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Time to Teach

Teacher attendance and time on task in primary schools

Nigeria

Spogmai Akseer and Ximena Játiva

October 2021

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Contents

Index of figures

Index of tables

Abbreviations

FGD	Focus group discussion
FGoN	Federal Government of Nigeria
FMoE	Federal Ministry of Education
FTM	Federal Teacher Scheme
IDI	In-depth interview
LGA	Local government authority
LGE	Local government education
NCE	Nigeria Certificate of Education
NHSMP	Nigerian Home-Grown School Meal Program
NUT	Nigerian Union of Teachers
NTEP	National Teacher Education Policy
PTA	Parent Teacher Association
SBMC	School-based management committee
SUBEB	State Universal Basic Education Board
TLM	Teaching and learning material
TTT	Time to Teach
UBE	Universal basic education
UBEC	Universal Basic Education Commission

Executive summary

Overview

Teachers play a significant role in the success of learners and are crucial to achieving learning goals. Their presence in the classroom is considered an essential pre-requisite for learning to take place; for achieving national and regional education goals; and for reducing inequalities. Lost teaching time can reduce pupil learning, hinder overall academic achievement, and limit opportunities in life. In the post-COVID-19 environment, learning losses are expected to be significant, with estimates suggesting immediate effects on the acquisition of foundational skills.[1]

Prior to COVID-19 lockdowns, the Federal Republic of Nigeria had taken measures to improve the quality of education and of teachers' working conditions. These included improvements in school infrastructure, accelerated teacher training programmes, and incentive schemes for teachers. Likewise, the government also committed to formally relaunching the 2014 National Teacher Education Policy (NTEP) in order to enhance the status of the teaching profession.

Despite these measures, ongoing constraints are limiting educational progress and the achievement of national learning outcomes, which are a concern for the Ministry. Moreover, while education is free and compulsory, Nigeria reports the highest number of out-of-school children in the world. Insufficient funding towards the education sector is one of the country's biggest challenges. The economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, the impact of school closures, and the shift towards remote learning are anticipated to pose further constraints and push even more vulnerable children out of the education system. Additionally, the shift towards distance learning raises concerns about in-service teacher preparedness and the inexperience of parents or guardians to assist pupils' learning needs, especially in rural settings.

Teacher absenteeism and the poor use of instructional time are also significant problems for the Nigerian education system[2] that negatively affect students' academic performance and learning. Earlier estimates indicate that in a given workday, 20 per cent of the teaching workforce in government primary schools is absent[3] and in a 30-minute lesson, children are actively involved in learning tasks for only eight minutes while the remaining time is spent in unproductive activities.[4]

The Time to Teach (TTT) study seeks to support both federal and state governments by providing a comprehensive understanding of teacher attendance in the country's primary schools. It also aims to provide insights into how attendance challenges may be similar or different across the types of schools (public/Quranic/private) and settings (urban/rural) and more importantly, how these can inform teacher policy design and implementation. Though data was collected prior to COVID-19 school closures, this study also aims to provide insights on how the pandemic may further exacerbate existing challenges.

Specifically, this study looks at four distinct dimensions of teacher attendance: (i) being in school; (ii) being punctual (i.e., not arriving late/leaving early), (iii) being in the classroom (while in school); and (iv) spending sufficient time on task (while in the classroom). It also identifies factors associated with teacher absenteeism at five different levels of the education system: a) national; b) state; c) LGA/community; d) school; and e) teacher.

TTT is a mixed-methods project employing both qualitative and quantitative research tools. The study draws from national, system-wide, qualitative data collections and school observations, and from a quantitative survey with 525 teachers working in 36 purposely selected primary schools.

1 Alban Conto, C., et al., 'COVID-19: Effects of school closures on foundational skills and promising practices for monitoring and mitigating learning loss', Innocenti Working Papers, No. 2020-13, UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti, Florence, 2020.

2 Ugoani, J. N., 'Education Corruption and Teacher Absenteeism in Nigeria', *Independent Journal of Management and Production,* vol. 7.no. 2, 2016, pp. 546–566.

3 Ejere, E. I., 'Absence from Work: A study of teacher absenteeism in selected public primary Schools in Uyo, Nigeria', *International Journal of Business and Management*, vol. 5, no. 9, 2010, pp. 115–123.

4 Adekola, O. A., 'Language, Literacy, and Learning in Primary Schools: Implications for teacher development programs in Nigeria', Working Papers No. 96, The World Bank, Washington, D.C., 2007, pp. 1–78.

Main findings

How frequently are primary school teachers absent?

- **Absence from school** is reported by 14.8 per cent of teachers in surveyed primary schools. It is more frequently reported by less qualified teachers (i.e., those who do not hold a university degree) (29 per cent) and by those with high pupil-teacher ratios[5] (17 per cent) compared with more qualified teachers (13 per cent) and those with lower pupil-teacher ratios (11 per cent).
- **Late arrival/early departure** is the second most frequent form of absence as 16.1 per cent of teachers affirm to have arrived late or left early on a recurring basis (i.e., at least once a week) since the start of the school year. Less experienced teachers (19 per cent) and those teaching in larger classes (20 per cent) are also more likely to report issues of punctuality compared with more experienced educators (12 per cent) and those in smaller classes (11 per cent).
- **Classroom absence** is the **most frequent** form of absence, reported by 19 per cent of teachers. This form of absence is more frequently reported by less experienced teachers (24 per cent) and those with lower pay (i.e., salaries below the median in the sample) (24 per cent) compared with more experienced educators (14 per cent) and those with higher salaries (11 per cent) respectively.
- **Limited time on task** is the least frequent form of absenteeism, reported by 14.6 per cent of teachers. It should be noted that the proportion of teachers who report never reducing instruction time is non negligible and more than double compared with other forms of absence. As with other forms of absenteeism, teachers who teach in larger classes (20 per cent) are more likely to reduce instruction time compared with those with lower pupil-teacher ratios (8 per cent). This form of absence is also more prevalent among men (20 per cent) compared with women (12 per cent), and among primary income earners (18 per cent) more than those who are not (10 per cent).

What are the main factors associated with teacher absenteeism?

- **National level factors** influencing attendance include frequent delays in the payment of salaries, which hinders teachers' punctuality and classroom presence, and low salaries which affects teachers' motivation and subsequently, their regular presence in the classroom. The timing of in-service training programmes often conflicts with teaching hours and thus forces teachers out of the school or causes them to arrive to school late or leave early. However, there is a need for further training, especially related to subject knowledge, lesson planning, and time and classroom management, all of which hinder teacher's time on task and presence in the classroom. Finally, teacher strikes (often related to salary delays) also lead to school and classroom absence and low punctuality, especially among public schools and male teachers.
- **At the subnational level**, local government authorities' (LGAs) regular monitoring of schools is a key motivation in teachers' presence at school and their punctuality. However, local education officials are sometimes not rigorous in their monitoring, especially concerning classroom attendance and time on task, and focus mainly on school absence and punctuality. Stakeholder interviews suggest that lack of resources limits how frequently LGAs can visit schools, thus affecting their ability to engage with teachers and lowering teacher motivation and subsequently, their attendance.
- **At the community level**, adverse climatic conditions (heavy rains in particular) hinder teachers' presence in the school and their punctuality, especially for those who live further away from school and rely on private or public transportation. Low parental engagement and lack of support for learners also affects teachers time on task and presence in the classroom, especially among male and public-school teachers.

5 Teachers with high pupil-teacher ratios are defined as those whose classes are above the median in the sample, which corresponds to 40 pupils per teacher. These teachers will be referred as those with "larger classes" throughout the report.

- **School level factors** affecting teacher attendance include a lack of focus among head teachers on monitoring more subtle forms of absence such as classroom absence and the reduction of time on task, and instead primarily monitoring school absence and punctuality. Teachers are also engaged in non-teaching activities during scheduled lessons causing them to regularly be outside the classroom and school, and not on task throughout the school year. Finally, teachers' lack of access to essential resources, including teaching and learning materials (TLMs), and a classroom environment conducive to teaching or learning lowers their use of instructional time and presence in the classroom, especially among public school teachers.
- At the **teacher level**, health, and personal responsibilities (looking after family and social engagements) are common reasons why teachers may be absent from the school and the classroom. It may also explain why they may not be punctual or reduce their time on task, particularly in rural areas where access to social services like healthcare or transportation might be limited. Moreover, teachers' lack of motivation and commitment to their work may cause them to seek additional income-generating activities, thus lowering their overall attendance.

What are the potential recommendations for policymaking?

Findings from this study highlight several individual and system-level factors contributing to teacher absenteeism in primary schools in Nigeria. While the government has carried out important developments to improve teachers' working conditions and the overall achievement of learning outcomes, findings from this study reveal that there are still pervasive challenges across the education system that limit teacher's time on task and attendance. This section builds on the study findings and identifies five key areas of action to further reduce teacher absenteeism:

1. Ensure that in-service training programmes do not conflict with teachers' time on task and that these initiatives address school-level needs of teachers.

As part of the Federal Government's plan to strengthen the capacity of school inspectors and supervisors, training should include measures that LGAs can use to limit teachers' engagement in non-teaching tasks (planned and unplanned meetings with parents, community members, and education officials; school maintenance; managing pupil administration; and sport activities, among others) and expand monitoring efforts so that time on task and classroom presence are included. The Ministry of Education (MoE) and State Universal Basic Education Boards (SUBEBs) should also include attendance monitoring in their training for School Based Management Committees (SBMCs), especially classroom presence and time on task. Finally, PTAs and SBMCs should consider increasing their support to schools, especially by helping with non-teaching activities so that teachers can focus primarily on their teaching responsibilities.

2. Ensure that teachers are in the classroom and on task while at school by minimizing their engagement in non-teaching activities.

The Federal Government should work closely with LGAs to expand their focus on attendance monitoring so that classroom presence and time on task are given similar attention by education officials at all levels of government as school absence or punctuality are. Additionally, as part of its goal to increase community involvement, the Ministry should ensure that SBMC committees are trained and operating at schools as this will help school managers enforce attendance rules. Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) and SBMCs should consider increasing their support to schools, especially for extra-curricular activities, in order to reduce teachers' engagement in non-teaching tasks. Previous evidence shows that parental engagement can help to improve pupil behaviour (Avvisati et al., 2014; Rogers and Feller, 2018) and academic performance (Barrera-Osorio et al., 2020a; Bergman, 2021; Dizon-Ross, 2019), both of which are known challenges in the Nigerian education system.

3. Provide teachers timely provision of salary, especially in rural and public schools, and consider providing incentive packages that help teachers facing hardship.

The Federal Government should work closely with states and the teachers' union to ensure that salary delays are avoided, especially in areas where resources might be constrained and the cost of living is high. The NTEP should include funds for transport as part of its incentive package and allowance for teachers in rural and disadvantaged areas. In the long-term, the Federal Government and SUBEBs should consider increasing pay to reflect local costs of living as this can improve retention by reducing teachers' need for second jobs, while also improving teacher's time on task by reducing their income-related worries. Finally, the government should improve access to the COVID-19 Intervention Fund for private school teachers and consider upscaling it in the long-term as COVID-19 will continue to hinder their pay.

4. Ensure the teaching environment is conducive to learning by providing necessary TLMs and a classroom environment meeting both learning and teaching needs.

It is imperative that in the Ministry's plans to rehabilitate schools, priority is given to classrooms in areas where adverse weather conditions are a common occurrence so that learning or teaching are not interrupted. This might require collaboration with local authorities and school leaders in identifying schools in immediate need of such support. Moreover, the state Ministries of Education and the SUBEBs should consider upscaling their initiative to provide TLMs that focus on the promotion of active learning and which include other subjects that teachers may need resources for. The Nigerian home-grown school meal programme (NHSMP) should also be upscaled by the Ministry and if possible, extended to teachers who may not have enough to eat, especially those who experience salary delays or work in remote areas. Finally, the Federal Government should work closely with Nigerian Union of Teachers (NUT) in the implementation of the COVID-19 Education Response Plan and ensure teachers are included in its psychosocial well-being efforts.

5. The Ministry should ensure that it continues to strengthen its inter- and intra- sector collaboration so that teacher attendance is prioritized across the different system levels.

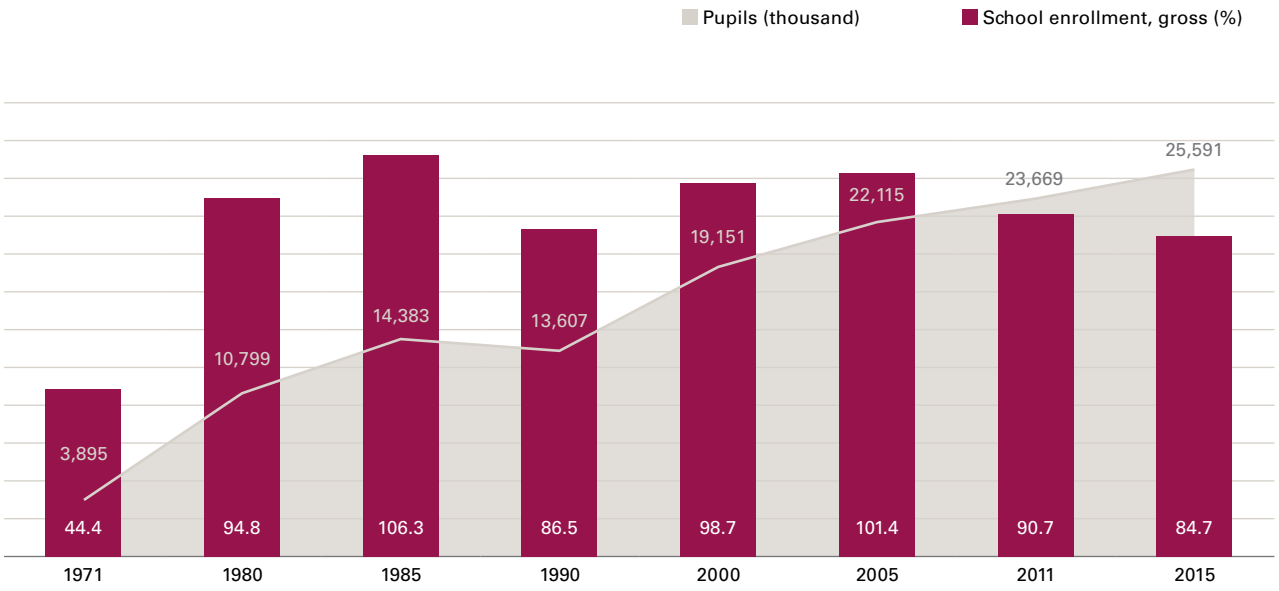
The Federal Government should consider establishing clearer guidelines on attendance in its official education policy documents. Specifically, the Teachers Code of Conduct and the Professional Standards for Nigerian Teachers as these are the official documents guiding teachers' professional work. These rules should build on Ekiti state's Teacher Service Manual (2011) which outlines a minimum teaching load; acceptable forms of absenteeism; mechanisms for recording and disciplining absences; and also includes monitoring of classroom presence and time on task. The community in which teachers work should be rehabilitated in the long-term through close collaboration between FMoE and other government entities, to ensure they provide essential services to teachers. Finally, there might be a need for the state Ministries of Education and the SUBEBs to consider providing head teachers with leadership training and management skills, similar to that planned for LGAs and the community. Strong leadership at the school level will be especially important in building head teachers' confidence in enforcing attendance measures, as well, the implementing COVID-19 school safety measures.

Section 1: Introduction

1.1 Research background and rationale

Since the introduction of the Universal Basic Education (UBE) Programme in 1999,[6] the Federal Government of Nigeria (hereafter Nigeria) has made significant progress in education access (*see Figure 1*). Over the last decade, the number of pupils enrolled in primary schools has increased by 27 per cent (*see Table 2 in Annex 1*). Yet, although basic education is free and compulsory, more than 10 million children of primary school age are still out of the school system (UBEC, 2018; UNICEF n.d.). It is estimated that the COVID-19 pandemic will further increase these numbers (GPE, 2020) and push even more children out of the school system.

Figure 1. School enrollment in primary schools in Nigeria, 1971-2015



Source: UNESCO Institute of Statistics

Between 2009 and 2018, only 7 per cent of the government's budget was allocated to the education sector (Odigwe and Owan, 2019); half the average in the region (16 per cent) and less than UNESCO's minimum education budget allocation recommendations (15-20 per cent) (ADBG, 2020). Limited government spending, combined with the need for better coordination between different tiers of government (i.e., federal, state and local)[7] to effectively implement UBE, could explain current challenges in the education system, both in terms of quantity and quality (UBEC, 2018; FMoE, 2018; ADBG, 2020). A national deficit of classrooms and instructional materials, inadequate school infrastructure, overcrowded classrooms *(see Table 3 in Annex 1)* – especially in public schools and in the North-West and North-East geopolitical zones – and incessant teacher strikes protesting low salaries and overdue payments are identified as common challenges (UBEC, 2018; FMoE, 2018).

6 The UBE programme ensures that all children have access to free, universal, and compulsory basic education. Basic education includes six years of primary and three years of junior high school (UBE Act, 2004). In 2014, one year of pre-primary school was included in the UBE programme (UBEC, 2018).

7 Nigeria has a decentralized education system due to its three-tier federal system of governance that includes (1) the Federal Ministry of Education and the Universal Basic Education Commission, (2) State Ministries of Education and Universal Basic Education Boards, and (3) Local government education authorities. Although primary education is managed by the Universal Basic Education Commission, most of the responsibility for primary schools is left to state and local governments (Adelabu, 2005).

Quality of education is also a concern. Despite improvements in the national curriculum, the existing shortage of teachers is compounded by their lack of qualifications,[8] low pedagogical competence, and insufficient access to training opportunities (Adekola, 2007; UBEC, 2018). The sharp increase in the number of teachers in the country between 2010 and 2018 has been primarily driven by the expansion of private education which has not been able to supply a sufficient number of qualified teachers to cope with the increasing demand *(see Table 2 in Annex 1)*. In fact, during the same time period, the share of qualified teachers in private primary schools decreased by 39 per cent, while increasing by 15 per cent in the public sector *(see Table 2 in Annex 1),* suggesting that recent national training policies for the public sector are yielding the desired results.

Teacher absenteeism and poor use of instructional time are also serious problems for the Nigerian educational system (Adeyemi and Akpotu, 2001; Adekola, 2007; Adeyemi and Akpotu, 2009; FMoE, 2015; Ugoani, 2016). They negatively affect both pupils' academic performance and learning (Banerjee and Duflo, 2006; Clotfelter et al., 2009 and the optimal utilization of school resources (Lee et al., 2015). With teachers' salaries and allowances representing 75 per cent of the government's expenditure in education, teacher absenteeism represents a waste of the already limited resources available to the education sector (Adeyemi and Akpotu, 2009; BudgIT, 2018). There is little evidence on the extent of teacher attendance and time on task in primary schools in Nigeria, principally due to the lack of reliable statistics hindering the government's ability to have accurate estimates and address other challenges of the education sector, including teachers' recruitment, deployment, and training (FMoE, 2015; UBEC, 2018). Estimates indicate that in a given workday, 20 per cent of the teaching workforce in government primary schools is absent (Ejere, 2010), with significant regional and locality (urban/rural) variation. In addition, estimates from classroom observations reveal that in a 30-minute lesson, children would be actively involved in learning tasks for only eight minutes and the remaining time would be spent in unproductive activities (i.e., non-learning activities) (Adekola, 2007).

Existing evidence suggests the common reasons for teacher absence in primary schools in Nigeria are a combination of individual and system level factors such as: ill-health; poor conditions of service; job dissatisfaction; perceived neglect; low career prospects; irregular pay of salary and benefits; and the misuse of teaching time for training activities (FMoE, 2005; Adeyemi and Akpotu, 2009; Ejere, 2010; Ugoani, 2016). While in the classroom, teachers are not able to use instructional time effectively due to the lack of teaching materials, poor lesson planning and communication skills, and pupil misbehaviour (Adekola, 2007). Lack of adequate monitoring and reporting of absences has been cited as a serious problem in the Nigerian education system (FMoE, 2005; Adeyemi and Akpotu, 2009). Only one in two schools were estimated to receive either monthly or weekly visits from school inspectors (FMoE, 2005). Despite recent measures the government has implemented to improve the frequency and regularity of education officials' visits[9] – such as the adoption of a school inspection schedules – previous evidence suggests the lack of social amenities and the poor condition of roads, especially in rural areas, hinders not only school inspectors' periodic visits but teacher and head teacher attendance (Adeyemi and Akpotu, 2001). However, previous studies on teacher absenteeism in Nigeria focused mainly on school absence and there is little or no knowledge on the incidence of and motivations behind other forms of absenteeism, such as the lack of punctuality, classroom absence, and reduction of instruction time (while in the classroom). As the use of instruction time is a key factor related to pupils' ability to learn and remain at school, issues of recurrent teacher school absence are compounded by the loss of instructional time and help to explain low levels of learning achievement in Nigerian primary schools.[10]

Prior to COVID-19 lockdowns, the Federal Government of Nigeria (FGoN) had taken measures to improve the quality of education and teachers' working conditions, including school infrastructure improvements, accelerated teacher training programmes, and incentive schemes for teachers *(See Box 1 and Annex 2)*. The Federal Government also committed to formally launching the National Teacher Education Policy (2014)[11] in order to enhance the status of the teaching profession (FMoE, 2018). Following COVID-19 school closures in mid-March 2020, the Federal Ministry of Education of Nigeria quickly developed a COVID-19 Education

8 The current national standard for teacher certification if the National Certificate of Education (NCE), the lowest qualification required to teach at the basic level. It should be noted that only teachers with the required qualification are eligible for in-service training and professional development (UBEC, 2018).

