Global Scientific JOURNALS

CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM FUNDAMENTALS AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE, CASE OF NANTE ISLAMIC JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL OF KINTAMPO SOUTH DISTRICT IN THE BONO EAST REGION OF GHANA

1.Ezekiel Nibenong Seudib

Offuman BACCSOD Ltd   Ghana

ezekiel.nibenong@uds.edu.gh

2. Adjei Stephen Kwasi

adjeis25.sa@gmail.com

University of Energy and Natural Resource,Sunyani Ghana

3. Chining Cletus Kwasi
Education   Service Ghan
cletuschining@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The study investigated the causes and influence of absenteeism on school children academic performance in Nante Islamic Junior High School. The study employed convenience, purposive and universal sampling methods which were used to cover a population and sample size of 74 students composes of students from year one to year three in other to obtain require data. Questionnaire was the main instrument adopted for the study. Data collected was analyzed using the 'Statistical Product and Service Solution' version 20 (SPSS) together with Microsoft excel. Chi-square and correlation analysis were performed together with basis statistics (percentages, mean and standard deviation). The findings from the research indicated a significantly ($0.00<0.05$) negative correlation ($r=-0.47$) between students' performance and the number of days they were absent from school, implying that a direct inverse relation existed between the variables. The chi-square analysis depicts that students with 85percent and more class attendance obtained grades within 1 to 5. Adding to that the study denoted a statistically significant ($0.00<0.05$) means difference ($\pi = 18.57$) implying that school/class attendance has an impact on students' performance. It was held that students who were punctual at class scored high marks than their counter-pals, implying that school attendance is significant for good scores. The study also identified Household chores, lack of

scholastic materials, Hunger at school, illness, punishment at school, Peer influence, loss of parents/guardian and lack of educational zeal as leading reasons for students' chronic absenteeism. The study recommended that government should subsidize the cost of scholastic materials or possibly give them free to students within rural communities.

Background to the study

Regular presence of students in schools for studies is significant for interaction of students among themselves and with their teachers, whereby knowledge is easily transferred. Meanwhile, all students for one reason or the other, at one time or another do miss school/class. The overall likelihood of engaging in such act reluctantly is consider as absenteeism. Student absenteeism is explained by teasley (2004) as a period when a student failed to be present in school, and which has consistently become a challenge amid school children in many countries. This undoubtedly is the case in Ghana of which Nante Islamic JHS is never an exception, as one of the researchers during his national services in the said institution attest to this fact.

However, attendance is significant as there is the possibility of students succeeding in academics when they consistently attend school (Pascopella, 2007). It is problematic for students and teachers in building expertise and headway if high figures of students are habitually absent. It must be said that, apart from failing to catch up with their colleagues in class, students who are not in school on a regular basis may get into trouble with the laws of the country and become a problem to their communities even when they become adults (Hocking, 2008).

Students absenteeism is caused by many factors, among them teasley (2004) have noted the followings; family health issues, low income, bad school environment, intake of liquor and drugs, issues with transportation, and community perception of education as causes. Pehlivan (2006) noticed that the overriding reason given by students for absenteeism include been

bored at school, dislike of school and lessons, discouragement of friends, and no educational ambitions.

In the other way round, Wilkins (2008) came out with four themes, which play significant role in encouraging students to be present in school including; the climate of the school, studies environment, discipline, and student-teacher interactions. However, in an alternative study shepherded by Henery (2007) realized that the educational level of parents contributes to students' absenteeism. Simons et al (2010) established that there was connection between bad school conditions and students' performance in academic.

When it comes to the impact of nonattendance on school children performance especially in mathematics, Schwartz et al (2009) made mentioned that school nonattendance has a negative connection to future academic goals. Throwing more light on the influence, Epstein & Sheldon (2002) indicated that students involved in school nonattendance miss chances to study the materials that will get them prepared to do well later in school and hence; fall behind their contemporaries in academic.

However, in this 21st century, a computer century, students can easily assess many kinds of lessons and lesson materials online. In fact, it is even possible for students to receive instructions through Skype or download video lessons on all kinds of topics and listen to them at home in even their leisure times. For these reasons it however appears quite misleading for one to conclude or not to conclude with certainty that students' absenteeism has an influence on their performance without any research.

Problem statement

Despite, the fact that efforts has been made by succession governments in providing quality tuition, infrastructure, teachers and instructional resources to schools and students within the country, students' absenteeism is a snake underground challenge for teachers, guardians,

administrative and the society as a whole. Though, several studies have been conducted on the problem worldwide, considerable knowledge gaps exists on the subject matter in Ghana. This is because many of the available studies to the best of the knowledge of the researchers are conducted on effects and bases of teenage pregnancy; effects of school dropout; and effect of instructional methodologies on students' performance among others. Emphatically, no studies of this kind has been conducted on the study institution as at now, making it necessary and urgent in the instance that absenteeism is common in the Nante Islamic JHS, whereas performance in mathematics is nothing to be brag of. It is in this light that this study evaluated the impact of students' absenteeism on their classroom performance in the Nante Islamic Junior High School.

Objectives of the study

The general task of the study is to explore the role of students' absenteeism on their classroom performance in the Nante Islamic Junior High School.

Specifically, the study focused on the following objectives:

I. To find out the correlation between students' absenteeism and classroom performance in mathematics

II. To establish the mean difference that exists between the scores of students who are often absent from school and those who are always punctual.

III. To identify causes of students' absenteeism.

Research questions

The research work was carryout base on the following research questions;

i. What is the correlation between the number of days' students were absent and their performance in mathematics?

ii.   What is the mean score performance difference between absenteeism students and

that of punctual students in mathematics?

iii.   Which factors do cause students absenteeism?

Literature review

Theoretical framework

Absenteeism is an act of indiscipline (disciplinary violations) in which a student intentionally or unintentionally in one time or in a regular or periodic bases does not present himself at school for school activities including learning. The adverse effect of this kind of behavior are numerous and unfriendly. It is for this reason that Weller (2000) said that, quite apart from potential loss of learning educational resources, human capabilities and time is wasted.

In a large-scale study following three cohorts of Texas seventh graders through subsequent years in school, by Fabelo, et al., (2009) on Taxes seventh graders from 2000 to 2002 through subsequent period in school found that the speed of dropout and repetition of grades increases along with abuses of disciplinary measures of all kind in which students indulge themselves in. In the light of this student school nonattendance was listed as the leading problem in the daily administration of the schools in the early 1970s, with respect to the results of 500 randomly sampled principals of the National Association of secondary schools (Rothman, 2001). It is therefore obvious that a student who indulged him/herself in indiscipline behavior such as absenteeism have inescapable chance of suffering academic challenges more especially in mathematics.

