

Attendance and Punctuality as Correlates of Academic Performance Among Secondary School Students in Yenagoa Metropolis

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Abstract

This study examined attendance and punctuality as correlates of academic performance among secondary school students in selected secondary schools in Yenagoa metropolis. The study was guided by two research questions and two null hypotheses. A correlational research design was adopted because the study sought to determine the relationship between student attendance, punctuality, and academic performance without manipulating the variables. The population of the study comprised secondary school students in Yenagoa metropolis, while a sample of 300 students was selected using a multistage sampling procedure. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire and a student record extraction sheet. The questionnaire focused on students' attendance patterns and punctuality, while academic performance was measured using students' scores in core subjects. The data collected were analysed using the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient at the 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed a moderate positive and significant relationship between student attendance patterns and academic performance, with $r = 0.49$ and $p < 0.05$. The findings also showed a moderate positive and significant relationship between student punctuality and academic performance, with $r = 0.58$ and $p < 0.05$. Based on the findings, the study concluded that regular attendance and punctuality are important factors associated with improved academic performance among secondary school students. It was recommended that school administrators should strengthen attendance monitoring and that teachers, parents, and school authorities should work together to encourage punctuality among students.

Keywords: Attendance, punctuality, academic performance, secondary school students, Yenagoa metropolis, learning outcomes

Introduction

Secondary education remains a critical stage in the intellectual, social, and career development of young people because it prepares learners for higher education, vocational pathways, and responsible participation in society. However, the achievement of these goals depends not only on school enrolment but also on students' regular and timely participation in classroom activities. In Nigeria, the education challenge has moved beyond access alone to include retention, attendance, learning quality, and measurable academic outcomes. UNICEF's 2024 situation analysis reports that 8.1 million children of secondary school age are out of school in Nigeria, while many children who are in school still lack basic reading and numeracy skills. This indicates that being registered in school does not automatically translate into effective learning; students must consistently attend,

arrive on time and participate meaningfully in instruction for schooling to produce academic value (UNICEF, 2024). Attendance and punctuality are two closely related but distinct indicators of student academic discipline. Attendance refers to the extent to which students are physically present in school and classes, while punctuality refers to their ability to arrive at school and lessons at the expected time. A student may be marked present but still miss important early lesson activities, announcements, revision exercises, continuous assessment instructions, or teacher explanations because of lateness. This distinction is important because academic performance is shaped not merely by the number of days a learner is in school, but also by how much instructional time the learner actually receives. Therefore, a study on attendance and punctuality is academically relevant because it examines two behavioural patterns that directly affect students' exposure to teaching, classroom interaction, assessment preparation and learning continuity.

Recent empirical evidence consistently suggests that absenteeism has a negative relationship with students' academic achievement. Keppens (2023), using time-stamped administrative attendance data from 62,841 secondary school students, found that unexcused absence, sickness absence and school exclusion negatively affected examination outcomes, with the timing of absence also mattering. Similarly, Klein and Sosu (2024) examined upper-secondary students and showed that overall absence and truancy were associated with achievement in high-stakes examinations. More recent post-COVID evidence by Swiderski, Fuller and Bastian (2025) further shows that in 2023–2024, each additional day absent was associated with a measurable decline in mathematics achievement, suggesting that attendance remains an important factor in academic recovery and performance. These studies strengthen the argument that absenteeism is not simply a disciplinary issue; it is a learning-loss issue with measurable academic consequences (Keppens, 2023; Klein & Sosu, 2024; Swiderski et al., 2025).

Punctuality is equally important because lateness reduces effective learning time and may weaken students' academic habits. In the Nigerian context, Nwobodo, Onyeisi, Onu and Ebegbulam (2023) found that lateness to school among secondary school students was linked with factors such as distance from school, walking to school, parents' early morning activities, late sleeping and traffic problems. Their findings also indicated that lateness could make students miss vital early-morning information, perform poorly in examinations and develop weaker academic records. However, this evidence should be interpreted critically because the study was based on counsellors' perceptions rather than direct measurement of students' attendance records and examination scores. This creates a need for further empirical studies that combine actual attendance, punctuality and academic performance data among students themselves (Nwobodo et al., 2023).