9 Based on structured school observations done during data collection in the TTT study, later confirmed during in-depth interviews with head teachers.

10 Estimates from the National Education Data Survey (NEDS) suggest that only 17 and 31 per cent of pupils in primary 1 and 2 levels respectively could pass literacy and numeracy competence tests appropriate to their age (Adeniran, Ishaku and Akanni, 2020).

11 The FGoN has acknowledged that the non-implementation of the National Teacher Education Policy of 2014 is a key issue hindering teacher education, capacity building and professional development (FMoE 2018).

Sector Strategy to mitigate the pandemic's impact on the education system, guide the provision of remote learning, and prepare schools for a safe reopening *(see Annex 2)*. Despite these measures, there is concern that both school closures and the economic impact of COVID-19 will have a significant impact on an already weakened education system and affect teaching and learning, particularly for vulnerable and disadvantaged children (e.g., those from poor socio-economic backgrounds, children with disabilities, and migrant, refugee, and displaced communities), and widen existing inequalities (GPE, 2020). The shift to remote learning also raises concerns about in-service teachers' preparedness to support remote learning and the inexperience of parents or guardians to assist pupils' learning needs, especially in rural settings (GPE, 2020; TEP and NESG, 2020).

The TTT report seeks to provide a comprehensive understanding of teacher attendance in primary schools in Nigeria. While the report does not specifically address the impact of COVID-19 on teacher attendance (as data collection was completed before the pandemic), its aim is to provide valuable insights on how the pandemic may exacerbate existing challenges of the education system that may affect teacher attendance, motivation, and time on task. This study is therefore informative for policy making, both in the current COVID-19 time and beyond.

Box 2. A snapshot of teacher policies in Nigeria

The introduction of the universal basic education program (1999) raised awareness of existing challenges in the education system that resulted in pupils' low learning outcomes (Adekola, 2007). Consequently, various major reforms have been implemented to modernize the education system and improve the working conditions of teachers. The most recent and relevant plans and programmes are summarized below:

National Teacher Education Policy (2014):

- Outlines the minimal requirements required to access the teaching profession, including supervised exposure to teaching practice and a structured process of deployment;
- Teachers are required, as a prerequisite to keep their license, to participate in at least one continuing professional development programme of at least four days' duration once every two years.;
- Encourages in-service training to be closer to the school, through school-based and cluster-based formats;
- Recommends the establishment of School-Based Management Committees (SBMCs);
- Promotes the delivery of incentives to attract competent teachers to schools in rural/ disadvantaged areas.

Teacher service manuals (Ekiti State) (2011):

- Outlines provisions regarding minimum teaching load and acceptable motivations for absence;
- Determines mechanisms of monitoring and recording teacher absences and defines disciplinary rules in case of violations.

Professional Standards for Nigerian Teachers (2010):

- Outlines the professional standards for Nigerian teachers that include teachers' professional knowledge, skills, values, attitudes, and conduct;
- It recommends an annual evaluation of teachers' professional standing as part of promotion and other reward schemes;
- Teachers should be re-certified every five years based on the fulfillment of in-service training requirements and their licenses should be renewed every three years.

National Policy on Education (2004):

- Makes the Nigeria Certificate of Education (NCE) the minimum qualification required to access the teaching profession. Moreover, non-professional teachers are required to obtain the required qualification for licensing in a period of time determined by the FmoE;
- It established mandatory in-service training for teachers as an integral part of continuing teacher education;
- Teachers should be able to transfer from state to state without loss of status;
- Outlines the provisions regarding planning, administration, and supervision of education and sets out the responsibilities of all relevant actors at the national, state, district, and local levels.

1.2 Research objectives

The principal objective of the TTT study in Nigeria is to generate evidence on the determinants of teacher absenteeism in primary schools, and to provide potential recommendations for improving teacher attendance and time on task.

The specific objectives of the study are to:

- Understand the various forms of primary school teacher absenteeism (e.g., absence from school, classroom, teaching, etc.) and assess their prevalence in different states, types of schools (e.g., public/private) and settings (e.g., rural/urban);
- Identify the motivations and key factors at different levels of the education system (national, subnational, community, school, and teacher) that affect teacher attendance and time on task;
- Identify pathways for policy makers and policy recommendations to strengthen teacher attendance rates and time on task as a means of improving learners' academic performance.

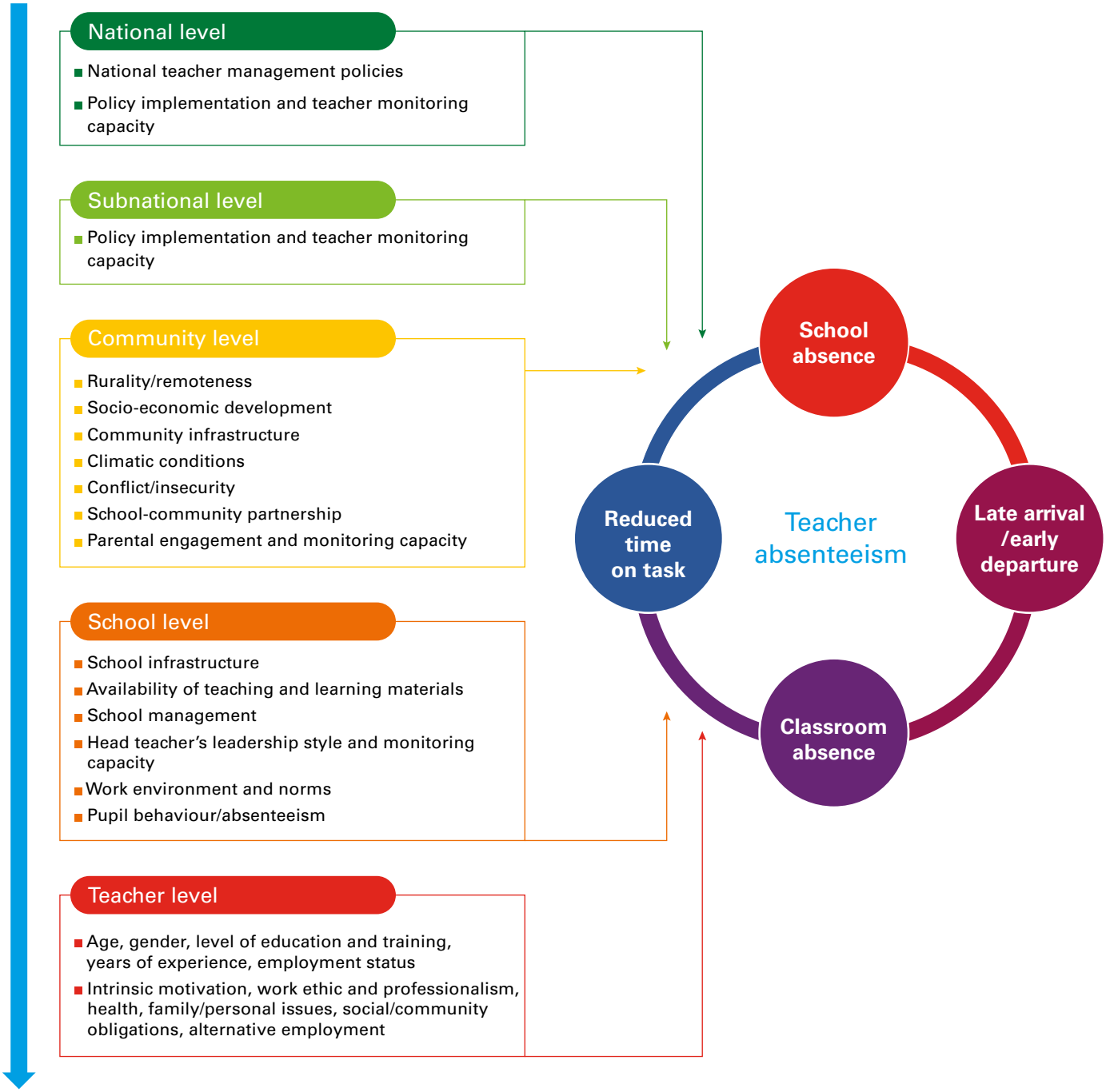
1.3 Definition, data and methods

The Time to Teach study is built on the foundation that both school progress and learning depend on the fulfilment of a number of minimum conditions related to the role of teachers in the learning process. Specifically, teachers need not only to: (1) be present at school; but also (2) be punctual; (3) be in the classroom (while at school); and (4) spend sufficient time on task (while in the classroom).

Based on this assumption, the Time to Teach study moves beyond the conventional definition of teacher attendance – which has focused mainly on being present at the school – and introduces the concept of multidimensional teacher absenteeism that recognizes four forms of teacher absence: (1) absence from school; but also (2) absence of punctuality (late arrival and/or early departure from school); (3) absence from the classroom (while in school); (4) absence from teaching (i.e., reduced time on task while in the classroom).

As the determinants of teacher absenteeism are likely to be located at various levels of the education system, the Time to Teach study adopts a systemic analytical framework. In particular, the study follows the work of Guerrero et al. (2012), who suggest three sets of factors affect teacher attendance: (i) teacher-level variables; (ii) school-level variables; and (iii) community-level variables. Expanding this framework, the TTT study also looks at (iv) national; and (v) subnational level factors affecting different types of teacher absenteeism, as illustrated in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Time to Teach explanatory framework



Source: Adaptation of the work of Guerrero et al. (2012).

The study is a mixed methods project employing both qualitative and quantitative research tools to collect a unique set of primary data and detailed information from teachers and other relevant stakeholders within the education system. A total of 36 schools were visited across six states: Bauchi, Bayelsa, Benue, Enugu, Kano, and Oyo. These states were selected to ensure the representation of each of the six geopolitical zones of the

country.[12] The schools were purposively selected based on the following criteria: location (geopolitical zone/state); community setting (urban and rural); and type of school (public and private).

The study employed three types of collection tools: (i) in-depth interviews (IDI) and focus group discussions (FGD) with head teachers, teachers, pupils, community representatives, national, state, and local level officials (reaching 235 individuals in total); (ii) a pen-and-paper survey administered to all teachers present in the selected schools on the date of the visit (525 teachers);[13] and (iii) an observation tool to record enumerators' observations during the visits.[14] Overall, 653 individuals participated in the study *(see Table 1)*.[15] More details on the research design, data collection, and analysis methods of the TTT study in Nigeria are presented in Annex 3.

Data collection, storage, and management were in line with international best practice and the UNICEF Procedure on Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation and Data Collection, and Analysis *(see Annex 6)*.

Table 1. Number of study participants, by level of analysis and data collection method

Respondent type	Data collection method	Number of respondents
National level		
National education officials, national teacher union representative	IDI	3
Subnational level		
State level education officers	IDI	6
Local level education officers	IDI	12
Community level		
Community leaders (PTA/SBMC)	IDI	36
School level		
Head teachers	IDI	35
Teachers	Survey/IDI	525
Pupils	FGD	36
Total number of respondents		**653**

Note: At the school level, a total of 107 teachers (18 per state, except for Kano state where 17 interviews were conducted) were selected for IDI – in-depth interview; FGD – focus group discussion.

1.4 Report organization

This report is structured as follows: Section 2 presents key findings on the incidence, motivation, and factors associated with teacher absenteeism in selected schools in Nigeria. Section 3 discusses policy implications and provides potential recommendations that contribute to the design of promising practices aimed at improving teacher attendance and time on task in the country.

12 The six geopolitical zones and corresponding states are: North-East (Bauchi), North-West (Kano), North-Central (Benue), South-East (Enugu), South-West (Oyo), South-South (Bayelsa).

13 The survey started on 9 June 2019 for a duration of three weeks. The 2018/2019 academic year began in September 2018 and ended in July 2019.

14 A structured observational tool was used to record enumerators' observations on teacher absences, teacher pupil interactions, and teacher working relations during visits to selected schools. These were used to understand school context and are not included as part of total number of interviewees.

15 Like all studies relying on self-reported data, TTT is not free of methodological limitations. See Annex 5 for a detail explanation of this study's methodological limitations.

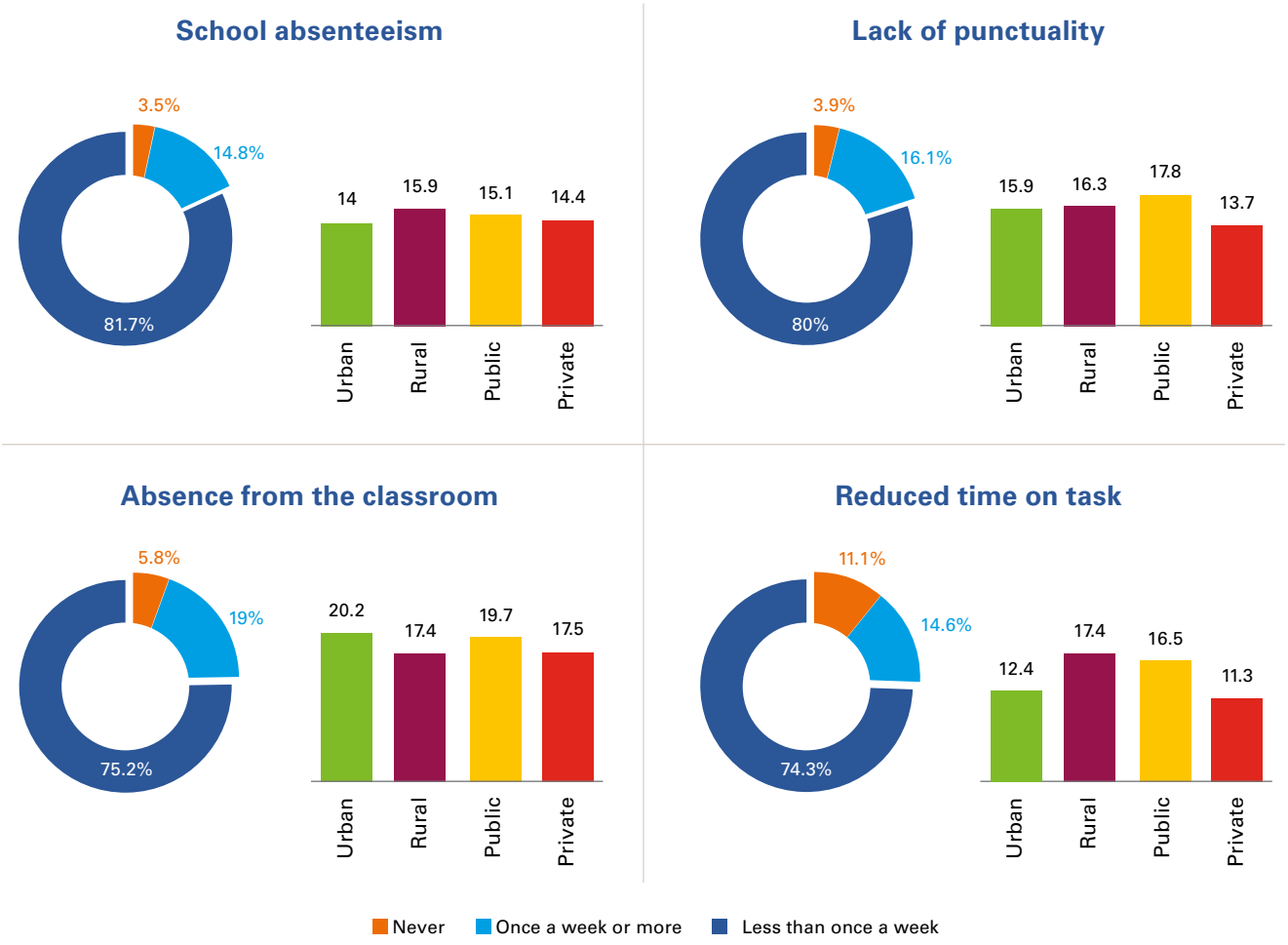
Section 2: Key findings

This section presents the findings of the TTT study in Nigeria, beginning with an overview of the reported frequency of teacher absenteeism disaggregated by type of absence (i.e., school absenteeism, lack of punctuality, classroom absenteeism, and reduced time on task), school level and by key differences between location, type of school and gender. It is followed by a more in-depth discussion of the factors associated with these different forms of absence, combining survey information and qualitative data collected from in-depth interviews and focus group discussions.

How frequently are teachers absent?

According to survey findings, 29 per cent of primary school teachers have been absent on a recurring basis (i.e., at least once a week) in any of the four dimensions of teacher attendance. The most common form of absenteeism is absence from the classroom followed by lack of punctuality, and the least common being school absenteeism and reduced time on task.

Figure 3. Self-reported frequency of teacher absenteeism in primary schools



Note: Percentages indicate the proportion of teachers who report never being absent, being absent less than once a week, and at least once a week or more since the beginning of the school year. The pie charts represent the responses of all surveyed teachers. On the right, the bar graphs represent the percentage of teachers who claim to be absent at least once a week or more by sub-groups: rural-urban and public-private.

Results by type of absenteeism and subgroup show that:

- **Absence from school** is reported by 14.8 per cent of teachers in surveyed primary schools. It is more frequently reported by less qualified teachers (i.e., those who do not hold a university degree) (29 per cent) and those with high pupil-teacher ratios (17 per cent)[16] compared with more qualified teachers (13 per cent) and to those teaching in classes with lower pupil-teacher ratios (11 per cent) respectively *(see Table 7)*.
- **Late arrival/early departure** is the second most frequent form of absence and 16.1 per cent of teachers affirm to have arrived late or left early on a recurring basis (i.e., at least once a week) since the start of the school year. Less experienced teachers (19 per cent) and those teaching in larger classes (20 per cent) are also significantly more likely to report issues of punctuality compared with more experienced educators (12 per cent) and those in smaller classes (11 per cent) respectively *(see Table 7)*.
- **Classroom absence** is the most frequent form of absence and is reported by 19 per cent of teachers. This form of absence is more frequently reported by less experienced teachers (24 per cent) and those with lower salaries (i.e., salaries below the median in the sample) (24 per cent) compared with more experienced educators (14 per cent) and those with higher salaries (11 per cent) respectively *(see Table 7)*.
- **Limited time on task** is the least frequent form of absenteeism, reported by 14.6 per cent of teachers. It should be noted that the proportion of teachers who report never reducing instruction time is non negligible, more than double compared with other forms of absenteeism *(see Figure 3)*. As with other forms of absence, teachers who teach in larger classes (20 per cent) are more likely to reduce instruction time compared with those with lower pupil-teacher ratios (8 per cent). This form of absence is also more prevalent among men (20 per cent) compared with women (12 per cent) and among primary income earners (18 per cent) more than those who are not (10 per cent).

Surveyed teachers were also queried on the main reasons behind each form of absenteeism. Primary reasons reported by teachers for each type of absenteeism are very similar to each other *(see Figures 2–5)*. Ill health is the most frequent answer given for absence from school, late arrival/early departure, and reduced time on task and the second most frequent answer given for absence from the classroom. Administrative reasons (e.g., office work, teacher meetings) is the most often cited motivation for classroom absence. Weather, family reasons, and transport are also mentioned frequently, as highlighted further below:[17]

- **Health, strikes, and family reasons** are the most common motives for **absence from school**, reported by 68, 31, and 29 per cent of surveyed teachers respectively *(see Figure 4)*. Ill health is more likely to be mentioned by teachers in rural settings (75 per cent in rural; 62 per cent in urban), in private schools (75 per cent in private; 63 per cent in public), and by women (74 per cent among women; 55 per cent among men). Family reasons are more common in rural settings (37 per cent in rural; 24 per cent in urban), and rather more common among men (39 per cent among men; 25 per cent among women).
- The main reasons for **lack of punctuality** according to teachers are **health, weather, and family reasons**, mentioned by 47, 45, and 38 per cent of teachers respectively *(see Figure 5)*. Health reasons are more common among teachers in rural areas (53 per cent in rural; 43 per cent in urban).
- Once at school, the most common reasons for **classroom absence** are **administrative reasons** (e.g., office work, teacher meetings) (60 per cent), **health** (52 per cent), and **official school business** (37 per cent) *(see Figure 6)*. While administrative reasons and health (66 per cent in rural; 56 per cent in urban in both cases) are more common among rural school teachers, official school business is more likely raised by those working in urban settings (40 per cent in urban; 32 per cent in rural). Ill health was also more commonly cited by women (56 per cent) compared with men (45 per cent).
- In the classroom, surveyed teachers reported **reducing time on task** mainly due to **health** (56 per cent), **lack of teaching materials** (38 per cent), and **weather** (30 per cent) *(see Figure 7)*. Health (65 per cent in rural; 48 per cent in urban) and weather (37 per cent in rural; 24 per cent in urban) problems are more common in rural areas, while the lack of teaching materials is more likely to be mentioned by urban school teachers (43 per cent) and in public schools (44 per cent) compared with those in rural settings (33 per cent) and in private schools (28 per cent).

16 Teachers with high pupil-teacher ratios are defined as those whose classes are above the median in the sample, which corresponds to 40 pupils per teacher. These teachers will be referred as those with 'larger classes' throughout the report.

