

# TEACHER'S ABSENTEEISM AS A DETERMINANTS OF INDISCIPLINE BEHAVIOUR AMONG PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS IN SOUTHERN IJAW EDUCATIONAL ZONE, BAYELSA STATE, NIGERIA.

Philip K. Ikiyei, (Ph.D)\*, <sup>2</sup>Grace Ibaba (Ph.D)

<sup>1</sup>*Department of Counseling and Educational Psychology, Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island, Bayelsa State.*

<sup>2</sup>*Department of Educational Management, Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island, Bayelsa State.*

## ABSTRACT

As professionals, teachers must do their duties diligently to earn a living like all other career personalities. This study investigated the Teachers' absenteeism as a determinant of indiscipline behaviour among primary school pupils in Southern Ijaw Educational Zone, in Bayelsa State. The researchers seek to find out the multiple maladaptive consequences teachers' absence from school could create in the life of the pupils at the foundational stages of education and beyond. A total of 10 public primary schools in the Educational Zone were purposively selected for the study. Again, 138 pupils in primary 5 and 6 served as sample that responded to the researchers' prepared instrument titled "Teachers Absenteeism and Pupils Behaviour Questionnaire" (TAPBQ) made up of 20 items. Results of the study were analyzed using frequency counts, mean scores and standard deviations. Finding of the study revealed that teachers' absence from school could be a precursor of pupil's bullying, truancy, cheating and noise making behaviour in class/school. Teachers owe their pupils a responsibility of exemplary conducts of which staying away from their duty posts portends danger and a bleak future for the younger generations that will success them. Recommendations are proffered to saving the school system from total collapse including the need for attitudinal change among teachers in the interest of the school pupils.

**KEYWORDS:** Determinants; Indiscipline behaviour; Primary school pupils; Teacher's absenteeism.

## 1. BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The primary school forms the foundation upon which the preparation of a sound education for every child lies. It is in the primary school that the child's future life and interests are shaped first after leaving their parents to the wider society for the first time. These tender minds are brought to be taught the rudiments of learning. It is here that the teacher comes into the picture. Teachers are the engine-room upon which the future development of the pupils they teach hinges on. A well trained and dedicated teacher is a veritable asset for progress, that any pupil can rely on to achieve their academic goals in life. Teachers by their definition according to Maduekwe (2015) are individuals who had gotten the requisite training concerning bring up children through the school system to become responsible adults. Again, Isangedighi (2007) had described the teaching profession as a helping skill. He opined that teachers are specialists in ensuring that they build the child's personality and establishes their emotional stability. Still writing about the place of a teacher in the life of the growing child, Denga (2013) used the Japanese proverb to capture the importance of the teacher to the mental development of children. The Japanese proverb maintains that spending "one day with a great teacher is better than a thousand days of diligent self-study".

Globally, teachers are regarded as disciplined, intelligent, and resourceful individuals who by dint of their professional training are ever willing to set various dynamic strategies to support others especially their pupils and students achieve their dreams through learning (Denga, (2008). Ugoani (2016) describes teachers as professionals trained to transmit knowledge in order for children to learn. Teachers are motivators who inspire their students to seek for methods via critical thinking in other to solving problems. Sound teachers' has a

repository of skills that assist pupils gather relevant information aimed at addressing the challenges of life (Paulley, Abdulrahman and Akpe, 2023).

Taking up such great responsibility entails been committed to duty. However, from observations of the conduct of some teachers especially in the rural/riverine areas in Bayelsa State had shown that most teachers hardly stay or report at their duty posts. These set of teachers are almost always absent from their classes only to wait for their salaries to be paid to them regularly by the state government. In the light of the above, teacher absenteeism from school, Irondi (2010) had observed that the larger Nigerian society is wondering why today's teachers are rejecting the village life. Most teachers it appears prefer to stay in the urban areas rather than perform their responsibilities to the children they are assigned to teach. Without fear of contradictions, there are some schools where teachers are posted or transferred to but they rarely surface to teach. One thing however is such about life, most likely, these untaught pupils may be the teachers of tomorrow. The question is; what will they teach, when they themselves were not taught?