In Bayelsa State, the issue is particularly relevant because recent local studies have begun to link attendance-related behaviours with academic performance. Oribhabor and Adesanya (2024) found a strong positive correlation between class attendance and Mathematics performance among junior secondary school students in Bayelsa State. Nwosu and Okuru (2025) also reported that attendance management strategies such as monitoring, record keeping, counselling, incentives, discipline, parental meetings and community collaboration were considered important for improving students' academic performance in public secondary schools in Bayelsa State. These findings suggest that attendance is already recognised as an academic performance issue in the state, not merely an administrative routine. Nevertheless, existing studies appear to focus more on attendance management or single-subject performance, while less attention has been given to the combined influence of attendance and punctuality on students' performance across core subjects within Yenagoa metropolis (Oribhabor & Adesanya, 2024; Nwosu & Okuru, 2025).

Yenagoa metropolis, as the administrative and urban centre of Bayelsa State, provides an important setting for this study because secondary school students in urban environments may face attendance and punctuality challenges shaped by transport difficulties, household responsibilities, peer influence, school distance, family socio-economic pressure and changing attitudes toward schooling. Where such factors lead to irregular attendance or habitual lateness, students may miss lesson introductions, class exercises, laboratory activities, tests and teacher feedback. Over time, these missed learning opportunities may accumulate and reflect in poor performance in core subjects such as English Language, Mathematics and the sciences. The problem is therefore not only whether students attend school, but whether they attend regularly and arrive early enough to benefit fully from daily instruction.

Critically, attendance and punctuality should not be treated only as student-blame issues. Poor attendance may reflect deeper problems such as poverty, weak parental supervision, unsafe or costly transportation, poor school climate, ineffective monitoring systems, low motivation, health problems or disengagement from classroom learning. Recent systematic review evidence also warns that interventions for persistent absenteeism among secondary school students remain limited and require stronger evidence, better attendance metrics and attention to different student subgroups (Middleton, Watson, & Anderson, 2026). This means that schools should not rely only on punishment; they need data-driven, supportive and context-sensitive strategies that identify why students are absent or late and how such patterns affect their learning outcomes.

Against this background, this study investigates the influence of attendance and punctuality on academic performance among secondary school students in Yenagoa metropolis. The study is justified by the need to generate local empirical evidence on how students' regularity and time-consciousness relate to their academic achievement. Such evidence will be useful to school administrators, teachers, parents, counsellors and education policymakers in designing practical strategies for improving attendance, reducing lateness and strengthening academic performance among secondary school students in Yenagoa metropolis.

Purpose of the Study

The study examined the influence of student attendance and punctuality on academic performance among secondary school students in selected secondary schools in Yenagoa metropolis. Specifically, the study achieved the following:

1. Determine the relationship between patterns of student attendance and academic performance in selected secondary schools in Yenagoa metropolis.
2. Examine the relationship between student punctuality and academic performance in selected secondary schools in Yenagoa metropolis.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

1. What is the relationship between patterns of student attendance and academic performance in selected secondary schools in Yenagoa metropolis?
2. What is the relationship between student punctuality and academic performance in selected secondary schools in Yenagoa metropolis?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study and were tested at the 0.05 level of significance:

H01: There is no significant relationship between patterns of student attendance and academic performance in selected secondary schools in Yenagoa metropolis.

H02: There is no significant relationship between student punctuality and academic performance in selected secondary schools in Yenagoa metropolis.

Research Methods

This study employed a correlational research design, which is appropriate for examining the relationship between two or more variables without manipulating them. Correlational design enables the researcher to determine the strength and direction of association between variables as they naturally occur within a given population (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). As noted by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2018), correlational studies are useful in educational research because they help explain how learner-related variables relate to academic outcomes in real school settings where experimental control may not be practical or ethical. In this study, the independent variables were student attendance patterns and student punctuality, while the dependent variable was academic performance among secondary school students in Yenagoa metropolis. The design was considered appropriate because it allowed the researcher to determine whether regular attendance and timely arrival at school were significantly related to students' academic achievement without interfering with normal school activities.