17 The findings presented are those for which the differences are statistically significant.

Figure 4. Top five factors affecting absence from school – by location, gender, and school type

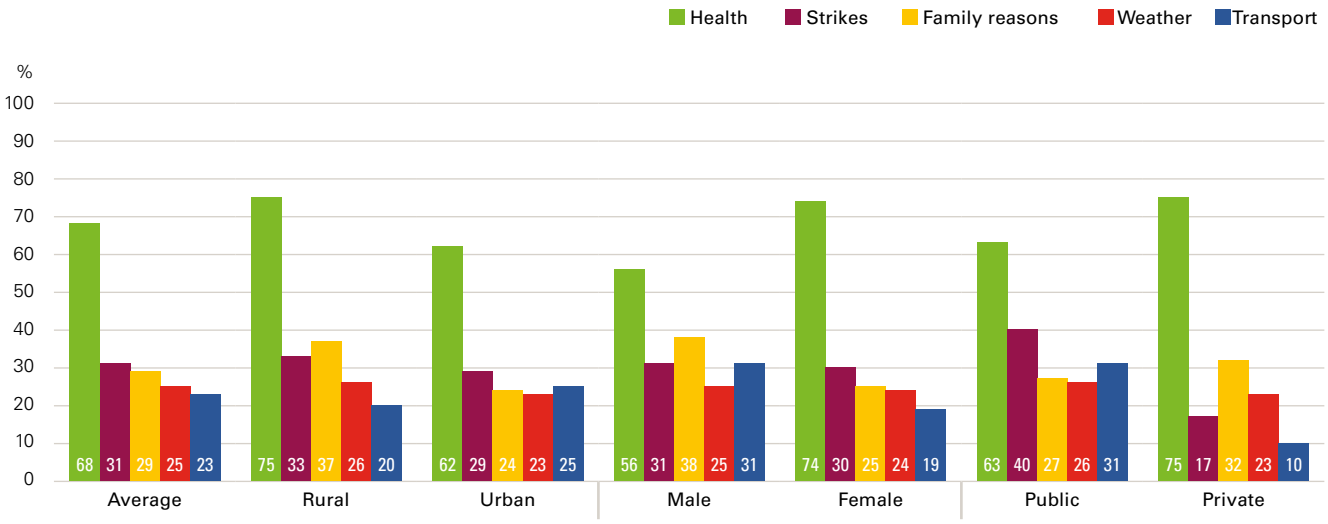


Figure 5. Top five factors affecting teacher's punctuality – by location, gender, and school type

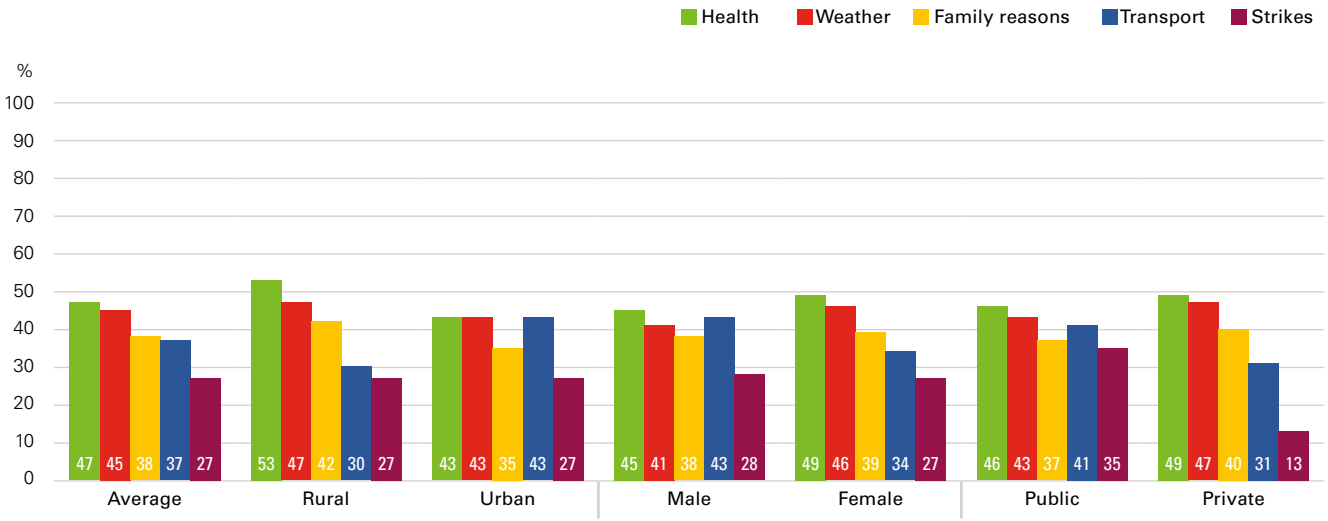


Figure 6. Top five factors causing classroom absenteeism – by location, gender, and school type

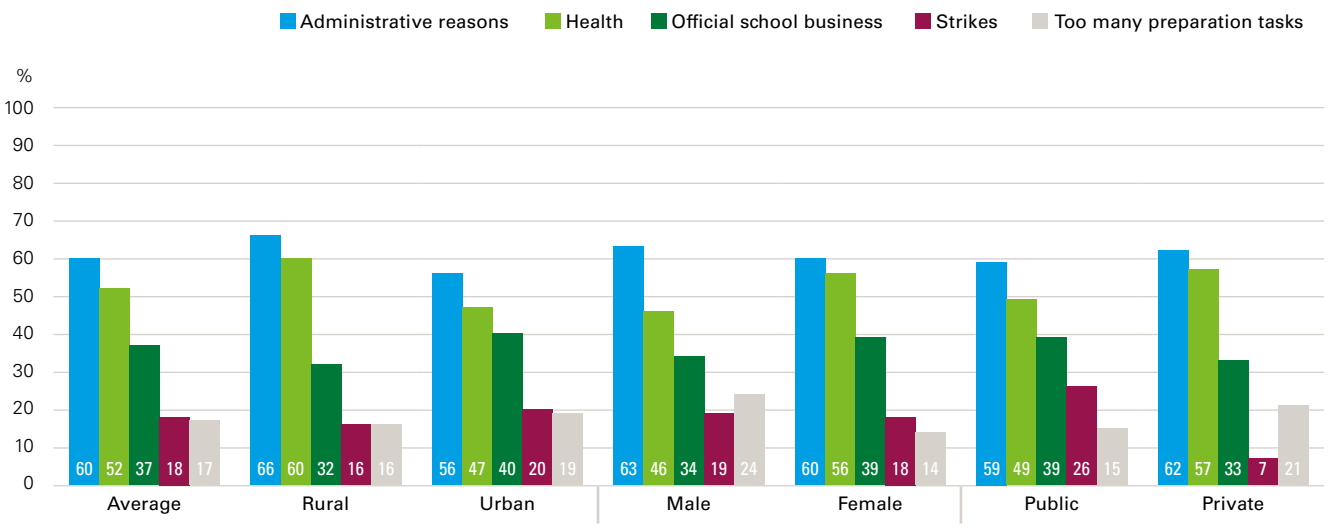
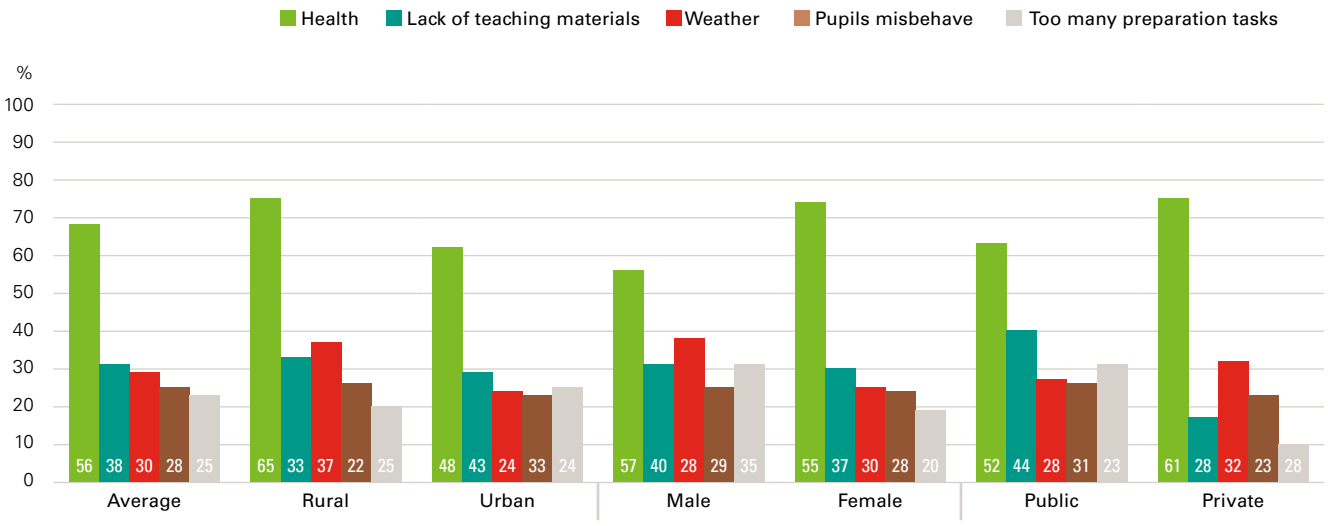


Figure 7. Top five factors limiting teacher's time on task – by location, gender, and type of school



Figures 4 to 7 provide a useful snapshot of the most frequently reported reasons for absenteeism. However, survey data only captured part of the details. Interviews with head teachers, teachers, pupils, and government officials complement these data with a contextual understanding of the determinants of teacher absenteeism in primary schools in Nigeria and are discussed in detail in the next section.

Why are primary school teachers absent?

2.1 National level factors

2.1.1 Remuneration

Teachers and head teachers point to low salary as a common reason why teachers may not be coming to school regularly or why they are not punctual. Respondents explain that the amount of **pay teachers receive is not sufficient to look after their household needs.** In survey responses, only 8 per cent of teachers affirm that their earnings as a teacher are enough to cover their monthly expenditures. Interviews suggest that the challenge is especially obvious at the middle and end of the month, forcing some teachers to look for additional sources of income (*see Section 2.5.3)* and loans to meet their daily needs. Moreover, in the survey responses, **only 30 per cent of teachers across the different schools agree that they are satisfied with their salary.** Across the states, salary satisfaction is higher in Kano (50 per cent), Bauchi (48 per cent), and Benue (27 per cent), and much lower in Enugu (5 per cent), followed by Bayelsa (14 per cent), and Oyo (16 per cent). The FMoE acknowledges challenges with the current salary structure and plans to work closely with the states to improve the problem (FMoE, 2018). It is not clear what the timeline for this might be, or whether there will be greater collaboration between the federal and state governments to solve existing disparities at the state level.

> "The pay that teachers take home is not sufficient, and at the end of the month they run out of funds. Sometimes the teacher will call and inform me that they cannot come to school because they do not have travel funds, but I encourage them to come and promise that I will return the cost of their fare."
>
> – Head teacher, urban public school, Bauchi state

Moreover, findings show that urban (25 per cent) and private (26 per cent) school teachers in particular seem less satisfied than their counterparts in rural (37 per cent) and public schools (33 per cent). This may be because urban teachers often rely on public transportation *(see Section 2.3.2)* and other vehicles to get to school *(see Figure 13)*, both of which are described as requiring additional funds, which a majority of the surveyed teachers do not seem to have *(see Table 6)*. Additionally, **living expenses may also be higher in urban than rural areas,** thus increasing teachers' dissatisfaction with their salaries.

Survey results reveal that private school teachers' pay is below the average of public school teachers in the sample, confirming similar findings from other studies (Unterhalter, Robinson, and Ibrahim, 2018). The COVID-19 pandemic could further exacerbate salary related issues among private school teachers who, unlike their peers in public schools, did not receive their pay or have seen halved as a result of school closures and the non-payment of school fees by pupils' parents (The Guardian Nigeria, 2020; Odegbaroye, 2020). In response, the Federal Government announced that private schools and teachers were eligible to access the Federal Government COVID-19 Intervention Fund, a stimulus package in the form of loans, to help schools cover outstanding salary arrears and help teachers overcome financial hardships (Odegbaroye, 2020). However, in practice, schools and teachers have found it difficult to access those funds and have declared the existing funding not to be sufficient to reach all schools in need (Niazi and Doorly, 2020).

Teachers whose salary is below the survey median are more likely to be absent (31 per cent) compared with those with higher wages (24 per cent) *(see Table 7)*. The differences are especially obvious for classroom absence as 24 per cent of teachers with low salaries (i.e., those with a salary below the median in the sample) declare being absent from the classroom compared with 11 per cent of teachers with higher salaries. A key reason for this might be that, in addition to low salary **there are frequent delays in payment, which also hinders teachers' motivation to carry out their teaching responsibilities.** This hinders teachers' punctuality and classroom presence as teachers who are frequently unpunctual (57 per cent) and absent from the classroom (59 per cent) are also significantly less likely to affirm the ease of collecting their salaries than those who are often on time (72 per cent) and present in class (74 per cent) *(see Table 10)*.

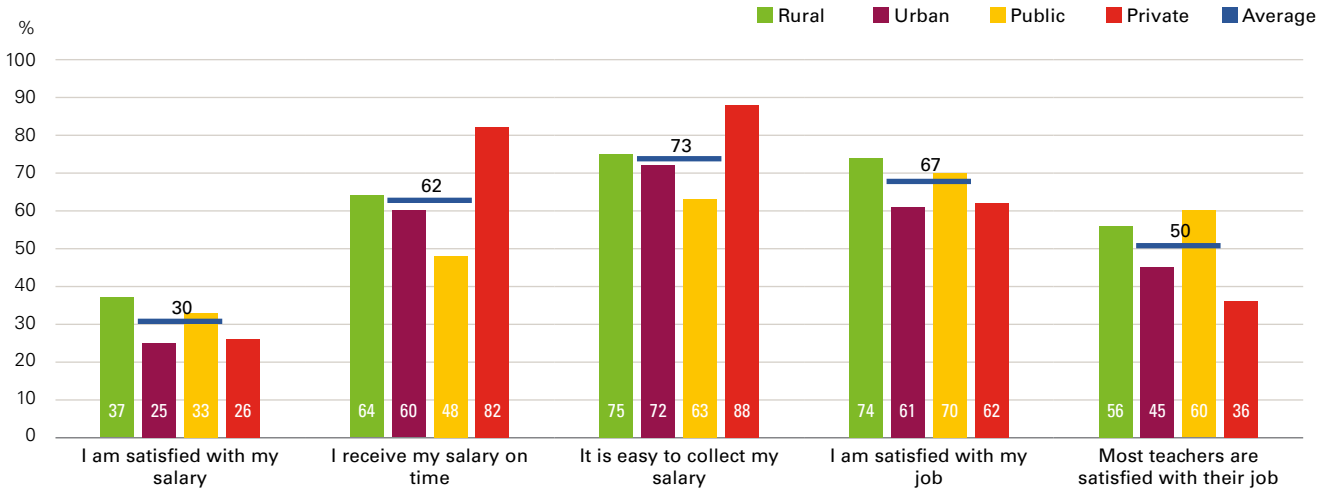
Respondents explain that **delayed payment affects teachers' access to essential resources like food** and consequently, many will arrive to school but stay outside the classroom in protest. Some teachers also describe **feeling distressed because of late payments and thus find it difficult to focus on teaching while in class.** Survey findings also confirm that teachers struggle to be on task or absent from school, when they are the 'only earners' in their household (18 per cent reduce time on task; 32 per cent are absent from school) compared with those who are not (10 per cent reduce time on task; 22 per cent are absent from school) *(see Table 7)*, and thus may have a higher need to have their pay disbursed on time.

> "While I was observing the classes, I noticed one of the teachers had put their head down on their desk and was not teaching. I asked them why they were not teaching, and they explained that they felt weak. This was the time when payment was delayed, and the teacher explained that they did not have enough food to eat."
>
> – Head teacher, rural public school, Benue state

Salary delays affect public school teachers more than private school educators, as only 48 per cent of teachers in public schools declare receiving their salary on time compared with 82 per cent of their peers in private schools *(see Table 9)*. Likewise, collecting salary also appears to be a challenge for public school teachers, 63 per cent of whom declare that it is easy to collect their salary compared with 88 per cent of those in private schools (*see Figure 8),* most likely because private school teachers receive their wages from school funds (Nwoko, 2015). However, despite having less difficulty collecting their salary, private school teachers (26 per cent) are less satisfied with their pay than their peers in private schools (33 per cent). This is also the case for their overall job satisfaction (62 per cent), which compared with public school teachers (70 per cent) is significantly lower. A key reason for this lower job satisfaction might be low pay, as the average self-reported salary among private school teachers is half the average among public school educators. Previous studies confirmed significant pay differences between private and public schools, which might have been further exacerbated by recent government initiatives to improve teachers' working conditions (Untehalter et al., 2018; Agboola and Offong, 2018; Amina, 2019). These have focused primarily on public schools, thus leaving private schools out. In qualitative responses, some teachers felt their delayed or insufficient salaries were also an indication that the government did not appreciate or recognize the efforts they put into their jobs, thus lowering their motivation.

Finally, head teachers point out that when salaries are delayed, it is difficult for them to motivate teachers or to enforce strict attendance adherance *(see Section 2.5.3).* A community representative at an urban public school in Benue state explains that school leaders feel helpless and do not think they are in a position to sanction teachers who are absent due to salary delays. Subnational representatives also affirm that **when salaries are delayed, head teachers struggle to enforce monitoring measures at their schools.** Additionally, some teachers note that salary delays affect head teachers' pay and thus they share similar experiences as teachers.

Figure 8. Opinions of teachers on selected statements related to absenteeism – remuneration and job satisfaction

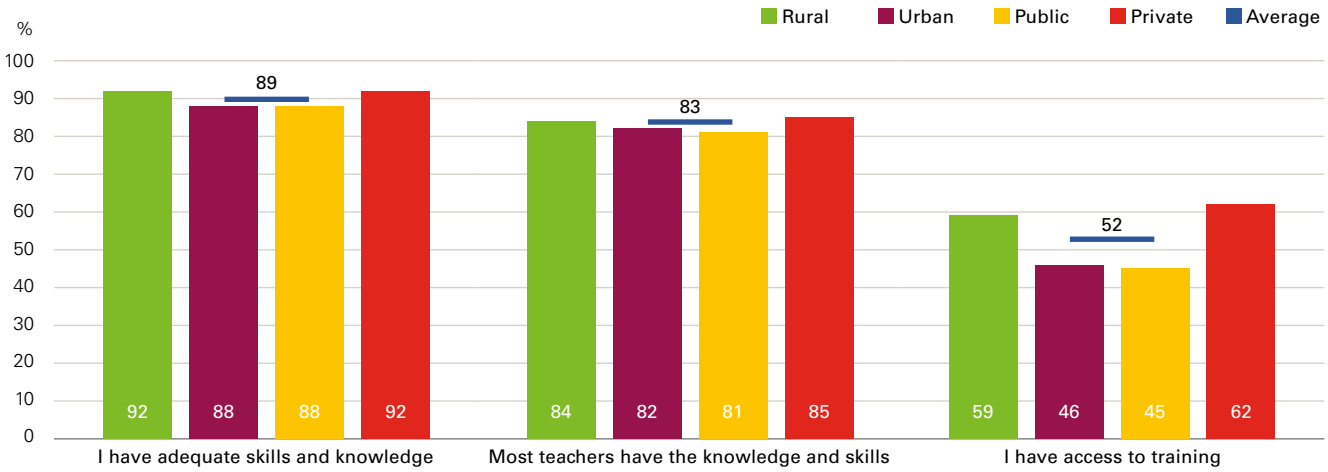


2.1.2 In-service training

Teachers point to **in-service training as an important factor limiting their presence in school and why they might not arrive at school** on time or leave school early. Often these trainings are organized away from the school and are held for an extended period of time, requiring teachers to travel and to be absent for more than one day. They also take place throughout the school year and sometimes require more than one teacher to attend. Survey responses reveal that private school teachers (65 per cent) are more likely to have access to training opportunities than their peers in public schools (45 per cent) *(see Figure 9)*. This could be a response to the sharp increase in the number of private school teachers over the last decade *(see Table 2 in Annex 1)*, which might have encouraged private schools to increase training opportunities for them.

> "Last week there was a conference in this state that started on a Wednesday, so some of the teachers from this school participated in it. Because of that, some of them did not come to school, or they left before the school closed."
>
> – Teacher, rural private school, Benue state

Figure 9. Opinions of teachers on selected statements related to absenteeism – knowledge and training



When teachers are away for training, their classes are sometimes combined with others, or supervised by head teachers so that pupils can attend. In most instances, however, especially because of a shortage of teachers, **pupils miss their scheduled lessons and when teachers return, they do not seem to have the time to make up for these** due to heavy workloads *(see Section 2.4.2)*.

> "The officials will tell the teachers to attend, and they select which teachers can attend. Right now, we have a workshop that takes place every Tuesday. It started last month and will finish at the end of July."
>
> – Head teacher, urban public school, Enugu state

On the other hand, **teachers and head teachers feel they have no choice but to attend training programmes as selection of participants is often done by the Ministry** and schools are simply asked to send the requested teacher(s). In survey responses, 'official school business', which includes training, is described as a leading cause of school absence (19 per cent), low punctuality (8 per cent), and a significant factor in classroom absence (37 per cent) *(see Figures 4 to 6)*. In some areas, the government has limited the timing of trainings to certain days, but this is not consistent across all schools, and more importantly, it still results in school absence as noted by a head teacher at a rural public school in Oyo state: "Trainings are currently offered only on Fridays. On that day, most of the teachers that are involved will be absent from school."