School absenteeism as defined by Amalu and Abang (2016) is the perpetual staying away from duty by either a teacher or pupil with or without excuse. Teacher absenteeism is the habit of deliberately not going to do the job for which one is paid without permission from their superiors (in this case, the Head teachers or Headmaster). It is noteworthy to mention that the teacher is expected to show an exemplary behaviour that will add value to the children left under their care as "loco parents" (teachers represent parents since the children are kept under their care for the better part of the day). A teacher's role does not stop with the teaching of the formal school subjects in the curriculum rather they are expected to transmit values in terms of industry, justice, integrity, discipline, courage, humility, obedience to rules, self-control among others (Denga, 2005). Teachers are mentors and once they lack of commitment to duties, it speaks volumes. When they relegate their duties, the children whom they are expected to direct no doubt will become disillusioned as they will be in their classes like "sheep without a shepherd". The teacher is a counselor to the growing child and the Holy Bible in Proverbs 11:14 stated clearly that "where no counsel is, the people fall: but in the multitude of counselors there is safety".

The dare situation the Nigerian child finds themselves is aptly captured in the Nigerian National Policy of Education (FGN 2014). It is emphatically stated there that education is an instrument par excellence for effecting national development. Ene and Mogboh (2020) had cited Ukeje as arguing that education is a powerful means as it can lift up or impoverish a nation. One wonders what type of education school children can receive without teachers. Such an education could hardly be competitive or progressive. Maduekwe (2015) had indicated that education is for improving the lives of others in our communities' better than we found them. Teacher absenteeism could be a contributory factor to children's lack of discipline and other maladjusted behaviours in the Nigerian society today. Teachers' with requisite skills prepares the emotional tone for the pupils in the class to learn. Great teachers serve as counselors to the pupils; they help to stabilize the mental state of the child, in the process of their interaction with their pupils, teachers remove anxiety and build confidence in their pupils. A professional teacher is a friend to the learner; he creates warmth; he is simple, understanding and always approachable by the pupils. Such teachers are good listeners and are objective while passing judgments.

From every indication, even with the presence of teachers and other administrative staff in the school environment, indiscipline is obviously becoming an endemic part of the educational system. In the school organization, both the teachers and pupils are guided by rules and regulations in order to ensure that instructions are obeyed. Conducting oneself contrary to the codes of conduct of the school system is what is referred to as indiscipline. Indiscipline is an infringement of an individual or group of individuals against set rules; they are behaviours that are not in tandem with laid out expectations for the smooth running of an organization. Offences that are commonly observable within the school social settings ranges from fighting among pupils, carrying of dangerous weapons to school for purposes of mischief, rudeness, truancy, cheating during tests and examinations, bullying, late coming or not been punctual, wearing of other dresses to school instead of the uniforms; among others are all elements of indiscipline behaviours exhibited by pupils. Pupils that are undisciplined, according to Isangedighi (2007) have contemptuous personal values, goals and aspirations. In the molding of the learner, teachers have major roles to play in ensuring that the child conform to the set standards of the school in order to cultivate a positive direction of life upon graduation from school. In a situation where teachers abdicate this enormous responsibility by being absent from school with flimsy excuses, the repercussions of what becomes of the child will boomerang on the entire society later.

In the light of the above, one could begin to imagine the very many benefits children miss when their teachers are absent from school for weeks (sometimes months). Such teachers no doubt are “cheaters” not “teachers”. Isangedighi (2007) had warned that teachers who pay lip-service to their duties do not seem to realize the magnitude of the great damage they constitute to the future of the society and the growing child. According to Isangedighi, the future belongs to the children, arguing that anything that happens to the child today will shape and at the same time affect their future tomorrow.

