

The Influence of Absenteeism on Academic Performance in English at PLE using Ibaare Sub County-Bushenyi District

Mushabe Faustino

Faculty of Education Kampala International University Uganda.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study was to find out the effect of absenteeism on academic performance in English at PLE using the Ibaare-Bushenyi district. It followed the order of the research objectives, which were to examine how absenteeism has contributed to poor academic performance in English at PLE in the Ibaare-Bushenyi district, to establish the causes of absenteeism and how it has contributed to poor academic performance in English at PLE in Ibaare-Bushenyi district, and to suggest a possible solution to address problems of poor academic performance in English at PLE in Ibaare-Bushenyi district. The study was undertaken using a cross-sectional research design, which helped in collecting data from a wide section of the study respondents. This kind of study design was preferred as it generated quick results. These helped the researcher save time during data collection because the researcher did not follow up with the respondents. The research design was suitable in the sense that the information collected involved analyzing how absenteeism has influenced the performance of English pupils at PLE. In addition, the study mainly used qualitative data, though some aspects of the study were presented as quantitative data. The study concluded that absenteeism is a well-known phenomenon that takes place in many schools, leading to poor academic performance, and should be handled with care. The study concludes that there are some ways in which absenteeism can be addressed. These include affirmative action, empowerment of women and physically handicapped people, and enforcement of labor laws. This study was applied research intended to find solutions for absenteeism and its impact on pupils' academic English performance in the Ibaare sub-county, Bushenyi District. Then, the researcher suggested the following recommendations addressed to politicians, policymakers, education planners, Ibaare Sub County, Bushenyi District administrators, and the respondents: the Ministry of Education and Sports should organize seminars on corrective measures that are regularly supervised by specialists in education. During holidays, head teachers' conferences should also be organized so that pupils are allowed to share ideas and experiences on the matter; this should be supervised by the Ibaare sub-county, Bushenyi District.

Keywords: Absenteeism, Teachers, Academic performance, English pupils.

INTRODUCTION

According to the Oxford Student's Dictionary, absenteeism refers to the fact of being frequently away from work or school, especially without good reasons [1]. Absenteeism from one angle is one of the most common causes of degrading student performances. Especially for those who are included in the advanced intelligence curriculum, absenteeism causes a great loss and results in giving up an aimed position [2]. It can also cause social depletion, especially when a class is composed of a large number of students [3]. This habit can cause a dilemma for the school administration when big figures are involved and decrease the school's performance. On the other hand, contamination with sickness and disease can be avoided because of the absence of a person [4-6]. Learning in a system of group collaboration is one of the best ways to gain

knowledge. It is a form of teamwork in which the framework relies on an individual learning from others and others learning from that individual. When a student misses a day of school, he or she must have lost the chance to hear others, interpret and analyze the lessons, or join the interaction within the class. This loss is rooted in two different courses and varying factors within these courses. The inquiry might be about a family situation or an individual problem. Then, under these courses, are the factors that contribute to a child's regular truancy. These can be financial concerns, disability, psychotic imbalance, poor school climate, family health, transportation problems, drug and alcohol use, and differing community attitudes towards education [7-9]. Absenteeism in students affects their school performances, especially when they are

in a group or working together on their assignments and projects. Since grouping helps develop the students' cooperation and ability to share and gain knowledge from their group mates, likewise, the group mates also miss the opportunity to gain knowledge from the absent student [10]. According to Schmidt in 1983, absenteeism affects the students' ability to get high scores in examinations, which can cause a decrease in grades or cause the student to fail or repeat the same grade level. Students who have spent time attending lectures or classes have a significant, positive effect on students' performance. Students who participated exhibited higher grades and scores in examinations than the other students. It indicates that persistent absentees at an inner-city school in South Wales had significantly lower self-concept and self-esteem, more deprived socioeconomic backgrounds, lower intelligence levels, and more educational problems than control groups. It suggests that remedial measures for absenteeism should focus on raising self-concepts and changing attitudes toward school [11]. Absenteeism is the most significant factor that affects the functioning of assembly lines in the development of school administration. Those high levels of absenteeism have a negative repression on colleagues' effect on the production of quality levels of well-trained students because of work specialization. The analysis of a hundred absentees reveals hundreds of instances of the negative effect of building well-disciplined students for the future.

