

# Gender, School Climate and Job Satisfaction as Correlates of Job Absenteeism among Selected Secondary School Teachers in Osun State, Nigeria

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## Abstract

Absenteeism has long been considered a significant and pervasive problem in industries and schools. As a result, theories have been developed and numerous studies conducted to identify the causes of absenteeism. Probably one of the most common theories is the notion that absenteeism is caused by employees avoiding a painful or dissatisfying work situation. Although it is recognized that absenteeism may be caused by the employee's inability to come to work, motivation to attend work is assumed to be a major factor determining how often an employee is absent. To many in the world of work, absenteeism is one of those stubborn problems for which there is no clear culprit and no easy cure. The purpose of this study was to investigate gender, school climate and job satisfaction as correlates of job absenteeism among selected secondary school teachers in Osun State, Nigeria. Descriptive research design of ex-post-facto type was used in the study. Four hundred (400) respondents were selected from Local Governments in Osun State, Nigeria. The respondents were measured with relevant standardized scales strong reliability coefficient and the data obtained was analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) and Multiple Regression statistical analysis of the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS). Three research hypotheses and two research questions were raised and answered in the study. The result showed that teachers' absenteeism is significantly correlated with gender ( $r = .561$ ;  $p < .05$ ), school climate ( $r = .495$ ;  $p < .05$ ) and job satisfaction ( $r = .784$ ;  $p < .05$ ), independent variables when pulled together have significant contribution to teachers' absenteeism ( $R$  (adjusted) = .592 &  $R^2$  (adjusted) = .582) and each of the independent variables made a significant contribution to the prediction of teachers' absenteeism (school climate made the most significant contribution (Beta = .612;  $t = 2.542$ ;  $P < 0.05$ ) follow by job satisfaction (Beta = .268;  $t = 3.471$ ;  $P < 0.05$ ) and gender (Beta = .056;  $t = 1.071$ ;  $P < 0.05$ ). On the strength of these findings, it was stressed and advocated that public and private schools should endeavour to provide enabling environment for the teachers, school management also should motivate their teacher and give attractive welfare packages to enhance their job satisfaction, because their level of job satisfaction has significant influence on teachers' job absenteeism in the school.

**Keywords:** Gender, School Climate, Job Satisfaction and Job Absenteeism

## CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION

### Background to the Study

Education is globally-accepted as the most viable tool for sustainable human development. It is equally an indispensable tool for enhancing economic growth and national development. Education is seen as the cornerstone of every development forming the basis for literacy, skill acquisition, technological advancement as well as the ability to harness the natural resources of the state. Participants in the World Conference on "Education for All" in Jomtien (2006) pointed out that education is a fundamental right of all people, women and men of all ages throughout the world. It helps to ensure a safer, healthier, more prosperous and environmentally-sound world. It is an indispensable key for personal and social improvement. UNESCO (1990) has however pointed out that the current provision of education is seriously deficient and that it must be made more relevant, qualitatively improved and universally available. In recognition of the inestimable value of education, the Nigerian Government has adopted education as an instrument par excellence for effecting national development. Thus, education is viewed as an instrument for building a free and democratic society, a just and egalitarian society, a united strong and self-reliant nation and a great and dynamic economy (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2004).

In order to attain these national aspirations, secondary schools are expected to provide quality instructions that will be oriented towards inculcating values of respect for the worth and dignity of individuals; ability to make rational decisions; moral and spiritual values in interpersonal relationship and shared

responsibility for the common good of society, among others (FRN, 2004). The quality of education of any nation, to a very large extent, determines the development status of that particular nation (Amao, Olashinde-Giwa, Muraina, & Muraina, 2012 and Oluwatoyin, Muraina & Muraina, 2013). Education can be regarded as the heartbeat of any nation. As a man nourishes his heart to be alive, a nation must also cater for her educational system to keep it 'alive' technologically, economically, politically, socially and to ensure quality products. The issue of quality in the educational system has been receiving a great deal of attention in the society in recent times. Parents as well as the entire society have been clamoring for quality (Nwogbo, 2007). The demand for quality in education is not out of place considering the huge sum of money that goes into the system. Madumere-Obike (2003) was of the view that education consumes a lot of public revenue. Therefore, it is important to note that those who manage schools should be accountable to the stakeholders. The quality of the products of education is part of that accountability.