The problem of this study therefore is to find out the extent that teachers are deliberately refusing to attend school or teach their pupils; apparently such teachers are building further challenges for the Nigerian society that is already saddled with multiple dimensions of social ills. Ordinarily, as emphasized by Farrant (1964) it is the class teacher's responsibility to check attendance and see that regular attendance is maintained by his class pupils, not where the teacher is the culprit. Most of the social challenges manifesting in society might start from the classrooms without teachers to direct and supervise them. For instance, a class without teachers to instruct the pupils can create children who will cheat to pass their examinations since they were not properly taught by a teacher. Remember, cheating is a dishonest behaviour. Such a class will produce bullies that may intimidate other weaker children (as it is already, Nigeria is experiencing multiple problems of insecurity, ranging from terrorism, banditry, armed robbery, and kidnapping); many of the pupils will lose interest in schooling as their classes will always be without a teacher to instruct them thereby creating unfulfilled dreams in the mist of boredom. Other disorderly behaviours that may be experienced among the pupils once there are no teachers to instruct them may range from restlessness to resorting to noise making. Idleness, resulting either from the absence of the teacher from the classroom or from the completion before time of work set, often builds up a crescendo of noise (Farrant, 1964). They may also lose their self-esteem, feel frustrated and inferior before their colleagues with proper education going forward.

Absenteeism of teachers may likely cause a total failure of meaningful learning. It can create tension among learners as the school atmosphere will become disorderly thereby resulting in anxiety and confusion (Gwaram, 2012). Absenteeism by teachers leads to meaningful loss of school learning time by pupils and could be a leading factor for pupils dropping out of school. The same may also be responsible for the fall in the quality of instruction as absentee teachers may find it difficult to cover the curriculum approved for their classes. Above all, with no proper education, the children may find it extremely difficult to cope during adult life as they may either end up doing menial jobs as many who do not have sound academic certificates will be considered unemployable. With no room for a sustainable living, a vicious circle of poverty will be the hall-mark of the rural setting in the long run.

The researchers' curiosity is equally linked to recent scourge of gun violence in the developed world. Under the watch of a teacher, several violent actions of children shooting either by their class mates, and teachers are reported especially in the developed world. Pupils in school; needs adult supervision for purposes of safety. The pupils in the classroom may take the semblance of a car driver. They must learn and qualify properly under the guidance of a professional driver before being allowed to enter a car and drive on public highways by themselves. In a situation where that process is not complied with, such drivers become a danger to themselves and every other individual road user. Teachers must be prepared to be at the driver's seat at all times to give directives that will help to groom the growing child to be obedient and law-abiding citizens by being enthusiastic about their job and leave up to expectations. The study is therefore is a wakeup call for all stakeholders in the education sector to not only check the practice of absenteeism from schools by teachers at all levels, but find ways of curbing the trend that is silently destroying the future of the Nigerian child.

## 2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The challenge of teachers staying off their duty posts and leaving the pupils uninstructed especially in the public schools had been a concern to scholars over the years. In recent times, it appears as if only persons living in poverty that are sending their children to the public primary schools. This is despite the fact that teachers in the public schools are in many instances better qualified and professionally trained than most teachers in the private schools. Parents and other care-givers have the perception that teaching and learning in the public schools suffer most times because of the absence of teachers from schools and this may be a contributory factor towards indiscipline among pupils. According to Nwobodo (2015) asserted that teacher's negative behaviours no doubt had led to a higher degree of students' indiscipline in schools. The findings of the study which was carried out in Enugu State concluded that students' indiscipline is largely connected with teachers' school absenteeism and recommended that there is need for counseling in the schools to both teachers and students for a positive change of behaviour to be attained.

Contributing on the impact of teacher absenteeism from work in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, Ejere (2010) ascertained that the World Bank reported that about 20 percent of teachers in public primary schools in Nigeria are absent from their duty posts on a daily-bases. Ejere also corroborated that when teachers are absent from school, students' academic success suffers adversely noting that positive learning outcomes could be realized when teachers spend quality time to teach the pupils in the classroom. Giving reasons for teachers not taking their duties seriously, Ejere postulated that lack of job satisfaction, not been able to see meaningfulness in ones' job and stress could likely be major factors for teacher absenteeism from school. The factors mentioned here could by implication mean that when teachers are given adequate motivation and incentives their behaviour towards work might improve.

Nzeako (2016) presented a study on the problems that secondary schools in Anambra State Nigeria are experiencing as a result of teacher absenteeism from schools. The essence of the study was to identify the behaviour problems of teacher absenteeism from schools might cause and proffer some likely solutions to the menace. The study had 30 school principals and 60 classroom teachers as respondents. Findings from the study indicated that, teachers' may have their personal challenges such as ill-health and issues related to their homes (families); dissatisfaction with incentives received from their employers and a work environment that is not befitting to their status as probable causes of absenteeism. These findings however did not limit the researchers from recommending that government should use the applicable labour law of "No work, No pay" to serve as a deterrent against teachers who are reluctant to attend their classes.