METHODOLOGY

Research design

The study was undertaken by the use of cross-sectional research design in nature and this helped in collecting data from a wide section of the study respondents. This kind of study design was preferred as it generated quick results [15, 16]. These helped the researcher to save time during data collection because the researcher did not make a follow-up of

Area of study

The area of the study was Ibaare sub-county-Bushenyi district south western Uganda. It covered schools like Kitabi Girl's Primary School, Kitabi

Study Population

Target population is defined as a compute set of individuals, cases/objects with some common observable characteristics of a particular nature distinct from other population. According to Sande [17], a population is a well-edfined or set of people, services, elements, events, group of things or households that are being investigated. This definition ensures that population of interest is homogeneous. Population studies are more representative because everyone had equal chance to

In contrast to the empirical evidence, it confirms that absenteeism produces a higher level of problems and that value specialization among students has been significantly reduced in the students' achievements [12]. Based on the above background, the study is set to find out the impact of absenteeism on the performance of English at PLE in Ibaare-Bushenyi District. The researcher has investigated a series of administrative problems affecting pupils' academic performance in PLE. Some identified factors include poor instructional quality, pupils' negative attitude toward school, overcrowded classrooms, and poor facilities in schools [13, 14]. From the experience of the researcher, student absenteeism is low in rural and highly populated urban schools. Teachers are in school, while most learners and pupils are at home due to absenteeism. Examination-oriented absenteeism students, by nature, depend on the knowledge of regular absenteeism pupils or enter the examination hall with prepared materials, which are types of examination malpractice. In recent times, rural Ibaare primary school pupils performed poorly in external examinations, in which continuous assessment of absenteeism was part of the overall poor grades in English exams. Therefore, this situation prompted the researcher to establish the absenteeism effect on academic performance in English at PLE in the Ibaare sub-county-Bushenyi district.

the respondents. The research design was suitable in the sense that the information collected involved analyzing how absenteeism has influenced the performance of English pupils at PLE. In addition, the study mainly used qualitative though some aspect of the study was presented as quantitative data.

Primary School, Ibaare Girl's Primary School and Jireh Primary school.

be included in the final sample that was drawn according to Mugenda and Mugenda (2013). The study involved Head-teachers, teachers, and primary school pupils in Ibaare- Bushenyi district. The study use the above categories of people since are stakeholders in education system and believed to be knowledgeable about the absenteeism effect on academic performance in English at PLE using Ibaare- Bushenyi district.

Sampling procedure

Schools in Ibaare- Bushenyi were grouped into two strata; government-aided and privately owned. From each stratum, a sample of 07 schools was selected using simple taken to be random sampling following a table of random numbers. However, the sampling

process was based on the size of the school in terms of number of staff, enrolment, location and academic performance at National Examinations. All schools were equally important in order to generate reliable results.

Selection of respondents

Respondents were grouped into three strata; Head-teachers, teachers, and pupils in the study area. Teachers and pupils were randomly selected. Simple random sampling was preferred because it was non-

biased. One Head-teacher from each school was selected as study respondents. Head teachers were utilized as key informants. In all, 56 respondents were selected from the study.

Table 1: Sample size and technique

No.	Category of respondent	Sample size	Sampling technique
1	Head teachers	07	Purposive
2	Teachers	20	Simple random
3	Pupils	15	Simple random
4	Parents	14	
	Total	56	

Source. Primary data, Ibaare PLE results 2018

Data collection method

The study made use of both primary and secondary data and this was done through utilization of quantitative methods of data collection. In quantitative research, the design was developed at the beginning of the research and deviation of any kind of deviation was not permitted as such

deviation is thought to cause problems; communication and interaction objectively define the fashion, data analysis took place only when the process of data collection was completed, the data collection methods was standardized and fixed leaving no options for correction and adjustment.

Key Informant Interviews

Face to face interviews was carried out with the head teachers and teachers to cross check the response from the questionnaire. These were designed in a way that more specific and truthful answers were got. These help to capture information, not provided

by the questionnaires. The method used Interview guide to capture the respondent's views. These methods were preferred because of its flexibility and ability to provide new ideas on the subject [18].

Documentary review

The study also uses secondary data this include written document such as notice, journals, text books, administrative and public records, magazines and policy papers. The reason for using secondary

information is mainly to help the researcher to place the findings with in a more general context by comparing and integrating the research finding to the existing literature about the study problem.

Research instruments

The study used two categories of research instruments; self-constructed and self-administered questionnaire and an interview guide. Both open and

close-ended questions were designed for each category of respondents.