According to the National Center for Children in Poverty research released in 2008, taking every ten kindergartens and first grade pupils' one of them misses at least one month of school within each year (Romero & Lee, 2008). When a child of this age misses 10 percent of school, this is known as chronic absenteeism (Romero & Lee, 2008). This prolonged

absenteeism has the potential of affecting students' achievement negatively. In the study institution and for that matter Ghana if absenteeism percentages are to be measured for every student, the researchers maintained a hypothesized position that a good figure of students would fall into the stage of chronic absenteeism. This possibly account for the high failure of students which is annually recorded in BECE in the area of mathematics across the country.

When a student refrains enough from class/school to be regarded habitual absenteeism, there will be a negative bearing on the maths achievement of such student. It should be kept in mind that, students nonattendance is a challenge that goes beyond the educational institution and hence does affects the families, society and even the students themselves (Gary & Rod, 2001). Therefore students should not be given room to be absent in order for them to entirely benefit from the academic course (Rothman, 2001).

A research work executed in Kuwait by Al-Shammari (2011), viewed attendance as a basic contributor to students learning achievement. For instance, a student identified to be chronically absent within kindergarten exhibits lower performance than their colleagues in first grade (Chang & Romero, Present, Engaged, and Accounted For: The Critical Importance of Addressing Chronic Absence in the Early Grades, 2008). This effect, if not properly combated in diverse ways including extra classes or home classes for such a child to recover lessons lost during days absent from class/school, such a student automatically stand the fortuitous of lamenting poor mathematical performance at the JHS level and in subsequent studies.

In a study carried out by Gottfried (2009), it was realized that students' performance and attendance is positively and significantly connected to the secondary and basic public schools results in Louisiana. Absenteeism holds a greater effect on students in mathematics from poor families to be specific. These families are generally not able to help their own children when

they have deserted school with lessons taught in their absent, hence these students fall further behind their colleagues disadvantageously. Research shows that students from poor families who miss school in kindergarten forecast the least achievement especially in mathematics at the completion of fifth grade and beyond (Chang & Romero, Present, Engaged, and Accounted For: The Critical Importance of Addressing Chronic Absence in the Early Grades, 2008). It is therefore better especially for families less endow with resources to make sure that their wards are in school on regularly basis for studies to avoid the other way round effects.

Early habitual absenteeism in a child educational development is also a first time warning of serious risk of dropout and academic challenge in years ahead (Burner et al., 2011), such must not be taken lightly. This call for the attention of government, ministry of education, national, regionals, metropolitans/municipals/districts and for that matter local educational authorities including headmasters/mistress of various school to put a close eye on students absenteeism. This must be done having in mind that making readily available educational logistics, infrastructures, qualify teachers among other things in the mix of habitual absenteeism of students, has the tendency of rendering all of them white elephants. On another side, it is popularly and cheaply thought that absenteeism only affect the student that is absent, but to the large extend it also affect those particular students who present themselves regularly at school. This according to Chang & Romero (2008), emphasized that absenteeism adversely affects the other students within a class, in the sense that the teacher is force to reteach subjects or topics previously taught in the absent of some students more especially in the instance that they are the majority. It can also be put that it becomes challenging for teachers and their students to figure expertise and advancement if very high numbers of students are habitually absent.

The fact that literature has shown many times that absenteeism does affect student achievement and hence in mathematics to be specific, it is important to believe that school/class attendance has a number of merits. The reason being that when students attend school very often, they are most expected to succeed in classroom performance (Pascopella, 2007). There are several numerous benefits including familiarization with school environment, colleagues' students and that of their own teachers. This is momentous as students unconsciously learn many things which are possibly going to be examined on.

Highlighting on the long standing effects of students' absenteeism on academics and for that matter in mathematics, Hedy et al., (2012) in their study carryout in California on "Student Achievement Starts with Attendance" emphasized that students who persistently absent themselves in pre-kindergarten and Kindergarten, according to the Educational Research of Baltimore found: higher possibility of consistent poor attendance up to 50% serious absenteeism more in grade one, 45% in grade two. This implied that progressively such students on percentagewise are possibly going to be affected academically in mathematics at the JHS school level of education and beyond. Still on the effects, the authors notice that nationwide, as many as 7.5 million students fail to be in classes close to one month of each year. Meaning that 135 million of days of lost time of lessons is possibly going to be recorded and which automatically have a long standing effect on those students. Hedy et al., (2012) clearly stated that serious absenteeism is a red alert that students are headed for academic trouble and eventually leading to high school dropout. Chronic absence with reference to the author in prekindergarten and kindergarten has a significant impact.

The supposition that students benefit a lot from attending class however, warrant the need to be re-examined the subject matter because the advancement of technology warrant a reassessment of the indigenous educational ways which basically rely on physical attendance

of classes, since a number of less burden different models of education focused on learning by distance is being familiarized (Stanca, 2006). This research view attendance as the time period students are present in school and take part in classroom activities, measurable in hours, days, weeks, months and for that matter years. Students' examinational scores of mathematics in grades or raw scores is also a measure of their scholastic performance.

Attendance and performance relationship

Relationship is about how two or more things are connected, in this particular instance it is how students school attendance and their mathematics classroom performance is connected. In otherwise, this section reviewed how the presence of students at school is connected to their performance (i.e. either good or bad) in mathematics from scholars' point of view.

In a time past, many studies have looked at the relation between absenteeism and performance of students in academic, in that they noticed that attendance played a role in academic attainment (can have a look at Bratti & Staffolani, 2002; Marburger, 2001; Dolton et al., 2003; Kirby & McElroy, 2003). An evident of this nature is a reason why some scholars advocated for steps to increase the attendance of students and the consideration of mandating attendance for undergraduate programmes.

Similarly, Rodgers (2001) who sampled 167 students of introductory statistics programme noticed a small but statistically significant impact on their performance. This implies that if a student plays around with school/class attendance, indirectly he/she is playing with his performance in mathematics to be specific. To improve upon one performance in mathematics, one therefore needs to at first consider improving upon one's school/class attendance.

Evaluating this relationship/correlation in a bit detail form Chen & Lin (2008) research on determinants of a college students' academic performance as an important issue in higher level education, looking at whether or not being present for lessons and classroom instruction and learning, affects the examination performance of students, got to know that the association amid the variables was positive. This implies that as the number of days a student is present in school/class increases so the academic results of the students, where the scope of their study encloses many different subjects including mathematics. Henceforth it must be known that least academic results is associated with students with high rates of truancy and are possibly going to fall out of school, implying that there is a connection between students results and attendance (Department of Justice, 2001). It is therefore crucial that, instead of stakeholders of education solely devoting all their time for students' performance, an equally better attention should be paid to students' attendance as well. It is only in this, a satisfactory result can be obtained in students' mathematics performance to be specific. It is largely believed that students of universities benefit more from lectures attendance (Stanca, 2006). In similar ways one cannot doubt the benefits of class/school attendance to children of JHS no matter what.