In Ejisu municipality area in Ghana, **Bonsu, Adom, Joe and Adu-Mensah** (2023) studied the Effects of Teachers Absenteeism on the Academic Performance of Students in selected Junior High Schools. The study which was conducted using a purposive sampling method had 683 pupils as well as 40 Mathematics and English Language teachers from 10 schools as respondents. The result from this empirical study established that the higher the turn-out of teachers (number of teachers) present on duty to teach their students the better the students' academic performance. The reverse is the case when teachers absent themselves from their classes. Under the later circumstance, more students performed below average in their academic scores. To prop up the morale of the teachers, the study recommended that the Ministry of Education should be advised to introduce incentives such as performance-based pay, give teachers the required recognition in society. Furthermore, they advocated for granting teachers other allowances, submitting that with improved conditions of service, most teachers may be swayed to change their negative behaviour and mind set towards school attendance.

Teacher absenteeism is a very unprofessional conduct that is detrimental to any nations' developmental vision (**Lee et al** 2015). In most of Sub-Saharan Africa, teacher absenteeism appears to be taking different twists and turns. It is alarming and a rude shock to gather that the World Bank submitted their findings after investigations in Ghana alone, many teachers do not attend classes for as much as 43 days each year (**Asiyai**, 2017). A lot of reasons are given for the incessant missing of class by these trained instructors. In some quarters, it is claimed that both their immediate superiors such as head teachers and principals have also neglected their supervisory responsibilities; this is in addition to the failure of the supervising department from the Ministry of Education to assigning School Supervisors for regular inspection activities. The notion that "health is wealth" had also being explored by many teachers as a lee-way to obtain permission on grounds of ill-health to stay away from work pretending to be receiving medical attention. Other excuses which teachers seem to adopt includes travelling to either the local government area headquarters or the state capitals to receive their salaries in the financial institutions since workers' salaries are no longer been paid cash due to security challenges such as incidence of armed robbery attacks. Cultural factors could also be implicated in some instances to be assisting or explored as excuses by some teachers to be absenting themselves from the classroom. For example, a teacher might obtain permission to attend a father, mother or uncle's burial ceremony and traditional rites. In Epe/Atisa culture in Yenagoa Local Government Area, Bayelsa State, upon the death of a revered chief or elder (either male or female), the relatives are by custom expected to stay at home to, receive and entertain their guests and other sympathizers for at least seven (7) days. For a teacher to be out of class for that period of time, means a huge setback of productive academic man-hours and enough set-back to the learners (**Karppine et al**, 2021). In Ikiyei (2006), some reasons such as lack of self-esteem, their expressed feelings of low job satisfaction and low/delayed salary payments had all been empirically proven to have affected the teachers' attitude to work. Some teachers may also be experiencing stress and academic burn-out due to excessive work-load which could result from teaching over-crowded classes, as well as marking numerous scripts daily either as assignments or tests conducted. Oghuvbu (2007) also high-lighted the neglect which teachers perceive in teams of their poor conditions of service, insufficient professional training, neglect by the society especially by the political elite toward the teaching service; inefficient instructional monitoring, as fundamental factors responsible for some of these unethical behaviours amongst those in the teaching profession.

Ada, Arop and Okute (2019) substantiated that chronic absenteeism may likely lead pupils to involve themselves in multiple social maladies. Borrowing a leaf from their position and claims from the studies of Fischer and Argyle, (2018), misconducts such as aggression, drug use, pronounced sex workers, attempting self-destructive tendencies as suicide and unplanned teenage marriages could not be detached from teachers' unpreparedness towards grooming their pupil. Has the absence of teachers who are regularly paid by the government but refused to go teaching these tender minds contributed significantly to the incidents of indiscipline among the growing primary school pupils over time? In spite of the availability of much literature concerning teachers' absenteeism, the researchers intends to cover a gap by investigating the situation in some selected rural primary schools Southern Ijaw Educational Zone, in Bayelsa State, Nigeria that had experienced many violent mishaps over time by the youth even with the state security apparatus doing their best possible the check indiscipline. Could teachers' absenteeism from classes be part of the challenge?

