



Assessing School Attendance On The First Week And Academic Performance In Ebonyi State Basic Education

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Abstract

The first week of the term is critical as it sets the tone of academic activities. Unfortunately, most staff and pupils do not resume schooling in this period. This diminishes school outputs and jeopardizes the attainment of its objectives. This motivated the researchers to conduct this study to determine the school attendance rates of pupils and teachers of Ebonyi State Basic Education on the first week of the term; and to discover whether differences exist in the rate of school attendance among the sample LGAs. The

researchers relied on official data kept in the State Ministry of Education Headquarters. The Ministry's officials collected the data using an instrument developed and validated by the Federal Ministry of Education. Six research questions and four hypotheses tested at a significance level of .05 guided the study. The researchers on permission extracted the data of interest from the instrument. MannWhitney and Kruskal Wallis tests were used to analyze the extracted data. The results showed that pupils' attendance to school within the period was low, with male (25.28%), females (29.7%) and total (27.49%). The teachers' attendance was commendable, with males 898(87%), females 2,249(86%) and total 3,147(89%). Furthermore, no statistical significance differences existed between male and female pupils and teachers and among the sample LGAs school attendance rates. Based on the findings, the researchers recommended that Ebonyi State Ministry of Education should domesticate and implement the national framework on school enrolment drive campaign; intensify the conduct of and implement recommendations on the report of effective school reopening supervision; and, engage frequently with parents and guardians to sensitize them on the benefits of pupils starting school on the first week of school resumption

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Introduction

The Nigerian 9 year basic education program has three distinct academic terms per session. Each term is heralded by the first week of school reopening, which kicks starts the academic term and by extension the academic and non-academic activities of the term and session. The first week of school/academic resumption plays crucial roles in the term's academic activities (Olson, 2014; Beynon, 2023; Children's Commissioner, 2022; & Attendance Works, 2014). This according to them is because it sets the tone of both the curricular and co curricular experiences offered by the school to its clientele for the term, which most often influence the activities for the rest of the session both for children, the staff and the entire school. Furthermore, this period of the term is significant in school program as it provides the opportunity for building of strong positive pupils-teacher social and academic relationship; fostering a sense of community and belonging in learners and teachers; and, re-establishing crucial school routines (Ibironke, 2025). Pupils and teachers use the period to: set individual and collective goals for the term; conduct revision of the previous term's activities so as to get ready for the current term's learning; socialize with each other for fostering acquaintances; and, commence the new term's academic activities. In an efficient setting, school teachers and school managers utilize this period to direct the attention and energies of the pupils in setting positive and realistic goals (Guskey, 2024). The first week equally, offers ample opportunities for pupil and staff bonding. Hence, teachers and pupils interact and understand themselves, the knowledge that teachers gain from the interaction enables them to understand the personalities, interest, and the learning styles of their pupils. These help the teachers and other staffs to prepare contents and teaching styles that are relevant to the lives and interest of the learners (Kohourt, 2024 & The Help Group, 2025).

The diagnostic tests which enable teachers to discover the learning needs and challenges of pupils are administered in the first week of the term. Finally class placement tests are also administered to new pupils in the first week of the term. Consequently, prior to the commencement of the term, and to ensure that the core aims and objectives of the schools are pursued right from the beginning of the term, efficient organizations, individuals and government agencies involved in basic and other levels of education programs/services provision, consciously make school policies or review existing ones if need be to guide pupils and staff conducts especially in critical area such as attendance to school especially in the first week and other periods of the term. The underlying purpose of a policy on school attendance on the first week of the term is because:

- a. Receiving unhindered, full time, suitable, efficient and effective education is a child's fundamental, and a legal right or entitlement;
- b. Parents and careers have a legal obligation or responsibility to ensure that this happens;
- c. Attending school regularly right from the first week of the term aids intellectual , social ,and emotional development and is essential, if a child is to benefit fully from their school life; and



d. Children whose attendance to school is low are likely to have poor outcomes (British Education Acts 1996; and Children's Welfare Acts 1989).

