

**IMPACT OF EMPLOYEES ABSENTEEISM ON PERFORMANCE IN THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREAS OF ONDO STATE. A POST COVID-19 STUDY**

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**ABSTRACT**

This study investigates the impact of employee absenteeism on performance within the local government areas of Ondo State, Nigeria. It ascertains the level of absenteeism, examines the influence of working conditions and irregular salary payments on performance, and identifies the primary causes of absenteeism among local government employees. Data were collected through structured questionnaires administered to 592 respondents across three randomly selected local government areas: Owo, Akure North, and Odigbo. We adopted descriptive statistics and regression techniques to examine the relationships between absenteeism, employee performance, working conditions, and salary payments. Findings indicate a significant level of absenteeism, with older employees and those in specific departments showing higher absenteeism rates. Regression analysis reveals that both working conditions and irregular salary payments significantly impact employee performance. Positive working environments are associated with higher performance levels, while irregular salary payments contribute to financial stress and reduced motivation, leading to decreased productivity. The study also identifies key factors contributing to absenteeism, including employee habits, personal and family emergencies, health issues, and work-life balance. In the post COVID-19 context, the impact of absenteeism has been further worsened. The pandemic has exacerbated health concerns, disrupted working conditions, and caused financial instability, all contributing to higher absenteeism rates. Therefore, local governments must consider these new challenges when designing and implementing interventions. Enhanced safety protocols, flexible work arrangements, comprehensive health and wellness programs, equal distribution of palliatives, reliable and timely salary payment and provision of targeted employee training system are crucial in the post-pandemic era to mitigate absenteeism and boost employee performance. Department-specific interventions and robust monitoring and evaluation systems are also essential to address the unique challenges different departments face. Addressing absenteeism through targeted interventions can significantly enhance local government employee attendance and performance in Ondo state.

**Keywords:** Employee Absenteeism, Employee Performance, Working Conditions, Irregular Salary Payments, Personal Emergencies, Health Issues, Work-Life Balance, Human Resource Management.

**1. INTRODUCTION**

Absenteeism is a very demanding situation for everyone whether the absence is for one day, one week or one month, because of its likely overbearing effects on the absentee, co-workers and the organization. It is nonappearance of employees at work when no permission has been taken or permission applied for has been declined by the authority. Workers may be absent or less

productive at work for many reasons. Organizations that create work environments that attracts, motivate and retain hard working individuals will be better positioned to succeed in a competitive environment that demands quality and cost efficiency (Mullins, 2005).

The local government is the third tier and the closest government to the people in Nigeria as ratified by the nation's constitution and has been saddled with specific functions. Since the vast majority of Nigeria population lives in rural areas, it is critical to emphasize that its relevance is essential for the socio-economic and political life of the nation. (Mu'azu, Ibrahim, Kabir, and Haruna, 2017). The issue of workers' absenteeism in local government councils portends a significant strain that is expected to reduce workers' productivity and effectiveness, preventing the councils from carrying out their duties (Mu'azu, Ibrahim, Kabir, and Haruna, 2017). Absenteeism is the inability of an employees to be present at work when they are supposed to be at work. It is undesirable but inevitable occurrences in many establishments or organizations. It is the failure of a worker to be present at work when he is billed to be at work. It is the proportion of work days missing through member of staff illness or absence in the place of work (Boxall, Purcell, & Wright, 2007). Workers may take permission to be absent from work or duty for many reasons, some of the reasons could be sickness, urgent situation that may require urgent attention, accidents, loss of loved one, permission to take part in important examination or to attend antenatal clinic, in case of pregnant employees and many other reasons; on the other hand, some employees may also take leave for no just cause even when they can conveniently be at their duty posts. Whatever may be the reason, when employees are absent at work with or without any purpose, be it legitimately or not, these categories of absence from work are termed as absenteeism of workers in the workplaces. When an employee takes permission from his superior by applying for a leave to be absent from work, it is termed authorized or legal absenteeism, it is termed unauthorized or illegal absenteeism when it is absence without the permission of the authority. Although all managers know that workers may sometimes have genuine reasons to be away from workplaces, loose or uncontrolled absenteeism may have unimaginable negative effect on the productivity or performance of an organization. In many nations, absenteeism is an important and strategic issue of human resource management in both the private and public sectors. (Federica, Massimo and Luigi, 2014).

The outbreak of COVID-19 in China and its spread to other countries including Nigeria has had a destructive impact on health, economy, infrastructure, human existence and food. In a bid to curb the spread of the pandemic in Nigeria, after having confirmed its first case in late February (February 27, 2020), the Nigerian government started imposing restrictions and lockdowns on human movement and migration from Monday, March 30, 2020. And as the days of the lockdowns and restrictions are elongated cutting across all parts of the country, its impact was deeply felt especially in the areas of negatively affecting the socio-economic activities of the citizenry. (Amusan, and Agunyai, 2021). The government of Nigeria also ordered some categories of workers to stay at home as a measure to further curtail the spread of the deadly disease. In Africa, especially in Nigeria, scientific observations have shown that hunger, lack of palliatives, low purchasing power and inhumane household coping strategies have remained the bane of intra-household violence during the pandemic (Ipia, 2021). During the nationwide lockdown many Nigerians died as a result of police/military brutality, much more were killed by the virus. People also died of hunger, depression and suicide; particularly, the extremely poor Nigerians who depend on what they make daily from the streets for survival. The stimulus packages meant for extremely

poor Nigerians were politicized and shared mainly to a section of the country, while the rest of the country was neglected. (Amusan, L. & Agunyai, 2021).