The teacher serves as the most important science curriculum implementer in the classroom (Ume, 1983 & Aweh, 2004). Teachers all over the world are recognized as critical factors in the delivery of quality education at whatever level (Amao, Olashinde-Giwa, Muraina, & Muraina, 2012 and Oluwatoyin, Muraina & Muraina, 2013). Becki (1983) opined that the successful attainment of the educational aspiration of any country depends on the inputs of its teachers. The recognition of the key role of teachers in any curriculum implementation has prompted several interaction studies in Education in Nigeria (Effiong and Erukoha, 2004; Kalu, 2004 and Edu, 2006). These studies have all acknowledged a need for improvement in the level of abilities in teachers for them to be able to effectively teach. Despite the emphasis on the importance of education and the huge investments in Education by the government, performance of students in English Language and Mathematics has been a source of concern to educational planners in Nigeria.

For decades business and industry have struggled with the problem of employee absenteeism, a fact that is supported by the vast body of literature that addresses the issue. In fact, absenteeism and staff turnover are the two most frequent outcomes studied in organizational research (Long & Ormsby, 2001). One of the key pillars of Vision 2030 in Kenya is provision of quality education. School systems have been engaged in a system of educational reform designed to change school culture and to improve student achievement. The financial cost of teacher absenteeism is significant. Teacher absence often means that students have lost opportunities to learn. Further, teacher absences disrupt the routines and relationships which support the learning process (Amao, Olashinde-Giwa, Muraina, & Muraina, 2012 and Oluwatoyin, Muraina & Muraina, 2013). While research has clearly demonstrated that teacher absence has a negative effect on student achievement (Ehrenberg *et al.*, 1991), the research has not been as demonstrative about the causes or predictors of teacher absence.

Conflicting evidence exists about the effects of characteristics such as gender, age, experience, time of week and school culture. For instance, some studies have shown that female teachers are absent more frequently than male teachers (Scott, 1990; Clotfelter, 2007), while others have found that men are absent more frequently than women (Rosenblatt & Shirom, 2005). The results of various studies appear to be contextual in nature, and therefore, are conclusive for the environs in which they were conducted. As a result, there was need to do a study of the teacher absence behaviors in the Nigeria context. Gupta (2003) called excessive absenteeism among school personnel one of the most neglected problems in public education. While teacher absenteeism is widely recognized as a serious problem, there is surprisingly little systematic data as to the pervasiveness or extent of the problem in Nigeria. Considering current economic conditions in the country and the emphasis of using education to attain the Vision 2020 goals, it is important that researchers be able to identify causes of teacher absenteeism in order to develop solutions to the problem. There is widespread consensus that teacher absenteeism is a major threat.

Absenteeism has long been considered a significant and pervasive problem in industries and schools. As a result, theories have been developed and numerous studies conducted to identify the causes of absenteeism (Amao, Olashinde-Giwa, Muraina, & Muraina, 2012 and Oluwatoyin, Muraina & Muraina, 2013). Probably one of the most common theories is the notion that absenteeism is caused by employees avoiding a painful or dissatisfying work situation. By the same token, this hedonistic theory would predict that employees who find their job more challenging, more interesting, or more pleasurable in other ways will be absent less often than employees who find their work less pleasurable. Although it is recognized that absenteeism may be caused by the employee's inability to come to work, motivation to attend work is assumed to be a major factor determining how often an employee is absent. To many in the world of work, absenteeism is one of those stubborn problems for which there is no clear culprit and no easy cure (Rhodes & Steers, 1990). Furthermore, as a general phenomenon it does not discriminate against individuals on the basis of sex, race and religion.