Broadening the base of literature around the impact of school attendance holistically, Kane noticed that older students who were habitually absent have higher rates of dropout, rebellious behaviors, and higher rates of unemployment (as cited Grottfried, 2014). This shows that chronic absenteeism doesn't only affect the student performance in school but has the potential of affecting the entire community and economy performance of the student for that reason his/her nation at large. As early on mentioned, chronic absenteeism also affect those children who attend school/class regularly due to the reason that teachers have to spent more time catching up the students who failed to be present in school substantially (Chang & Romero, Present, Engaged, and Accounted For: The Critical Importance of Addressing

Chronic Absence in the Early Grades, 2008). In a study conducted by Rothman (2001), it was noticed that high student absenteeism rates affect the achievement of students' that attend regularly by disrupting the existing learning groups (Zamudio, 2004). This therefore call for a holistic jointed-hands-fight of absenteeism by parents of both regular students and those ones who absent themselves, as the effects covers the wards of both of them.

Performance difference between non regular students and regular students score

When it comes to scoring of high grades, it must be realised that more time is required by students for studying a course (Plant et al., 2005). It is for this reason that Applegate (2003) indicated that regardless of societal and economic factors, the schools with higher attendance rates achieved higher test scores.

Similarly, Marburger (2001) investigated the relationship amid absenteeism and exam scores for 60 students sample of a principle of microeconomics programme. In this study, any time a student comes to class within the semester it was recorded and was compared with information of the class meeting when each question materials were covered. The result is that students answer question incorrectly which associate with materials covered on a said date than those students who were present. The research consistently shows that children who are habitually absent perform bad on exams than their colleagues (Chen & Lin, 2008; Grottfried, 2014; Marburger, 2001).

LeBalanc (2005), an associate professor in his study on the relation amid school appearance and scores using a population sample size of 1617, has his results indicating that attendance significantly influences test score average for students across sections and institutions (R^2=0.181). His other results indicated that same relationship holds when controlling for institutional, course subject, and whether attendance rule was enforced. In all these instances, results obtained shows that student attendance was strongly related to grades. And that the relationship is real whether or not class attendance rule is made obligatory or not. However,

he noticed that where class attendance regulation is not compulsory, both attendance rates and test scores averages drop but connection between attendance and test results does not vary significantly. The professor's results further suggested that whether subject material is distributed through means other than in the classroom, whether student have videotaped lectures available or not, whether students have lectures available via distance technology such as online streaming video or not attendance matters. The reviewed clearly spell out how important it is for students to personally be part of a class before the can attain good grades. It could therefore be said that at San Antonio in the University of Texas within the period of the research, even technology could not impede the significance of school/class attendance.

To add to that Silvestri (2003) in his research found a week significant correlation between class attendance and the total days of absences and subject score for students who failed to make it to three or fewer classes. the author subsequently established a significantly negative relationship amid number of days' absences and subjects scores.

Furthermore, strategies employed by a teacher to have attendance increased also can be called external motivators. This is also seen by Moore (2003) in another way of which he put it that, where students receive points for class attendance they get influenced automatically. However, the author acknowledged that where students are not motivated with points for their class attendance, the correlation amid attendance and scores remain strongly positive.

In similar way, Shimoff & Catrina (2001) unearth that student who regular come in for every class meeting, and hence are present for more classes, scored higher marks in quizzes. Following the trend it seem not to be out of place to put it that total period of time that student reports to class for studying has a potential of foretelling success in school, just like as Plant et al., (2005) put it by simply that it might be seen that the many days a student use in studies, the better chance of good grades for him.

A study by Balfanz & Byrnes (2012) subscribes to this philosophy by stating that rates of school dropout and standardize test are strongly affected by school attendance. The study additionally affirmed the impression that students' regular attendance is required for better class achievement. It is for this reason that states, district and teachers within United States by various regulations and incentives encourage students to attend classes. Students who are absent are postulated to have narrow chance of ever regain lessons taught when they were absent. Therefore, regular attendance should be encouraged since it is needed for better academic achievement.

The literatures throughout various disciplines indicate that attendance and students grades in classes have a relationship. This study sought to establish how different the case of Nante Islamic JHS may be, and if in case a different really exists why it is so.

Absenteeism indicators

Considering how serious absenteeism effect has on students' scholastic (mathematics) performance, lives among others, it is significant to reflect on the roots of absenteeism. In otherwise, another key aspect to improving attendance is finding the root of the situation as to why student isn't making it to school; in that regard, Chang (2010) stated that habitual absenteeism is often knotted to transportation challenges emanating from poverty, little or no access to health care, and lack of housing or unstable housing. The situation in that of Nante Islamic JHS may not differ much as a good number of the students struggle to get money for school needs including learning materials, lunch at school among others. The researchers are in the known of some instances where students report late to school on reopening with the excuse of having to labour for money for their school needs.

To add to that Schagen et al., (2004), in their research noted that contextual variables such as, the size of the school and location, have a large influence on the extent of absenteeism within

13

schools. According to them "The most important of the contextual variables is percentage of free or reduced price meals within a school, which is connected with increased levels of absence"

Similarly, Hedy et al., (2012) who conducted their research in California, found that Chronic illness including asthma, diabetes, obesity and tooth decay affect 20 to 30% of children and adolescents. Almost 18% of California adolescents have asthma, which was responsible for an estimated 1.9 million days of school which is missed in California within 2005. Also, they noticed that almost two million children in California come from homes that experience food insecurity (fear of having adequate food). Buttressing this, Geier, et al., (2007) stated that student health has a meaningful effect on attendance; obesity, according to them was one factor which contributes to a small but significant increase in absenteeism. In fact, literature further affirms that long-lasting health complications, a category including asthma, disabilities, or lasting injuries, among other problems are the single most common factor behind student absences (Holbert, Wu, & Stark, 2002). It is henceforth prudent for parents/guardians of students and other concern stakeholders of education to take good notice of students' health needs and response to them appropriately.

This is a key reason of this research, and which is to establish how similar or different the circumstance of Ghana may be, where Nante Islamic JHS in the study is but just an institution of study. A study of elementary schools in New York on the subject matter also established that the state of the building of a school was a crucial determiner of school attendance whereby socioeconomic status as a variable was controlled (Duran-Narucki, 2008). The results advocate that increasing the qualities of the facilities of a school decreases absenteeism probabilities. Schools that lack adequate janitorial staff or use temporary facilities were found more probable for increased rates of absenteeism (Duran-Narucki,

2008). In line with physical condition of the building, characteristics of school climate which causes absenteeism, the author also indicated that factors including bullying were also identified with the probability of increasing absenteeism. The study found that twenty percent of basic school children indicated that they would skip school to avoid being bullied.