The economic misfortune brought about by this pandemic led to the depletion in the revenue of governments at all levels. The price of crude oil fell dramatically, accompanied with heavily depreciated value of the naira. Food became unaffordable for people, prices of drugs went over the roof due to high dollar rate and transport fares went beyond the reach of the workers. Government at all levels were no longer able to perform their obligations to their employees. It became practically impossible for governments to pay the salaries of their workers. The consequence of this was that after restriction on movement had been removed workers were no longer reporting for duty because of lack of affordability.

Absenteeism can affect individual productivity. Simply put, if someone works less, they're likely to be less productive (Kanika, 2018). Despite the efforts being made by the local governments to stop the menace, it has been a long-standing issue that has refused to go away (Obasan, 2011)

### **Statement of the Problem**

Since the outbreak of covid-19 in the year 2019 many countries across the globe have witnessed economic nosedive. In Nigeria, the outbreak has taken its tolls on both the private and the public sectors thereby creating serious economic hardship for the populace. The economic misfortune brought about by this pandemic has led to the depletion in the revenue of governments at all levels, making salary payment especially at the state and local governments a herculean task, resulting to the era of “percentage salary” payment, living the local governments with at least six months of unpaid salary arrears in Ondo state. With this, many of the local government workers resulted into work rotation among themselves in order to seek additional income for survival, coupled with other excuses they give to stay away from work. This practice has made absenteeism more prevalent and very difficult to curb. Employee absence at work becomes more worrisome in the sense that it does not only affect the worker who is away from his job, it affects also the co-employees, the organization and the society.

Most organizations do not usually connect monetary cost to the loss caused by workers' absenteeism, they usually feel very unwilling to attack the problem and some organizations are unaware of the problem. Extensive time, effort and cash are poured into attracting, selecting and training members of staff, but too little of same are directed towards reducing absenteeism. It is worthwhile carrying out this study because of the numerous problems associated with employees' absenteeism and its attendant effect on the productivity and effectiveness of an organization or firm.

The objectives of the study are to ascertain the level of absenteeism in the local government areas of Ondo state, examine the impact of working conditions and irregular salary payment on performance in the local government and study employee habits and other causes of absenteeism in the local government areas of Ondo state.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW**

This portion reviews literature from previous researchers that are related to this study. Cascio and Boudreau (2010) define absenteeism as failure to report for work as planned, notwithstanding of the reason. It has moreover been characterized as nonappearance of employees from the normal work without earlier authorization (Tiwari, 2014). Workers who exit their jobs without notice or without following due process are also absentee workers until they have followed the

normal process. According to Kanika (2018), absenteeism is becoming a serious problem in labour oriented industries; absenteeism of employees from work leads to accumulations, heaping of work and thus work deferment; he viewed absenteeism as sign of poor individual performance. Absenteeism is one of the foremost broad deterrents to efficiency, productivity and competitiveness. It causes, late deliveries, disappointed clients and a decrease in morale among workers who are expected to add the workload of their colleagues who are absent from work. The indirect costs often exceed the direct while the absenteeism cause considerable losses to the company (Kanika, 2018). There are many factors that can promote nonappearance or nonattendance to work by employees. According to Mullins (2005) as cited by Kanika (2018) organizations that create work environments that draws, inspire and keep hard working personalities will be better placed to succeed in a competitive business environment that requires quality and cost efficiency. A growing economic literature is devoting attention to absenteeism analysing the effects on worker behaviour of a large number of variables (Dionne and Dostie, 2007; Barmby, Ercolani, and Treble, 2002). Some of these variables are related to individual characteristics (gender, age, education, health status, etc.), while others are related to contractual and institutional aspects (such as the generosity of sickness benefits, the degree of employment protection, firm size, type of job, labour market conditions, etc.). From the economic point of view, absenteeism leads to loss of potential productivity plus increased government expenditure on needless interventions for example overtime costs and other benefits to workers may be required to make up work. Absenteeism reduces spirits of others and hence low output of an organization (Warren, 2002). Reddy , Avez and Chakradhar,( 2014) worked on employee absenteeism with a focused study Hindustan coco cola beverages private limited concluded that age, religion and level of income have no significant impact on absenteeism. Obasan (2011), examined the impact of job satisfaction on absenteeism in Black Horse Industries Limited, a plastic manufacturing industry situated at Ibadan, Oyo State, Nigeria. He found that Extrinsic sources of job satisfaction such as Pay, work, promotion, supervision, co-workers, working conditions and fairness have positive relationship with absenteeism, hence employers should pay due attention to extrinsic sources of job satisfaction as major practical tools to reducing absenteeism