Vicariously, school managers have the responsibility to set up school level mechanisms to ensure that these objectives are achieved.

Specifically, poor school attendances especially at the beginnings of any term have been observed to lower the literacy and numeracy rates of any country (Thompson, 2008). Hence, to reduce the rate of low attendance to school by pupils and staff, so as to bolster high literacy and numeracy rates of a country, schools set up the school attendance policy which according to Onethrustow l(2025) is to:

- a. ensure that all young people attend schools regularly and punctually from the first day of the first week of school reopening in order to maximize their educational and social development;
- b. Promote good attendance, thus improving the chances of young people attending schools and preparing them to fully contributing as citizens and even when they reach adulthood.
- c. Minimize absence from school right from the first day of school reopening thereby reducing levels of persistent absence.
- d. Ensure all stakeholders discharge their responsibilities regarding young people's attendance to school from the first week of school reopening.

Against this backdrop on school attendance therefore, St Peters School (2025) itemized the following rationale for each school to develop and implement a comprehensive organic school attendance policy. These include the fact that regular school attendance by learners is essential in order for each child to fulfill his/her educational potentials; children who attend schools regularly from the first day of school resumption are more likely to enjoy school; stakeholders have the obligation to start from the first week of the term to provide a welcoming and positive atmosphere so that young people feel safe and valued in the school; celebrate good attendance ; and communicate effectively with partner agencies to support families that are struggling with attendance (onethrustowl,2025). It is very important to note that the consequence of being absent from school at the beginning of academic term has a far reaching effects on the pupils' academic growth especially on their subsequent interests/attentions to school activities. In line with this, Beynon(2023) pointed out that missing school in the first week of school term gets a pupil off on the wrong foot leading to problem later in the year. This assertion firmly highlights the disadvantage of children not starting school or missing any day on the first week of the term. This being the case, therefore, stakeholders (parents, guardians, and education managers) should strive to insulate children/wards/pupils from staying away from school especially on any day of the first week of the term in order to prevent them from encountering the aforementioned challenge.



Regrettably, despite the important roles that policies targeting school attendance plays, there is no single policy framework in Nigeria at the federal level specifically targeting attendance to school on the first week of school reopening, instead, attendance on the first week is governed by broader multi-level education policies and laws, as well as specific strategies employed by states and local education authorities and sometimes by communities to ensure a smooth school reopening. Most of the efforts come in form of;

- a. Community engagement and institution led actions, such as PTAs (Parent Teachers Association), SBMC (School Based Management Committee) CBO (Community Based Organization) and FBOs (Faith Based Organization) sensitization of parents/guardians/stakeholders on the need for children to return to school after the end of the holidays.
- b. awareness campaigns on early resumption to school by education authorities, town announcers, media broadcast, community level town halls;
- c. Teacher readiness (that's making sure that teachers are prepared and present on the first day of the school term); and;
- d. Support for vulnerable families through grants by government and philanthropic organizations and individuals. This is mostly obtainable in Northern Nigeria through the federal/state government and donor supports.

The absence of national framework and laws on school attendance on the first week of the school term has led to weak, haphazard, and, in some cases non enforcement of existing state/community/school initiated laws/policies on attendance to school on the first week of the term by the enforcement team such as the ministry of education officials and community set up task force team. These school attendance enforcers have complained severally that they have always encountered resistance and challenges from defaulters because there is no law backing up their action from the national authorities. This resistance perhaps has given rise to the reported poor school attendance on the first week of the term experienced across all the states in Nigeria. For example, Oluwole (2025) had reported that in many schools across Nigeria, that the first week of the term is marked by half empty classroom while Miya, Sarkingobir and Hilhya (2023) had decried low school attendance in the first week of the school reopening as the schools are marked by high rates of absenteeism, truancy by pupils and teachers are often noticeable; the classrooms have scanty number of children whose precise numbers according to them are not readily available. Abu (2025) in his report revealed that schools in Calabar Cross River state recorded low attendance of pupils on the second day of the first week of 2024/2025 second term academic session.