Furthermore, boredom is a leading cause of absenteeism and later dropout, with 47 percent of dropouts reporting that boredom was a main reason for their decision (Kearney, 2008).

A student's ability to be present in schooling days for teachings is heavily influenced by circumstances outside of school hours, governed instead by their family and neighborhood. Free and reduced price lunch depends on the income level of a family, and suitability is significantly positively associated with absenteeism (Epstein & Sheldon, 2002; Grottfried, 2014).

Some literature had it that absenteeism is caused by factors as discussed below.

Family factors: these include ignorance of laws of attendance, domestic violence, lack of caretaker or strong supervision of parents, drug abuse, and diverse behaviors towards education (Department of Justice, 2001).

School factors: these compose of school size, attitudes of other students and teachers, climate of schools, and rigidity in meeting the various cultural and students' styles of learning. Though schools usually have varying steps of handling habitual absenteeism, many of them may not have strict measures for truant students, for instance suspension for out of school (Department of Justice, 2001).

Economic stimulus: These consist off lack of affordable means of transport or transportation, inadequate childcare, employed students, high rate of mobility, parents with multiple jobs and single parenthood (Department of Justice, 2001).

15

Student variables: These include mental health complication, lack of understanding of laws of attendance, social incompetence, bad physical health conditions, alcohol and drugs misuse (Department of Justice, 2001).

The study sort to identify specific determiners of students' absenteeism in Ghana whereby Nante Islamic JHS is a case study institution. Knowing very well that these causes will guide authorities of education in coming out with good policies to help address the canker.

METHODOLOGY

Research design

Burns & Grove (2009) made mentioned that research design is an overall strategy employed by a researcher in addressing a research problem. Research design in short provides guidelines to the researchers in carrying out a study. It should be noted that, the choice and the scope of a research problem determines the kind of design employs for a given study.

Since the research involves two major variables (i.e. Absenteeism and performance) a deductive approach of comparative design was employed for the research. According to Bureau & Houlberg (2012), inductive approach of comparative design entails, at least ideally, a linear vision of the procedures of the process of making scientific knowledge from descriptions which disclose similarities and differences athwart the cases under comparison and which may show the causal mechanisms and association towards creating and examining the theoretical models replicating causal relation. The task is to conduct a comparative study of absenteeism and performance of students of Nante Islamic JHS in the Kintampo south district. It is intended to study the connection between the variables (absenteeism & performance) counting on students' end of terms examination results.

In conducting this study, the quantitative study method was deployed with little qualitative study method in that the perceptions of the students and the teachers about factors erupting absenteeism were gathered. The Quantitative method was used to gather data on students' results at one point in time. Besides, there was no influence on the variables and hence no control groups.

Study population

The intended population covered 74 students in first, second and third years of the Nante Islamic JHS located in the Kintampo south district of Ghana, which capital town is known as Jema.

Sample and sampling technique

The study employed convenience, purposive and universal sampling techniques in that all the participants of the overall population were considered for the study. Convenience sampling is selecting the research participants on the foundation of being reachable and reasonably illustrative of the population of target (Baumgartner, Strong and Hensley, 2002). Convenience techniques employed to base the study on Nante Islamic JHS as it was a school willing to give data to aid the study. The study was purposively base on the institution of study because students were often absent. This sample included students in JHS one, JHS two and JHS three. Among these students were some with regular class/school attendance and others with non-regular attendance. The study then took into consideration the overall days' students were not present in school in a term, and the scores they had in mathematics assessment from the close of term assessment examination.

Instrumentation and data collection mode

Questionnaire of total 74 was distributed to the students of the institution and collected for the study. According to Kusi (2012) questionnaire is a study tool that contains the research or

survey questions asked to respondents. End of term examination results which is the secondary data was collected from the school in the area of mathematics through a formal request for data.

Mode of data analysis

Analysis of collected data was done bearing in mind of objectives of the study. Some of the objectives were analyzed employing t-test method using SPSS.

The t-value, the p-value and the mean for the various categories of students' results was computed using the underline formulas;

$$\text{Scores of students with 85\% \& plus attendance } = X_i = X_1, X_2, X_3, \ldots X_{ni} = \mu_1 = \frac{\sum_{i=1}^{n} X_i}{N}$$

$$\text{Scores of students with attendance below 85\%} = X_j = X_1, X_2, X_3, \ldots X_{nj} = \mu_2 = \frac{\sum_{j=1}^{n} X_j}{N}$$

This aid the researchers understanding of the average performance for both regular students and those other students who were not punctual to school.

The study additionally tested the questions entailed in the questionnaire to see whether absenteeism was a determiner of grades using the chi-square estimators to calculate for it significant level and degree of freedom. The underline formula was used;

$$X^2 = \sum \frac{(\text{obtained value } - \text{expected value})}{expected\ value} = \sum \frac{(O - E)}{E}$$

Procedure for executing paired t-test

Holding onto the reality that we are comparing the performance of regular students and students involved in absenteeism, the procedure using t-test is modelled as follows;

Let x =grade scores of students with 85percent & plus attendance, y = grade scores of students with less than 85percent attendance.

To test the H_0 implying no difference in mean between the scores of students/children with 85percent and plus attendance and the students with less than 85percent attendance, the procedure is as follows:

1. Calculate the difference ($d_i = y_i - x_i$) amid the two observations on every pair, making sure one can differentiate amid positive and negative differences.

2. let the mean different be $\underline{d}$ and calculate for it.

3. obtain the standard deviation difference as Sd, and use it to compute the standard error of the mean difference, $SE(\underline{d}) = Sd / \sqrt{n}$

4. compute the t-statistic, which is denoted as $T = \underline{d}/SE(\underline{d})$. Under the H_0, this statistic follows a t-distribution with $n - 1$ degrees of liberty.

5. Use tables of the t-distribution to compare one value for T to the t_{n-1} distribution.

This disclose the p-value for the t-test.

The analysis of the data test for the significant difference in performance of regular and irregular students. Analysis of the data also test for the significant difference in performance of regular students and non-regular students. The assumed significant level, 0.05, was compared with the p-value obtained.