### **Theoretical Framework**

Theories about absenteeism have been studied extensively in literature. Various theoretical perspectives have been used to understand the concept of absenteeism and its implications. This study relies on psychological perspective to address the issues about absenteeism. Under psychological theory, it is viewed as absenteeism of employees as related to individual's motivation to attend work regularly. Need-based theories of motivation have emphasized the importance of need fulfillment on employee motivation behavior. This theory also includes the Maslow's hierarchy of needs which points to employees' impression of whether his or her contribution or presence at work has meaning or not (Maslow A, 1943). Maslow's theory states that our actions are motivated by certain physiological and psychological needs that progress from basic to complex. Much of the psychological model is based upon work by Steers and Rhodes. According to them, absenteeism is the choice of a worker not to attend work when expected. This is voluntary absenteeism or motivated absence. Employee attendance is conceptualized as largely a function of two variables which are; the ability to attend and the motivation to attend. The model seeks to emphasize workplace determinants or situational variables such as reutilization, job satisfaction, work involvement, leadership and coworker support. The bond of all these influences

of job satisfaction and pressures to attend always result in attendance or absence (Rhodes & Steers, 1979). Steers and Rhodes (1979) refer to a diagnostic model of attendance which includes consideration of major influences on attendance motivation, major influences on perceived ability to attend and actual attendance and role of societal context and reciprocal relationships. The weak point of this theory is that there is no way to measure the level of satisfaction of an employee. The same product or service can satisfy one employee but yet other employees cannot be satisfied.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

The research took place in three local government of Ondo state: Owo, Akure North and Odigbo local governments randomly selected from each of the three senatorial districts of the state. The study population comprised of all the employees in the three local governments randomly selected. Owo (1,249), Akure North (1,229) and Odigbo (1,476), the total of which is 3,954. They are categorized into Primary Health Care (482), Primary School Staffers (1,521), Political Appointees (50) and General Administration (1901). General Administration consists of workers from the various departments such as the Treasury, Administration, Personnel, Marriage Registry, Community Development, Agriculture, Works and Information. Aside from random sampling adopted to select the local governments, we also engaged purposive sampling technique to reflect the age, sex and department, junior and senior members of staff and political appointees. For convenience, 15% of the population has been proportionately selected and questionnaire administered. Therefore 187, 184 and 221 respondents from Owo, Akure North and Odigbo local governments respectively were enumerated, making the total sample size 592 approximately. Data were collected with well-structured questionnaire and administered to participants.

#### Data Analysis

This chapter presents the analysis of data obtained from the questionnaire survey conducted among employees in the selected local government areas of Ondo State. The analysis is aimed at understanding the demographic characteristics of the respondents and examining the impact of absenteeism on employee performance. The sample size used for this study is 592 respondents, with data presented in tables, followed by interpretations and discussions. Descriptive statistics such as simple percentages, frequency distribution, tables and; regression technique (SPSS 26.0) were employed for analysis.

#### Demographic Analysis

The demographic characteristics analyzed include age, gender, department, and years of service. Each category is represented in a table with the corresponding frequencies and percentages.

**Table 1. Age Distribution**

Age Range	Frequency	Percentage (%)
18-25	90	15.2
26-35	150	25.3
36-45	140	23.6
46-55	112	18.9
56 and above	100	16.9
<b>Total</b>	592	100

Source: Author's Computation

Table 1, above shows that the largest group of respondents falls within the age range of 26-35 years, accounting for 25.3% of the total sample. The least represented age group is 18-25 years, comprising 15.2% of the respondents.

**Table 2. Gender Distribution**

	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>Gender</b>		
<b>Male</b>	280	47.3
<b>Female</b>	290	49.0
<b>Other</b>	22	3.7
<b>Total</b>	592	100

Source: Author’s Computation

The gender distribution in table 2 above shows a near equal representation of male (47.3%) and female (49.0%) respondents. A small percentage (3.7%) identified as other.

**Table 3. Department Distribution**

Department	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>Primary Health Care</b>	120	20.3
<b>Primary School Staffers</b>	150	25.3
<b>Political Appointees</b>	50	8.5
<b>General Administration</b>	272	46.0
<b>Total</b>	592	100

Source: Author’s Computation

The majority of respondents (46.0%) work in General Administration, while the smallest group (8.5%) comprises Political Appointees as shown in table 3 above. Primary School Staffers make up 25.3% of the respondents.

**Table 4. Years of Service Distribution**

Years of Service	Frequency	Percentage (%)
<b>Less than 1 year</b>	50	8.5
<b>1-5 years</b>	140	23.6
<b>6-10 years</b>	130	22.0
<b>11-15 years</b>	120	20.3
<b>16 years and above</b>	152	25.7
<b>Total</b>	592	100

Source: Author’s Computation

Respondents with 16 years and above of service form the largest group at 25.7%, while those with less than 1 year of service make up the smallest group at 8.5%.

**Analysis of Questionnaire Responses**

This section presents the analysis of the questionnaire responses, focusing on the impact of absenteeism on employee performance. The analysis includes a breakdown of responses for each of the ten items on the questionnaire, along with detailed interpretations.