Some other factors reported by researchers to be contributing to the low attendance to school on the first week of the term and in other times of the terms include: economic hardship or poverty of the caregivers; poor infrastructure and inadequate learning facilities; lack of standardized enforcement and capacity for monitoring across all levels of government; non enforcement of the existing state/community/school made Laws/policies on absenteeism on the first week of school reopening; social cultural factors; peer group influence; and; insecurity. Those identified factors were differently categorized by other researchers as follows: the pupils (individual) factor; family factor; school factor; and, community factor. The impact of the low attendance to school by pupils and teachers on school outcomes can be explained by Piaget's constructivist theory which emphasizes that learners(pupils) should be engaged actively to enable them construct and reconstruct knowledge through interaction and experience through hands-on activities that enhances exploration and discovery. When pupils are present in the learning environment at the right time as demanded by the law, they engage better and explore more, and their achievement will increase. Whereas the less the pupils present themselves in the learning environment, the less the pupils will engage and this will invariably lower their achievement and outcomes. It should be noted that every school day plays important role in the academic pursuit of pupils. The school curriculum which presents experiences that guide learning for pupils in school is structured, planned and sequenced in such a way that every school day has specific designated or outlined instructional objectives with matched activities that are aimed at providing experiences for children (Wheelers, 1965). Any day of the school day that a learner is not in school he/she will miss the planned instructional objectives for that day.

In Ebonyi state, there is existing policy that teaching and learning should commence effectively on the first day of the term, this policy has been in force and evidences show that schools have been implementing the policy to the later. Most pupils who stay away from school on the first week have always missed classes and lessons (EBSMoE, 2025). This underscores the need for parents to ensure that pupils return to schools on the first day of the school reopening in order not to miss any lesson in the term.

School attendance itself is the physical presence of a learner in the school and includes attending scheduled classes/tours/sports during such hours and on such days as determined by the school, unless excused from such attendance by school policy or state laws (Collins Dictionary, 2025 & Law Insider, 2012B). The emphasis and concern on children's school attendance on the first week of the school term are many folds. Firstly, studies have shown that absenteeism at the beginning of the term can predict ongoing attendance problems (Attendance Works, 2025). Secondly, it has been shown that poor attendance to school can generally influence negatively children's school achievement. This is evidenced, as research findings have shown that poor attendance to school can influence children's reading proficiency (Attendance Works, 2014). Late



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resumption to school by teachers and pupils has been linked to low curriculum coverage (EBSMoE, 2011). This in turn leads to poor school outcome which manifests in low students/pupils' achievement in both internal and external examinations especially standardized examination, such as Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE) at the basic education level as was reported by researchers (Okpara, 2019). Furthermore, it has equally been shown that pupils who missed fewer than 2 days in the first week continue to average fewer than 2 days absences each month while those who missed 2 to 4 days in the first week were 5 times likely than those who missed 2 days to be chronically absent for the year (Olson, 2014). It has been shown as evidenced by available data, that, more than half of pupils who missed some days of the first week went on to become persistently absent in 2024 compared with 14% of pupils who fully attended the first week; and; every day of school missed is a day stolen from a child's future (BBC News, 2025). Children's commissioner (2022) had reported that children who had an unauthorized absence on any day of the first week of the term had average term-level unauthorized absence rate of 25% compared to an unauthorized absence rate of 2% for pupils who didn't miss any session on the first week of the term. These evidences according to researchers have confirmed the theory that if a child attends everyday for the first week of the school term that it is strong indicators that they will go on to attend school regularly throughout the term. Low attendance to school on the first week of the term is a global challenge (Banyan, 2023 & Media Officer, 2023). Nigeria as a developing nation has her own fair share of the challenge of low school attendance on the first week of the school term. For instance, Oluwole (2025); Abu (2025); and, Milhya et al (2023) had independently and severally reported preponderance of pupils' low school attendance on the first week of the term in Oyo, Sokoto and Cross River States, while Ebonyi State Education Management Information System (EMIS) (2023) implicated low turnout of pupils to school in the beginning of the term as the cause of late commencement of effective academic activities in school which hitherto causes non coverage of each term's curriculum contents.