Data analysis and discussion

Demographic physiognomies of respondents

Table 1: Sex, Age, educational level and class attendance of students

variables	Categories	Level of Study			Total
		JHS1	JHS2	JHS3	
sex	Male	14	13	12	39
	Female	8	10	14	32
Age	5 – 10	3	0	0	3
	11 – 15	15	18	11	44
	16 – 20	4	5	15	24
Class attendance	85percent & Plus	16	18	14	48
	Below 85 Percent	6	5	12	23

The illustration in table1 above generally depicts that majority of the respondents are males, of which JHS three hold the highest number of students followed by JHS two and one respectively. While year one record higher male students which decline in two as were as year three where the least is recorded, the direct inverse effects is notice in the number of females' students in each level.

On the overview, most of the students in Nante Islamic JHS ages is within the category of 11-15, follows by those within 16-20 and lastly those within 5-10years. While numerous of the students in JHS two ages falls in between 11-15years, numerous of the JHS three students ages was within 16-20years. Though most of JHS one students ages was also within 11-15, it was the only class where the youngest student who age was within 5-10 could be found.

The synopsis of the class attendance shows that about 67% of the students representing the majority recorded 85percent and more class or school attendance. With higher number of those students in year two, year one and year three respectively. The rest of the students (33%) with less than 85percent class and school attendance were dominated in JHS 3, JHS1 and JHS 2 correspondingly.
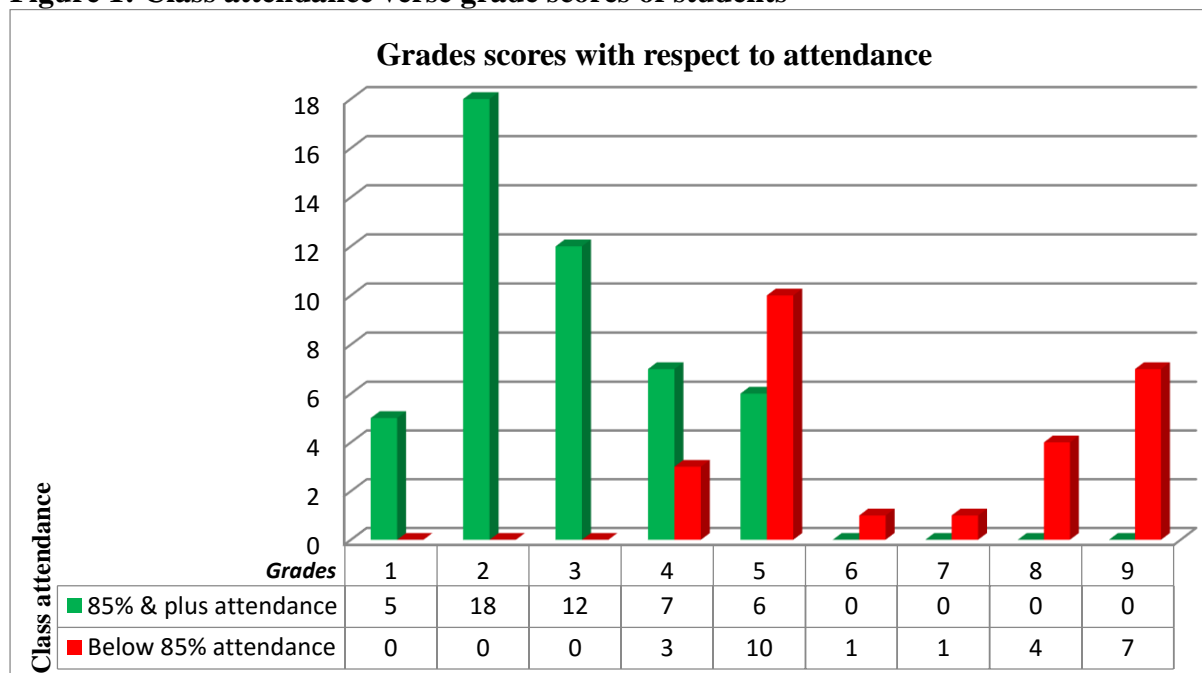
Class attendance and students' performance rapport

Table 2: Correlation between absenteeism and assessment scores of students

Variables	Test	Number of days absent	Students' scores
Number of days absent	Pearson Correlation	1	-0.471**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	74	74
Students' scores	Pearson Correlation	-0.471**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	
	N	74	74

The researchers in their quest to establish the relationship that exist between students' class attendance and school performance, realized a significantly $(0.00 < 0.05)$ negative correlation

(r= -0.47) between the performance of students and their class attendance, which is displayed on table 2 above. This implies that there is a direct inversely proportional connection between the variables, meaning that an increase in the total days a student absent him/herself from class/school automatically lead to a decrease in that student's performance in the class. Therefore, it could be inferred that for a student to performance well in class, that student requires to be regular in class. This outcome is in congruent with the results of Moore (2003) who noticed that class/school attendance influenced students' scores and that where there are no motivational points awarded for class/school attendance there is still a strong connection between attendance and scores or grades.

Figure 1: Class attendance verse grade scores of students

Grades scores with respect to attendance

Grades	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
85% & plus attendance	5	18	12	7	6	0	0	0	0
Below 85% attendance	0	0	0	3	10	1	1	4	7

Chi-Square Sig. 0.000

The illustration in figure 1 above signpost that students who school attendance was 85percent and above obtained grades in mathematics within 1 to 5, of which five of them scored grade 1, eighteen, twelve, six and seven of them scored grade 2, 3, 4 and 5 respectively. While students whose attendance fall below 85% of the total number of days they were required to be in school, came out with low grades. It was identified that except three of them who obtain grade 4, the rest of them scored grades as follows; ten of them obtained grade 5, one, one,

four and seven of them also came out with grade 6, 7, 8 and 9 respectively. This clearly signified that students who regularized themselves in school and for that matter in class had the greater chance of scoring higher grades than those who absent themselves from classes. The results displayed above is a clear picture of Shimoff & Catrina (2001) discovery, who noticed that students who signed in at each class meeting and attended more classes, scored high grades in quizzes. Following the trend, it seems not to be out of place to put it that the total amount of time a student delegate for classroom studies has a potential of influencing their success in school. This is what Plant et al., (2005) posited it simply that, it must be seen that the more time students spend studying, the better grades they should expect to receive.

The grades associated with the regularity of students in classes was found to be statistically significant at 0.00<0.05 of 95% confident level. It was noticed to be less than the acceptable margin of error 5% allowed for the study.