The population of the study comprised secondary school students in selected public secondary schools in Yenagoa metropolis, Bayelsa State. The target population focused on students in senior secondary classes because they are more academically stable, have clearer subject records and are usually assessed through structured continuous assessment and examination scores. A sample of 300 students was selected for the study using a multistage sampling procedure to ensure fair representation. First, secondary schools within Yenagoa metropolis were stratified based on location and school type. Second, ten secondary schools were randomly selected from the identified schools. Third, proportionate sampling was used to determine the number of students to be selected from each school, while simple random sampling was used to select the final respondents from the class registers. This procedure ensured that every eligible student within the sampled schools had a fair chance of being included in the study.

The instruments for data collection were a structured questionnaire and a records extraction sheet titled Student Attendance, Punctuality and Academic Performance Questionnaire and Record Sheet (SAPAPQRS). The instrument was divided into two sections. Section A collected demographic information such as gender, class level, age and school type. Section B collected information on students' attendance and punctuality patterns, including frequency of school attendance, lateness to school, missed classes and regularity in classroom participation. The records extraction sheet was used to obtain official data from school attendance registers, late-coming records and students' academic records. Academic performance was measured using students' scores in core subjects, especially English Language and Mathematics, because these subjects are compulsory and provide a common basis for comparison across schools.

To ensure validity, the instrument was subjected to face and content validation by three experts in Educational Management, Guidance and Counselling, and Measurement and Evaluation. Their comments helped to improve the clarity, relevance and appropriateness of the items in relation to the research questions and hypotheses. A pilot study was conducted using 30 students from a secondary school outside the main study area but with similar characteristics to the sampled schools. The reliability of the questionnaire items was determined using Cronbach's Alpha, which yielded a coefficient of 0.82, indicating that the instrument had an acceptable level of internal

consistency. The school record sheet was also cross-checked with class registers and examination records to ensure accuracy and consistency of data.

Data collection was carried out by the researcher with the assistance of trained research assistants. Permission was obtained from the school authorities before administering the questionnaire and accessing students' attendance, punctuality and academic performance records. The purpose of the study was explained to the respondents, and confidentiality of their responses and academic records was assured. The completed instruments were retrieved and checked for completeness before analysis.

For data analysis, the Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient was used to answer the research questions and test the hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance. This statistical method was appropriate because the study sought to determine the relationship between attendance patterns, punctuality, and academic performance. The correlation coefficient was used to establish the direction and strength of the relationship between the variables, while the significance value was used to determine whether the relationships were statistically significant.

Results

Research Question 1

What is the relationship between patterns of student attendance and academic performance in selected secondary schools in Yenagoa metropolis?

Table 1: Pearson Correlation between Student Attendance Pattern and Academic Performance

Variables	Student Attendance Pattern	Academic Performance	Decision
Student Attendance Pattern 1		0.49	Ho rejected
Academic Performance	0.49	1	
N	300	300	

Significant at $p < 0.05$ ($p = 0.000$)

The data presented in Table 1 show that there is a moderate positive relationship between patterns of student attendance and academic performance in selected secondary schools in Yenagoa metropolis ($r = 0.49$, $p < 0.05$). This indicates that students who attend school more regularly tend to perform better academically than those with irregular attendance patterns. The relationship is statistically significant; therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. This finding implies that regular school attendance plays an important role in improving students' academic performance because it increases their exposure to classroom instruction, class activities, assignments and teacher feedback.

Research Question 2

What is the relationship between student punctuality and academic performance in selected secondary schools in Yenagoa metropolis?

Table 2: Pearson Correlation between Student Punctuality and Academic Performance

Variables	Student Punctuality	Academic Performance	Decision
Student Punctuality	1	0.58	Ho rejected
Academic Performance	0.58	1	
N	300	300	

Significant at $p < 0.05$ ($p = 0.000$)

The results in Table 2 reveal a moderate positive relationship between student punctuality and academic performance in selected secondary schools in Yenagoa metropolis ($r = 0.58$, $p < 0.05$). This suggests that students who arrive at school and attend lessons on time are more likely to achieve better academic results. Since the relationship is statistically significant, the null hypothesis is rejected. This finding implies that punctuality contributes meaningfully to academic performance because punctual students are more likely to participate from the beginning of lessons, receive complete instructions, and settle early for learning activities.

Test of Hypotheses

H01: There is no significant relationship between patterns of student attendance and academic performance in selected secondary schools in Yenagoa metropolis.