Even though trainings cause absenteeism and teachers may not have the time to make up for missed lessons due to heavy workload *(see Section 2.4.2)*, they are **seen as crucial to the teachers' professional growth,**

and also to the overall progress of pupils at their school. The government plans to increase in-service training to 100,000 teachers annually as part of its efforts to enhance quality through continuous professional development (FMoE, 2018). However, it is not clear if timing will be taken into consideration to avoid conflicts with scheduled classes. Additionally, the Ministry has stated that it will promote training closer to the school, including school-based and cluster-based formats (FMoE, 2018), though it is not clear if this will be mandated at the local level to ensure teachers do not miss scheduled classes.

Additionally, there is worry among some respondents that teachers might not have the skills or subject knowledge they need to meet their subject requirements. This may also explain the Ministry's concerns that teachers are sometimes **assigned subjects they do not feel confident in teaching**, and thus they may not feel confident in preparing lesson plans as required. A head teacher at a rural private school in Benue state explains: "Most of the time, I discover that the methodology the teacher uses does not work well in the classroom. I can tell that they are not prepared to teach and their lessons are short, meaning that they leave the class earlier than they should." Survey findings reveal that teachers who are frequently absent from the classroom are less likely to consider their skills and knowledge adequate (77 per cent) than those who do not (93 per cent) *(see Table 10)*. Likewise, teachers who rate their colleagues as not having sufficient skills or knowledge are much more likely to be absent both from the school and the classroom and to report arriving/leaving late from school *(see Table 10)*. [18]

These findings suggest that a **teacher's confidence with his/her subject knowledge might be a factor affecting their attendance** and supports the belief among some respondents, especially head teachers and local government authorities, that teachers need additional in-service training. In that regard, the Ministry plans to develop an assessment framework to determine teacher competency levels (FMoE, 2018), and to provide training based on school level needs (FMoE, 2018). However, it does not specify how these needs will be identified and whether marginalized communities will be given priority. Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic poses additional challenges to teachers' training since, regardless of the type of remote learning channel used, teachers will need to obtain new skills and adapt their practices in order to keep pupils engaged and reduce learning losses (Barron et al., 2021). These issues have been compounded by the lack of access to training opportunities, a lack of appropriate teaching materials, and limited infrastructure, as highlighted further in Section 2.3 (e.g., electricity, connectivity, devices) (eLearning Africa, 2020). Prior to the pandemic, some state initiatives had been launched to address this issue. The state of Edo, for instance, trained 11,000 primary school teachers in the effective use of digital technologies in the classroom and has transitioned this in-service teacher training programme by remote learning to address current challenges (eLearning Africa, 2020; World Bank, 2020a).

2.1.3 Role of teachers' unions

> "The union gives us their maximum cooperation, which is why, when we go out to schools for supervision, we call them and discuss with them before we take any action."
>
> – Local government authority, Kano state

Teachers' unions are described by educators and education officials as important stakeholders in the overall representation of teachers, and in supporting teachers' positive role in the school. Some subnational respondents explain that **working closely with the union improves their implementation efforts, especially when monitoring schools.** A Nigerian Union of Teachers (NUT) official explains that in recent years, they have worked closely with SUBEBs and the Ministry to ensure that teachers are maintaining good attendance.

Teacher strikes appear to be a common occurrence across surveyed schools affecting teachers' school presence throughout the school year. FMoE has expressed concern that the frequency of teacher strikes is a hindrance to quality of learning (FMoE, 2018). There also appears to be concern among parents as those who have the financial means have moved their children to private schools due to the regular occurrences of teacher strikes (Elaigwu, 2014).

In interviews, teachers point to strikes as the "main reason" why they are absent from school. They also explain that when the union calls for a strike, teachers have no choice but to oblige. A teacher at a rural public school in Oyo state explains: "When there are salary delays, we go on strike, and even though I want to come and teach,

18 Teachers who report being frequently absent from school (70 per cent) and the classroom (64 per cent), as well as to arriving/leaving early (70 per cent) on a regular basis are significantly less likely to rate their colleagues' skills and knowledge as sufficient compared with those who are regularly present in the school (85 per cent), classroom (84 per cent), and on time (85 per cent).

usually there are no learners so I cannot come." Teachers explain that they are usually not allowed to teach or in some cases, to enter the school during strikes. However, some teachers do go to school but stay outside the classroom in protest. A pupil at a rural private school in Enugu state explains: "My friends tell me that their teachers sometimes come to school, but they do not teach them because of the strike."

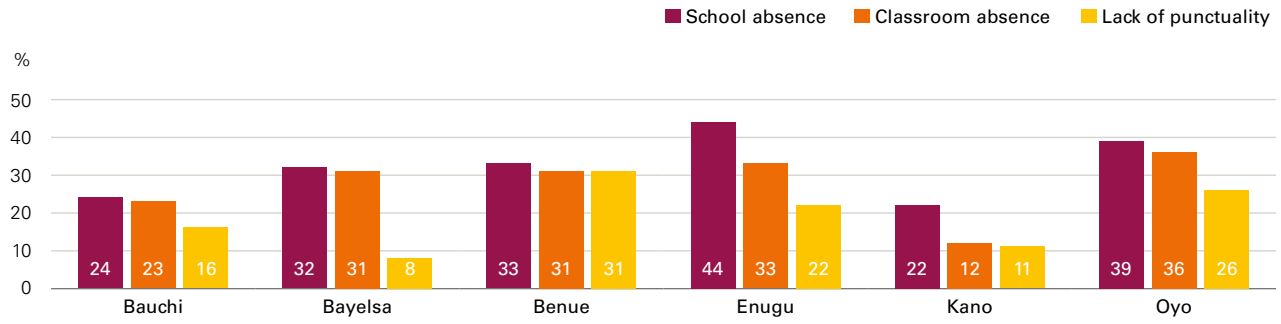
> "Some teachers use strikes as an excuse to stay away from school. After the strike is over, they still do not return to school, stating that they did not hear about the strike being over. Some even travel during this time, so they are not around when school resumes."
>
> – SUBEB official, Oyo state

In survey responses, **strikes are selected as the second most common factor causing school absenteeism** *(see Figure 4)*, and among the most common reasons for low punctuality and classroom absence *(see Figures 5 and 6)*. Public school teachers are more likely to affirm that strikes lead to school absence (40 per cent in public; 17 per cent in private), low punctuality (35 per cent in public; 13 per cent in private), and classroom absence (26 per cent in public; 7 per cent in private) than their peers in private settings *(see Figures 4 to 6)*. Some government officials, however, worry that teachers might be taking advantage of strikes to be absent from school for personal reasons. **This might explain why teachers in rural areas are absent from school slightly more during strikes**,[19] as sanctioning teacher absenteeism occurs less in these parts *(see Section 2.2.1)*.

Finally, strikes are described in survey responses as a more common occurrence in Enugu, Oyo, Benue, and Bayelsa states compared with Kano and Bauchi states *(see Figure 10)*. This might be explained by differences in terms of access to funding as it appears that states where strikes are less common are also those that received more UBEC funding in 2019, particularly in Kano (930 million Naira) and Bauchi (785 million Naira), with Bayelsa and Enugu not receiving any UBEC allocations in 2019 (Eduplana, 2020).[20]

A teacher in Bayelsa state explains that **delayed payments are a key reason strikes take place in their state, resulting in significant school absences.** Similarly, a teacher at a rural private school in Enugu state points out that teachers in their state went on strike due to lack of promotion. These affirm the view among union officials that the government needs to do more to ensure teachers' well-being is prioritized, through timely payment and recognition of work. Previous research also confirms findings from this study that lack of promotion is a factor in recurrent teachers' strikes, and that it lowers their motivation to be present in the classroom (Adelabu, 2005).

Figure 10. Share of teachers mentioning 'strikes' as a motivation for absenteeism – by state and type of absenteeism



19 On average, 33 per cent of teachers in rural areas mention strikes as a motivation for school absence compared with 29 per cent of teachers in urban settings. However, the difference between urban and rural areas is not statistically significant at the 10 per cent level.

20 In 2019, the Federal Government disbursed the following funds to state governments for the implementation of UBEC: Bauchi (785 million Naira), Benue (25 million Naira), Kano (930 million Naira), Oyo (240 million Naira). Three states did not receive the 2019 UBEC Allocation (Bayelsa, Enugu, and Yobe) (Eduplana, 2020).

2.2 Subnational level factors

2.2.1 Monitoring

The monitoring of schools by local government authorities is described by several respondents as a key reason why teachers are regularly present in school. Usually, when education officials visit schools, they follow up on attendance by checking in with head teachers or teachers and by observing attendance books. Some respondents pointed to their **unannounced visits as another significant reason teachers were not absent in their schools**. Across schools, it appears that local education officials visit regularly as most teachers (84 per cent) agreed that school inspectors came to their schools, especially public (88 per cent in public; 79 per cent in private) *(see Figure 11).*

Fear of sanctioning is another reason teachers are described as arriving to school on time and are punctual. **Education officials warn teachers who are regularly absent by giving them queries, and in some cases, deduct their pay**. This fear of losing pay is described by teachers as a key reason they try not to be absent from school or late in the morning. Teachers also point out that deductions are often made without warning to the teacher and they only find out it is attendance-related after they inquire about their missing pay.

> "When school supervisors come to our school, they check the children's books and the teaching dates. If they notice that there is a day where children have not completed any work, they immediately follow up with the teacher in charge of that subject. They do not accept any excuses."
>
> –Teacher, urban public school, Benue state

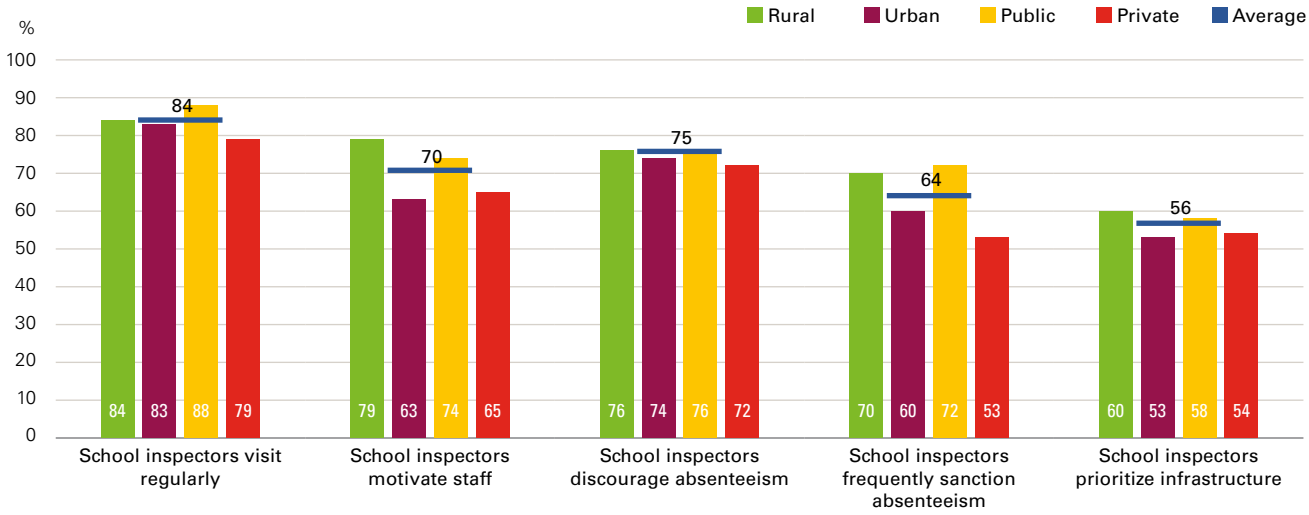
Local education authorities mainly provide teachers with verbal warnings regarding punctuality. In some instances, education officials visit classrooms and check teachers' lesson plans, though this is not common across all schools. Survey responses suggest that sanctioning absence may be less common, as only 64 per cent of teachers agree that school inspectors sanction absenteeism *(see Figure 11)*. The problem seems especially pervasive in private schools as only 53 per cent of teachers agree or strongly agree that school inspectors sanction absenteeism compared with 72 per cent of public-school teachers. Likewise, sanctioning appears less common in urban settings, as 60 per cent of urban school teachers affirm that absenteeism is sanctioned frequently by school inspectors compared with 70 per cent of rural teachers *(see Figure 11).*

It is worth noting that while school officials are rated lower among private school teachers for their ability to motivate staff and their sanctioning capacity *(see Figure 11 and Table 9),* **overall absenteeism is lower in private schools (23 per cent) compared with public schools (32 per cent)** *(see Table 7).* This reflects previous research suggesting that monitoring and reporting of teacher absence is a serious challenge across the country (Adeyeme and Akpotu, 2009; FMoE, 2005). The Ministry recognizes this as a factor contributing to low achievement of national learning outcomes and thus plans to strengthen quality assurance capacity at the federal and state levels so they can effectively carry out their responsibilities and functions (FMoE, 2018). Additionally, in the COVID-19 context, monitoring may be further complicated as access to learning platforms is limited, especially in rural areas (Niazi and Doorly, 2020; Azubuike, Adegboye and Quadri, 2021). As noted earlier, teachers' skills and knowledge around this new form of learning are uneven. As schools reopen, monitoring might focus more on ensuring schools are compliant with safety protocols rather than learning achievements (Olatunji, 2021) and tracking learners' access and effectiveness of learning (Nasir, 2020), which may not leave sufficient time or resources for observing attendance or time on task.

In qualitative responses, participants point out that head teachers are much stricter at private schools, which may explain the lower occurrence of absenteeism. This could be because in private schools, head teachers enforce discipline measures without the bureaucratic steps that a head teacher at a public school may need to take. However, as discussed further in Section 2.4.1, classroom attendance is often not monitored as rigidly as other forms, thus explaining why this form of absenteeism is higher among teachers in both public and private schools. These differences also suggest that **subnational officials might be experiencing challenges related to implementing existing measures.** This is especially since some officials engage in rigorous attendance monitoring, by observing teachers in the classroom and checking their lesson plans, while others do not. The Ministry is also concerned over the non-implementation of existing policies, including the National Teacher Education Policy, which affects teachers' education, capacity building, and professional development (FMoE, 2018).

Finally, findings from qualitative responses suggest that **local education officials may not have the resources to carry out their responsibilities,** which might explain why teachers at some schools do not consider their visits sufficient. A SUBEB official from Bayelsa state explains: "The Local Government Education (LGE) supervisors do not go to schools regularly and may sometimes only visit once a year. The Local Government Authority, which provides funds to these supervisors, has not been able to, explaining that there is lack of funds." Bayelsa is a state, jointly with Oyo, where teachers feel school inspectors' sanctioning of absenteeism is less frequent (55 per cent in Bayelsa; 49 per cent in Oyo, compared with 78 per cent in Kano; 69 per cent in Bauchi; 69 per cent in Enugu). Additionally, schools that are closer to the offices of local education authorities are described by local education officials as easier to visit frequently than those further away. Previous findings reveal that the lack of resources for implementing national directives has been a challenge for a while (Adeyemi and Akpotu, 2009; FMoE, 2005).

Figure 11. Opinions of teachers on selected statements related to absenteeism – school inspectors monitoring



2.2.2 Subnational engagement

While subnational involvement in schools is generally valued by teachers and head teachers, some point out these are limited or infrequent. Teachers explain that **education officials are not around as often as they might need to be, or that they do not offer** much guidance other than verbal support. In the survey data, only 70 per cent of teachers rate school inspectors as 'motivating staff', with lower rates in urban areas (63 per cent) compared with rural settings (79 per cent). Likewise, private school teachers rate school inspectors as less motivating (65 per cent) compared with their peers in public schools (74 per cent) *(see Figure 11)*.

> "I want SUBEB and the local authority to know that some of our teachers do not come to school on time and they do not carry out their teaching responsibilities effectively. I want them to assist us by visiting the school more frequently."
>
> – Head teacher, rural, public school, Bauchi state

Overall, teachers who are frequently absent from school (83 per cent), from the classroom (80 per cent), and unpunctual (79 per cent) affirm that school inspectors regularly visit their schools slightly less than their peers who are often at school (85 per cent), in the classroom (85 per cent), and on time (85 per cent) *(see Table 10)*.[21] This suggests that regular engagement with local education officials might have the potential to positively

21 Differences are not statistically significant for either form of absence.

influence teachers' attendance. This is also suggested in qualitative interviews, where **teachers and head teachers describe subnational engagement as "motivating" and "helpful"**. For instance, a head teacher at an urban public school in Enugu state explains that regular visits from local officials have helped teachers at his school arrive on time.

Like motivation, some teachers feel that **school inspectors are not as engaged in their school's needs,** with only 56 per cent of teachers agreeing that they prioritize infrastructure *(see Figure 11)*. This appears to be especially challenging in Bayelsa (37 per cent), followed by Enugu (52 per cent), Bauchi (55 per cent), and Oyo (58 per cent). However, teachers in Benue (61 per cent) and Kano (70 per cent) see it as less of a challenge. Additionally, surveyed teachers in urban schools appear to agree less with this statement (53 per cent) compared with those in rural areas (60 per cent).[22] At these schools, teachers are significantly more likely to select "lack of teaching materials" as factor leading to reduced instruction time use (43 per cent in urban; 33 per cent in rural). **This suggests that even though these schools are located in urban areas, there might be a constraint in terms of teaching and learning resource availability.**

> "In Bauchi, teacher attendance has improved. Teacher promotion has been implemented recently and the SBMC engagement also entails following up on attendance and the school's development by visiting the different schools."
>
> – SUBEB official, Bauchi state

Finally, some **teachers point out that they are not always clear on the purpose of local government officials' visits** as they do not interact with them directly, nor see them often at their school. SUBEB officials, however, see their engagement as frequent and supportive, with some pointing to recent measures the government has implemented as helping to improve teacher attendance, such as the adoption of a school inspection schedule. Despite these improvements, school inspectors' periodic visits are hindered by the lack of resources to carry out their responsibilities *(see Section 2.2.1),* such as fuel or vehicles. A subnational respondent from Kano state points out that SSOs visit schools where attendance is a challenge and manage to "control the problem". Likewise, a national level official explained that close relations with SBMC were additional measures taken to address teacher attendance. Capacity development training of inspectors and supervisors has been planned to strengthen quality assurance of monitoring measures (FMoE, 2018). It is not clear if their focus also includes increasing accountability of LGAs in the effective implementation of existing initiatives, especially in the COVID-19 context, where they will be responsible for implementing safety and access-related measures. It is not clear either whether the focus of inspections will shift towards both monitoring and mentoring of teachers, which could positively influence teacher attendance.

22 Although differences are not statistically significant.

2.3 Community level factors

2.3.1 Climatic conditions

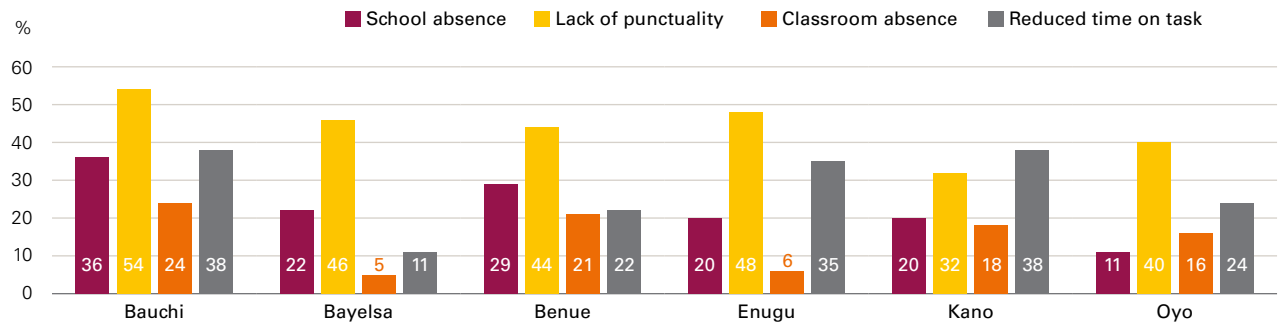
> "Since this state is a swampy land, the main road was flooded. I took my umbrella and folded my trousers and went to the main road but reached school late."
>
> –Teacher, urban private school, Bayelsa state

Across the different school types, weather conditions are among the top five reasons teachers provide for being absent from school or not punctual *(see Figures 4 and 5)*. Respondents explain that **during rainy seasons in particular, it is difficult to come to school regularly or on time due to flooding or the poor quality of roads.** Weather seems to be a key cause for absenteeism in most states, especially for low punctuality, though to a lesser extent in Oyo and Kano *(see Figure 12)*. This might also explain why lack of punctuality also appears higher among teachers from Bauchi (18 per cent), Bayelsa (17 per cent), and Benue (25 per cent), compared with Kano (14 per cent), Enugu (13 per cent), or Oyo (3 per cent).

> "I use a bicycle to get to school every day, but when it rains, especially heavy rains, you know that you will get wet. So, I wait for the rain to subside, and this makes me late to school in the morning."
>
> –Teacher, urban public school, Bayelsa state

School officials appear to see such absences as 'unavoidable' and thus understandable. A head teacher at a rural private school in Benue explains: "When it rains in the morning, teachers are reluctant to come to school because they do not have any protection against the rain. This is a natural occurrence so there is not much the teacher can do." Some teachers harvest during rainy seasons, thus limiting their presence in school. **For teachers in rural areas, community infrastructure can be a further hindrance (Adeyemi and Akpotu, 2001) during rainy conditions, potentially affecting their attendance.** Qualitative findings reveal that teachers often cannot use cars or public transportation due to the poor quality of roads, thus resulting in regular late arrivals or absences from school. Figure 13 demonstrates that during the rainy season, most teachers in rural areas travel to school by foot (64 per cent in rural; 33 per cent in urban), whereas in urban areas using a car is more common (39 per cent in urban; 9 per cent in rural).