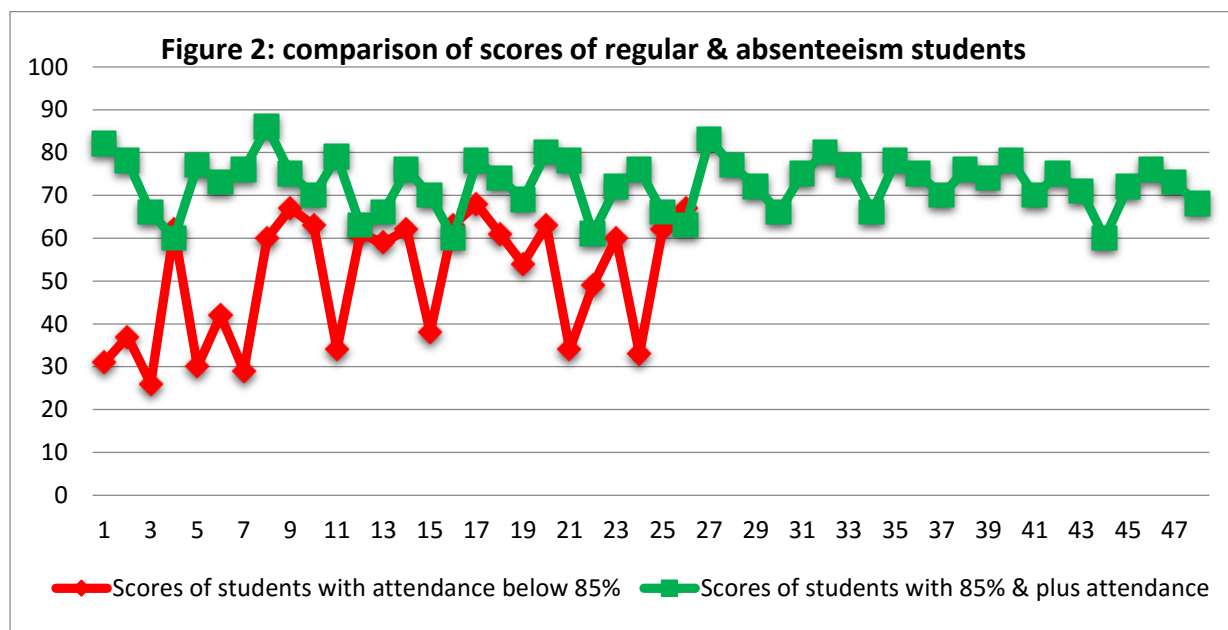**Mean difference in examination scores of students with diverse class attendance**

Table 3: Illustration of means statistics

Class attendance	Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Scores of students with attendance below 85%	50.60	26	14.60	2.87
Scores of students with 85% & plus attendance	72.08	48	7.21	1.41

Chi-Square Sig. 0.000

The study ascertained a higher mean score (that is 72.08 at a standard deviation of 7.21 and a standard error of mean 1.14) of the scores of students with 85percent and more class attendance in the Nante Islamic JHS. This mean is higher than the mean score (that is 50.6 at a deviation of 14.6 and a standard error of mean 2.87) for the students who class attendance was less than 85percent of the total required attendance.

The illustration in table 3 demonstrates that there is a high variation among the scores of the students who were punctual (14.6) than as it is in that of students who total class attendance was less than 85percent (7.21). The mean errors (2.87 &1.41) depicts that the means (π = 72.08, 50.6) were not much far from the actual means. Below is an illustration on a line graph.

Figure 2: comparison of scores of regular & absenteeism students

Table 4: Mean comparison of examination scores of students with diverse class attendance

parameters	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig.
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Scores of students with attendance below 85% Verses Scores of students with 85% & plus attendance	18.14	21.5	3.60	14.17	28.83	6.04	25	0.00

Generally, the comparison of the mean mark (π = 72.40) of the students who were punctual in class with the mean mark (π = 50.6) of students who were rare in class, pop up with a mean score difference of 18.14 at a standard deviation of 21.5 and a mean error 3.60. The standard

deviation indicated that there was a high variation among the scores of the students of both categories, while the mean error also shows that the mean difference was close to the actual means. The mean mark ($\pi = 18.14$) different was deemed significant ($0.00 < 0.05$) and falls directly between the lower (14.17) and the upper (28.83) bounds of the 95% confidence interval of which a correct mean score difference was definitely expected to be within.

Conclusively, a big significant mean difference was noticed to exist between the scores of students with 85percent and more class attendance and scores of students with less than 85percent class attendance. It could be inferred that students have the chance of performing well on condition that they regularize themselves in class for lessons, of which the exception to this is poor performance. This finding totally agrees with the finding of Applegate (2003) who stated that regardless of social and economic factors, the schools with higher attendance rates achieved higher test scores.

Rudiment of students' class absenteeism

Table 5: Fundamentals of absenteeism

Factors	Sex		Total	Percent(%)	Rank
	Males responses	Females responses			
Lack of scholastic requirements	17	18	35	12.8	2nd
Household work	23	16	39	14.3	1st
Lack of interest in Education	17	12	29	10.6	6th
Hunger at school	22	12	34	12.5	3th
Sexual harassment at school	6	6	12	4.4	9th
Illness or Disease	16	16	32	11.7	5th
Loss of parent \guardians	10	7	17	6.2	8th
Peer influence	9	2	11	4.0	10th
Harsh punishment at school	21	12	33	12.1	4rd
Teacher factor	8	1	9	3.3	11th
Weak policy	15	7	22	8.1	7th
Total	**164**	**109**	**273**	**100.00**	

It is evident from the survey that household work contributes 14.3% and is the first causer of student absenteeism in the Nante Islamic JHS. Students who were found staying with guardians rather than their parents were often absent from school than those staying with their biological parents. However whether students stay with guardians or biological parents, their absenteeism from school was due to the fact that; some of them have to wake up very early in the morning and go to farm, fetch enough water for use, teeter animals (fowls, goats, sheep) among others before going to school. Their preparation for school depends on the time they accomplish various task they have been assigned.

The findings further depict that 12.8% of the students absent themselves because they lack scholastic materials such as; books, pens, uniforms, mathematical sets, and additional fees like; examination fees and Parents Teachers Association fees. It was found to be the second causer of students' absenteeism. It should be bear in mind that extra fees are a barrier to students' attendance.

It was also noticed that 12.5% of the total absenteeism in the school is affected by lack of afternoon meal. This factor was rank 3rd causer of students' absenteeism. This is because some families are trapped in poverty and have no income to pay for meals at school. In otherwise student(s) could not have decent breakfast and lunch while at school, hence making their bodies weak for learning. Reasons of this kind among others give room for students unwillingness to be in school/class because of the long time it will take them at school on empty stomach whereby their full concentration in class is needed.

From the findings, the researchers denoted harsh punishment as the fourth (12.1%) cause of students' absenteeism within the school. Students at a point in time were asked to bring fire wood, weed grass around the institution compound among others for wrong doing, late coming to school and so on. These punishments cause a good number of students to stay away from school which probably would not have been the case.