Bydowell (2000) postulates that employers have the right to expect good attendance from their employees as employment is a contract between two consenting parties. The author further states that absenteeism issues will undoubtedly arise within the employment relationship and should be resolved in a manner which is fair and equitable to both the employer and the employee. Absenteeism can be very costly to organisations and enormous savings can be realized through effective management of nonattendance at work.

Besides the cost implications, absenteeism is influenced by dozens of interrelated factors which make it even more difficult to quantify, qualify or rectify (Tylczak, 1990). One of these factors which have been cited by different researchers is school climate.

Working conditions is an extrinsic factor that has a moderate impact on employee's job absenteeism (Luthans, 1995). Working conditions refer to such aspects as temperature, lighting, noise and ventilation. Robbins (1989) states that employees are concerned with their work environment for both personal comfort and for facilitating good job performance and reduce the level of absenteeism. Studies have demonstrated that employees prefer physical surroundings that are safe, clean, comfortable and with a minimum degree of distractions (Robbins, 2005). According to Spector (1997), research has shown that employees who perceive high levels of constraints in terms of their work environment, tend to be dissatisfied with their jobs. Contradictory literature, however, indicates that most people do not give working conditions a great deal of thought unless they are extremely bad (Luthans, 1995).

One factor related to job satisfaction is the extent to which employees perceive that they are being treated fairly (Aamodt, 2004). According to Robbins (1989), employees seek for policies and systems that they perceive to be fair as this will likely result in an increase in job absenteeism. Frankenhaeuser and Gardell (1976) examined employees' autonomy in the workplace and showed that that workplaces characterised by low worker-control and autonomy created stress, which resulted in absenteeism. Similar results were also reported by Spector et al (1988). If one assumes that work-related stress is an undesirable condition then the direct impact of stress on the individual may in turn have serious repercussions on the organisation of the firm through high absenteeism, high turnover costs per effective unit of labour input, industrial relations difficulties and poor quality control.

Another factor which could also predicts job absenteeism is the level of job satisfaction among teachers. In conjunction with this, George and Jones (2002) maintain that many researchers have studied the relationship between absenteeism and job satisfaction in an attempt to discover ways to reduce absenteeism. Early job satisfaction research has emphasized the underlying assumption that job dissatisfaction represents the primary cause of absenteeism (Steers, Porter & Bigley, 1996). Steers (1996) supported the notion that employees who are dissatisfied with various aspects of their jobs are more likely to be absent. Studies by McShane (1984) found job satisfaction to be more highly related to frequency of absences than to number of days lost. In view of the findings above, the present study concentrates on gender, school climate and job satisfaction as correlates of job absenteeism among selected secondary school teachers in Osun State, Nigeria.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Teachers determine what ultimately happens to educational policies, to curriculum guidelines, the use to which teaching-learning materials are put, etc and in fact the fate of a nation's huge investments in education. What teachers do, or do not do, are able or not able to do, are willing or not willing to do, what they do properly or do poorly determines, to a great extent, the effective curriculum (what children actually learn). They play a significant role in the determination of the quality of education. The National Policy on Education succinctly states that no education system can rise above the quality of its teachers, thus implying the important role played by teachers in facilitating teaching and learning and in determining the quality of education service delivery.

Teachers have been shown to have an important influence on students' academic performance and they also play a crucial role in educational attainment of pupils with hearing impairment because the teacher is ultimately responsible for translating policy into action and principles based on practice during interaction with the students (Afe, 2001). As such, both teaching and learning depends on teachers, no wonder an effective teacher has been conceptualized as one who produces desired results in the course of his duty as a teacher (Uchefuna, 2001). Considering governments' huge investment in public education, its output in terms of quality of students has been observed to be unequal with Government expenditure. Consequent upon the observed deterioration in the job performance, attitude and values of secondary school students in public schools, one wonders if the high failure rates and the poor quality of the students is not a reflection of the instructional quality in the schools. In other words the ineffectiveness of teachers in classroom interaction with the students could be responsible for the observed poor performance of students and the widely acclaimed fallen standard of education in Nigeria.