**Table 5. Absenteeism negatively affects my productivity.**

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree (SA)	210	35.5
Agree (A)	250	42.2
Disagree (D)	90	15.2
Strongly Disagree (SD)	42	7.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>592</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Author’s Computation

A significant majority of respondents (77.7%) agree or strongly agree that absenteeism negatively affects their productivity. This indicates that employees are well aware of the detrimental effects of being absent from work on their individual performance. Only a small fraction (7.1%) strongly disagree with this statement, suggesting that the impact of absenteeism on productivity is widely recognized among the workforce.

**Table 6. Irregular salary payments contribute to my absenteeism.**

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree (SA)	180	30.4
Agree (A)	240	40.5
Disagree (D)	100	16.9
Strongly Disagree (SD)	72	12.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>592</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Author’s Computation

Over 70% of respondents (70.9%) agree or strongly agree that irregular salary payments contribute to their absenteeism. This highlights a critical issue within the organization, where financial instability and delays in salary payments are major factors causing employees to be absent from work. Addressing this issue could potentially reduce absenteeism rates significantly.

**Table 7. The working conditions in my department are satisfactory.**

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree (SA)	120	20.3
Agree (A)	190	32.1
Disagree (D)	180	30.4
Strongly Disagree (SD)	102	17.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>592</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Author’s Computation

The responses indicate a divided opinion regarding the satisfaction with working conditions. While 52.4% of respondents agree or strongly agree that their working conditions are satisfactory, a substantial proportion (47.6%) disagree or strongly disagree. This split suggests that improvements in working conditions could enhance overall employee satisfaction and potentially reduce absenteeism.

**Table 8. I feel motivated to come to work regularly.**

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree (SA)	150	25.3
Agree (A)	220	37.2
Disagree (D)	130	22.0

<b>Strongly Disagree (SD)</b>	92	15.5
<b>Total</b>	592	100

Source: Author’s Computation

A majority of respondents (62.5%) feel motivated to come to work regularly, indicating a generally positive attitude towards their jobs. However, 37.5% do not feel the same level of motivation, suggesting that there are factors affecting their willingness to attend work regularly. Identifying and addressing these factors could further improve attendance rates.

**Table 9. Absenteeism leads to increased workload for my colleagues.**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>Strongly Agree (SA)</b>	230	38.9
<b>Agree (A)</b>	260	43.9
<b>Disagree (D)</b>	60	10.1
<b>Strongly Disagree (SD)</b>	42	7.1
<b>Total</b>	592	100

Source: Author’s Computation

An overwhelming majority of respondents (82.8%) agree or strongly agree that absenteeism leads to an increased workload for their colleagues. This response underscores the ripple effect of absenteeism, where the absence of one employee impacts the productivity and morale of others. It highlights the importance of managing absenteeism not only for individual performance but also for team dynamics.

**Table 10. I believe absenteeism impacts the overall performance of our department.**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>Strongly Agree (SA)</b>	200	33.8
<b>Agree (A)</b>	250	42.2
<b>Disagree (D)</b>	100	16.9
<b>Strongly Disagree (SD)</b>	42	7.1
<b>Total</b>	592	100

Source: Author’s Computation

The majority of respondents (76%) believe that absenteeism impacts the overall performance of their department. This consensus indicates a strong awareness among employees about the broader implications of absenteeism on departmental efficiency and effectiveness. It suggests that initiatives to reduce absenteeism could lead to significant improvements in departmental performance.

**Table 11. My department has effective measures to handle absenteeism.**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
<b>Strongly Agree (SA)</b>	110	18.6
<b>Agree (A)</b>	200	33.8
<b>Disagree (D)</b>	180	30.4
<b>Strongly Disagree (SD)</b>	102	17.2
<b>Total</b>	592	100



Source: Author’s Computation

Responses are mixed regarding the effectiveness of measures to handle absenteeism, with 52.4% agreeing or strongly agreeing and 47.6% disagreeing or strongly disagreeing. This indicates that while some departments may have effective strategies in place, there is a significant need for improvement in others. Implementing consistent and effective absenteeism management practices could help reduce absenteeism rates.

**Table 12. I often take leave due to personal or family emergencies.**

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree (SA)	150	25.3
Agree (A)	210	35.5
Disagree (D)	140	23.6
Strongly Disagree (SD)	92	15.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>592</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Author’s Computation

A considerable portion of respondents (60.8%) agree or strongly agree that they often take leave due to personal or family emergencies. This suggests that personal and family issues are significant factors contributing to absenteeism. Providing support for employees to manage personal emergencies, such as flexible working arrangements or emergency leave policies, could help reduce absenteeism.

**Table 12. The management addresses absenteeism issues promptly and fairly.**

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree (SA)	120	20.3
Agree (A)	200	33.8
Disagree (D)	180	30.4
Strongly Disagree (SD)	92	15.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>592</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Author’s Computation

The responses indicate that just over half of the respondents (54.1%) believe that management addresses absenteeism issues promptly and fairly. However, a significant proportion (45.9%) do not share this view. This suggests a need for improved transparency and consistency in how absenteeism is managed and communicated within the organization.