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to investigate and ascertain if teachers' absenteeism from school could be a determinant of pupils' indiscipline behaviours. Specifically, the study seeks to:

1. Determine whether teachers' absenteeism could be responsible for pupils bullying behaviour in school;
2. Ascertain if teachers' absenteeism contributes to pupils' engaging in truancy at school;
3. Determine the relationship between teachers' absenteeism and the tendency of pupils to cheat during examinations;
4. Find out if teachers' absenteeism from classes affects pupils' noise-making tendencies in school.

### **Research Questions**

The following research questions are posted to guide the study:

1. To what extent does teachers' absenteeism influence bullying among school pupils?
2. To what extent does teachers' absenteeism influence school pupils' engagement in truancy?
3. To what extent does teachers' absenteeism influence pupils' behaviour toward cheating during examinations?
4. To what extent does teachers' absenteeism influence pupils' noise-making tendencies in school?

## **3. METHOD**

The research design adopted for this study is the descriptive research design. This is because the phenomena being investigated had already occurred and the researchers' concern is to identify the perceptions of the subjects (Isangidighi, Joshua, Asim and Ekuri, 2004). The population of the study is made up of all the public primary school pupils in Southern Ijaw Educational Zone of Bayelsa State, Nigeria. The purposive sampling technique is used to select 138 pupils as respondents from primaries 5 and 6 classes aged between 10 – 13 years. These respondents are randomly selected from ten schools in the Educational Zone. The researchers' developed an instrument titled "Teachers Absenteeism and Pupils Behaviour Questionnaire" (TAPBQ), made up of two parts to elicit responses from the sample. Part "A" elicits demographic details from the respondents such as sex, age and class. It also accommodates one question item, "How often does your teacher stay away from teaching you". This will enable the researchers to ascertain the pupils' level of awareness with regards to their teachers' overall time that they spend in class to teach. The options for the pupils to respond to are "Most often" (4 Points), "Often" (3 Points), "Not often" (2 Points), "Never" (1 Point).

Part "B" of the instrument contain 20 items (5 items for each variable on indiscipline behaviour among pupils when their teachers are absent from classes) again using a four-point Likert-type scale of "Most often" (4 Points) (MO); "Often" (3 Points) (O); "Not often" (2 Points) (NO) and "Never" (1 Point) (N). Each of the items is scored 4;3;2; and 1 point for positive items while the reverse is the case for negative items. The instrument was given to experts in Measurement and Evaluation in the Department of Counseling and Educational Psychology, Niger Delta University, Wilberforce Island, to ascertain the face-validity of each item. After the administration of the instrument, the responses were retrieved upon completion in the classrooms immediately to avoid attrition. The administration of the instrument lasted 2 weeks. This was because the sample schools where located along riverain areas and are only accessible by boat or canoes. Data analysis was done for the research questions using frequency counts; mean scores and standard deviation. Frequency counts would be considered for acceptance or rejection of disorderly behaviour due to teacher's absence from school. For purposes of effective administration of the instrument, the researchers seek the permission of the school headmasters' to allow two teachers serve as assistants.

**Results of data analysis**

Below is the result of the data analysis after collecting the responses from the pupils in line with the four research questions stated to guide the study.

**Research Question 1: To what extent does teachers' absenteeism influence bullying among school pupils?**

<b>Bullying</b>								
	<b>To what extent does teachers' absenteeism influence bullying among school pupils?</b>	<b>Most Often</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Not Often</b>	<b>Never</b>	<b>×</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
1	I usually beat up younger pupils in my class	70(280)	21(63)	37(74)	10(10)	1.700	.95	Accepted
2	I like shouting down other pupils in order to get my way in class	46 (184)	36(108)	43(86)	13(13)	2.11	.98	Accepted
3	I really enjoy it when we gang up to beat the weaker pupils	98 (392)	10(108)	27(54)	3 (3)	1.40	.72	Accepted
4	I see myself as powerful, so I intimidated other pupils in class	95 (380)	12(36)	24(48)	6 (6)	1.47	.83	Accepted
5	I respond by physically fighting in class once I am offended	60(240)	20(60)	37(74)	21(21)	2.01	.10	Accepted