Questionnaires

These were self-constructed and self-administered to head teachers and teachers to find out their opinions and attitudes on the absenteeism and pupils performance in primary schools. The questionnaire

was designed in the way of both open and closed in nature. The questionnaire method was preferred because it was time saving.

Interview Schedule

An unstructured interview schedule which contained open-ended questions was used as a guide to obtain

qualitative data from pupils. The interview schedule was used because they have a high completion rate

compared to other methods. Interviews were also

guaranteeing an immediate feedback.

Data Quality Control

Validity: instruments are supposed to measure accurately what they are supposed to measure. Therefore, before they used administered, they are first being examined by colleagues taking the same programme as the researcher's. They are examined by the supervisor as this ensured that the terms used in the questionnaire and interview guides are accurately defined and properly assumed. Reliability: an instrument is reliable if it measures consistently

what it is supposed to measure. Even if other researchers administer it, it should produce the same results. In this study, the test re-test method was used to establish reliability. The tools of data collection were experimented more than once on different instances to the same sample by different data gatherers; they produce the same results if the instrument is reliable.

Data analysis

Data analysis was done after collecting the raw data from the field, editing and checking for accuracy of information, consistency and uniformity. The collected data was analyzed both quantitatively and qualitatively. Quantitative data was grouped and statistical description such as tables showing frequencies and percentages and pie- charts was developed for better representation of the study findings. Qualitative data refers to the data collected from respondents that can not be easily presented in

numerical form and the researcher analyze this type of data by only identifying the responses from respondents that was relevant to the research problem at hand. Mainly such data was analyzed in way of explaining the facts collected from the field under which the researcher was in position to use themes developed from the study objectives as the researcher was also in position to quote respondents responses.

Expected limitations of the study

During the process of data collection, the following limitations was encountered by the researcher

Being the first research, the researcher faced with the problem of not having researcher skill during the process of undertaking this study. However, the researcher worked with the supervisor to

successfully finish the research in time. In addition, the study was limited with funds in form of transport as distance from the university to the study area was long. However, the researcher solicited fund from his friends and relatives during the process of undertaking this study.

RESULTS

The discussion of findings has been arranged in accordance with demographic characteristics of respondents' and objectives of the study as were formulated. These objectives were; to examine how absenteeism has contributed to poor academic performance in English at PLE in Ibaare- Bushenyi

district, to establish the causes of absenteeism and how it has contributed to poor academic performance in English at PLE in Ibaare-Bushenyi district and suggesting the possible solution to address problems of poor academic performance in English at PLE in Ibaare- Bushenyi district

Gender composition of the respondents

The gender of respondents was established. This aimed at knowing how males and females as members who clearly understood absenteeism effect academic performance in English. The study

targeted both males and females which gave a variety of findings that were not biased making it gender sensitive.

Table 2: Showing the gender composition of the respondents

Gender	Frequency	Per cent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	25	44.64	44.64	44.64
Female	31	55.36	55.36	55.36
Total	56	100	100.0	

Source: Primary Data, 2018

According to the study findings as in table 2 above, most of the respondents were female as compared to the males. The number of males who participated in the study represented 44.64% as compared to 55.36%

of the female respondents. The above finding indicated that females who participated in selected schools in the Ibaare sub-county district were many compared to males within the study.

Age composition of respondents

The age composition of the study respondents was also an important factor in the process of understanding absenteeism and its impact on pupil's

academic performance in English in the Ibaare sub-county Bushenyi district. This was so because different age groups were assumed to understand the

study variables differently yet considered vital to the

study.

Marital status of the respondents

The marital status of the respondents were also covered and analyzed to assess their views about the study variables of absenteeism and pupils' academic

performance in English in selected schools in the Ibaare sub-county, Bushenyi district as shown below.

Table 3: Showing marital status of the respondents

Marital status	Male	Female	Frequency	Percentage
Married	15	25	31	55.35
Single	09	6	24	43.00
Divorced	1	0	1	1.65
Total	25	31	56	100

Source: Primary Data, 2018

As seen in the table above, the majority of the study respondents constituting 55.35% were married and these were followed by respondents who were single as

revealed by 43% of the respondents then 1.65% of the respondents who were divorced. The study established that the majority of the respondents were married.

The highest level of education of respondents

To get information from all categories of people, those that have attained certificates, diplomas, university degrees, postgraduate and masters were all approached

during the study process. This established the levels of education of the respondents as indicated in the table below.