**Table 13. I receive adequate support from my supervisors when I face personal challenges that affect my attendance.**

Response	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Strongly Agree (SA)	130	22.0
Agree (A)	210	35.5
Disagree (D)	150	25.3
Strongly Disagree (SD)	102	17.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>592</b>	<b>100</b>

Source: Author’s Computation

The majority of respondents (57.5%) agree or strongly agree that they receive adequate support from their supervisors when facing personal challenges affecting attendance. However, a

significant minority (42.5%) do not feel adequately supported. Enhancing supervisory support mechanisms could help mitigate some of the personal challenges that lead to absenteeism.

**Test of Hypotheses**

**Objective One: To Ascertain the Level of Absenteeism in the Local Government Areas of Ondo State**

**Hypothesis:**

Null Hypothesis (H0): There is no significant level of absenteeism in the local government areas of Ondo State.

Alternative Hypothesis (H1): There is a significant level of absenteeism in the local government areas of Ondo State.

**Variables:**

Dependent Variable: Level of absenteeism

Independent Variables: Age, Gender, Department, Years of Service

**Linear Regression Analysis**

**Table 14. Linear Regression Analysis of the Level of Absenteeism**

Variables	Coefficients (B)	Standard Error	t-Value	p-Value
Constant	2.305	0.345	6.682	0.000
Age	0.123	0.052	2.365	0.018*
Gender (Male)	-0.054	0.089	-0.607	0.544
Gender (Female)	-0.037	0.093	-0.398	0.691
Department	0.210	0.048	4.375	0.000**
Years of Service	0.089	0.046	1.935	0.054

Source: Author’s Computation

R-squared: 0.426; Adjusted R-squared: 0.415

F-statistic: 12.368; p-value (F-statistic): 0.000

Note: \*p < 0.05, \*\*p < 0.01

The regression analysis results are presented in Table 14. The model summary shows an R-squared value of 0.426, indicating that approximately 42.6% of the variation in the level of absenteeism are accounted for by the independent variables included in the model. The adjusted R-squared value of 0.415 suggests a slight reduction when adjusting for the number of predictors, but still indicates a moderate fit for the model. The constant coefficient is 2.305, which is statistically significant (p < 0.01). This suggests that when all independent variables are held at zero, the baseline level of absenteeism is positive and notable. The coefficient for age is 0.123, which is statistically significant (p < 0.05). This positive relationship implies that as the age of employees increases, the level of absenteeism tends to increase as well. This finding could be attributed to older employees possibly experiencing more health-related issues or personal responsibilities that lead to higher absenteeism.

The coefficients for male and female genders are -0.054 and -0.037 respectively, neither of which are statistically significant (p > 0.05). This indicates that gender does not have a significant effect on the level of absenteeism in this context. The lack of gender-based differences in absenteeism might reflect equitable workplace policies or similar job roles and responsibilities across genders. The coefficient for the department is 0.210, which is highly significant (p < 0.01). This strong positive relationship suggests that the department in which an employee works

significantly affects their level of absenteeism. Departments with higher absenteeism might have more demanding work environments or less supportive conditions, leading to more frequent absences. The coefficient for years of service is 0.089, which approaches significance ( $p = 0.054$ ). This marginal positive relationship indicates that employees with longer years of service tend to have higher levels of absenteeism. This could be due to burnout, reduced motivation, or accumulated health issues over time.

The F-statistic is 12.368 with a p-value of 0.000, indicating that the overall model is statistically significant and that the independent variables jointly have a significant effect on the level of absenteeism. The regression analysis supports the alternative hypothesis (H1), indicating that there is a significant level of absenteeism in the local government areas of Ondo State. Age and department are significant predictors of absenteeism, while gender and years of service are not significant at the 5% level but suggest trends worth further exploration. The findings highlight the need for targeted interventions to address absenteeism, particularly focusing on older employees and specific departments with higher absenteeism rates. By improving work conditions and support systems, especially in departments with high absenteeism, and addressing the unique needs of older employees, local government areas can potentially reduce absenteeism and enhance overall employee performance.

The COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated absenteeism trends, with older employees being more vulnerable due to increased health risks and potential chronic conditions post-infection. Departments facing higher absenteeism may have been significantly impacted by the pandemic, experiencing increased workloads and stress, leading to more frequent absences. Additionally, the pandemic has likely intensified burnout and reduced motivation among employees with longer years of service. By improving work conditions and support systems, especially in departments with high absenteeism, and addressing the unique needs of older employees, local government areas can potentially reduce absenteeism and enhance overall employee performance. Implementing flexible work arrangements, health and wellness programs, and support for remote work could be effective strategies in the post-COVID-19 era.

**Objective Two: To Examine the Impact of Working Conditions and Irregular Salary Payment on Performance in the Local Government**

Null Hypothesis (H0): Working conditions and irregular salary payments do not significantly impact employee performance in the local government.

Alternative Hypothesis (H1): Working conditions and irregular salary payments significantly impact employee performance in the local government.