Miller, Miller, Murnane, and Willett (2007) find that substantial shares of absences are discretionary and that higher absences lead to significantly lower student achievement. Another recent study from North Carolina that used a rich longitudinal data set of teachers and students found that teacher absences are associated with lower student achievement in primary school (Clotfelter, Ladd and Vigdor, 2007). Moreover, absence is more prevalent in schools serving disadvantaged children. The authors found that schools in the poorest quartile averaged almost one extra sick day per teacher than schools in the highest income quartile, and schools with persistently high rates of teacher absence were much more likely to serve low-income than high-income students. This suggests that in the Nigeria, teacher absenteeism compounds the disadvantages already faced by students in

developing countries. Teachers' absenteeism in the schools may be determined by several factors which among others could be job satisfaction, leadership style and school climate. As such, the present study concentrates on gender, school climate and job satisfaction as correlates of job absenteeism among selected secondary school teachers in Osun State, Nigeria.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The main purpose of this study is to investigate gender, school climate and job satisfaction as correlates of job absenteeism among selected secondary school teachers in Osun State, Nigeria. Specifically, other purposes of the study include to:

1. Examine significant relationship among the independent variables (gender, school climate and job satisfaction) and teachers' absenteeism.
2. Investigate combined contribution of the independent variables (gender, school climate and job satisfaction) on teachers' absenteeism and,
3. Determine relative contribution of the independent variables (gender, school climate and job satisfaction) and teachers' absenteeism.

### **Research Questions**

1. What is the significant relationship among the independent variables (gender, school climate and job satisfaction) and teachers' absenteeism?
2. What is the combined contribution of the independent variables (gender, school climate and job satisfaction) on teachers' absenteeism?
3. What is the relative contribution of the independent variables (gender, school climate and job satisfaction) and teachers' absenteeism?

### **Significance of Study**

This study will be of immense benefit to the government at all level, the parents, teachers, educational planners, decision and policy makers as well as other stakeholder in education. However, this study will help the public and private schools to know and ascertain the contributions of job satisfaction and school climate on teachers' absenteeism, thereby making the school to prepare appropriate working condition in finding lasting solution to the menace in the school.

The study will provide an insight understanding for the school management and directors to know the effect of gender on teachers' absenteeism. This will help in appropriate management and direction of teachers in the school system. The study of this type will further enable the teachers to discover the contributions of independent variables (gender, school climate and job satisfaction) on absenteeism of teachers in the school system.

Through this study, the school managers/principal as well as the teachers will be able to know the contributions of independent variables (gender, school climate and job satisfaction) on absenteeism of teachers in the school.

The gender, school climate and job satisfaction as correlates of job absenteeism among selected secondary school teachers will enable the government and the general public to be aware of these factors and work towards better improvement of teacher absenteeism in the school system. It is important to note that findings in this study will also serve as a source of reference for other researchers who may want to conduct the same or similar study in other subjects or part of the country.

### **Scope of the study**

The study concentrates on gender, school climate and job satisfaction as correlates of job absenteeism among selected secondary school teachers in Osun State, Nigeria. The study cut across both male and female teachers with different educational qualifications and teaching subjects in Osun State, Nigeria.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

The research design used in this study was descriptive design of ex-post- facto type. It is going to ascertain the effects of the independent variables (gender, school climate and job satisfaction) on the dependent variable (teachers' absenteeism) without manipulations. However, it is carefully observed and recorded information as it naturally occurred at the time the study was conducted.

### **Population**

The population for the study comprises of all secondary school teachers in Osun State, Nigeria. The study will cut across all schools and the teachers in the schools.

### Sample and Sampling Techniques

The sample for this study comprises 450 participants which were randomly selected from secondary school teachers in Osun State, Nigeria. Multi-stage sampling technique was used. The first stage involves the selection of three (3) Senatorial districts which constitute the state follow by the selection of three (3) Local Governments in each senatorial District. Five (5) schools were selected in each Local Government and ten (10) teachers were drawn for each school randomly. On the whole, four hundred and fifty (450) secondary school teachers were selected. These consist of both male and female and cut across different departments in the school.