Figure 12. Proportion of teachers mentioning 'weather' as a motivation for absenteeism – by state and type of absenteeism



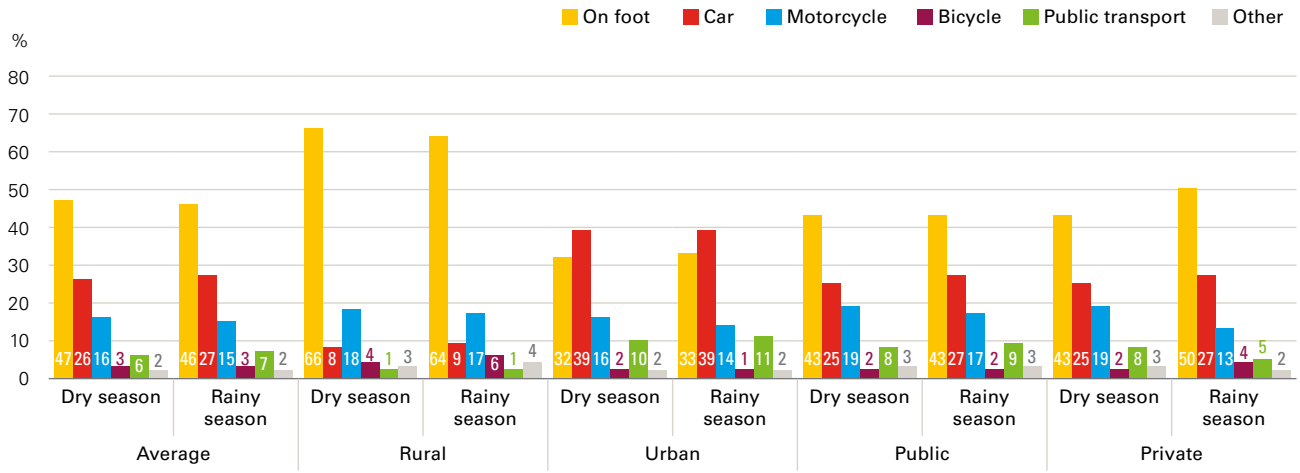
Finding relevant and affordable transportation is exacerbated during rainy conditions, affecting teachers' ability to come to school regularly or on time. **Teachers who experience salary delays or feel that they do not make enough income monthly struggle to cover these expenses and thus, some will choose to stay home on such days.** Those who can afford transportation find it a challenge to get to school as availability of vehicles becomes scarcer and slower since multiple customers share a ride, thus requiring time to drop each person at their respective stops.

> "The last two weeks we had heavy rains and while some of our teachers were able to make it to school, others could not because there were no public vehicles available to bring them here."
>
> – Head teacher, urban public school, Benue state

> "The roof sometimes starts leaking or it is blown off because of heavy rains and winds. When this happens, classrooms are dismissed, and children are sent home."
>
> – Teacher, rural public school, Bauchi state

Finally, **heavy rains limit teachers' classroom presence and time on task mainly due to lack of protection against such weather**. In the survey responses, weather is selected as the third most common reason teachers are not on task, especially in rural areas (37 per cent) compared with urban settings (24 per cent) *(see Figure 7).* Respondents explain that when the quality of the classroom roof is poor, it causes leakage and excessive noise. This makes it difficult to remain in the classroom or carry on with lessons. **Sometimes the classroom becomes dark on cloudy days, or too hot during summer,** which makes it difficult for teachers to provide lessons and for pupils to concentrate. A teacher at an urban private school in Benue state explains: "Sometimes the clouds are very thick, and it becomes dark, even for the children who also cannot hear because of the noise of the roof. The children cannot hear you so, you may be present at school but you are not in the classroom." It is common for pupils to move to another area of the classroom, away from the rain, or to have the class held elsewhere. **Teachers explain that in many instances, they simply pause the lesson or revise their lesson plans so that pupils can work independently and quietly** while waiting for weather conditions to improve. In the current strategic plan, the Ministry has made plans to rehabilitate school infrastructure and provide targeted funding for schools (FMoE, 2018), both of which are important initiatives needed, especially in rural areas, though it is not clear how these funds will be allocated.

Figure 13. How teachers get to school during rainy and dry season – by locality and school type



2.3.2 Distance to school

Teachers who live further away from school are absent more frequently than those who live closer to their schools. In qualitative responses, teachers deployed in towns far from their homes seem to be absent from school more, especially after visiting their homes during school breaks. Survey responses show that **distance to school is cited by 5.8 per cent of respondents as a key cause of absence from school and by 7.3 per cent for lack of punctuality**. It especially affects punctuality, as teachers who are regularly unpunctual (19 per cent) are more likely to cite distance to school as a reason for their late arrival or early departure compared with those who are on time on a regular basis (5 per cent). Teachers living further away also rely on public transportation more often, which is sometimes difficult to secure due to lack of pay or adverse climatic conditions, as noted earlier. Notably**, teachers in public schools are more likely to mention distance to school as a reason for school absence (8 per cent in public; 3 per cent in private),** while their peers in private schools cite it more often as a motivation for lack of punctuality (10 per cent in private; 5 per cent in public). The higher rates of school absence as a result of distance to school among public school teachers might be related to deployment practices in the public sector, as public schools sometimes hire teachers who are not from the local community, a practice that worries some local government authorities. Lower punctuality among private school teachers might be related to income as previous studies show that salaries are, on average, lower in private schools compared with public settings (Unterhalter, Robinson, and Ibrahim, 2018), which explains the low level of salary satisfaction observed in survey responses among private school teachers *(see Section 2.1.1).*

Interviews reveal that due to income constraints, teachers often walk long distances, especially when they cannot afford the travel costs. Some teachers would like to live closer to school but cannot afford to. Sometimes the community provides help to out-of-town teachers in finding a place to stay near the school, or with transportation, however, this does not appear to be common across most of the schools.

Furthermore, school distance appears to hinder male teachers' school attendance (9 per cent among male; 4 per cent among female) and punctuality (12 per cent among male; 5 per cent among female) more than female educators. One reason for these gender differences might be that men (35 per cent) are more often engaged in additional income-generating activities *(see Section 2.5.2)* compared with women (18 per cent),[23] which hinders both school presence and punctuality.

> "Out-of-town teachers are expected to be back in town on Sunday, but some will come on Mondays, and thus resume teaching late. The government is bringing teachers from other towns to teach here. It is better if they select teachers from the local community as this can help reduce absence."
>
> – Subnational level respondent, Oyo state

As pointed out earlier, finding reliable transportation is a challenge for teachers who live further away from school. **In fact, survey responses reveal that transport-related challenges are among the most common reasons for lack of punctuality** *(see Figure 5),* which affects urban school teachers (43 per cent) more than those living in rural areas (30 per cent). This might be due to lack of public transport, which is not readily available, as noted in Section 2.3.1. A headteacher from an urban public school in Enugu state explains: "If a teacher does not reach the bus station on time, they will find that the buses are full so they have to stand there and wait for the next one, which can take an additional 15-20 minutes."

Several teachers also mention **transportation costs as a key barrier affecting their regular attendance.** They explain that such costs are often difficult to cover *(see Section 2.1.1),* especially when there are salary delays or if their monthly salary is not enough to cover household expenses. In some cases, **head teachers try to help teachers by providing financial support however, this is not consistent across most schools.** Some teachers and local government officials feel there is a need for the government to provide loans to teachers, which can help alleviate their transportation challenges. The new NTEP (ACNN, 2020) includes the provision of a rural allowance to attract and retain competent teachers in rural areas. It also

> "Two teachers at this school live very far away and they sometimes arrive to school late. I have confronted them, but they sometimes do not have the transport fare. Sometimes I give them money, which they do not pay back."
>
> – Head teacher, urban public school, Bayelsa state

23 These percentages correspond with survey responses to the following question: "Do you earn money from activities other than teaching?"

proposes a special incentive package for teachers working in disadvantaged communities. It is not clear if these efforts will be implemented in a timely manner given previous challenges and, during the post-pandemic context where state priorities have shifted and Federal Government allocations to the education sector are reduced (Okwuosa and Modibbo, 2021). It is also not clear if the incentive package takes into consideration the need to provide transportation funds for teachers who may experience regular salary delays.

2.3.3 Role of community

> "When there are active SBMCs within the community, they will report back to us on how the teachers are doing at school. Sometimes pupils will also tell their parents about an absent teacher, and that parent will follow up with the school leadership."
>
> – SUBEB official, Enugu state

The community is described by many respondents as a key actor in supporting teachers and schools, and providing guidance and leadership to school staff. Local government officials explain that working **closely with the community, especially the SBMCs and Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) helps strengthen their implementation measures,** particularly around attendance.

Monitoring teacher attendance is one area in which both school leadership and education officials recognize the community's role as positive and helpful in deterring such practices. Community leaders and parents also positively view their relationship with schools and consider it essential to support them in their efforts to improve teacher attendance. A community representative for an urban private school in Bauchi state explains: "As parents, we advise head teachers and the teachers who might be giving them a difficult time. We sit down with all of them and try to resolve the challenge collectively. But if it seems like there are no improvements, then we reach out to the higher authority."

> "If I come to school and I see that a teacher who has a scheduled lesson is not in class, I will ask them, "You have a class, why are you sitting here doing nothing?" I remind them that these children have left their parents to learn from them, to give them motivation."
>
> – Community representative, rural public school, Bauchi state

The community also helps in sanctioning teacher attendance by giving warnings to teachers who are absent or late. Some also check if teachers are present in the classrooms though this form of monitoring is not common across all schools. Some communities provide rewards during PTA meetings to encourage teachers who maintain good attendance and are punctual. **Survey responses reveal that teachers in rural (74 per cent) and private schools (74 per cent) are more likely to feel appreciated by the community than their peers in urban (66 per cent) and public schools (66 per cent)** *(see Figure 14).*

There is concern among some school leaders that parents are not engaged with schools or their children's learning as frequently as they need to be. Only 67 per cent of surveyed teachers affirm that parents are engaged in school affairs, especially in public schools (57 per cent) where parental engagement is significantly lower than in private schools (82 per cent) *(see Figure 14).* A SUBEB official from Bayelsa state explains that the **process for parents to become involved in schools, especially in monitoring teacher attendance, is constrained due to a lack of funding and training.** In the current strategic plan, the Ministry plans to ensure SBMC committees are active across all primary schools and receive training, though this is focused primarily on monitoring teacher professional development activities (FMoE, 2014) and not attendance. Additionally, in the Teachers Code of Conduct (TRCN, 2013), teachers are encouraged to support and actively engage in PTA meetings, which findings from this study suggest is key to improving attendance. However, as these findings reveal, this is often difficult to achieve as teachers appear to lack both resources and time *(see Section 2.4.2).*

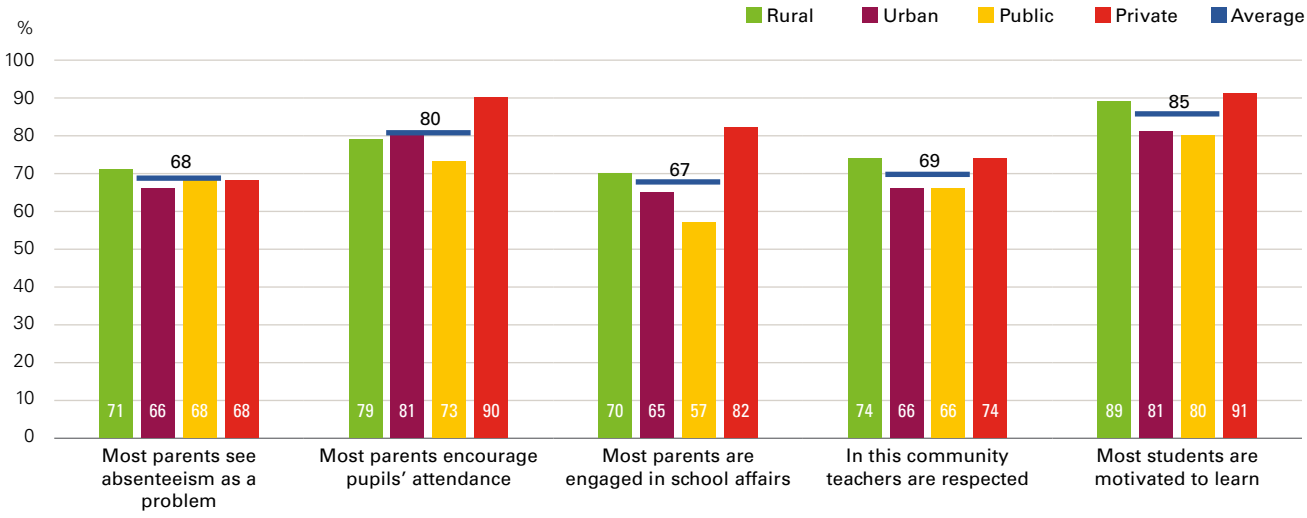
Teachers in private schools (90 per cent) also seem significantly more satisfied with parents' support of pupils' attendance than those teaching in public schools (73 per cent) *(see Table 9).* Survey findings suggest that when parents and pupils are engaged, punctuality is enhanced, with teachers who are frequently late or who leave school early (60 per cent) are less likely to agree with the statement "most parents appreciate the value of education and encourage pupils' attendance" than those who are often on time (80 per cent). Educators who are frequently unpunctual (73 per cent) are also less likely to affirm that "pupils are motivated to learn"

than those who are not (87 per cent) *(see Table 10)*. This suggests regular **parental engagement affects teacher attendance positively, which in return may influence teachers' perception and overall relationship with pupils.** During COVID-19 school closures, the Federal Government recognized the critical role of parents and the community in supporting their child's learning by including, in its COVID-19 Education Response Plan, the need to strengthen collaboration between federal and state governments with parents and the community (GPE, 2020). As schools reopen, community involvement will be critical to help enforce health measures and assess learning losses.

> "SBMC committee members are supposed to report teacher absenteeism. They are supposed to have training to do this, but because of lack of funding, they have not. As a result, when they find out about absent teachers, they may not have the skills or resources to go about submitting an official complaint, including the funds to drop the letter to the office."
>
> – SUBEB official, Bayelsa state

Finally, findings indicate that **female teachers might be receiving more support from parents than male educators,** [24]suggesting that teacher gender matters in terms of parental engagement. Consequently, female teachers (89 per cent) are more likely to see pupils as motivated learners compared with male teachers (76 per cent) *(see Table 8)*. One reason for this gender disparity might be related to levels of qualification as national statistics reveal that in the 2015-2016 school year, 95 per cent of female teachers in public primary schools had the necessary qualifications to teach compared with 78 per cent of male educators *(see Table 3)*. Additionally, **female teachers are more likely to be on task than male teachers**, as only 12 per cent of women reported reducing instruction time compared with 20 per cent of men. **Female teachers might also be engaged in school activities with pupils more than male teachers** as a significantly higher share of female teachers (84 per cent) affirm their "head teacher supports teacher involvement" than male educators (78 per cent) *(see Table 7)*. In qualitative responses, **teacher involvement in school affairs includes engagement with pupils through extra-curricular activities.** These results are consistent with previous evidence suggesting that female teachers in Nigerian schools are positively perceived by both parents and pupils, especially in rural areas, and are seen as effective community mobilizers who often engage with parents and pupils, are generally more encouraging and understanding, and rely less on corporal punishment (FHI 360 and UNICEF Nigeria, 2017).

Figure 14. Opinions of teachers on selected statements related to absenteeism – role of the community



24 Female teachers are significantly more likely to agree with the statements 'parents encourage pupil attendance' (82 per cent among female; 75 per cent among male) and 'parents are engaged in school affairs' (71 per cent among female; 58 per cent among male) than their male counterparts.

2.4 School level factors

2.4.1 Role of the head teacher

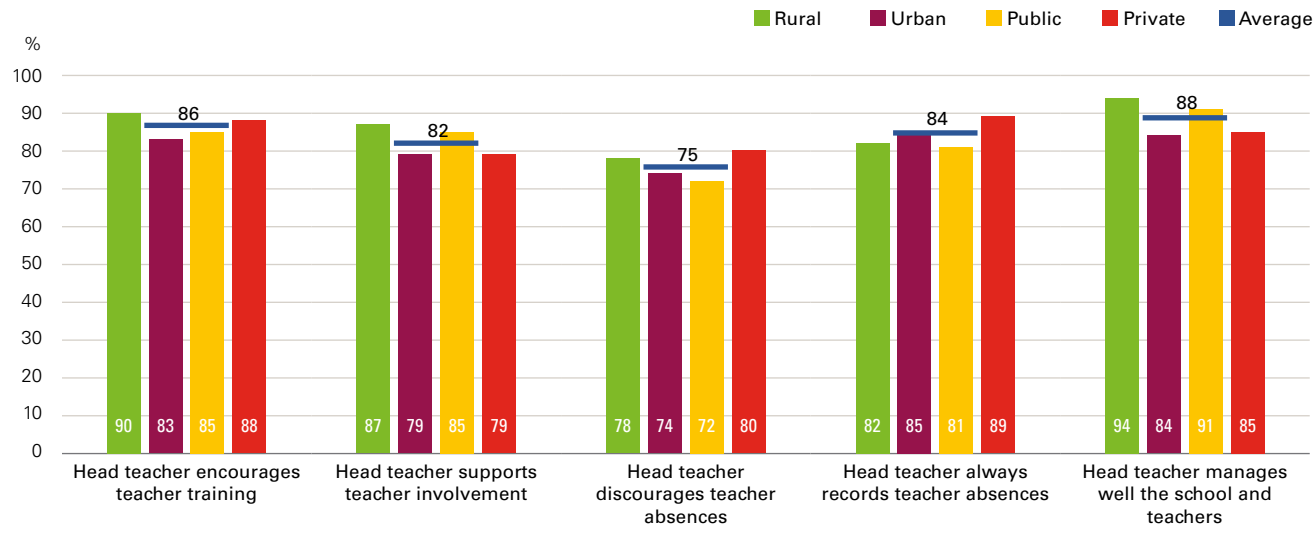
> "We penalize teachers who are absent by deducting money from their pay they receive at the end of the month. There is a certain amount that we deduct [and] even if it is a small amount, we give the teacher a form that they have to study, sign and return the next day."
>
> – Head teacher, urban private school, Bayelsa state

Head teachers play an important role in monitoring teacher attendance and enforcing measures to prevent absenteeism. **In all surveyed schools, head teachers keep track of school attendance on a daily basis,** with teachers signing in when they arrive to school and signing out when they leave. In instances where teachers will be absent, late, or need to leave early, head teachers are informed by phone or a note, and whenever possible, other teachers are assigned to cover their lessons. In the survey responses, **most teachers (88 per cent) affirm the head teacher manages their school well, especially in rural (94 per cent) and public schools (91 per cent)** compared with urban (84 per cent) and private settings (85 per cent) *(see Figure 15)*.

> "Most of my staff are female and some of them are still giving birth so they take maternity leave for a while, sometimes for up to three months. So, that is a challenge that exists in this school."
>
> – Head teacher, urban private school, Benue state

Head teachers enforce a **variety of measures to hold absent teachers accountable, including giving verbal and written warnings, and deducting salary.** A community representative for a rural public school in Bauchi state explains that attendance logs are key evidence used to hold teachers accountable. Head teachers follow up on these daily and some use them to track teacher punctuality, though this is not consistent across all schools. In some schools, **head teachers walk around classrooms and check if teachers are present, or they check teachers' scheme of work in advance to ensure it meets learning goals.** In most schools, however, it appears that head teachers' monitoring is limited to following up on school absence and late arrivals in the morning.

Figure 15. Opinions of teachers on selected statements related to absenteeism – role of the head teacher



Survey results show that three out of four teachers (75 per cent) affirm that head teachers play an active role in discouraging absenteeism, especially in private schools (80 per cent in private; 72 per cent in public), where head teachers are also much more likely to record absenteeism (89 per cent) compared with those in public schools (81 per cent) *(see Figure 15).* **Additionally, female teachers (78 per cent) are more likely to affirm that head teachers discourage absenteeism compared with male educators (70 per cent).** This might be because there is a common assumption among school officials and head teachers that female teachers are absent more frequently than male *(see Section 2.5.1)* and this may explain why they have more experiences with attendance monitoring.

In qualitative interviews, **teachers point out that they try to avoid being absent to avoid salary deductions and warnings from head teachers.** A teacher at an urban private school in Bauchi state explains: "When a teacher is absent, they are questioned, so some teachers try to stay on the safer side. The kinds of questions that the school leaders ask us motivate us to avoid giving lousy excuses and commit to our work instead." Some head teachers encourage teachers to inform them in advance of their absence or to leave work for pupils; others try to help them address their problems so they can carry on with their teaching responsibilities. However, these efforts are not always possible and thus, are not consistent across all schools.

Respondents explain that **at private schools, head teachers have more authority to follow up on attendance, unlike public schools where there is greater bureaucracy.** A teacher from a rural private school in Bayelsa state explains: "Unlike government schools, in private schools teachers cannot play with their job. If they are not teaching, before they know it the head teacher will talk to them. We have a strict schedule and we follow it. When we are teaching, head teachers come and look at us, they pay attention to us, so we do not play with that."