Table 4: Showing the highest level of education of the respondents

Level of education	Male	Female	Frequency	Percentage
Certificate	2	0.0	2.0	4.0
Diplomas	18	10	28	56
University degree	10	5	15	30
Post graduate	3	2	5	10
Master	3	3	3	6.4
Total	33	23	56	100

Source: Primary Data, 2018

Table 4 above shows that most of the respondents had attained up to a diploma level of education 56%, followed by 30% of the study respondents who had university level then certificate as was reported by 04% of the respondents, and finally 10% of the respondents who cited that had attained other levels of education master level. The study on further understanding revealed that

some respondents are still trying to advance their levels and these were the head teachers with diplomas advancing to acquire degrees. This showed that the information was from literate people who could understand better the absenteeism and its impact on pupil's academic performance in English

Table 5: Duration of stay/work in the study area that is Ibaaresub-county district

Years	Frequency	Per cent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
1 – 3 year	8	10	10	10
3- 4 year	15	30	30	30
4 – 5 years	18	30	30	30
Above 5 years	15	30	30	30
Total	56	100	100	100

Source: Primary Data 2018

From the above table, respondents were asked about their duration of stay/work in the study area that is; the bushy district. It was hoped that the respondent's time of their stay in the place influenced their impact in the area. Those who had stayed longer in the study area were further believed to have witnessed several

changes, trends and patterns of pupil's academic performance in English. This was witnessed with those who stayed for 1-3 years represented by (10%) 3-4 years with 30%, 4-5 years with 30% and those above 5 years with 30% respectively. Hence those above 5 years were acknowledged than others.

Table 6: Showing religion of respondents

Religion	Frequency	Per cent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Catholic	21	42	42.0	42.0
Protestant	24	40	40.0	82.0
Muslim	07	14	14.0	96.0
Others (specify)	04	4.0	04.0	100.0
Total	56	100	100	

Source: Primary data 2018

Table 6 above shows the religious affiliation of the respondents, where the majority of them were Catholics at 42%, Protestants had 40%, Muslims had

14% and others who did not specify had 4%. Therefore, this implied that most of the respondents were Catholics by faith.

How has absenteeism contributed to poor performance in English?

The second objective of the study was to find out how absenteeism contributed to poor performance in English. To determine this, respondents were asked to indicate how absenteeism has contributed to poor performance in English. The responses for how has

absenteeism contributed to poor performance in English in the Ibaare sub-county, Bushenyi district were tallied and frequency tables prepared percentages and the results are as summarized in the table below.

Table 7: How has absenteeism contributed to poor performance in English?

How has absenteeism contributed to poor performance in English	Percentage
Poor English scores	30
Poor grades	25
Lack of morale among the pupils in the subject	30
Others	15
Total	100

Source: Primary Data, 2018

For Changing education priorities, twelve cent of the people in Bushenyi district responded how has absenteeism contributed to poor performance in English as follows; absenteeism leads to poor English scores represented by 30%, leads to poor

English grades as represented by 25%, Lack of morale among the pupils in the subject by 30% and other impacts by 15% as represented in the table above.

The causes of absenteeism of pupils in primary schools

The respondents were asked to indicate the causes of absenteeism of pupils in primary school pupils in, the

Bushenyi district and the findings were as in the table below.

Table 8: Showing the causes of absenteeism of pupils in primary schools

The causes of absenteeism of pupils in primary schools	Per cent
Domestic work	30.0
Family chores	20.0
Pupils laziness	05
Long distance from home	15
Others	20
Total	100.0

Source: Primary Data 2018

Table 8 above indicates that 30% of the respondents revealed that domestic work was the major cause of absenteeism, 20% of the respondents also gave their views that family chores by children also caused absenteeism, 05% of the respondents gave their

views on Pupils laziness also caused absenteeism, 15% of the respondents also commented on long distances from home to be the common cause of absenteeism, lastly 20% of the respondents gave other factors.

The possible solutions to absenteeism of pupils in primary schools

The third objective of the study was to suggest possible solutions to the absenteeism of pupils in primary schools in selected primary schools. To determine this, respondents were asked to indicate

the possible solutions to absenteeism of pupils in primary schools selected primary schools and the responses were tallied and frequency tables prepared

percentages and the results are summarized in the

table below based on the parties that were involved;

Table 9: How has absenteeism contributed to poor performance in English

The parties involved	Percentage
Government	30
Local leaders	25
NGOs	30
Traditional leaders	15
Total	100

Based on the table above, the parties involved gave their suggestions where by government was indicated by 30%, followed by local leaders represented by 25%, NGOs represented 30% and lastly 15% by traditional leaders in the area. Furthermore, respondents were asked to indicate the solutions that have been formulated to solve

the problem of absenteeism of pupils in primary schools and their views were; that the class teachers conduct early English tests so that pupils may come up early and that the parents were given the responsibility of waking up their children very early and this acted as the last resort solution.