**Research Question 2: To what extent does teachers' absenteeism influence school pupils' engagement in truancy?**

<b>Truancy</b>								
	<b>To what extent does teachers' absenteeism influence school pupils' engagement in truancy?</b>	<b>Most Often</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Not Often</b>	<b>Never</b>	<b>×</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
6	I find a reason to stay away from school any time my teacher is not around	82 (328)	9(27)	40(80)	7(7)	1.57	.82	Accepted
7	I feel happy to stay away from school anytime my teacher is not coming to school	94(376)	10(30)	20(40)	2 (2)	1.33	.67	Accepted
8	I am not comfortable that my teacher always comes to class	48 (192)	5(15)	28(56)	11 (11)	1.51	.89	Accepted
9	I am sure the school environment is conducive when my teacher is not around	44(176)	10(30)	19(38)	64(64)	2.66	1.36	Rejected
10	I will hang around the streets when my teacher is not around	72 (288)	14(42)	38(76)	13 (13)	1.75	.98	Accepted
11	I will attend my classes regularly even when there is no teacher in the class	27(108)	35(75)	39(78)	44(44)	2.21	1.15	Rejected

**Research Question 3: To what extent does teachers' absenteeism influence pupils' behaviour toward cheating during examinations?**

<b>Cheating</b>								
	<b>To what extent does teachers' absenteeism influence pupils' behaviour toward cheating during examinations?</b>	<b>Most Often</b>	<b>Often</b>	<b>Not Often</b>	<b>Never</b>	<b>×</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
12	I use to copy answers to the examination hall so that I can pass	83 (332)	11(33)	40(80)	4 (4)	1.58	.76	Accepted
13	I copy to pass when my teachers' did not teach us	68 (272)	21(63)	36(72)	11 (11)	1.78	.99	Accepted
14	I don't know what to write except I am assisted since my teacher was always absent from class	67 (268)	24(72)	29(58)	17 (17)	1.92	1.08	Accepted
15	I cheat during exams so that the absentee teacher will commend/praise me	98 (392)	6(18)	29(58)	5 (5)	1.40	.74	Accepted

**Research Question 4: To what extent does teachers' absenteeism influence pupils' noise-making tendencies in school?**

Noise Making Class								
	To what extent does teachers' absenteeism influence pupils' noise-making tendencies in school?	Most Often	Often	Not Often	Never	×	SD	Remarks
16	I make-noise a lot when my teacher is absent from school	54(216)	27(81)	46(92)	11(11)	2.89	1.02	Accepted
17	I perceive that my class mates remain quite in class even if the teacher don't attend school	24(96)	13(39)	38(78)	62(62)	2.80	1.27	Rejected
18	I often get punished for noise-making when my teacher is not around	70 (280)	28(78)	14(56)	28(28)	2.18	.87	Accepted
19	I lead other pupils to disturb the school when our teachers are not around	102 (408)	5(15)	27(54)	4(4)	1.36	.69	Accepted
20	I feel happy staying around noise-maker than welcoming my teacher that is absent many times	106 (424)	9(27)	17(34)	6 (6)	1.38	.79	Accepted

**4. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

It is obvious from the analysis of the instrument that in most instances, teacher's absence from classes especially at the Primary school level is a potential time bomb aimed at derailing the future of the pupils in the school system. Remembering, also that the primary education system is the foundation laying stage for the enhanced academic development of the growing child. The responses and scores, to the research questions, is an indication that when teachers are not in their classes, there is the tendency that the classroom atmosphere will be unstable and not fit for learning. The submissions from this study are in line with many earlier studies reviewed in the process. For instances, Isangedighi (2007) had warned that teachers who absent themselves from their classes are only preparing the younger generation for disability, in the future.