Psychologists and educational researchers have adduced plausible reasons for the reported low attendance to school on the first week of the term. One of the reasons is anchored on the theory of cognitive dissonance propounded by Leon Festinger in 1957. According to him, human beings strive for consistency to function mentally in real world. People who experience internal inconsistency most often become psychologically uncomfortable. They therefore strive to reduce the cognitive dissonance (Wikipedia, 2025). Joseph and Rangash (2017) had opined that what triggers off dissonance in males are slightly different from that of females. According to them, females are more dissonance to internal and personal areas such as personal adjustments, health and wellness, whereas males are more dissonance in external and impersonal areas especially in schooling and learning and subservience division. Cognitive dissonance could be triggered in pupils and staff due to the changes between relaxation of holidays and the beginning of the school



term and school environment. This results to psychological discomfort. Pupils and school staff attempt at all cost to avoid situation that will trigger dissonance by refusing to return to school at the beginning of the term (UGC. NET, 2025). The first week of the term serves as a period of making decision by pupils and staff on whether to return to school or to continue with their relaxation. Parents and careers can arrange holiday lessons for pupils to enable them stay connected to academic activities during the holiday period. This will help reduce the incidence of dissonance at the beginning of the term which results to staying away from school. The view of this reviewed theory is in consonance with but explained differently by the theory of cumulative risk factor propounded by Sir Micheal Ruther in 1979. The cumulative risk factor theory is based on the probability of some events occurring over a specific period of time. The events will lead to compounded effects of multiple risk factors (Kamiya and Gonzalez, 2023). Hence the theory is of the opinion that accumulation of risk factors such as bullying, child labour, domestic violence, and poverty can lead to negative outcomes (Ragnassdotir and Krisjansson, 2017). In education, pupils and teachers with high cumulative risk scores may be likely to experience difficulty in resuming back to school in the first week of school term (Sun, Sun, Peng Jang and Peng, 2021). This is as a result of their strive to attend to or settle those pressing unfriendly factors that accumulate to drag them back from returning back after school resumption. This is most likely to be the case and the cause of the low attendance to school in the first week of the term in Ebonyi state as most families in Nigeria especially in Ebonyi state face economic hardship which has pushed them below poverty line. The first week of school reopening is still a continuation of activities of the holiday. Pupils and parents are still engaged in economic activities and other sources of livelihood such as farm work and or other economic activities such as hawking. This leads to such negative outcomes like children not turning up to school in the first week and in some cases an outright drop out of school.

The government and education stake holders in Ebonyi state should as a matter of urgency rise up to the challenge of addressing all the issues that lead to low turnout to school by pupils on the first week of the term. This has become necessary as Ebonyi state is the only state within the southeast geopolitical zone of Nigeria classified as education less developed. One of the indices of education growth or development is the percentage of school aged who enrolled in school, attend regularly and complete education with vocational/livelihood skills. Hence, if Ebonyi state wants to grow her education system, and exit from this unenviable classification, all efforts must be intensified in encouraging pupils to resume schooling from the first day of the term.

The purpose of this research study is to investigate the extent to which pupils and staffs (males and females) of Ebonyi state basic education (primary) return to school on the first week of school reopening in Ebonyi state. The study will equally determine the rate in which pupils and



staffs (males and females) of primary section of the basic schools of the sampled LGAs return to schools on the first week of school reopening in Ebonyi state basic education.

Statement of the problem.