DISCUSSION

The causes of absenteeism of pupils in selected primary schools of Ibaare sub-county, Bushenyi District

Findings from the study revealed that domestic work was among the causes of absenteeism among the pupils. Respondents pointed out that domestic work, which consisted of fetching water, among others, led to most of the pupils coming to school late and even occasionally led to absenteeism in most cases where pupils fear being punished for coming late. Furthermore, respondents from the study indicated family chores as another cause of absenteeism. Pupils with a lot of family chores, for

example, washing dishes, mopping houses, cleaning house quarters, cleaning the kitchen, and cleaning the compound, among others, are too late; thus, pupils resort to absenteeism as the last resort. The study found that pupils' laziness and long distances from home also lead to absenteeism. In their views, respondents said that most pupils fear walking long distances in the morning, especially when the school is very far, due to laziness.

How has absenteeism contributed to poor performance in English?

It was found that absenteeism in most primary schools has led to the education system suffering the effects of economic decline and political instability during the 2013s and 1980s. The system continued to function, however, with an administrative structure based on regional offices, a national school inspectorate, and centralized, nationwide school examinations. Other studies include [19] and [20]. Enrollments and expenditures increased steadily during this time, reflecting the high priority Ugandans attach to education, but at all levels, the physical infrastructure

necessary for education was lacking, and the quality of education declined. School maintenance standards suffered, teachers fled the country, morale and productivity deteriorated along with real incomes, and many facilities were damaged by warfare and vandalism. Also identified were the poor English scores, poor grades, and lack of morale among the pupils in the subject as the major impacts of absenteeism on English performance at PLE. It was established that absenteeism leads to the above-mentioned.

The possible solutions to the absenteeism of pupils in primary schools

Furthermore, respondents were asked to indicate the solutions that have been formulated to solve the problem of absenteeism among pupils in primary schools, and their views were that the class teachers conduct early English tests so that pupils may come up early and that the parents were given the responsibility of waking up their children very early, and this acted as the last resort solution. The study cited that the community develops and facilitates the achievement of the mission and vision, develops values required for long-term success, implements these through appropriate action and behaviors, and is personally involved in ensuring that the organization's management system is developed and implemented. The central government should be responsible for training, posting, and promoting primary

school teachers, setting salaries and school fees, providing supplies, inspecting schools, and appointing educational committees to deal with absenteeism problems. Local school officials, including the headmaster or headmistress, and district education officials were responsible for collecting fees, ordering supplies, and administering the school according to national policy. The government should continue to encourage families to send all their school-going-age children to school, although government sponsorship will still be limited to four children per family. To increase the number of schools at this level, the government should take over community schools, staffing them with teachers and paying their salaries. Between the years 2018 and 2000, over 4000 schools were grant-aided.

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that absenteeism is a well-known phenomenon that takes place in many schools, leading to poor academic performance, and should be handled with care. The study concludes that there are some ways in which absenteeism can be addressed. These include affirmative action, empowerment of women and physically handicapped people, and enforcement of labor laws. Lastly, the argument notes that there is evidence that causes of poor performance are used merely as a last resort to

boost school performance but are inflicted regularly and for the smallest of infractions. They also raise the concern that if causes of poor performance are regarded as a 'last resort', it may well lead learners to regard other, more positive forms of discipline as unimportant and so render them ineffective. Again, research has proven that classrooms with the fewest behavioral problems are run by teachers who are committed to non-violent and child-centered approaches to the classroom.

RECOMMENDATIONS

This study is applied research intended to find solutions for absenteeism and its impact on pupils' academic English performance in the Ibaare sub-county, Bushenyi District. Then, the researcher suggested the following recommendations addressed to politicians, policymakers, education planners, the Ibaare sub-county, Bushenyi District administrators, and the respondents: The Ministry of Education and Sports should organize seminars on corrective measures that are regularly supervised by specialists

in education. During holidays, head teachers' conferences should also be organized so that pupils are allowed to share ideas and experiences on the matter; this should be supervised by the Ibaare sub-county, Bushenyi District. There should be the provision of supervision committees in large numbers of voluntary bodies, research organizations, national initiatives, and vast numbers of one-school projects.

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