Head teachers and local government officials explain that **sanctioning measures against absenteeism are sometimes difficult** to enforce when salaries are delayed. Additionally, head teachers also struggle to enforce rules as teachers may be affiliated with powerful individuals within the Ministry or in the community. Such teachers may come to school but are usually not present in the classroom or on task. **A subnational representative explains that some teachers are difficult to handle because they might be more 'influential' than the head teacher.** Consequently, head teachers feel intimidated and may not report such teachers for absenteeism for fear of retaliation.

> "When there are salary delays, the head teacher will not have the moral ground to caution any teacher."
>
> – Community representative, urban public school, Benue state

Finally, some local officials feel that head teachers might not report or sanction absenteeism as frequently as they should. One local government authority explained they found a head teacher filling the attendance log on behalf of teachers and thus not tracking or accurately reporting teachers' absence. Similarly, field enumerators observed several classrooms without teachers, or others who were arriving late or leaving early, supporting subnational respondents' concern that head teachers may be underreporting absenteeism. Thus, the findings from this study suggest the **need to further strengthen head teachers' leadership in teacher management.** However, the current strategic plan focuses primarily on the monitoring capacity of local education authorities and the community and does not include head teachers (FMoE, 2018). As schools reopen after a long period of school closures, strong leadership will be crucial (World Bank, 2020b) in helping teachers assume new responsibilities established in the education recovery plan (e.g., psycho-social support, assessing learning loses, implementing health and safety measures, etc.) (GPE, 2020).

2.4.2 Workload

Across surveyed schools, teachers describe being engaged in several non-teaching activities affecting their attendance. **Administrative activities (e.g., office work, teachers' meetings) appear to be a significant cause of absence, as 60 per cent of the teachers pointed to this as a factor leading to classroom absence.** Rural teachers' classroom presence (66 per cent) seems to be much more

> "While checking the classroom I found that a teacher was not there. When I saw them, I asked where they were, and they explained to me that they had been out collecting PTA levy as I had asked."
>
> – Head teacher, rural public school, Benue state

affected by administrative tasks than those in urban settings (56 per cent). Often these activities include both planned and unplanned meetings with staff, community members, education officials, or parents. Sometimes, head teachers assign additional tasks, including school maintenance, distribution of learning resources (equipment) to learners, managing pupil administration in the beginning of the term, sorting out class scheduling, and collecting fees from PTA or pupils. The government plans to further increase sporting activities at schools (FMoE, 2018) which are important for pupil engagement, but which may also increase teacher responsibilities, thus hindering their attendance.

Teachers also point In fact, "too many preparation tasks" is among the top reasons for reduction of instructional time, mentioned by 24 per cent of teachers *(see Figure 7)*, and is also cited by teachers as a frequent cause for classroom absence (18 per cent). Activities such as grading pupils' homework, exam preparations, and taking the attendance roll often take time away from teaching while pupils and teachers are in class. In many instances, **teachers will be in school, but will stay in the staff room or elsewhere in the school to finish grading pupils' work.** Learners explain that sometimes teachers are in class marking and request pupils to sit quietly, review the previous day's work, or simply rest while their teachers finish marking their work. Some teachers express that the **amount of assessment is more than they can keep up with**, and consequently, **they find it difficult to manage their time.**

> "Sometimes I miss my lesson period because there might be a request from the Ministry to select pupils for a function; maybe a debate a quiz, or a cultural event. These requests are usually impromptu, and we have to make special arrangements for them, so I end up missing my class."
>
> –Teacher, urban public school, Benue state

> "In this school, every day we give pupils assignments. So, sometimes teachers may plan to miss a class so that they can catch up on their grading."
>
> –Teacher, rural private school, Enugu state

Survey responses reveal that male teachers are more likely to be absent from the classroom (25 per cent among male; 14 per cent among female) and to reduce instruction time (33 per cent among male; 20 per cent among female) due to "too many preparation tasks" more so than female educators *(see Figure 7)*. This might be because male teachers are more likely to be engaged in additional income-generating activities, and as explained further in Section 2.5.3, this often causes teachers to fall behind on their teaching responsibilities.

Teachers point to **heavy lesson preparation and assessment activities as especially prevalent when there are many pupils in the classroom.** In the survey data, teachers with big classes (i.e., those whose class size is above the median in the sample) (35 per cent) are more likely to be absent than those with fewer pupils (21 per cent) *(see Table 7)*. The differences are especially salient for time on task as teachers with larger classes (20 per cent) are more than twice as likely to limit their instructional time use than teachers with fewer pupils (8 per cent) *(see Table 7)*.

> "Some teachers refuse to teach because of the stubbornness of some of the pupils in the classroom. They refused to stop making noise, so the teacher then refused to teach them."
>
> – Pupil, rural public school, Benue state

Finally, teachers appear to be struggling with pupil misbehaviour, which often adds to their workload, thus limiting their instructional time use and presence in the classroom. This confirms previous research on the negative impact of pupil misbehaviour on teachers' effective instructional time use (Adekola, 2007). Figure 7 indicates that pupil misbehaviour is among the top factors in reduction of instructional time, mentioned by 28 per cent of teachers. Those in urban (33 per cent in urban; 22 per cent in rural) and public schools (31 per cent in public; 23 per cent in private) are more likely to report pupils' misbehaviour as a reason for reduction in teaching time. These are also schools where parental engagement, as noted earlier, is lower, suggesting that misbehaviour may also be more common when parents are not as involved in their children's learning. In the Teachers' Code of Conduct, teachers are required to ensure that learners are behaving appropriately and when this is not the case, that they are disciplined (TRCN, 2013). However, as findings from this study show, this often takes time away from teaching and thus may not be feasible, especially as teachers often work with heavy workloads. The Code also includes a variety of additional responsibilities as part of the teacher's 'professional responsibilities' but these do not focus on attendance, which might explain their frequent engagement in non-teaching activities during class

time. There is also concern that teachers' responsibilities may be further burdened during COVID-19 as they look after their own family's needs while engaged in providing feedback and fulfilling administrative responsibilities (Barron et al., 2021). Findings elsewhere show that during COVID-19, teacher workloads have increased, along with the need to use personal income for teaching purposes (Okunola, 2020).

2.4.3 School environment

> "In my classroom, we do not have any lights that work and the whiteboard that we are using is in very poor condition. The stationery that we use to write on the board is an issue. Sometimes, I will go looking for a marker in the headmaster's office and they won't have any. So, I end up buying it with my own money, which is not supposed to be the case, but I do it to help the children."
>
> –Teacher, urban public school, Bayelsa state

Lack of teaching and learning materials (TLMs) are described as a crucial reason teachers might be missing from the classroom or why they might be limiting their instructional time. Figure 7 reveals that **TLM shortage is the second most common determinant for reduction of instruction time,** affecting more urban (43 per cent in urban; 33 per cent in rural) and public schools (44 per cent in public; 28 per cent in private). Teachers explain that sometimes they do not have the required materials to provide lessons, causing them to look for alternatives during class time, including borrowing chalk from other classrooms. In addition to not having necessary teaching resources, teachers point out that **pupils do not have textbooks and classrooms are not equipped with teaching aids, all of which hinder their ability to remain on task.** TLM shortage also affects teachers' presence in the school as they find it demotivating and thus are reluctant to attend, knowing they will not have the materials needed for their subjects. A teacher from an urban private school in Bauchi state explains that they sometimes do not want to go to school knowing that they will "not have anything for the lesson" to teach with. TLM shortage is a challenge that the Ministry is aware of and recognizes as a barrier to achieving learning outcome goals (FMoE, 2018). In response, it has committed to working closely with the states to ensure learners have textbooks, and that schools have TLMs that promote "practical experiments" (FMoE, 2018: 66), though it is not clear if this will include all subjects or only those the Ministry is focused on (science, technology, and mathematics).

The **poor quality of classrooms hinders teachers' ability to be on task** as they do not find the classroom conducive to learning or teaching due to limited availability of teaching aids and resources (including chairs, desks, lighting, and lack of protection against rain). Shortage of classrooms is another challenge some teachers experience and affecting their classroom presence. This may explain why private school teachers (87 per cent) are more satisfied with their work environment than public school teachers (58 per cent), **as private school teachers (71 per cent) disclose having significantly more access to TLMs than public school teachers (50 per cent)** *(see Figure 16).* These findings suggest that TLMs play an important role in teacher motivation, a necessary condition for regular attendance. They also support previous research which similarly found TLM shortage limited teachers' use of instructional time (Adekola, 2007). Moreover, there is worry that COVID-19 will exacerbate inequity in education as access to learning resources has been limited and thus unequal (GPE, 2020).

Pupil-teacher ratio (PTR) might be exacerbating the condition and need for additional resources as classrooms where these ratios are above the median in the sample seem to experience higher rates of teacher school absence (17 per cent for high PTR; 11 per cent for lower PTR), late arrival or early departure (20 per cent for high PTR; 11 per cent for lower PTR), reduced time on task (20 per cent for high PTR; 8 per cent for lower PTR), and classroom absence (22 per cent for high PTR; 15 per cent for lower PTR). The NTEP (ACNN, 2020) recognizes the importance of improving teachers' working conditions but does not clarify how this will be carried out.

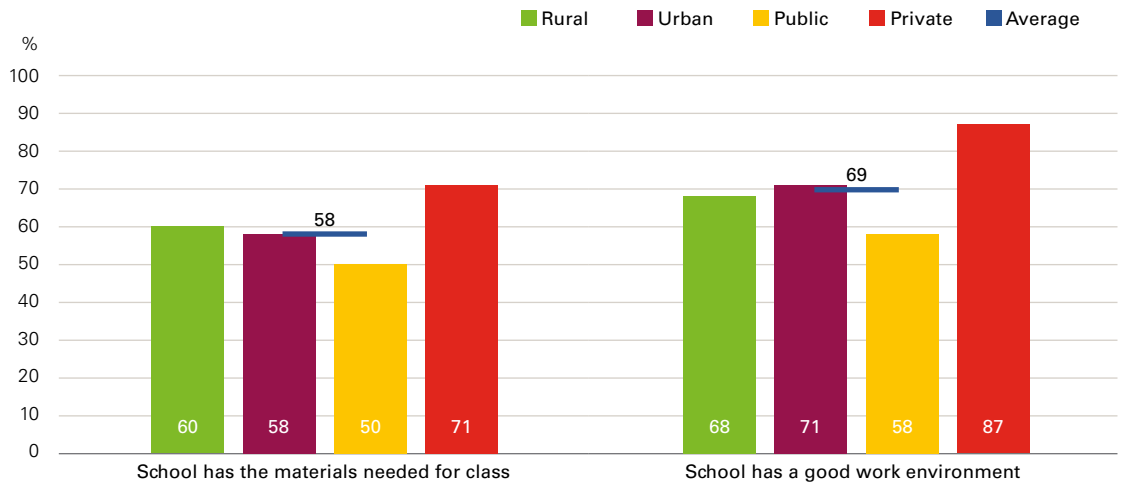
Teachers are sometimes encouraged by head teachers to prepare their lessons in advance so they can identify missing TLMs prior to entering their classes. However, this is not required regularly or across all schools. Some respondents point out that **not all teachers feel confident, due to lack of skills or subject knowledge, in preparing lesson plans in advance** and consequently, will work on this while at school. This might explain why teachers who are regularly absent from the classroom are less likely to feel they have the adequate skills or knowledge needed to teach well (77 per cent) compared with those who are often in class (93 per cent) *(see Table 10).*

In addition to TLMs, the current strategic plan recognizes the importance of school rehabilitation and will work with the Federal Teacher Scheme (FTS) and SUBEBs to ensure all schools receive this support (FMoE, 2018). Findings from this study show there are variations across schools and thus, there is a need to prioritize disadvantaged areas and the upgrading of classrooms, especially so teachers and pupils are protected against the weather. However, in the COVID-19 environment, it is not clear if the government will be able to continue with the implementation of these goals, given that there will be a need for additional infrastructure for health and safety (Obiwulu, 2020), and decreased availability of federal funds for education (Adebumiti, 2021).

Additionally, respondents explain that some pupils make excessive noise which takes a while for the teacher to control. This is especially the case when pupils are misbehaving, as noted in Section 2.4.2, a factor that might also be connected to pupils' low motivation levels. Survey responses reveal that private school pupils are viewed by their teachers (91 per cent) as more motivated to learn than those in public schools (80 per cent) *(see Table 9)*. This affirms that **pupil misbehaviour creates classroom management challenges for teachers, which in turn may influence their perception of pupils.** Pupils also point out that teachers will sometimes pause lessons to address behavioural or noise-related issues, thus highlighting teachers' struggle to manage pupils. Some head teachers advise teachers to control pupils prior to beginning their lesson, but this advice does not appear sufficient as findings from this study suggest teachers use instructional time to address these challenges.

Finally, **a teacher's instructional time use may be interrupted by pupils not feeling well, either due to hunger or poor health.** A teacher at an urban public school in Bauchi state explains: "Sometimes I stop my lesson because the pupil is not feeling well. Usually, this happens towards the end of the day as they are hungry and thinking of going home to eat. So, at that time, teaching becomes very hard. Sometimes I give them a writing or driving activity." The government plans to address this challenge through the provision of the Nigerian Home-Grown School Meal Program (NHSMP) (FMoE, 2018), though it is not clear how this will be distributed during the pandemic, and whether disadvantaged communities will be prioritized.

Figure 16. Opinions of teachers on selected statements related to absenteeism – school environment



2.5 Teacher level factors

2.5.1 Health

For most teachers, **health is a significant factor affecting all forms of absenteeism, especially absence from school (68 per cent) and inadequate instructional time use (56 per cent), followed by classroom absence (52 per cent) and low punctuality (47 per cent)** *(see Figures 4 to 7).* This high occurrence might be because **health is often considered a 'valid' reason for absence and head teachers provide permission, without always requesting proof of illness** (i.e., doctor's note). Teachers can therefore be absent from school, sometimes for multiple days, without having to provide evidence of being sick. Moreover, some subnational respondents raise concerns that teachers may not always be honest when they cite health as a cause of their absenteeism. When teachers are not feeling well, they choose to stay home to rest, or they may need to visit the hospital, or take medication, which will cause them to be absent from school or the class, unpunctual, or not on task while at school.

> "If a teacher is not feeling well, they cannot come to school. They might have fever or typhoid, both of which will make it difficult for them to make it to school. Even if they come to school, they will just be there but not able to do their work so that is why they may absent themselves."
>
> –Teacher, urban public inclusive school, Bauchi state

Survey findings reveal that female teachers are more likely to be absent from school (74 per cent among female; 56 per cent among male) and the classroom (56 per cent among female; 45 per cent among male) due to health reasons than their male counterparts. Interviews with participants suggest that a key reason might be absences due to pregnancy, as these teachers attend regular pre-natal check-ups throughout the school year or may be absent to look after a newborn. A teacher at a rural private school in Enugu state explains: "We have a teacher who is pregnant. She has been facing health challenges so sometimes she may not be in school. Other times, she may come to school and stay for a while but then leave early to go for treatment." It should be noted that schools that participated in this study had a higher share of female teachers (68 per cent) *(see Table 6)* than the national average (54 per cent) *(see Table 5)* which could explain the perception of women being absent due for pregnancy-related reasons.

> "A teacher will not want to stay home because that will be counted as 'absence from school'. So, sometimes you somehow manage to bring yourself here to school, and the administration will see your condition and ask that you sit somewhere and rest for a while."
>
> –Teacher, rural private school, Bayelsa state

Findings show that private school teachers (75 per cent) are more likely to be absent from school due to health than their peers in public schools (63 per cent). This might be related to the fact private school teachers generally receive less pay than public school teachers, and in qualitative responses, teachers point to low salary as affecting their ability to meet their personal needs, which may include access to affordable health care and medication.

Likewise, **health issues appear more prevalent among rural school teachers than those in urban areas** for all forms of absenteeism (75 per cent in rural versus 62 per cent in urban for school absence; 53 per cent in rural versus 43 per cent in urban for lack of punctuality; 60 per cent in rural versus 47 per cent in urban for classroom absence; and 65 per cent in rural versus 48 per cent in urban for reduced time on task) *(see Figures 4 to 7).* This might be due to limited access and mobility (Titus, Adebisola, and Adeniji, 2015), as rural teachers often travel by foot, which may not be possible while they are feeling unwell, thus prolonging their journeys to reach school or healthcare centres. A teacher at a rural private school in Oyo state explains: "A teacher will sometimes leave school early to visit the hospital. It is not something that happens all the time, maybe once a month."

Many teachers come to school even though they are not well enough to teach, to avoid being marked 'absent' and potentially have their pay deducted. This may explain why classroom absenteeism is the most prevalent form of absence compared with others *(see Figure 3).* Findings suggest some head teachers make it clear to teachers that they are not allowed to arrive at school while ill; however, others feel that they are not

able to prevent them from arriving to school while ill, and thus will allow them to rest during scheduled class time. It is also common for teachers to leave school early or arrive late when they are on medication.

Finally, **teachers are sometimes at school but not feeling well due to hunger or stress, often making it difficult for them to remain on task.** A head teacher at a rural public school in Benue state explains that sometimes teachers feel "weak" due to hunger and this problem is especially pervasive towards the end of the month when their monthly pay has been used up. Weather can worsen some teachers' health, limiting both their presence in school and punctuality.

> "Teachers sometimes have to remain in the same classroom teaching several subjects. After maybe the second or third [lesson], they will sit down and explain that they are feeling hungry or that they do not have the stamina to continue."
>
> – Local government authority, Benue state

It is worth noting that the Teachers Code of Conduct (TRCN, 2013) and Professional Standards for Nigerian Teachers (TRCN, 2010) do not provide any guidance on teachers' sick leave, even though these are key documents that primary school teachers are required to follow. Thus, there is a need to provide clearer guidelines to teachers at the school level so that head teachers can enforce a standardized leave of absence for health-related absences and consequently, provide the school (and teacher) with an opportunity to prepare lessons that can be taught in their absence. This is especially needed as schools reopen due to teachers' fear and concern about the spread of coronavirus and its associated health complications. (United Nations, 2020).

2.5.2 Personal and family obligations

> "I love teaching a lot and do not like being absent from school. The only times I am absent is if my daughter is having a health-related challenge. When that happens, then I do take responsibility in looking after her."
>
> –Teacher, rural private school, Bayelsa state

Several respondents point out that teachers are frequently absent from school due to personal or family reasons, especially to look after ill family or to attend social gatherings in the community. In the surveyed responses, **"family reasons" is the third most common reason why teachers are absent from school (29 per cent) or unpunctual (38 per cent)** *(see Figures 4 to 5)*. Respondents explain that teachers are often away attending funerals or social gatherings in the community (e.g., weddings or other ceremonies). In most cases however, teachers are not punctual or they are not in school because they are looking after a sick family member. A teacher at an urban public school in Bauchi state explains: "Sometimes my wife is not around so I come late to school; maybe three to four times in a term. The reason is that I have to dress my children, prepare their food, and then take them to school."

Some respondents also explain that **looking after the family can cause teachers stress, especially when their salaries are delayed as they feel they cannot look after their basic needs.** A community representative for a rural private school in Bayelsa state explains: "Teachers are trying to be on time but sometimes when they don't receive their salaries on time, they have children at home to feed but cannot manage the needs of their families." **Stress due to family reasons not only causes school absence, but also absence from the classroom and time on task.** Survey findings reveal that stress might be a factor hindering time on task among male teachers (17 per cent) as they cite "distraction by family/personal problems" more than female educators (11 per cent); along with public school teachers (16 per cent) and those in rural settings (17 per cent) compared with those in private (8 per cent) and urban schools (11 per cent). Male teachers and those in public schools also cite salary delays as a common experience, and in qualitative responses, these delays are often associated with stress. There is indication that COVID-19 may have worsened these experiences for teachers and thus, could result in burnout as their family responsibilities increase (Barron et al., 2021).

Additionally, TTT findings show that teachers who declare they are the "only earner" in their households are more likely to be absent (32 per cent) than those who are not (22 per cent), especially in the reduction of instructional time (18 per cent among only earners; 10 per cent among not only earners) *(see Table 7),* **which may explain respondents' claims that teachers' stress is related to income and that not being able to meet their daily needs causes worries that hinder their time on task.**

> "It is rare for me to be absent from school, but recently I came to school with my wife and told the headmaster that I have to take her to the hospital because she was sick. When he saw her, he approved my leave, and that was the day that I was not present in school."
>
> – Teacher, urban public school, Bayelsa state

Survey responses suggest that men are more likely to cite family reasons (39 per cent) as a factor in their absence from school than women (25 per cent); as well, social/communal obligations (18 per cent among men; 4 per cent among women) as a motivation for lack of punctuality. Qualitative responses reveal that male teachers often take sick family members, including pregnant wives, to healthcare facilities, and often drop their children off at school in the morning, which may explain why these two forms of absences are higher among this group. This might also explain why rural school teachers are significantly more likely to be absent from school (37 per cent) due to family reasons than teachers in urban schools (24 per cent) *(see Figure 4),* as **infrastructure (including transportation and hospitals) is limited in these settings, a challenge that may be further hindered due to the prevalence of traveling by foot** *(see Figure 13).*

Moreover, while head teachers generally approve such leave, it is not clear if there are limits to how many days teachers can use for family or social obligations. A local education authority for Enugu state explains that there is a limit of two days, and that more than two days' leave would require a local education official's permission. Interviews with teachers and head teachers, however, suggests that it is mainly the head teacher who provides this permission and there do not seem to be clear limits in terms of how long a teacher can be absent for. As noted earlier, clarifications on absenteeism are also not included in official documents related to teaching.