Specifically, from Research Question 1, it is clear that the pupil's tendency to bully others in class is most frequent when their teachers are not available in class. As many as 70 of the respondents admitted of being prone to bullying their class-mates in instances where their teachers are absent from class. This results could also be linked with the conclusions of Nwobodo (2015), where it is emphasized that teachers negative behaviours no doubt had led to a higher degree of pupils' indiscipline in schools. The findings of the study maintained that students' indiscipline is largely connected with teachers' school absenteeism. The curiosity of the researchers became more worrisome concerning public primary schools in Southern Ijaw Local Government Area, wherein some schools have only two teachers employed by the Universal Primary Educations' Board. Worst still these teachers live in Yenagoa the State capital and only visit their pupils like itinerant teachers most likely for three (3) or four (4) days only in the month.

Research Question 2, intended to find out if teacher absentees could be responsible for pupil's truancy behaviour from their classes. Again, it was revealed that most of the pupils accepted that when teachers are not coming to school, there is the possibility that many pupils will be playing truancy. They will lose interest in academic pursuits there by perform below expectations in their examinations. The pupils are without doubt led like sheep without shepherds. Furthermore, the school environment will appear extremely disorderly when pupils engage in loitering. They may be attracted to life styles of getting involved in drugs and drug trafficking. Other anti-social behaviours might become more prevalent among the pupils due to the absence of teachers to instruct them. These submissions are in line with the views of Ada, Arop and Okute (2019) who substantiated that chronic absenteeism may likely lead pupils to involve themselves in multiple social maladies.

Research Question 3, seeks to clarify whether teacher absenteeism could lead to examination malpractices during examinations. The findings of the present study, reveals that teacher absenteeism could be responsible for pupils inculcating the behaviours of cheating to pass their examinations. Learning is a continuous process and the presence of the teacher alone is enough motivation for the pupils. The teacher is a cover to the children just as mother hen gives direction to her chicks. Once the pupils are not adequately taught, little could be done to cover the void of the teachers' instructions. The findings are in line with Gwaram (2012) who had pointed out that absenteeism by teachers leads to meaningful loss of school learning time by pupils and could be a leading factor for pupils dropping out of school. The same may also be responsible for the fall in the quality of

instruction as absentee teachers may find it difficult to cover the curriculum approved for their classes. The blame in this instant needs not be only for the pupil who cheats during tests and examinations; teachers who refuse to perform their legitimate duties are expected to understanding that some of these pupils might replace them as teachers in the near future. Such untutored pupils will have little to deliver. This implies that there will continue to be a grooming of illiterates in society and further underdevelopment in the communities. **Bonsu, Adom, Joe and Adu-Mensah** (2023) studied the Effects of Teachers Absenteeism on the Academic Performance of Students in selected Junior High Schools in Ghana, established that the higher the turn-out of teachers (number of teachers) present on duty to teach their students the better the students' academic performance. The reverse is the case when teachers absent themselves from their classes. It is certain that under the later circumstance, more students performed below average in their academic scores.

From Research Question 4 seek to find out **to what extent does teachers' absenteeism influence pupils' noise-making tendencies in school? Data gathered from the analysis indicates that pupils are more noisy when teachers are absent from the classes. This finding is in line with the conclusions of** studies organised by Fischer and Argyle, (2018). Misconducts such as aggression, drug use, pronounced sex workers, attempting self-destructive tendencies as suicide and unplanned teenage marriages could not be detached from teachers' unpreparedness towards grooming their pupil. Farrant (1964) had long identified disorderly behaviours that may be experienced among the pupils once there are no teachers to instruct them. They range from restlessness to resorting to noise making. Idleness, resulting either from the absence of the teacher from the classroom or from the completion of what is expected to be taught before time of work set, often builds up a crescendo of noise.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

The submissions from the findings of the study specially for Primary schools in Ijaw Local Government Area of Bayelsa State is certainly not encouraging. The pupils from the analysis of the data concluded that they are been pushed to becoming bullies, truants, young people who cheat in examinations and serious noise-makers in their classes due mainly caused by teachers' absence from school. Teachers' absence will without doubt lead to chain-reactions as future generations whom the teachers are refusing to teach will impact negatively to the entire society. In a 21<sup>st</sup> century where education is a major driver of economic growth, only time will tell how backward communities here will be without proper school. Children whose teachers are playing truant, should realize that they have deliberately created a generation of handicaps by their actions. These pupils cannot compete with their contemporaries elsewhere due to the reasons of not being taught. This ugly situation is a wakeup call for all meaningful sectors in education and society to consider alternative methods of reawakening the consciousness of teachers to take responsibility for the upbringing of the pupils who are indeed the future of any society.