School attendance in the first week of the term is crucial in the achievement of the desired behavioral outcomes in learners outlined in the curriculum. Poor attendance to school within this period has been proved to drastically reduce the academic outcome of children. For instance, Children's commissioner (2022) had reported that children who had an unauthorized absence on any day of the first week of the term had average term-level unauthorized absence rate of 25% compared to an unauthorized absence rate of 2% for pupils who didn't miss any session on the first week of the term. Furthermore, researches have shown that poor attendance to school can influence children's reading proficiency negatively (Attendance Works, 2014). Regrettably, reports have shown that school attendance by pupils and teachers in Nigeria during the beginning of the academic term generally is low (Oluwole, 2025 & MIya et al, 2023). Hence it is a concern that Ebonyi state may likely be facing the same challenge.

Worried by the negative effects of low school attendance to pupils' academic outcome, these researchers carried out this research study. The compelling need for this study is based on the fact that Ebonyi state is classified as educationally less developed state (EBSMoE, 2019). Therefore, the outcome of this study will spur the state to strive to ensure that staff and pupils are mobilized to attend school from the first week of the term. The researchers believe that this is one of the pathways through which the state can exit the educationally less developed categorization.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study is to determine the rate of school attendance in Ebonyi state on the first week of the term in Ebonyi state Basic Education (primary section). Specifically, the study sought and determined:

- a. pupils' and staff (males and females) school attendance rates on the first week of school reopening in the sample LGAs
- b. the rates of male pupils' attendance in the first week of school reopening in the sample LGAs
- c. The rate of female pupils' attendance in the first week of school reopening in the sample LGAs.
- d. The rate of male teachers' attendance in the first week of school reopening in the sample LGAs.
- e. The rate of female teachers' attendance in the first week of school reopening in the sample LGAs.



- f. The rate of teachers (males and females) school attendance on the first week of school reopening in the sample LGAs

Methodology

The study adopted a quantitative survey research design, this is to enable the researchers carefully and methodically explore the rates of pupils and staff (males and females) attendance to schools on the first week of the term from 2019/2020 to 2021/2022 academic session. These were events that had already taken place in the past. Therefore manipulation of variables was not possible. The nature of data collected from the State Ministry of Education Headquarters was merely quantitative data. The quality assurance officers of the ministry collected the data using a monitoring instrument developed and validated by the Federal Ministry of Education Abuja. The researchers after obtaining approval from the officials of the ministry extracted the data of interest from the official document. After subjecting the extracted data to statistical analysis, the outputs from the analysis were used to answer the research questions as well as to test the hypotheses. The data were analyzed using either MannWhitney or Kruskal Wallis tests as were applicable or appropriate to each of the research questions and hypothesis. The population of the study comprised of all the four hundred and five thousand pupils and ten thousand six hundred and ninety teachers in Ebonyi state Universal Basic Education schools (primary section) (EBSMoE 2023). Seven LGAs were sampled for the study. All the teachers and pupils in those seven LGAs formed the sample of this study.

Research Questions

Six research questions were developed to guide the study. They were:

- a. What is the school attendance rate of pupils in the first week of school reopening in the sample LGAs of Ebonyi state?
- b. What is the school attendance rate of male pupils in the first week of school reopening in Ebonyi state?
- c. What is the school attendance rate of female pupils in the first week of school reopening in Ebonyi state?
- d. What is the school attendance rate of teachers (male and females in the first week of school reopening in the sample LGAs in Ebonyi state?
- e. What is the school attendance rate of male teachers in the sample LGAs of Ebonyi state?
- f. What is the school attendance rate of female teachers in the first week of school reopening in the sample LGAs of Ebonyi state?

Hypotheses

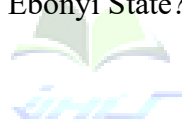


- a. Four hypotheses were formulated to guide the study. The hypotheses were tested at alpha level of .05 level of confidence. They were
- b. HO1. There is no statistical significance difference between the rate of male and female pupils attendance in the sample LGAs of ebonyi state.
- c. HO2. There is no statistical significance difference in the male and female teachers' attendance rate in the sample LGAs in Ebonyi state.
- d. HO3. The attendance rate of pupils in the first week of school reopening in Ebonyi state does not significantly differ among the sample LGAs.
- e. HO4. The attendance rate of teachers in the first week of school reopening in ebonyi state does not significantly differ among the sample LGAs.

