

Cost Analysis of Teacher Absenteeism in Nigerian Secondary Schools

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ABSTRACT The paper was based on the contention that teacher absenteeism is costly, which could lead to wastage in the school system. Hence, the paper analyzed the cost of un-authorized teacher absenteeism in Nigerian secondary schools between 1997 and 1999, i.e. two academic sessions of 1997/98 - 98/99. The analysis revealed that the cost of absenteeism was relatively high when the dwindling financial allocation to education is put in mind. The analysis showed that the total cost of absenteeism for the period was ₦56.0 million (US \$800,018) at ₦70/US \$1 exchange rate that was in existence at that time. The yearly average cost was ₦26.0 million (US\$400,009). The analysis also showed that cost of absenteeism seemed to be higher in Delta, Kwara and Ogun states when the % of sample was juxtaposed with the % of total cost of absenteeism. On the other hand, the cost of absenteeism seemed to be lower in Edo, Lagos and Ondo states, when their percentage of sample was juxtaposed with the percentage of total cost. Similarly, the average total unit cost of ₦222 (\$3.2) of rural schools as against ₦220 (\$3.1) of urban schools suggested that the cost of absenteeism could be a bit higher in the rural schools than the urban schools. The paper therefore, concluded that though the total money cost of un-authorized teacher absenteeism could be small (only 6.0% of the total actual teacher emolument during the period of study), such amount could constitute an enormous wastage. This included the un-quantified cost, especially to students in form of lessons not taught, going by the aggregate number of days (256,237) teachers were absent. An all-inclusive approach was suggested to reduce the incidence of unauthorized teacher absenteeism. This included better working conditions, comprehensive rural development, improved funding of schools and application of the available laws to check rate of absenteeism among teachers. It is hoped that these suggestions would make teachers to be more committed to their job, thereby encouraging better attendance, thus reducing the cost of wastage arising from teacher absenteeism.