During the study, most illness/diseases being mentioned by the respondents were; girl's Menstruation period, malaria, stomach ulcer, flu and cough, asthma and sickle cell as contributed factors to students' absenteeism which account for 11.7% and was ranked 5Th. This finding is in agreement with the study conducted by Balfanz & Byrnes (2012) and Ubogu (2004) who identifies illness as a common cause of absenteeism.

Respondents ranked lack of interest in education and weak policies governing students' absenteeism as the 6th and 7th influencers of students' rampant absenteeism. They represented 10.6% and 8.1% respectively of the total responses.

Loss of caretaker/parents also accounted for about 6.2% and was ranked 8Th causer of the absenteeism of school children in the JHS. Sexual harassment which was rank 9Th by the respondents' replies accounted for 4.4% of the reasons for students' absenteeism in the school. This implies that some number of teachers and or students in the school harass the opposite sex for intercourse or sex intimacy which is not good in academic environment.

Peer influence was identified to be 10th causer of students' absenteeism which represented 4% of the total responses. As the saying goes; *"Birds of the same feather do flock together."* Similarly children with little or no ambitions and interest tend to dodge going to school and go to farm for money, hunt for bush meat, attend market to trade or work for income as a fast mean of making money in that schooling is viewed as a waste of time.

Lastly the study denoted teacher factor such as; teacher absenteeism, qualification, and teaching skills contributing 3.3% to the total absenteeism and ranked as 11th among the causes of students' absenteeism in schools. Schools with low quality have high absenteeism rate as compared to schools with high standard.

<div align="center">

Summary, Conclusion and Recommendation

</div>

Introduction

This chapter provides the summary of the study, the conclusions and the recommendations. The summary emanates from the outcome of the study from which conclusions are derived. The recommendations are proposed base on the conclusions drawn.

Summary

The principal goal of this study is to explore the influence of students' absenteeism on performance specifically mathematics in the Nante Islamic Junior High School.

The study specifically focused on these objectives; 1) To find out the correlation between students' absenteeism and classroom performance in mathematics, 2) To establish the mean difference that exists between the scores of students who often abstain from school and those punctual, and 3) To identify causes of students' absenteeism.

In terms of methodology, the study employed convenience, purposive and universal sampling methods of which 74 students of the institution from year one to three were sampled. SPSS was used for both qualitative and quantitative analysis. Chi-square, correlation, pair sample and descriptive analysis were performed.

With regard to findings, it was noticed that many of the student ages were within the age group of 11-15years of which several of them were males. Though majority of the children had record of more than 85percent class attendance, about 33% of the respondents were found with irregular class attendance. This however create a major concerned.

Adding to that the study in an effort to establish relationship between the absenteeism of students and their performance, a significantly (0.00<0.05) negative correlation (r= -0.47) pop-up between the performance of school children and class absenteeism, implying that a

direct inverse relationship exists between the variables. The chi-square analysis indicated that students who had more than 85percent class attendance obtained grades within 1 to 5.

In other to establish the means difference if any between marks of students with high class/school attendance and those with low class attendance, the analysis indicated a statistically significant (0.00<0.05) means difference ($\pi = 18.14$) at a standard deviation of 21.5 and a standard mean error of 3.60, implying that if only a student wants to improve performance, s/he should consider increasing class attendance. It was deduced that scores of school children who were regular in class was not the same as those who hardly attend classes and hence those who were punctual at class scored higher marks than their counter-pals, implying that class/school attendance is significant.

Going further, the study identified the followings among the lot as the serious causes of students' absenteeism in the Nante Islamic JHS; Household chores, lack of educational materials, Famine at school, illness, punitive penance at school, Peer stimulus, loss of parents/guardian and Lack of enthusiasm in Education. It could be inferred that, if students' absenteeism is to be curtailed in the JHS, especially in the Nante Islamic, the about causes of absenteeism should be given a clear remedy.

Conclusion

Base on the main outcome of the study, the proceeding conclusions were reach on the various objectives of the study;

There is an influence of students' absenteeism on their school performance. Hence if students' performance is to be held with high esteem, their attendance should first be held with all seriousness, bearing in mind that students' performance in especially Nante Islamic JHS is directly proportional to their attendance.

There is a significant mean difference between marks of students who attended classes regularly and the marks of students who hardly attend classes. Emphatically, the higher the class attendance of a students, the higher their performance is most probable to be recorded.

The leading of causes of students' absenteeism in the school was identified as housework, lack of educational materials, famine while in school, peer group influence, loss of parents/guardian and lack of zeal for Education.

Recommendations

Attendance is a key driver of the nation's achievement in junior school performance and for qualification attainment for SHS entrance. Thus as a nation we must be proactive to ensure that our students are ready, willing and able to go to school every day. Their future, and hence our future, depends on it. It is against this background that the researchers recommend that the government should subsidize taxes on scholastics materials such as books, sandals/shoes, pens, school bags, calculators, and school uniforms or provide them free to the rural schools where majority of the parent are peasant and cannot even afford two meals a day let alone giving money for books, sandals, pens/pencils, calculators and mathematical sets among others. the fact is that these parents are pinched with pressing needs such as provision of food, meeting medical expenses and weeding of their farm lands and hence turns to view school expenses as waste of money.

Suggestions for further research

The following are the areas the researchers have seen prudent for future research:

- ❖ The correlation between the District Education Officers work and the JHS administrations on students' performance.
- ❖ Effects of students' absenteeism on the academic performance of the regular students.

❖ The effect of diseases/illness on students' relations in school and academic performance.

References

Al-Shammari, Z. (2011). Does Integrating Technology-Based Attendance Into Teacher Education Program Improve student Achievement in Kuwait? *College student Journal*, 45(4), 839-846.

Applegate, K. (2003). *The relationship of attendance, Socio-economic status, and mobility and the acheivement of Seventh graders.* Mo: Saint Louis University.

Balfanz, R., & Byrnes, V. (2012). *Chronic Absenteeism: Summarizing What We Know Washington,.* Washington: DC: National Center for Education Statistics.

Bratti, M., & Staffolani, S. (2002). *Student Time Allocation and Educational Production functions, Working Paper Number 170.* Ancona: Economics Department, University of Ancona.

Bureau, & Houlberg, S. (2012). *Comparing Comparative Research Designs. .* Working Papers from Department of Political Science.

Burner, C., discher, A., & Chang, H. (2011). Chronic Elementary Absenteeism: A Problem Hidden in Plain sight. *Attendance Works & Child & Family Policy Center*, (pp. 1-5).

Burns , N., & Grove, S. (2009). *The practice of nursing research: Appraisal, synthesis and generation of evidence. 6th Edition .* St. Louis: Saunders Elsevier.