Variables:

Dependent Variable: Employee performance

Independent Variables: Working conditions, Irregular salary payment

**Linear Regression Analysis**

**Table 15. Linear Regression Analysis of the Impact of Working Conditions and Irregular Salary Payment on Performance**

Variables	Coefficients (B)	Standard Error	t-Value	p-Value
Constant	1.875	0.274	6.843	0.000
Working Conditions	0.458	0.065	7.046	0.000**
Irregular Salary Payment	-0.389	0.072	-5.403	0.000**

Source: Author's Computation

R-squared: 0.564; Adjusted R-squared: 0.559

F-statistic: 38.256; p-value (F-statistic): 0.000

Note: \*\*p < 0.01

The regression analysis results are presented in Table 15. The model summary shows an R-squared value of 0.564, indicating that approximately 56.4% of the variation in employee performance can be explained by the independent variables included in the model. The adjusted R-squared value of 0.559 suggests a minimal reduction when adjusting for the number of predictors, indicating a good fit for the model. The constant coefficient is 1.875, which is statistically significant ( $p < 0.01$ ). This suggests that when all independent variables are held at zero, the baseline level of employee performance is positive and significant.

The coefficient for working conditions is 0.458, which is highly significant ( $p < 0.01$ ). This positive relationship implies that better working conditions significantly improve employee performance. This finding underscores the importance of a supportive and conducive work environment in enhancing the productivity and effectiveness of employees. Factors such as workplace safety, availability of resources, and overall job satisfaction contribute to better performance. The coefficient for irregular salary payment is -0.389, which is also highly significant ( $p < 0.01$ ). This negative relationship indicates that irregular salary payments significantly reduce employee performance. Irregular or delayed payments can cause financial stress and dissatisfaction among employees, leading to decreased motivation, lower morale, and ultimately poorer performance. Ensuring timely and regular salary payments is crucial for maintaining employee productivity and commitment.

The F-statistic is 38.256 with a p-value of 0.000, indicating that the overall model is statistically significant and that the independent variables collectively have a significant impact on employee performance. The regression analysis supports the alternative hypothesis (H1), indicating that working conditions and irregular salary payments significantly impact employee performance in the local government. The findings highlight that both improved working conditions and regular salary payments are critical for enhancing employee performance. Addressing issues related to the work environment and ensuring timely compensation can lead to higher productivity, job satisfaction, and overall better performance of employees. Local government authorities should prioritize creating a supportive work environment and maintaining regular salary payments to optimize employee performance and achieve organizational goals.

In the post-COVID-19 context, these findings take on additional significance. The pandemic has exacerbated challenges related to working conditions and salary payments. For instance, remote work arrangements, the need for enhanced workplace safety measures, and the financial instability caused by the pandemic have all affected employee performance. Local government authorities should prioritize creating a supportive work environment and maintaining regular salary payments to optimize employee performance and achieve organizational goals. This includes implementing flexible work arrangements, ensuring health and safety protocols are followed, and providing financial stability through timely salary payments to address the heightened stress and uncertainty employees face in the post-pandemic era.

### **Objective Three: To Study Employee Habits and Other Causes of Absenteeism in the Local Government**

Null Hypothesis (H0): Employee habits and other causes do not significantly affect absenteeism in the local government.

Alternative Hypothesis (H1): Employee habits and other causes significantly affect absenteeism in the local government.

Variables:

Dependent Variable: Absenteeism

Independent Variables: Employee habits, Personal/family emergencies, Health issues, Work-life balance

**Linear Regression Analysis**

**Table 16. Linear Regression Analysis of Employee Habits and Other Causes of Absenteeism**

Variables	Coefficients (B)	Standard Error	t-Value	p-Value
Constant	1.554	0.231	6.727	0.000
Employee Habits	0.276	0.049	5.633	0.000**
Personal/Family Emergencies	0.195	0.054	3.611	0.000**
Health Issues	0.317	0.061	5.197	0.000**
Work-Life Balance	0.198	0.057	3.474	0.001**

Source: Author’s Computation

R-squared: 0.482; Adjusted R-squared: 0.474

F-statistic: 35.814; p-value (F-statistic): 0.000

Note: \*\*p < 0.01

The regression analysis results are presented in Table 16. The model summary shows an R-squared value of 0.482, indicating that approximately 48.2% of the variation in absenteeism can be explained by the independent variables included in the model. The adjusted R-squared value of 0.474 suggests a slight reduction when adjusting for the number of predictors, indicating a reasonable fit for the model. The constant coefficient is 1.554, which is statistically significant (p < 0.01). This suggests that when all independent variables are held at zero, the baseline level of absenteeism is positive and significant.

The coefficient for employee habits is 0.276, which is highly significant (p < 0.01). This positive relationship indicates that employee habits significantly affect absenteeism. Habits such as frequent lateness, lack of punctuality, and general work ethic play a crucial role in determining absenteeism rates. Improving these habits through targeted training and disciplinary measures could help reduce absenteeism. Personal/Family Emergencies: The coefficient for personal/family emergencies is 0.195, which is highly significant (p < 0.01). This positive relationship implies that personal and family emergencies significantly contribute to absenteeism. Providing support systems such as emergency leave policies and flexible working arrangements could help employees manage these emergencies better and reduce absenteeism. The coefficient for health issues is 0.317, which is highly significant (p < 0.01). This strong positive relationship suggests that health issues are a significant cause of absenteeism. Implementing health and wellness programs, providing medical support, and promoting a healthy work environment can help address this issue and reduce absenteeism rates. The coefficient for work-life balance is 0.198, which is significant (p < 0.01). This positive relationship indicates that poor work-life balance significantly affects absenteeism. Ensuring a healthy work-life balance by promoting flexible working hours, offering remote work options, and encouraging employees to take regular breaks and vacations can help reduce absenteeism.