> "Sometimes our teacher will be in class but on her phone, or they go outside to eat something or talk to another teacher. Sometimes while teaching us, they will be on their phone, or they will go sit somewhere with another teacher and show them something on their phone."
>
> – Pupil, urban private school, Benue state

Several respondents, especially pupils, point out that **teachers are regularly absent from the classroom or limit their time on task because they are engaged in personal activities,** including using the Internet, on their phones, engaged in conversations with colleagues, or attending to personal visitors during class time. Though some head teachers walk around to prevent this, it appears this is common in schools where such monitoring is not frequent. A local government authority for Benue state explains: "Sometimes teachers come to school but don't go to school and instead gossip with other teachers. This happens especially when the headmaster is not around or strong enough to stop it." In the COVID-19 environment, the need to monitor may become even greater as teachers become engaged in additional activities and school officials focus on monitoring learning and access, as noted earlier.

Finally, some teachers are absent from school because they are engaged in their own learning or professional growth. They often miss school so that they can write national examinations, often for more than one day. Pupils at a rural public school in Enugu state explain that their **teacher does not come to school every day because they are writing exams.** This also affects teachers' time on task and presence in the classroom as sometimes teachers are reviewing their own work while at school or in the classroom, instead of teaching the required lessons. A reason why this may occur is because the Ministry has committed to ensuring teachers' access to continuous professional development is increased, and they are continuously advancing in their field (FMoE, 2018). However, there is a need to ensure that access to these opportunities does not take teachers away from the classrooms and their lessons.

2.5.3 Teachers' motivation and commitment

> "Some teachers drive taxis or are traders since the low pay means that their teaching salary is not sufficient. So, he has to take on other jobs to have enough income to meet the family's needs. This is why a teacher might be absent from school, or they might come to school but not go to class."
>
> – Community representative, urban public inclusive school, Bauchi state

In survey responses, 67 per cent of teachers agree that they are satisfied with their job, however, they rated their colleagues' satisfaction as significantly less (50 per cent), suggesting that **low motivation is a challenge that teachers at their schools encounter, especially in urban and private schools** *(see Figure 8 and Tables 8 to 9)*[25]. Female teachers seem to be significantly more satisfied with their jobs (70 per cent) than their male counterparts (61 per cent). In qualitative responses, some respondents point out that lack of job satisfaction, especially due to low pay, often results in teachers seeking alternative employment. Table 7 shows that **alternative employment is an important factor affecting teacher attendance** as absenteeism rates are significantly higher among teachers with a second job (42 per cent) than among those who only teach at their school (25 per cent).[26] It is possible that low motivation (in addition to insufficient pay) might be a significant reason teachers seek alternative employment and consequently, why they might be absent from school or not punctual. Moreover, data from interviews points to a link between teachers struggles to keep up with their teaching responsibilities while simultaneously pursuing additional income-generating activities, thus resulting in higher workload (as noted in Section 2.3.2), and lower motivation. This might explain why more male (25 per cent among male; 14 per cent among female) and private (21 per cent in private; 15 per cent in public) **school teachers cite "too many preparation tasks" as the cause of their classroom absence** (see Figure 6), **and why the share of teachers who are absent from the classroom is higher among those with second jobs (26 per cent) than those who only teach at their school (17 per cent).**[27]

25 Teachers in urban schools are significantly less likely to affirm that they are satisfied with their jobs (61 per cent) and that most teachers are satisfied with their jobs (45 per cent) than their peers in rural schools (74 per cent own job satisfaction: 56 per cent peers' job satisfaction). Likewise, teachers in private schools are also less likely to state they are satisfied with their jobs (62 per cent) and that other teachers in their school are satisfied with theirs (36 per cent) than their peers in public schools (70 per cent for own job satisfaction: 60 per cent peers for job satisfaction).

26 It should be noted that these percentages correspond to any form of absenteeism in Table 7.

27 Differences are not statistically significant.

Section 3: Policy implications and recommendations

The TTT study is a multi-dimensional approach to teacher attendance that highlights factors influencing teacher attendance at various levels of the education system. This approach recognizes that challenges at specific levels often intersect, resulting in new constraints or exacerbating existing ones. Thus, system-wide analysis and understanding are needed to provide relevant policy recommendations and overcome existing challenges hindering teacher attendance and time on task.

Findings from this study reveal that issues of resource constraints, monitoring capacity, delays in salary, and recurrent strikes are factors hindering teacher attendance and time on task in primary schools in the country. Existing evidence from policy documents suggests the Federal Government is committed to improve the working conditions of teachers to advance learning outcomes. Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic for instance, the country was quick in developing a national response plan to guide the provision of remote learning initiatives. Yet, as findings from this study highlight, pervasive challenges continue to limit teacher's time on task which may be further exacerbated by COVID-19. For instance, there is worry that access to new and existing initiatives may be limited and unequal due to a lack of sufficient funding directed to the education sector. There is also concern teachers' attendance will be hindered further by COVID-19 due to their need for psychological support, their increased workload, and issues with timely payments, among others.

This section builds on findings from this study to provide recommendations to increase teacher attendance in its four forms and assist the Federal, SUBEB, and Local Government Authorities achieve their educational aims, both during and beyond the COVID-19 pandemic.

1. Ensure that in-service training programmes do not conflict with teachers' time on task and that initiatives address school-level needs of teachers.

- States – through the Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB) – and LGAs – through local education authorities (LEAs) – should work closely with school leadership to ensure that in-service training programmes do not conflict with teaching times and should encourage them to schedule engagements with teachers during non-teaching hours. The government's initiative to provide school-based and cluster-based training to in-service teachers can also significantly reduce school absence and low punctuality, especially if organized during non-teaching times. It could improve learning outcomes, a major concern for the FMoE, as existing evidence from other countries in the region suggests that in-class coaching programmes lead to better learning outcomes than centralised training (Cilliers et al., 2019).
- It is equally important that states – through the Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB), LGAs – through Local Education Authorities (LEAs), and head teachers work together to perform periodic teacher needs assessments at their schools so in-service training initiatives address the immediate needs of teachers in the classroom. The proposed teachers' competency assessment framework is an important tool that can be utilized by head teachers and LGAs to achieve this goal and should be made available at the school level. This will help teachers to receive support related to their specific needs, especially through the inclusion of subject knowledge and pedagogical skills that feature classroom and time management and lesson planning, which can reduce loss of teaching time. Previous evidence from the region shows that targeted instruction training interventions for teachers are effective in boosting pupil learning outcomes (Duflo, Kiessel and Lucas, 2021; Beg et al., 2020).

2. Ensure teachers are in the classroom and on task while at school by minimizing their engagement in non-teaching activities.

- Since FMoE plans to strengthen the capacity of school inspectors and supervisors, it would help to include in their training how SUBEB and LEAs can ensure teachers' involvement in non-teaching activities does not hinder their time on task or presence in the classroom. This will encourage LGAs to plan their visits to schools and engage with teachers during non-teaching hours so teachers can devote the required time to their teaching tasks.
- LGAs need to expand their focus on attendance monitoring so that classroom presence and time on task are given similar attention as are school absence or punctuality. The Federal Government should consider including attendance monitoring explicitly in policy documents as part of its mandate for the LGA in school management.
- The Ministry of Education, Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB), and local education authorities (LEAs) should give priority to their goal of ensuring that SBMC committees are trained and operating at schools as this will help school managers enforce attendance rules. This may require the government to include attendance monitoring – especially classroom presence and instructional time use – as part of their planned training for SBMC in monitoring the professional development activities of teachers. Since LGAs are responsible for implementation, it is imperative they are included throughout this process.
- The PTA and SBMC should consider increasing support to schools so that teachers are not needed for maintenance or other administrative tasks during class time. The Ministry could include this in the SBMC training measures to increase community involvement, especially their engagement in extra-curricular activities. This could be especially important in the government's plan to increase sports activities. Previous evidence shows that parental engagement can improve pupil behaviour (Avvisati et al., 2014; Rogers and Feller, 2018) and academic performance (Barrera-Osorio et al., 2020a; Bergman, 2021; Dizon-Ross, 2019), both of which are known challenges in the Nigerian education system. However, parental engagement interventions are only effective if institutional rules are clear (Barrera-Osorio et al., 2020b) and therefore, it might be helpful for the Ministry to lead these initiatives.
- Building on experiences from other countries in the continent (e.g., Rwanda, Liberia), the Ministry of Education, Universal Basic Education Board (SUBEB), state and local education authorities, and representatives of the Nigerian Union of Teachers could explore the use of technology-based interventions, such as biometric fingerprint devices, in schools to ensure teachers adhere to attendance rules. However, caution and a consultative process between all actors is needed to develop and implement these programmes as previous evidence suggests these interventions may not work and could have substantial negative spill-over effects that include decreased job satisfaction, reduced effort, and recruitment problems (Banerjee, Glennerster and Duflo, 2008; Dhaliwal and Hanna, 2014).
- It is important that the Ministry of Education, SUBEB, and LEAs work together to reduce disparities in teacher-pupil ratios across the regions and localities (urban/rural), as results from this study suggest that teachers with larger classes find it difficult to manage the heavy workload and struggle with pupil misbehaviour, which affects not only their time on task but also their attendance and punctuality.

3. Provide teachers with timely provision of their salary, especially in rural and public schools, and consider incentive packages that help teachers facing hardship.

- The Federal Government should work closely with individual states to ensure salary delays are avoided, especially in areas where resources might be constrained and the cost of living is high. Variations among states suggest the need for a national directive to support and guide local governments to ensure teachers receive their pay on time. Since the Government already recognizes the challenges that delayed salaries generate for teachers, as well as the negative impact of recurrent strikes, it should consider working closely with NUT and seek its support in the process and progress of timely payments.

- The newly-revised NTEP includes the provision of an allowance for teachers working in rural areas, along with an incentive package for those in disadvantaged communities. It might help to include transportation within these packages, especially in areas with frequent salary delays or high living costs. It might also help to work closely with head teachers who can identify eligible teachers for these allowances and who can help out-of-town teachers find affordable accommodation options near the school. These initiatives can boost teachers' motivation and commitment to their jobs and attract qualified professionals to deprived areas. Evidence from The Gambia suggests the introduction of a hardship allowance significantly increased the share of trained teachers in remote areas (Pugatch and Schroeder, 2014). However, it is crucial to provide teachers working in remote and challenging areas with a supportive, conducive working environment as recent evidence suggests although financial incentives attract teachers, they are not as effective in retaining them (See et al., 2020).
- In the long-term, the Federal Government should consider supporting state and local authorities in ensuring salary amounts meet the daily household needs of teachers as low pay is a key cause of absenteeism. This can improve teachers' presence in the classroom and help the government achieve its aim of attracting more qualified teachers. It might also improve retention and time on task as it can decrease teachers' need to look for additional work or to feel stressed while in class.
- Finally, while the Federal government's COVID-19 Intervention Fund is an important initiative, it may need to be further simplified in its accessibility to private school teachers and schools, especially in disadvantaged areas. In the long-term, the Ministry may want to consider scaling up this initiative as private schools may continue to struggle with wage payment because they will need to allocate funds to meet the government's new COVID-19 school safety measures.

4. Ensure the teaching environment is conducive to learning by providing necessary TLMs and a classroom environment that meets both learning and teaching needs.

- Since the Ministry plans to rehabilitate schools, it is crucial that priority is given to classrooms in areas where adverse weather conditions are a common occurrence so that learning or teaching is not interrupted. These should include soundproof roofs, large windows, appropriate lighting, and the inclusion of other essential teaching aids (blackboards, chalk). These can be emphasized in the NTEP as part of its focus to improve teachers' working conditions. They should work closely with local authorities and school leaders to identify schools in immediate need of such support.
- FMoE, SUBEBs, and LEAs should consider upscaling their initiatives to provide TLMs that promote active learning and consider including other subjects that teachers may not have resources for. Additionally, attention needs to be given to teaching aids as these are also not always available. Existing evidence in the region shows that providing content support and scripted teacher guides to teachers can reduce their workload and enhance pupil learning outcomes (Piper et al., 2018).
- The Ministry's NHSMP programme for pupils should be upscaled so schools in marginalized contexts are prioritized as their need might be further exacerbated by COVID-19. It might help to include teachers as they too struggle with hunger, especially those experiencing salary delays or who work in rural or remote areas. This will ensure teachers stay at school and are on task, instead of searching for food or stressing over food security.
- Finally, the Federal Government should work closely with NUT to ensure teachers are included in the well-being efforts proposed in the COVID-19 education response plan, especially as they may experience additional hardships due to the combined impact of school closures and the economic consequences of the pandemic. This will strengthen the engagement of school officials and NUT, which can create a supportive environment for teachers by increasing collaboration between these key stakeholders.

5. The Ministry should ensure that it continues strengthening its inter- and intra- sector collaboration so that teacher attendance is prioritized across different system levels.

- In the long-term, FMoE might need to establish clearer guidelines on attendance in its official education policy documents, specifically the Teachers' Code of Conduct and the Professional Standards for Nigerian Teachers as these are official documents guiding teachers' professional work. Presently there are no rules or regulations on teacher absenteeism at the national or local level (except for Ekiti state), which may make it difficult for head teachers and LGAs to hold teachers accountable across all schools. These rules should build on Ekiti state's Teacher Service Manual (2011) which outlines minimum teaching load, acceptable forms of absenteeism, and mechanisms for recording and disciplining absences, and includes not only punctuality and school absence but also classroom presence and time on task as these are currently not prioritized.
- It is important that the Ministry strengthens its collaboration with other government sectors to ensure the broader community environment and infrastructure meet teachers' professional and personal needs. This will require additional resources so that communities are equipped with essential services (e.g., hospitals, banks, reliable transport). These are essential as they can save teachers time and thus enable them to focus on their teaching obligations.
- Finally, findings from this study suggest there is a need to further strengthen head teachers' leadership and management skills. Thus, the government should consider including school leaders in its current plan to develop the capacity of LGAs and the community, as strong leadership will be especially important during the COVID-19 pandemic when learners and educators will assume additional responsibilities. This will ensure head teachers have the confidence to enforce sanctioning measures despite salary delays or potential intimidation from teachers. Findings from previous studies suggest that head teacher training, combined with mentoring of teachers and provision of TLMs, improves literacy outcomes (Lucas et al., 2014). Likewise, research from The Gambia revealed school grants alone did not improve learning outcomes unless combined with management training (Blimpo et al., 2015).

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Annexes

Annex 1. Primary education statistics in Nigeria

Table 2. Trends in primary education in Nigeria

Indicator	Type of School	2006	2010	2018
Number of schools	Public	54.431	59.007	63.414
	Private	18.272	18.307	50.036
	Total	**72.703**	**77.314**	**113.450**
Pupils' enrolment	Public	23.016.559	20.291.709	22.384.755
	Private	1.144.095	1.621.638	5.504.632
	Total	**24.160.654**	**21.913.347**	**27.889.387**
Number of teachers	Public	534.794	564.569	594.653
	Private	75.899	116.025	318.926
	Total	**610.693**	**680.594**	**913.579**
Qualified teachers (%)	Public	52	60	69
	Private	80	80	49
	Total	**56**	**64**	**69**
Pupil-teacher ratio	Public	43:1	36:1	38:1
	Private	15:1	14:1	17:1
	Total	**40:1**	**32:1**	**31:1**

Source: Based on data from UBEC (2018).

Table 3. Trends in teacher statistics in public primary schools

Academic year	Number of teachers			Qualified teachers (%)		
	Male	Female	**Total**	Male	Female	**Total**
2011-2012	289.592	207.940	**497.532**	60	67	**63**
2012-2013	292.176	244.558	**536.734**	54	71	**61**
2013-2014	282.096	233.305	**515.401**	75	94	**83**
2014-2015	293.019	274.361	**567.380**	75	93	**84**
2015-2016	283.051	259.482	**542.533**	78	95	**86**

Source: Based on data from FMoE (2017).

Table 4. Primary education statistics in 2018, by school type and zone[28]

Type of School	Indicator	North-Central	North-East	North-West	South-East	South-South	South-West	National
Public	Enrolment (number)	2.411.662	3.405.554	8.841.916	1.981.261	2.370.753	3.373.609	22.384.755
	Number of schools	13.148	10.173	20.159	5.456	5.869	8.609	63.414
	Number of classrooms	75.869	56.490	114.290	44.000	52.045	64.084	406.778
	Classrooms in good condition (%)	45	44	54	52	55	57	51
	Number of classrooms required	68.905	97.302	252.626	56.607	67.736	96.389	639.565
	Average class size	32	60	77	45	46	53	55
	Pupil–teacher ratio	20:1	33:1	51:1	40:1	34:1	41:1	38:1
Private	Enrolment (number)	965.966	526.936	1.129.112	661.178	992.802	1.228.638	5.504.632
	Number of schools	9.027	3.029	5.639	5.726	7.894	18.721	50.036
	Number of classrooms	49.491	17.706	26.889	35.940	47.189	106.463	283.678
	Classrooms in good condition (%)	88	83	83	87	91	96	91
	Number of classrooms required	27.599	15.055	32.260	18.891	28.366	35.104	157.275
	Average class size	20	30	42	18	21	12	19
	Pupil–teacher ratio	16:1	22:1	30:1	18:1	19:1	12:1	17:1
National	Enrolment (number)	3.377.628	3.932.490	9.971.028	2.642.439	3.363.555	4.602.247	27.889.387
	Number of schools	22.175	13.202	25.798	11.182	13.763	27.330	113.450
	Number of classrooms	125.360	74.196	141.179	79.940	99.234	170.547	690.456
	Classrooms in good condition (%)	62	53	60	68	72	81	67
	Number of classrooms required	96.504	112.357	284.886	75.498	96.102	131.493	796.840
	Average class size	27	53	71	33	34	27	40
	Pupil–teacher ratio	29:1	49:1	23:1	48:1	36:1	17:1	31:1

Source: Based on data from UBEC (2018).

28 The national minimum class size standards are 35 learners per classroom in primary schools (UBEC, 2018).

Table 5. Primary school teacher statistics in 2018, by school type and geopolitical zone[29]

Zone	Public			Private			National		
	Number of teachers	Female teachers (%)	Qualified teachers (%)	Number of teachers	Female teachers (%)	Qualified teachers (%)	Number of teachers	Female teachers (%)	Qualified teachers (%)
North-Central	119.386	44	62	62.103	57	76	181.489	49	56
North-East	101.957	36	57	24.453	42	68	126.410	37	64
North-West	172.316	26	40	38.198	41	60	210.514	28	47
South-East	49.190	83	65	37.576	86	49	86.766	84	
South-South	69.228	68	73	52.088	73	46	121.316	70	61
South-West	82.576	73	79	104.508	74	48	187.084	74	62
National	**594.653**	**47**	**69**	**318.926**	**66**	**49**	**913.579**	**54**	**62**

Source: Based on data from UBEC (2018).

29 The six geopolitical zones and corresponding states (in the TTT sample) are: North-East (Bauchi), North-West (Kano), North-Central (Benue), South-East (Enugu), South-West (Oyo), South-South (Bayelsa).

Annex 2. Recent national education initiatives prior to and during COVID-19

Prior to COVID-19 lockdowns, several initiatives were undertaken by the Federal Government of Nigeria to address existing challenges in the education system and to work towards universal access to basic education for all. These initiatives include: the Nigerian home-grown school meal programme (NHSMP); rehabilitation of school infrastructure; provision of textbooks and learning materials; and targeted funding for schools (FMoE, 2018). The 2018-2022 Education Sector Strategic Plan identified the need to attract more teachers in rural and remote areas through the provision of special grants as incentives. Hence, the New National Teaching Policy, signed and approved in October 2020, addresses this need, and includes a rural allowance to attract and retain competent teachers in rural areas. The policy also sets up a new salary structure, a pension scheme, and a clear career progression system for teachers (ACNN, 2020).

To address teacher shortage in basic education schools across the country and to respond to increasing enrolment demand, the strategic plan envisions the recruitment and training of 287,500 new teachers (FMoE, 2018). Moreover, the Female Teachers Trainee Scholarship Scheme was introduced to ensure gender balance in the profession and to create role models to boost girls' education. Between 2008 and 2015, more than7,800 women benefited from this scheme. However, interviews with awardees show that despite the potential of the programme, the learning conditions (i.e., overcrowded classrooms, lack of teaching and learning materials) of pre-service teacher training programmes (common to all aspiring teachers), financial constraints, language difficulties, and lack of practical content were major obstacles contributing to high rates of repetition and failure among pre-service training teachers and awardees (Humphreys, Dunne, and Durrani, 2021).

The current education strategic plan acknowledges that the most salient challenges faced in pre-service training includes low quality of entrants; inadequate funding of teacher education; poorly organized and implemented teaching practices; and non-implementation of the National Teacher Education Policy (2014). The strategic plan attaches great importance to teacher education and considers pre-service training a key component to improve learning outcomes in the country. Thus, the Federal Government designated the National Commission for Colleges of Education (NCCE) to put in place adequate monitoring mechanisms to ensure the implementation of both recent pre-service training reforms and the new NCE curriculum. Furthermore, the Federal Government has committed to strengthening collaboration with state and local governments to sustain education spending, protect teacher salaries and conditions of work, and to expand teacher upgrading programmes, in-service training, and professional development to head teachers and school supervisors (FMoE, 2018).