Chang, H. (2010). *Race to the top - coalition white paper on attendance data and early warning system.* Washington DC: The chronic absence project.

Chang, H., & Romero, M. (2008). Present, Engaged, and Accounted For: The Critical Importance of Addressing Chronic Absence in the Early Grades. *National Center for Children in Poverty.*

Chen, J., & Lin, T. (2008). Class attendance and exam performance: A randomized Experiment . *Journal of economic Education*, 213-227.

Department of Justice, .. (2001). Truancy reduction: Keeping students in school. Office of Justice Programs. *Office of Juvenile Delinquency Prevention, United State*.

Dolton, P., Marcenaro, D., & Navarro, L. (2003). The Effective Use of Student Time: a Stochastic Frontier Production Function Case Study. *Economics Education review*, 22, 547-560.

Duran-Narucki, V. (2008). School Building Condition, School Attendance, and Academic Acheivement in New York City Public Schools; Mediation model. *Journal of environment psychology*, 28(3), 278-286.

Epstein, J. L., & Sheldon, S. B. (2002). Present and accounted for: Improving students attendance through family and community involvement. *Journal of Educational Research*, 95(5), 301-318.

Fabelo, T., Thompson, M. D., Plotkin, M., Carmichael, D., Marchbanks, I. M., Booth, E., & Gottfried, M. A. (2009). Evaluating the Relationship between Student Attendance and Achievement in Urban Elementary and Middle Schools: An Instrumental Variables Approach. *Society for Research on Educational Effectiveness*.

Gary, W. P., & Rod, P. (2001). *The Center for Education 2001*. US NCES 2001-072: National center for education statistics, US department of Education Research and Improvement,.

Geier, A. B., Gary, D., Foster, L. G., Womble, J. M., Kelley, e., Borradaile, J. N., . . . Shults, J. (2007). Borradaile, Joan Nachmani, Sandy Sherman, Shiriki Kumanyika, and Justine Shults. 2007. "The Relationship Between Relative Weight and School Attendance Among Elementary School Children. *Obesity*, 15 (8):2157-2161.

Grottfried, M. A. (2014). "Can Neighbor Attributes Predict School Absences?" . *Urban Education*, 49 (2):216-250.

Hedy, C., Debra, D., Don, O., & Brad, S. S. (2012). Student Achievement Starts with Attendance" California School Board Association Annual Education Conference November 29, 2012 Improving Student Attendance Through Family and Community Involvement. *The Journal of Educational Research*, 95(5): 308-318.

Henery, K. L. (2007). Who's Skipping school: Characteristics of truants in 8Th and 10Th grade? *Journal of School Health* , 77(1), 29-35.

Hocking, C. (2008). *The Contributing Factors to Student Absenteeism/ Truancy and The Effectiveness of Social Services and Interventions*. Rhode Island: Providence College Providence. social work Thesis.

Holbert, Wu, & Stark. (2002). *3rd Annual Evaluation Report: School Attendance Initiative, TheFirst 3 Years 1998/99 - 2000/01*. Oregon Department of Human Services.

Kearney, C. A. (2008). School Absenteeism and School Refusal Behavior in Youth: A Contemporary Review. *Clinical Psychology Review*, 28(3), 451-471.

Kirby, A., & McElroy, B. (2003). The Effect of Attendance on Grade for First Year Economics Students in University college Cork" . *The Economic and Social Reviev*, 34(3), 311-326.

Kusi, H. (2012). *Doing Qualitative Research: A Guide for Researchers. .* Accra-New Town: Emmpong Press.

LeBalanc, H. P. (2005). *The Relationship between Attendance and Grades" International Academy of Business Disciplines, April 8, 2005.* Pennsylvania,: Pittsburgh.

Marburger, D. R. (2001). Absenteeism and Undergraduate Exam Performance . *Journal of Economic Education*, 99-110.

Moore, R. (2003). Attendance and performance. *Journal of college Science Teaching*, 32(6), 367-371.

Pascopella, A. (2007). *The dropout crisis: Educators sound off on the pros and cons of.* Retrieved October 14, 2019, from http://www.districtadministration.com

Pehlivan, Z. (2006). *The absenteeism at state secondary schools and related school management policies .* Ankara, Turkey: Doctoral dissertation, Ankara University.

Plant, E. A., Ericsson, K. A., Hill, L., & Asberg, K. (2005). Why study time does not predict grade point average across college students: Implications of Deliberate Practice for Academic performance. *Contemporary Educational psychology*, 96-116.

Rodgers, J. R. (2001). A panel-data study of the effect of student attendance on academic Performance. *Unpublished manuscript*.

Romero, M., & Lee, Y. S. (2008). *A National Portrait of Chronic Absenteeism in the Early Grades.* New York: National Center for Children in Poverty, Mailman School of Public Health at Columbia University.

Rothman, S. (2001). School absence and student background factors: Amultilevel analysis. *International Educationa Journal*, 2(1), 59-68.

Schagen, I., Benton, T., & Rutt, S. (2004). Study of attendance in England: Report for National Audit Office. Sough: NFER.

Schwartz, L. A., Radcliffe, J., & Barakat, L. P. (2009). Associates of school absenteeism in adolescents with sickle cell disease . *Pediatric Blood cancer*, 52, 92-96.

Shimoff, E., & Catrina, A. C. (2001). Effect of recording attendance on grades in introductory physchology. *Teaching of Psychology*, 28(3), 192-195.

Silvestri, L. (2003). The effect of attendance on undergraduate methods course grades . *Journal of Education*, 123(3), 483-486.

Simons, E., Hwang, S. A., Fitzgerald, E. F., Kielb, C., & Lin, S. (2010). The impact of school building conditions on students absenteeism in upstate New York. *American Journal of Public Health* , 100(9), 1679-1686.

Stanca, L. (2006). The effects of Attendance on Academic Performance: Panel data Evidence from introductory Microeconomics, forthcoming . *Journal of Economic Education*.

teasley, M. L. (2004). *Absenteeism and truancy: Risk, protection, and best practices implications for school social workers.* Children and school: 26(2), 117-128.

Ubogu, R. E. (2004). *The Causes of Absenteeism and Dropout among Secondary School Students in Delta Central Senatorial District of Delta State* . Abraka.: Delta StateUniversity.

Weller, D. L. (2000). School attendance problem: Using the TQM tools to identify root causes. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 38, 64-82.

Wilkins, J. (2008). School characteristics that influence student attendance: Experiences of students in a school avoidance program. *The High School journal*, 91(3), 12–24.

Zamudio, G. (2004). Student mobility: the relationship between student population stability anacademic achievement. *(Unpublished doctoral dissertation), University of Arizona.*