### Recommendations

To encourage teachers to be responsive and actively involved in schools, the researchers had proffered the following recommendations.

- i. Government should create an enabling environment by rethinking of special reward systems as incentives for rural teachers to encourage others to go and be willing to stay and teacher in these communities without social amenities.
- ii. The Ministry of Education, should urgently put in place a mechanism for effective supervision and monitoring of the activities of teachers. Possibly by making the to "Clock in and Clock out" using digital technology. This may be a little rash however, for teachers who are not efficiently responsive to their duties should be sanctioned through suspensions and seizure of their salaries.
- iii. Developing the mind sets of the teachers to understand that teaching as a career requires being empathetic is significant. Teachers must see the profession as an "helping service". They must be ready to support this young children develop holistically despite the circumstances they find themselves. this mental training should be built in the teachers even when they are in the Colleges of Education or Universities.
- iv. Every teacher must be intentional and deliberate in believing that teaching is a responsive career and not for those who sees it as a "stepping-stone" for better/optimal job performance. The integrity of the teacher is a significant propeller for becoming a great classroom teachers'. See the pupils as "seeds" you are sowing for both your personal growth and that of the societys' tomorrow. Only then can we build a better future which is secure and prosperous for all.

## REFERENCE

1. Amalu, M.N. and Abang, K.B. (2016). School absenteeism among primary school pupils in Cross Rivers State: Psychological implication for National Development. *Global Journal of Educational Research*, 15; 49 – 56.
2. Denga, D.I. (2008). *New Millennium Education: Theory and Pedagogy*. Calabar: Rapid Educational Publishers Ltd.
3. Denga, D.I. (2013). *Teacher education in the new millennium: Challenges and Prospects of Professionalism with a Teaching Practice section*. Calabar: Clear Lines Publication.
4. Ejere, E.I. (2010). Absence from work: A study of Teacher Absenteeism in selected public primary schools in Uyo, Nigeria. *International Journal of Business Management*, 5 (9); 115 – 123.
5. Ene, F.N. and Mogboh, V.E. (2020). Digital Literacy in Teaching and Learning: Implications for National Development. In S.N. Ikwumelu (ed.), *New Perspectives in Literacy and National Development. A Festschrift for Professor Sunday NwanyaAgwu. Ebonyi State University, Abakaliki, Ebonyi State*. Lagos: Foremost Educational Services Ltd.
6. Gwaram, A. (2012). Indiscipline in Our Post Primary Institutions. *Journal of ANCOPSS*, 1 (3).
7. Ikiyei, P.K. (2006). Teachers' Self-Esteem, Attitude and Job Performance in Primary Schools in Northern Bayelsa State, Nigeria. *An Unpublished Masters Degree Thesis submitted to the Department of Educational Foundations, Guidance and Counseling, University of Calabar, Calabar- Nigeria*.
8. Isangedighi, A.J., Joshua, M., Asim, A. and Ekure, E.E. (2004). *Fundamentals of research and statistics in education and social sciences*. Calabar. University of Calabar press.
9. Nwobodo, D.N. (2015). Teachers' Behaviour as responsible factors in students' indiscipline in schools in Nigeria. GOUNI Repository. <http://eprints.gouniedu.ng/PDF>.
10. Nzeako, C.U. (2016). Tackling the problem of teacher absenteeism in secondary schools in Anambra State of Nigeria. *Knowledge Review*; 35 (1); 1 – 6.
12. Oghuvbu, E. P. (2007). Indiscipline among teachers: Causes and influence on school administration in Nigeria. *U.S. Department of Education (.gov)*. <https://file.eric.ed.gov/PDF>
13. Paulley, F.G.; Abdulraham, Y.M. and Akpe, P.P. (2024). *Echoes on Education: Selected works of Professor Augustine Adeleke Adeyinka*. Port-Harcourt: Pi African Press.
14. Ugoani, J.N.N. (2016). Education corruption and teacher absenteeism in Nigeria. *Independent Journal of Management and Production (IJM&M)*. <http://www.ijmp.jor.br> DOI:10.14807/ijmp.v712.428.