The community was urged to provide its role in maintaining school, effective student-teacher relations, provision of security, and proper parental care were submitted to avoid school/ class absenteeism (Ladan, 2018; Hiliya & Umar, 2021; Sanchi et al., 2022). Similar studies elsewhere had reported similar results (like in Table 5), showing the measures to ensure students' absenteeism at school were mentioned (Akkus & Cinkir, 2022). Proper management methods such as developed action plans, prevention laws, policies, and reducing teacher absenteeism are related. Monitoring and evaluation of teachers and students are other methods mentioned to curb absenteeism. In this vein, monitoring of students properly is a mentioned method similar to that of Table 5 (Jalili & Mall-Amir, 2015; Dange & Dange, 2019; Akkus & Cinkir, 2022). This has reiterated that school attendance by students is a major thing towards attaining good outcomes in the education and training of students. Students must be made to attend schools due to the concerted efforts of teachers, parents, and policies of governments and school management as well. School managers, teachers, governments, and parents must work tirelessly to remove barriers to school attendance and scuttle the act of school absenteeism by students (Boyi, 2013; Gado & Alkammawa, 2017; Akkus & Cinkir, 2022; Casian et al., 2022).

For countries, states, and individuals to compete and propel well in the current trend of the global economy, education is non-negotiable (Kapur, 2019). One of the major phases of education is secondary education, which helps the students to be efficient in appreciating curricular and extra-curricular activities. At this level of education, students are supposed to learn sciences, technologies, ideas, and behaviours that will propel them in the community of peers. Thus, secondary education is significant (Bello et al., 2017; Pepple & Joseph, 2018; Kapur, 2019). However, nowadays, the absenteeism of students from schools is metamorphosing into a huge challenge both in rural and urban settings (Fabgenle & Elegbeleye, 2014; Bello et al., 2022). Considering the diverse factors surrounding the happenings of school absenteeism, it is imperative to unveil information from various regions of the country to come up with a lasting prevention for this menace (Fabgenle & Elegbeleye, 2014). Furthermore, in this study, it was revealed that there is school/class absenteeism exhibited by some students due to the lack of care from teachers, head teachers, parents, corruption, and government attitude. The negative effects of the menace cannot be overstated. They are linked with lifelong adverse academic, social, and health sequelae; however, the menace of school/class absenteeism received less attention from all (Allen et al., 2018; Aliyu & Bichi, 2019). Missing schools/classes frequently is a factor that causes children to engage in social problems, risky behaviours, drop school, avoid higher institutions, and experience low academic performance, among other effects (Ololube, 2014; Oviawe, 2016; Allen et al., 2018; Umar et al., 2018; Kearney et al., 2022). Therefore, measures should be put down by the community, government, and school heads to see that all teachers perform well and effectively in a student-friendly and centred manner to avoid absenteeism; teachers should be monitored to properly attend classes and monitor students (O'Grady et al., 2011; Odeniyi & Adeyanju, 2020). Likewise, the head of schools should properly ensure teachers do their job of attending schools and classes in order. Parents should check their wards always and report any misbehaviour of schools to the right authority. Corruption should be tackled because some students abstain from

schools but give corruption to be promoted or scaled through. Adequate security in school areas is paramount because many students and teachers leave school because some areas of Sokoto are ravaged by insecurity (Olorode & Adeyemo, 2012; Moosa, 2021; Zikanga et al., 2021; Sunday et al., 2022; Omoregie, 2022; Yabo et al., 2022).

CONCLUSIONS

The objective of this work was to evaluate the existence of school and absenteeism in a school in Sokoto East, Nigeria. Forms of absenteeism found include the closing of classes, class absenteeism, and school absenteeism, which are due to poor supervision, insecurity, corruption and the like. Effects of absenteeism are poor academics, school dropout, and inability to complete higher education. The ways of prevention include proper supervision by parents, teachers, leaders, community, and administration. Thus, there exists school and class absenteeism in their forms, their effects and the tendency to affect education and, in turn, the development of the area and state at large. Proper monitoring of schools, students, and teachers is needed from the side of government, community, and school heads.

LIMITATION & FURTHER RESEARCH

Since this study is a survey design, there is a need for experimental or case-control or other more robust methods that will augment the findings of this study.

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