The F-statistic is 35.814 with a p-value of 0.000, indicating that the overall model is statistically significant and that the independent variables collectively have a significant impact on

absenteeism. The regression analysis supports the alternative hypothesis (H1), indicating that employee habits and other causes significantly affect absenteeism in the local government. The findings highlight that factors such as employee habits, personal/family emergencies, health issues, and work-life balance play a crucial role in determining absenteeism rates. Addressing these factors through targeted interventions and support systems can help reduce absenteeism and improve overall employee attendance. Local government authorities should focus on improving employee habits through training and disciplinary measures, providing support for personal and family emergencies, implementing health and wellness programs, and promoting a healthy work-life balance to optimize employee attendance and performance.

In the post-COVID-19 context, these findings are particularly relevant. The pandemic has heightened the impact of personal and family emergencies, health issues, and work-life balance on absenteeism. Employees may face increased personal and family emergencies due to the pandemic's ongoing effects, such as caring for sick family members or managing childcare during school closures. Health issues, including those related to COVID-19, have become more prevalent, necessitating robust health and wellness programs. Additionally, the shift to remote work and the blurring of boundaries between work and personal life have intensified work-life balance challenges. Local government authorities should focus on improving employee habits through training and disciplinary measures, providing support for personal and family emergencies, implementing health and wellness programs, and promoting a healthy work-life balance to optimize employee attendance and performance. Adopting flexible work arrangements, supporting mental health, and ensuring employees can balance their work and personal lives are essential strategies in the post-COVID-19 era.

#### 4. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The analysis revealed a significant level of absenteeism among employees in the local government areas of Ondo State. The regression analysis indicated that factors such as age and department significantly impact absenteeism rates. This finding aligns with existing literature that emphasizes the role of demographic and job-related factors in influencing absenteeism.

Absenteeism is a multifaceted issue that can stem from various causes, including personal health issues, family emergencies, and workplace conditions. For instance, a study found that older employees are more likely to experience absenteeism due to health-related issues, which supports our finding that age is a significant predictor of absenteeism (Cushard, 2017). Additionally, departments with higher workloads or more stressful environments tend to have higher absenteeism rates, as employees in these departments may experience burnout or job dissatisfaction, leading to increased absenteeism (Ha and Moon, 2023).

The significant impact of departmental differences on absenteeism underscores the need for targeted interventions that address specific departmental challenges. Improving work conditions, providing support for health issues, and creating a positive work environment can help mitigate absenteeism rates. Furthermore, the study highlights the importance of considering demographic factors when developing strategies to reduce absenteeism, as these factors play a crucial role in influencing employees' attendance behaviors.

The pandemic has exacerbated health-related issues, particularly for older employees who may be dealing with long-term effects of COVID-19 or increased vulnerability to illness. Departments that were heavily impacted by the pandemic may now face higher absenteeism rates due to increased stress and workload during the crisis. Therefore, targeted interventions should not only address

traditional causes of absenteeism but also consider the lingering impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The regression analysis for this objective demonstrated that both working conditions and irregular salary payments significantly impact employee performance. Better working conditions were positively associated with improved performance, while irregular salary payments had a negative impact. Research consistently shows that poor working conditions can lead to decreased job satisfaction and higher absenteeism rates, which in turn negatively affect performance. For example, studies have highlighted that employees who perceive their work environment as supportive and well-equipped are more likely to be productive and less likely to miss work (Wynne-Jones et al., 2009). On the contrary, employees facing poor working conditions, such as inadequate resources or unsafe environments, often exhibit lower performance levels due to stress and dissatisfaction (Wynne-Jones et al, 2023).

Irregular salary payments are another critical factor affecting employee performance. Financial instability caused by delayed or inconsistent salary payments can lead to stress and reduced motivation among employees. This finding is supported by evidence from multiple studies indicating that financial stress significantly impacts employee well-being and productivity (Cushard, 2017). Regular and timely salary payments are essential for maintaining employee morale and ensuring high performance levels. Organizations must prioritize financial stability and ensure consistent compensation to mitigate the negative effects of irregular salary payments on performance. The pandemic has disrupted regular salary payments for many employees, causing additional financial stress and uncertainty. Working conditions have also been affected, with many employees having to adapt to remote work or dealing with inadequate safety measures in the workplace. Addressing these issues is crucial for improving employee performance in the post-pandemic period. Ensuring financial stability through regular salary payments and improving working conditions to meet new health and safety standards are essential steps for local governments to take.

The regression analysis identified employee habits, personal/family emergencies, health issues, and work-life balance as significant predictors of absenteeism. Each of these factors contributes to the complex nature of absenteeism and requires targeted interventions to address. Employee habits, such as punctuality and work ethic, play a significant role in absenteeism. Employees with poor habits are more likely to be absent, impacting overall productivity. This finding aligns with research that emphasizes the importance of fostering positive work habits through training and support . Encouraging good habits and providing necessary resources can help reduce absenteeism rates.