### Instrumentations

#### Absenteeism Scale (AS)

Teacher absenteeism was measure by the total number of contract days missed during the school year for any reason. For this study, total absences were categorized into five levels: 0-4 absences coded = 1; 5-9 absences coded = 2; 10-19 absences coded = 3; 20-34 absences coded = 4; and 35 and above absences coded = 5.

#### School Climate Scale (SCS)

The school climate scales constructed by Sukkyung, Meagan and Michael (2008) was adopted to be used as a measure of school climate. It is a twenty items scale with responses anchored base on the four likert points. The reliability of the scale range from .77 and .84. The responses anchored based on four likert points which are Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2) and Strongly Disagree (1).

#### Job Satisfaction Scale (JSS)

The job satisfaction scale developed by Worrell (2004) was used as a measure of job satisfaction of the teachers. The instrument has twenty two (22) items with reliability coefficient of .80. The responses anchored based on four likert points which are Strongly Agree (4), Agree (3), Disagree (2) and Strongly Disagree (1).

#### Procedure for Data Collection

The instruments were administered to the participants on the day approved by the school authorities for the exercise. The researcher was assisted by research assistant in the administration and collection of the instruments. In each of selected school, the administration and collection of instruments were done on the same day of administration. The instrument was administered on the participants in their various schools by the researcher with the support of the research assistant. Out of four hundred and fifty (450) distributed on four hundred (400) were properly filled and used in the data analysis.

### Data Analysis

The Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) and multiple regression statistical analysis was used to analyse the data. The multiple regression analysis yielded correlation matrix, analysis of variance among others which was used to interpret the data.

## RESULTS

The study investigate into gender, school climate and job satisfaction as correlates of job absenteeism among selected secondary school teachers in Osun State, Nigeria. Three research questions were raised and answered. The data were analyzed using Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) and multiple regression statistical method. The results are presented below:

**Research Question One:** What is the significant relationship among the independent variables (gender, school climate and job satisfaction) and teachers' absenteeism?

**TABLE 1: DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS AND INTER-CORRELATIONS AMONG THE VARIABLES**

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Absenteeism	Gender	School Climate	Job Satisfaction
Absenteeism	400	39.91	22.38	1.00			
Gender	400	3.31	3.38	.561**	1.00		
School Climate	400	28.48	16.73	.495**	.678	1.00	
Job Satisfaction	400	21.31	12.12	.784**	.569	.749	1.00

**Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)**

Table 1 contains descriptive statistics and inter-correlations among the study variables. As shown in the table 1, teachers' absenteeism is significantly correlated with gender ( $r = .561$ ;  $p < .05$ ), school climate ( $r = .495$ ;  $p < .05$ ) and job satisfaction ( $r = .784$ ;  $p < .05$ ). Also, there were also significant correlations among the independent variables.

**Research Question Two:** What is the combined contribution of the independent variables (gender, school climate and job satisfaction) on teachers' absenteeism?

**TABLE 2: MULTIPLE REGRESSION ANALYSIS ON ADOLESCENTS' TEACHERS' ABSENTEEISM DATA**

Multiple R (adjusted)=.592				
Multiple R <sup>2</sup> (adjusted)=.582				
Standard error of estimate= 31.46				
Analysis of variance				
	Sum of square (SS)	DF	Mean square	F
Regression	2590.94	3	863.65	11.52
Residual	29699.08	396	75.00	
Total	32290.02	399		

The table 2 above shows that the independent variables when pulled together have significant contribution to teachers' absenteeism. The value of R (adjusted) = .592 and R<sup>2</sup> (adjusted) = .582. The analysis of variance performed on the multiple regressions yielded an F- ratio value of 11.52 and was found to be significant at 0.05 level.

**Research Question Three:** What is the relative contribution of the independent variables (gender, school climate and job satisfaction) and teachers' absenteeism?