Following COVID-19 school closures in mid-March 2020, Nigeria quickly developed a Coordinated Education Response Plan to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on the education system, to guide the provision of remote learning to over 37 million children and adolescents affected by school closures, and to prepare schools for reopening. The FMoE introduced a variety of modalities of distance learning including radio and TV education programmes, online content, and the provision of paper-based materials for vulnerable children (i.e., migrating families, children from refugee communities, children with special needs, and those from low socio-economic backgrounds). Although the use of various platforms for remote learning has the objective of ensuring continuity of education for all, there is concern that the pandemic will further exacerbate issues of inequity in education. Access to them has been limited and unequal, as only 1 out of 10 learners has access to a computer or owns a mobile phone, 82 per cent do not have access to the internet, 61 per cent of households in the country have a radio, and 49 per cent own a television (GPE, 2020). The education response plan outlines several post-COVID-19 measures to improve access to education for children and adolescents across all levels of basic education and to more than 10 million out-of-school children. These include back-to-school campaigns and accelerated and catch-up education programmes. The Federal Government, in coordination with state and local governments and the Ministry of Health is planning to train teachers on safety and hygiene measures, provide psychological support to children, launch sensitization campaigns around gender-based violence, provide access to adequate water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities, increase hygiene supplies to schools, and implement strict health measures (e.g., fumigation and disinfection of schools; provision of learning materials and protective equipment; safe distancing measures) when schools reopen.[30] Finally, as schools reopen, several alternative learning models for safe social distancing are being considered including: outdoor learning, staggered and alternate attendance, use of double shifts and decreasing interactions (FMoE, 2020).

30 All public and private schools are expected to reopen on 18 January 2021 with strict compliance with COVID-19 protocols and safety measures (FMoE, 2021).

Annex 3. Data collection and analysis methods

The study has three main data sources: in-depth interviews (IDI), focus group discussion (FGD), and paper-based surveys administered to teachers. In the first case, a total of 199 interviews were conducted with four distinct group of respondents: teachers, head teachers, education officials (national, subnational and district level), and community leaders *(see Table 1)*.

FGDs were conducted with a total of 36 pupils in primary schools who were present at the time of the survey. The interviews and FGDs had an average duration of one hour and were performed in the English language. They were transcribed word-for-word and analysed in the original language using Thematic Content Analysis. Coding was done manually, and data was organized into themes based on the TTT Conceptual Framework.

A total of 525 paper-based surveys were collected, cleaned, and compiled, removing any information that could allow participant identification. Table 6 presents basic statistics of survey data by state.

Table 6. Survey data summary statistics on selected teacher characteristics, by school level

Category		Average	Bauchi	Bayelsa	Benue	Enugu	Kano	Oyo
Urban/Rural (%)	Rural	42,5	41,4	42,5	34,9	51,8	52,2	34,9
	Urban	57,5	58,6	57,5	65,1	48,2	47,8	65,1
Type of school (%)	Public	59,6	82,0	56,3	67,5	51,8	55,4	31,4
	Private	40,4	18,0	43,8	32,5	48,2	44,6	68,6
Gender (%)	Female	68,3	61,4	75,0	71,1	100,0	40,9	77,7
	Male	31,7	38,6	25,0	28,9	0,0	59,1	22,4
Age (years)		36,5	35,8	35,4	38,8	37,4	33,3	39,4
Pupil-teacher ratio		54:1	76:1	31:1	51:1	31:1	81:1	30:1
University degree (%)		93,3	94,4	91,0	95,1	100,0	87,4	93,6
Studying or in training (%)		15,2	16,8	12,1	26,6	19,6	10,5	6,2
Work experience (%)	< 1 year	11,9	10,0	12,7	6,0	17,9	17,1	10,5
	1-5 years	27,7	35,8	29,1	30,1	28,6	23,9	16,3
	> 6 years	60,4	54,2	58,2	63,9	53,6	59,1	73,3
Teacher earnings enough to cover living expenses (%)	Yes	7,7	17,1	1,3	1,2	0,0	8,1	10,6
	No	92,3	82,9	98,7	98,8	100,0	92,0	89,4

Source: Nigeria TTT Survey data

The comparative analysis of survey data by different levels of aggregation (urban/rural, type of school) and teacher characteristics is limited to those cases where the differences between subgroups are statistically significant at a confidence level of at least 90 per cent. Stata was used for the descriptive and statistical analyses of survey data.

Annex 4. Study limitations

Like all studies relying on self-reported data, TTT is not free of methodological limitations.

Response bias may have been a challenge. Absenteeism is generally a taboo subject and it is unclear how truthfully teachers responded to questions around the nature and frequency of their absences, even though the principles of anonymity and confidentiality were highlighted during data collection. Enumerators were trained to communicate the objectives of the study clearly and to clarify any misconceptions regarding possible consequences and implications of voluntary participation. Moreover, other typical problems of self-reported data may have arisen such as selective memory, social desirability bias, telescoping, and differentiated weighting of events with respect to their true significance.

Selection bias may have been an issue as the teacher survey was administered only to teachers who were present at school on the day of the school visit. This means that some frequently absent teachers may not have been surveyed. To pre-empt this problem, all school visits were announced and teachers were informed about them well in advance.

Finally, the research team recognizes issues of **representativeness of the survey data** due to the purposive approach in selecting schools[31] and the size of the TTT survey sample (525 teachers) which, although important, is small and may affect the accuracy of any population estimates and limit the disaggregation of the analysis. Thus, the TTT findings only provide a snapshot of the selected schools rather than a representative view of the situation across all schools in the country.

For these reasons, the above-mentioned limitations were taking into consideration when interpreting the data. All findings reported have been thoroughly triangulated through qualitative interviews and focus group discussions with key education stakeholders.

31 The main units of analysis are a total of 36 schools, six in each state, selected based on regional diversity, type of school (public, private) and location (urban, rural). All teachers present in the school at the time of the survey were selected for a paper-based survey and 18 teachers per state were interviewed (except for Kano State where 17 interviews were conducted).

Annex 5. A brief note on research ethics

The UNICEF Office of Research – Innocenti applied for ethical clearance for the TTT study to the Health Media Lab and to the Institutional Review Board of the Office for Human Research Protections in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, both located in Washington, D.C. Ethical clearance was granted in July 2018.

Study implementation was preceded by extensive consultation with the Universal Basic Education Commission (UBEC) and key education stakeholders on research tool design, sampling, and instrument administration. Tools were shared with the UBEC for review and feedback and refined accordingly.

All contracted partners were extensively trained in research ethics and abided by the UNICEF Procedure on Ethical Standards in Research, Evaluation and Data Collection and Analysis.

Annex 6. Absenteeism and selected teacher characteristics

Table 7. Absenteeism and selected teacher characteristics

		Absence from school (%)	Lack of punctuality (%)	Absence from the classroom (%)	Reduced time on-task (%)	Any form of absenteeism (%)
Location	Urban	14	16	20	12	26
	Rural	16	16	17	17	32
	Diff	-2	0	3	-5	-6
	p-value	0,62	0,92	0,51	0,23	0,16
Type of school	Public	15	18	20	17	32
	Private	14	14	18	11	23
	Diff private-public	-1	-4	-2	-5	-9
	p-value	0,85	0,30	0,63	0,19	0,03
Gender	Female	15	15	19	12	26
	Male	15	17	19	20	34
	Diff	-1	-2	0	-8	-7
	p-value	0,89	0,65	0,94	0,06	0,10
Age	Above median (35)	13	13	15	12	25
	Below median	15	17	21	16	32
	Diff	-1	-4	-6	-4	-7
	p-value	0,75	0,40	0,20	0,39	0,13
Marital status	Single	13	16	20	16	32
	Married/Widowed	14	15	19	14	27
	Diff	-1	1	2	2	6
	p-value	0,72	0,79	0,74	0,67	0,28
Has children	Children	14	15	19	15	28
	No children	16	20	19	16	30
	Diff	-2	-6	0	-1	-2
	p-value	0,68	0,27	0,93	0,82	0,69
University degree	Yes	13	15	18	14	27
	No	29	27	28	24	47
	Diff	-16	-12	-10	-10	-20
	p-value	0,08	0,18	0,28	0,31	0,04
Years experience school	Above median	12	12	14	14	22
	Below median	18	19	24	15	34
	Diff	-6	-7	-9	-1	-12
	p-value	0,11	0,07	0,03	0,78	0,00
Teacher-student ratio	Above median (40)	17	20	22	20	35
	Below median	11	11	15	8	21
	Diff	6	9	7	12	14
	p-value	0,09	0,02	0,11	0,00	0,00
Studying/ training	Training	15	11	7	9	27
	No training	13	16	20	15	28
	Diff	2	-5	-13	-5	-1
	p-value	0,77	0,35	0,00	0,28	0,90

		Absence from school (%)	Lack of punctuality (%)	Absence from the classroom (%)	Reduced time on-task (%)	Any form of absenteeism (%)
Salary	Above median	13	13	11	16	24
	Below median	14	17	24	13	31
	Diff	-1	-4	-13	2	-7
	p-value	0,80	0,37	0,00	0,58	0,10
Salary covers montly expenditure	Yes	16	18	33	22	37
	No	15	16	17	14	28
	Diff	1	2	16	8	9
	p-value	0,84	0,77	0,08	0,34	0,28
Other jobs	Yes	18	17	26	16	42
	No	14	17	17	15	25
	Diff	4	1	9	1	17
	p-value	0,42	0,91	0,11	0,78	0,00
Only earner	Yes	15	16	18	18	32
	No	12	16	17	10	22
	Diff	3	0	1	9	10
	p-value	0,43	0,91	0,78	0,03	0,02
Time to school dry season (minutes)	Above median (20)	16	13	19	16	33
	Below median	11	16	19	13	25
	Diff	5	-4	1	4	8
	p-value	0,21	0,38	0,90	0,41	0,07
Time to school rainy season (minutes)	Above median (30)	16	13	20	13	31
	Below median	12	18	20	15	28
	Diff	4	-5	1	-2	3
	p-value	0,35	0,24	0,91	0,63	0,59

Note: Percentages indicate the proportion of teachers who report recurrent absences (i.e., once a week or more) based on each characteristic. The reported p-values are from OLS regression models estimated separately for each variable using robust standard errors.

Annex 7. Views and opinions related to teacher absenteeism on a selection of statements

Table 8. Views and opinions on a selection of statements, by location and gender

	Urban	Rural	Diff		Female	Male	Diff	
	Proportion (%)			p-value	Proportion (%)			p-value
School inspectors visit regularly	83	84	-1	0,77	85	81	4	0,30
School inspectors motivate staff	63	79	-17	0,00	70	70	-1	0,91
School inspectors prioritize infrastructure	53	60	-6	0,17	54	59	-5	0,30
School inspectors discourage absenteeism	74	76	-2	0,59	75	74	1	0,90
School inspectors frequently sanction absenteeism	60	70	-10	0,03	66	61	6	0,25
In this community teachers are respected	66	74	-8	0,04	72	64	7	0,10
Most parents encourage pupils' attendance	81	79	2	0,61	82	75	7	0,08
Most parents are engaged in school affairs	65	70	-5	0,24	71	58	13	0,00
Most parents see absenteeism as a problem	66	71	-5	0,24	70	64	6	0,18
Most students are motivated to learn	81	89	-8	0,01	89	76	13	0,00
School has the materials needed for class	58	60	-2	0,63	61	52	9	0,06
School has a good work environment	71	68	3	0,48	72	64	9	0,05
Most teachers work well with one another	84	92	-8	0,01	88	85	4	0,29
Head teacher is always at school	92	97	-6	0,00	95	93	2	0,38
Satisfied with head teacher's feedback	82	94	-12	0,00	88	85	3	0,39
Head teacher encourages teacher training	83	90	-6	0,03	88	82	6	0,09
Head teacher supports teacher involvement	79	87	-8	0,01	84	78	6	0,09
Head teacher discourages teacher absences	74	78	-4	0,31	78	70	8	0,05
Head teacher always records teacher absences	85	82	3	0,41	85	82	3	0,38
Head teacher manages well the school and teachers	84	94	-9	0,00	89	88	1	0,81
I am satisfied with my job	61	74	-12	0,00	70	61	9	0,05
I am satisfied with my salary	25	37	-12	0,00	28	34	-6	0,15
I receive my salary on time	60	64	-4	0,32	59	67	-7	0,11
It is easy to collect my salary	72	75	-3	0,46	74	70	4	0,30
I have access to training	46	59	-13	0,01	49	57	-8	0,09
I have adequate skills and knowledge	88	92	-4	0,18	90	89	1	0,78
I am upset when I am absent	81	82	-1	0,89	82	81	1	0,84

	Urban	Rural	Diff		Female	Male	Diff	
	Proportion (%)			P-value	Proportion (%)			p-value
Most teachers have the knowledge and skills needed to teach well	82	84	-2	0,54	84	79	5	0,21
Most teachers are satisfied with their job	45	56	-11	0,02	51	48	2	0,63
Most teachers are always present	84	83	1	0,68	87	78	9	0,02
Most teachers feel upset when absent	61	62	-1	0,86	63	57	6	0,19
Most teachers come late and/or leave early	24	23	0	0,96	23	24	-1	0,79
When in school, teachers always attend classes	89	94	-5	0,06	91	91	-1	0,82

Note: Percentages indicate the share of surveyed teachers who agree with each statement by locality and gender. The reported p-values are from OLS regression models estimated separately for each statement using robust standard errors.

Table 9. Views and opinions on a selection of statements, by school type

	Public	Private	Diff	
	Proportion (%)			p-value
School inspectors visit regularly	88	79	-9	0,01
School inspectors motivate staff	74	65	-8	0,05
School inspectors prioritize infrastructure	58	54	-4	0,40
School inspectors discourage absenteeism	76	72	-4	0,32
School inspectors frequently sanction absenteeism	72	53	-19	0,00
In this community teachers are respected	66	74	7	0,08
Most parents encourage pupils' attendance	73	90	18	0,00
Most parents are engaged in school affairs	57	82	26	0,00
Most parents see absenteeism as a problem	68	68	0	0,98
Most students are motivated to learn	80	91	11	0,00
School has the materials needed for class	50	71	22	0,00
School has a good work environment	58	87	29	0,00
Most teachers work well with one another	86	89	2	0,49
Head teacher is always at school	95	92	-3	0,16
Satisfied with head teacher's feedback	90	84	-6	0,07
Head teacher encourages teacher training	85	88	3	0,30
Head teacher supports teacher involvement	85	79	-5	0,12
Head teacher discourages teacher absences	72	80	8	0,03
Head teacher always records teacher absences	81	89	8	0,01
Head teacher manages well the school and teachers	91	85	-6	0,06
I am satisfied with my job	70	62	-9	0,05
I am satisfied with my salary	33	26	-7	0,10
I receive my salary on time	48	82	34	0,00
It is easy to collect my salary	63	88	25	0,00
I have access to training	45	61	17	0,00
I have adequate skills and knowledge	88	92	5	0,08
I am upset when I am absent	81	82	1	0,88
Most teachers have the knowledge and skills needed to teach well	81	85	3	0,31
Most teachers are satisfied with their job	60	36	-24	0,00
Most teachers are always present	78	93	15	0,00
Most teachers feel upset when absent	64	57	-7	0,12
Most teachers come late and/or leave early	26	21	-5	0,19
When in school, teachers always attend classes	90	93	3	0,26

Note: Percentages indicate the share of surveyed teachers who agree with each statement by type of school. The reported p-values are from OLS regression models estimated separately for each statement using robust standard errors.

Table 10. Views and opinions on a selection of statements, by type of absenteeism

	Absence from school				Lack of Punctuality			
	Yes	No	Diff		Yes	No	Diff	
	Proportion (%)			p-value	Proportion (%)			p-value
School inspectors visit regularly	83	85	-3	0,65	79	85	-6	0,31
School inspectors motivate staff	78	70	7	0,24	75	67	7	0,26
School inspectors prioritize infrastructure	58	56	2	0,84	57	57	1	0,91
School inspectors discourage absenteeism	72	75	-3	0,62	79	73	6	0,30
School inspectors frequently sanction absenteeism	62	64	-2	0,80	71	61	10	0,13
In this community teachers are respected	77	67	10	0,11	67	68	-1	0,86
Most parents encourage pupils' attendance	82	78	5	0,42	60	80	-20	0,01
Most parents are engaged in school affairs	70	65	4	0,52	59	66	-7	0,33
Most parents see absenteeism as a problem	63	72	-9	0,20	56	68	-12	0,10
Most students are motivated to learn	87	82	5	0,36	73	87	-13	0,03
School has the materials needed for class	51	60	-9	0,20	55	61	-5	0,47
School has a good work environment	63	70	-7	0,33	68	71	-3	0,68
Most teachers work well with one another	81	87	-6	0,31	89	85	4	0,40
Head teacher is always at school	96	94	3	0,35	95	94	1	0,78
Satisfied with head teacher's feedback	89	88	1	0,84	82	88	-6	0,30
Head teacher encourages teacher training	87	86	1	0,86	81	86	-5	0,35
Head teacher supports teacher involvement	85	81	4	0,45	82	81	1	0,89
Head teacher discourages teacher absences	69	75	-5	0,43	69	75	-6	0,39
Head teacher always records teacher absences	81	86	-5	0,39	78	85	-7	0,23
Head teacher manages well the school and teachers	85	88	-2	0,64	84	89	-5	0,32
I am satisfied with my job	71	67	4	0,57	58	67	-9	0,22
I am satisfied with my salary	34	35	-1	0,94	29	34	-5	0,44
I receive my salary on time	53	65	-12	0,11	54	65	-10	0,15
It is easy to collect my salary	63	72	-8	0,25	57	72	-15	0,04
I have access to training	66	52	14	0,05	51	52	-2	0,84
I have adequate skills and knowledge	85	90	-5	0,31	82	89	-7	0,20
I am upset when I am absent	75	80	-5	0,40	80	82	-2	0,74
Most teachers have the knowledge and skills needed to teach well	70	85	-15	0,03	70	85	-15	0,02
Most teachers are satisfied with their job	49	52	-3	0,73	40	51	-11	0,11
Most teachers are always present	75	82	-8	0,21	82	83	-1	0,91
Most teachers feel upset when absent	52	61	-9	0,24	49	61	-11	0,12
Most teachers come late and/or leave early	44	22	22	0,00	41	21	20	0,00
When in school, teachers always attend classes	83	91	-7	0,18	86	91	-6	0,26

Note: Percentages indicate the share of surveyed teachers who agree with each statement by form of absenteeism (i.e., differentiated by those who affirm they are regularly absent and those who are not). The reported p-values are from OLS regression models estimated separately for each statement and form of absence using robust standard errors.

Table 10. Views and opinions on a selection of statements by type of absenteeism (continued)

	Classroom absenteeism				Reduced time on task			
	Yes	No	Diff		Yes	No	Diff	
	Proportion (%)			p-value	Proportion (%)			p-value
School inspectors visit regularly	80	85	-5	0,39	80	82	-2	0,77
School inspectors motivate staff	76	73	3	0,63	67	71	-4	0,58
School inspectors prioritize infrastructure	56	60	-4	0,59	55	55	-1	0,93
School inspectors discourage absenteeism	75	77	-2	0,75	73	74	-1	0,91
School inspectors frequently sanction absenteeism	70	65	4	0,52	78	63	14	0,06
In this community teachers are respected	70	68	2	0,77	67	68	-1	0,92
Most parents encourage pupils' attendance	69	77	-8	0,24	70	76	-6	0,39
Most parents are engaged in school affairs	56	65	-9	0,19	64	66	-2	0,79
Most parents see absenteeism as a problem	58	69	-12	0,10	67	68	-1	0,89
Most students are motivated to learn	83	84	-1	0,84	89	85	4	0,42
School has the materials needed for class	52	55	-4	0,62	54	56	-2	0,81
School has a good work environment	78	65	13	0,04	75	65	10	0,19
Most teachers work well with one another	83	87	-5	0,40	86	86	0	0,99
Head teacher is always at school	90	96	-6	0,13	91	97	-5	0,22
Satisfied with head teacher's feedback	83	91	-8	0,14	89	89	0	1,00
Head teacher encourages teacher training	83	87	-4	0,47	86	84	2	0,67
Head teacher supports teacher involvement	82	83	-1	0,79	91	82	9	0,08
Head teacher discourages teacher absences	72	75	-2	0,72	68	73	-5	0,55
Head teacher always records teacher absences	76	85	-9	0,13	82	85	-3	0,60
Head teacher manages well the school and teachers	87	90	-3	0,47	85	89	-4	0,44
I am satisfied with my job	58	67	-9	0,18	71	64	7	0,32
I am satisfied with my salary	32	34	-2	0,77	39	33	6	0,48
I receive my salary on time	56	63	-7	0,35	61	61	-1	0,94
It is easy to collect my salary	59	74	-15	0,04	81	68	14	0,04
I have access to training	53	53	0	0,95	66	50	16	0,05
I have adequate skills and knowledge	77	93	-16	0,00	84	89	-6	0,34
I am upset when I am absent	82	78	4	0,46	72	81	-9	0,23
Most teachers have the knowledge and skills needed to teach well	64	84	-20	0,00	76	84	-9	0,20
Most teachers are satisfied with their job	52	51	1	0,88	56	49	7	0,39
Most teachers are always present	72	82	-10	0,11	73	82	-9	0,19
Most teachers feel upset when absent	52	58	-5	0,47	55	57	-3	0,76
Most teachers come late and/or leave early	38	23	15	0,03	42	21	22	0,01
When in school, teachers always attend classes	88	91	-3	0,56	91	91	0	0,94

Note: Percentages indicate the share of surveyed teachers who agree with each statement by form of absenteeism (i.e., differentiated by those who affirm they are regularly absent and those who are not). The reported p-values are from OLS regression models estimated separately for each statement and form of absence using robust standard errors.

for every child, answers

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