Personal and family emergencies are also significant causes of absenteeism. Employees facing personal challenges, such as family illnesses or emergencies, often have no choice but to miss work. Providing support systems, such as flexible working arrangements and emergency leave policies, can help employees manage these situations better and reduce absenteeism (Ha and Moon, 2023).

Health issues are a major contributor to absenteeism, as employees dealing with chronic illnesses or health problems are more likely to miss work. Implementing health and wellness programs, offering medical support, and promoting a healthy work environment can help address this issue and improve attendance (Cushard, 2017)

Work-life balance is another crucial factor influencing absenteeism. Employees struggling to balance their work and personal lives are more likely to experience burnout and miss work.

Promoting a healthy work-life balance through flexible working hours, remote work options, and encouraging regular breaks can help reduce absenteeism and improve overall well-being (Ha and Moon, 2023)

The findings from the analysis of these three objectives highlight the multifaceted nature of absenteeism and its significant impact on employee performance. Addressing the identified factors through targeted interventions can help reduce absenteeism rates and improve overall productivity and performance in the local government areas of Ondo State.

In the post-COVID-19 era, these factors have become even more pronounced. The pandemic has led to an increase in personal and family emergencies, as well as health issues, with many employees dealing with the long-term effects of COVID-19 or increased caregiving responsibilities. Work-life balance has also been disrupted, with remote work blurring the lines between personal and professional life. Local government authorities should therefore focus on creating supportive policies that address these post-pandemic challenges. This includes flexible working arrangements, comprehensive health and wellness programs, and robust support systems to manage personal and family emergencies, ultimately reducing absenteeism and improving employee performance.

## 5. SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The study identified a significant level of absenteeism among employees in the local government areas of Ondo State. Age and departmental differences were significant predictors of absenteeism. Older employees and those in certain departments exhibited higher absenteeism rates, likely due to health issues and job dissatisfaction. Both working conditions and irregular salary payments were found to significantly impacted employee performance. Positive working conditions were associated with higher performance levels, while irregular salary payments had a detrimental effect, causing financial stress and reduced motivation among employees. Key factors contributing to absenteeism included employee habits, personal and family emergencies, health issues, and work-life balance. Poor employee habits, frequent personal emergencies, chronic health problems, and an imbalance between work and personal life were significant predictors of absenteeism.

### 5.2. Conclusion

In the post-COVID-19 context, the impact of these factors has been worsened. The pandemic has led to increased health concerns, disrupted working conditions, and created financial instability, all of which have contributed to higher absenteeism rates. Local governments must consider these new challenges when designing and implementing interventions to improve attendance and performance.

### 5.3. Recommendations

- **Enhance Working Conditions:** Local governments should invest in improving workplace environments to create supportive and conducive conditions. This includes ensuring workplace safety, providing adequate resources, and fostering a positive work culture. Implementing enhanced safety protocols and adapting workspaces to meet health guidelines can help reduce absenteeism related to health concerns.
- **Regular Salary Payments:** Ensuring timely and consistent salary payments is crucial. Local governments should prioritize financial stability to reduce financial stress among employees and enhance their motivation and performance. Given the financial instability caused by the



pandemic, establishing a reliable payment system is even more critical to ensure employees feel secure and motivated.

- **Health and Wellness Programs:** Implement health and wellness programs to address health-related absenteeism. Providing medical support, promoting a healthy work environment, and encouraging regular health check-ups can help mitigate health issues that lead to absenteeism. Offering comprehensive health support, including mental health resources and COVID-19 specific care, can address the unique health challenges posed by the pandemic.
- **Flexible Work Arrangements:** Introduce flexible working hours and remote work options to help employees manage personal and family emergencies better. Emergency leave policies and support systems can reduce absenteeism caused by personal issues. Expanding remote work capabilities and flexible scheduling can help employees balance work and personal responsibilities, especially in light of ongoing pandemic-related disruptions.
- **Employee Training and Development:** Invest in training programs to improve employee habits and work ethic. Regular training and development sessions can help foster a culture of punctuality and responsibility among employees. Training programs should include modules on adapting to new work environments, such as remote work best practices and maintaining productivity during disruptions.
- **Department-Specific Interventions:** Tailor interventions to address the specific challenges faced by different departments. Departments with higher absenteeism rates should receive targeted support to improve work conditions and address job-related stress. Departments heavily impacted by the pandemic may need additional support and resources to address heightened stress and workload.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Establish a robust monitoring and evaluation system to track absenteeism trends and assess the effectiveness of interventions. Regular feedback from employees can help refine strategies and ensure continuous improvement. Monitoring systems should include metrics specific to post-pandemic challenges, such as tracking health-related absences and remote work effectiveness.

By implementing these recommendations, local governments can reduce absenteeism rates, enhance employee performance, and achieve their organizational goals more effectively. The post-COVID-19 context underscores the need for adaptable and resilient strategies to manage absenteeism and maintain high levels of organizational performance.

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