**TABLE 3: RELATIVE CONTRIBUTION OF INDEPENDENT VARIABLES TO THE PREDICTION**

Model	Unstandardized coefficients	Standardized coefficients		T	P
	B	Standard error	Beta		
Constant	12.109	2.518		6.385	P<0.05
Gender	.052	.331	.056	1.071	P<0.05
School Climate	.370	.153	.612	2.542	P<0.05
Job Satisfaction	.467	.045	.268	3.471	P<0.05

The table 3 above shows that each of the independent variables made a significant contribution to the prediction of teachers' absenteeism. In term of magnitude of contribution, school climate made the most significant contribution (Beta= .612; t= 2.542; P<0.05). Other variables made contribution in the following order: job satisfaction (Beta= .268; t= 3.471; P<0.05) and gender (Beta= .056; t= 1.071; P<0.05).

### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The result of the first research question revealed that teachers' absenteeism is significantly correlated with gender, school climate and job satisfaction. Also, there were also significant correlations among the independent variables. This is in line with the finding of Robbins (1989), employees seek for policies and systems that they perceive to be fair as this will likely result in an increase in job absenteeism. Frankenhaeuser and Gardell (1976) examined employees' autonomy in the workplace and showed that that workplaces characterised by low worker-control and autonomy created stress, which resulted in absenteeism. Similar results were also reported by Spector et al (1988). If one assumes that work-related stress is an undesirable condition then the direct impact of stress on the individual may in turn have serious repercussions on the organisation of the firm through high absenteeism, high turnover costs per effective unit of labour input, industrial relations difficulties and poor quality control.

The result of the second research question revealed that the independent variables when pulled together have significant contribution to teachers' absenteeism. The value of R (adjusted) and R<sup>2</sup> (adjusted) showed that 58.2% of independent variables in the study contribute to teachers absenteeism. This is in collaboration with the finding of Bydawell (2000) postulates that employers have the right to expect good attendance from their employees as employment is a contract between two consenting parties. The author further states that absenteeism issues will undoubtedly arise within the employment relationship and should be resolved in a manner which is fair and equitable to both the employer and the employee. Absenteeism can be very costly to organisations and enormous savings can be realized through effective management of nonattendance at work. Besides the cost implications, absenteeism is influenced by dozens of interrelated factors which make it even more difficult to quantify, qualify or rectify (Tylczak, 1990). One of these factors which have been cited by different researchers is school climate.

The result of the third research question revealed that each of the independent variables made a significant contribution to the prediction of teachers' absenteeism. In term of magnitude of contribution, school

climate made the most significant contribution. Other variables made contribution in the following order: job satisfaction and gender. This is consistent with the finding of George and Jones (2002) maintain that many researchers have studied the relationship between absenteeism and job satisfaction in an attempt to discover ways to reduce absenteeism. Early job satisfaction research has emphasized the underlying assumption that job dissatisfaction represents the primary cause of absenteeism (Amao, Olashinde-Giwa, Muraina, & Muraina, 2012 and Oluwatoyin, Muraina & Muraina, 2013). Steers (1996) supported the notion that employees who are dissatisfied with various aspects of their jobs are more likely to be absent. Studies by McShane (1984) found job satisfaction to be more highly related to frequency of absences than to number of days lost.

### Conclusion and Recommendations

Base on the findings of this study, persistent record of Nigerian secondary school teacher absenteeism due to gender, school climate and job satisfaction should not continue indefinitely. There is hope that with the improvement of school climate and job satisfaction, the situation can be changed for the better. The study discovered that gender, school climate and job satisfaction influence significantly the teachers absenteeism in the school. As such, it is very crucial to improve these factors (school climate and job satisfaction) so as to eradicate the persistent occurrence of teacher absenteeism records and low student performance in this great country, Nigeria.

The public and private schools should endeavour to provide enabling environment for the staff and students of the schools, so as to reduce the level of teachers' absenteeism in the school. School management also should motivate their teacher and give attractive welfare packages to enhance their job satisfaction, because their level of job satisfaction has significant influence on teachers' job absenteeism in the school.

School counselors should intensify their effort to organize seminars/conferences on the implications of these factors (e.g school climate and job satisfaction among others) on the teachers' job absenteeism and Both the home and the school should cooperate together in making the learners to remain focused and the teachers effort be materialized in the school.

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