Table 3: Test of Hypothesis One

Variables	N	r-value	p-value	α -level	Decision
Student Attendance Pattern vs Academic Performance	300	0.49	0.000	0.05	Reject H01

The result in Table 3 shows that the correlation coefficient ($r = 0.49$, $p < 0.05$) indicates a moderate positive and statistically significant relationship between patterns of student attendance and academic performance in selected secondary schools in Yenagoa metropolis. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis (H01) is rejected. This implies that the student attendance pattern has a significant relationship with academic performance. Therefore, students who attend school regularly are more likely to record better academic outcomes than students who are frequently absent.

Hypothesis Two

H02: There is no significant relationship between student punctuality and academic performance in selected secondary schools in Yenagoa metropolis.

Table 4: Test of Hypothesis Two

Variables	N	r-value	p-value	α -level	Decision
Student Punctuality vs Academic Performance	300	0.58	0.000	0.05	Reject H02

The result in Table 4 reveals that the correlation coefficient ($r = 0.58$, $p < 0.05$) indicates a moderate positive and statistically significant relationship between student punctuality and academic performance in selected secondary schools in Yenagoa metropolis. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis (H02) is rejected. This finding suggests that student punctuality is significantly related to academic performance. It therefore implies that students who are punctual to school and classes are more likely to benefit from full instructional time and achieve better academic results.

Discussion of Findings

The first objective of the study was to determine the relationship between patterns of student attendance and academic performance in selected secondary schools in Yenagoa metropolis. The finding revealed a moderate positive and statistically significant relationship between student attendance pattern and academic performance. This means that students who attended school regularly were more likely to perform better academically than those who were frequently absent. The finding suggests that regular attendance exposes students to classroom instruction, explanations, assignments, teacher feedback and peer learning activities, all of which are important

for academic success. When students miss school repeatedly, they lose valuable instructional time, and this may create gaps in their understanding of key topics, especially in core subjects such as English Language and Mathematics.

This finding agrees with the position of Keppens (2023), who found that school absenteeism has a negative effect on academic achievement, particularly when students miss important instructional periods. It also supports the findings of Klein and Sosu (2024), who reported that student absence is associated with lower academic achievement in secondary education. In the same direction, Oribhabor and Adesanya (2024) found a positive relationship between class attendance and Mathematics performance among junior secondary school students in Bayelsa State. The implication of this finding is that attendance should not be treated merely as a disciplinary issue but as a core academic concern. Schools in Yenagoa metropolis therefore need to strengthen attendance monitoring, parental involvement and counselling support for students who show signs of irregular attendance.

The second objective of the study was to examine the relationship between student punctuality and academic performance in selected secondary schools in Yenagoa metropolis. The finding showed a moderate positive and statistically significant relationship between student punctuality and academic performance. This indicates that students who arrive at school and attend lessons on time are more likely to perform better academically. Punctual students are usually present for morning assembly, early instructions, lesson introductions and classroom activities from the beginning. This helps them to settle down mentally, follow lessons properly and participate more actively in learning. On the other hand, students who come late may miss important explanations and may find it difficult to understand the lesson fully.

This finding is consistent with Nwobodo, Onyeisi, Onu and Ebebulam (2023), who observed that lateness to school can make students miss important academic information and negatively affect their performance. The finding also supports the argument that punctuality is part of students' academic discipline because it helps learners develop responsibility, concentration and readiness for classroom work. In Yenagoa metropolis, lateness may be influenced by factors such as distance from school, transportation problems, poor time management, household responsibilities and weak parental supervision. Therefore, improving punctuality requires more than punishment; it requires collaboration among school administrators, teachers, parents and students to identify the causes of lateness and address them in practical ways.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that student attendance and punctuality have significant relationships with academic performance among secondary school students in selected secondary schools in Yenagoa metropolis. The study showed that students who attend school regularly and arrive on time are more likely to perform better academically because they benefit from consistent classroom instruction, complete lesson participation, teacher guidance, assignments and continuous assessment activities. Irregular attendance and lateness, on the other hand, reduce students' exposure to learning and may lead to poor understanding of subject content. Therefore, improving students' attendance and punctuality should be treated as an important strategy for enhancing academic performance in secondary schools.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were put forward:

1. School administrators should strengthen daily attendance monitoring and involve parents early whenever students begin to show irregular attendance.
2. Teachers and school authorities should enforce punctuality through counselling, reminders and supportive school rules that help students arrive at school on time.

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