Results

The findings of this study are presented under the research questions that guided the study. These findings are presented under the research question that led to the finding.

Research Question1. What are the attendance rates of male and female pupils in the first week of school reopening in the sampled L.G.As of Ebonyi State?





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LGA	YEAR	TERM S (MALES)				TERMS (FEMALES)				GRAND TOTAL
		1 ST	2 ND	3 RD	TOTAL	1 ST	2 ND	3 RD	TOTAL	
ABAKALI	2019/2020	402(29)	341(23)	355(44)	1090(26)	513 (24)	311(27%)	316(23%)	1140(24.6%)	2235(25.3%)
	2020/2021	206(48)	196(40)	465(29)	929(39)	269(10)	176(35)	471(29)	916(25%)	1845(32%)
	2021/2022	203(48)	114(40%)	471(29)	788(29)	218(30)	416(35)	986(29)	18-72(31.6%)	1366(30%)
	TOTAL	873(45)	651(34%)	1291(27%)	2815(35%)	1000(21)	965(30%)	1723(29)	3628(27%)	6443(315)
EBONYI	2019/2020	276(25)	415(13)	251(2)	942(19.3%)	278(23%)	516(15)	316(24)	1104(206)	2046(20.1)
	2020/2021	412(26)	79(13)	608(08)	1099(16.1%)	445(3&)	83(17)	109*7%)	637(20.3)	1736(18.1)
	2021/2022	156(14)	231(21)	197(13)	1184(16%)	188(13)	235(17)	297(16)	723(13.3)	190.7(15.6)
	TOTAL	844(21.6%)	725(156%)	1656(13.3%)	3225(17%)	911(24.3%)	828(16.33)	724(15.6%)	2463(184%)	5688(17.8)
IZZI	2019/2020	83(24)	113(15)	299(37)	795(2490)	153(31)	142(32)	329(46)	624(36.3)	1119(30.8)
	2021/2022	362(20)	103(44)	66(07)	433(15.6)	536(47)	214(68)	85(10)	834(41%)	365(34)
	2021/2022	166(09)	155(16)	172(22)	(21.7)	178 (05)	202 (20)	292(98)	672(4.3)	11.05(20)
	TOTAL	551(17.7%)	371(25.6)	537(22.6)	1459(21)	866(27.7)	558(40)	706(34.7)	2130(31%)	3588(28)
EZZA NORTH	2019/2020	438(30)	99(9)	101(03)	638(7.3)	448(350)	117(26)	214(34)	779(31)	1417(24.1)
	2020/2021	312(26)216	216(32)	623(54)	1151(37)	327(26)	310(43)	730(61)	1367(43)	2518(40)
	2021/2022	30(64)99	99(03)	231(17)	360(08)	16(03)	117(26)	30(19)	163(16)	523(12)
	TOTAL	780(20%)	44(189)	955(46)	2149(20.8)	791(21.3)	344(32%)	1240(38)	2580(30.4)	4729(27.5)
IKWO	2019/2020	280(20)	321(11)	362(22)	310(32)	310(32)	410(17)	570(34)	1290 (36)	2253(26.8)
	2020/2021	144(17)	104(20)	30(64)	172(19)	172(19)	210(12)	16(30)	398(11)	756(12.35)
	2021/2022	562(31)	116(20)	410(51)	1088(44)	626(33)	266(40)	526(58)	148(43.7)	2506(43.8)
	TOTAL	986(22.)	621.(17%)	802(26)	2409(21.9)	1108(28)	866(21)	1112(33)	3166(27)	5515(246)



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The output of data analysis contained in Table 1 provided the answers to these questions.

TABLE 1 PUPILS ATTENDANCE ON THE FIRST WEEK OF SCHOOL REOPENING IN EBONYI STATE FROM 2019/2020-2021/2022

LGA	YEAR	TERM (MALES)				TERMS FEMALES				GRAND TOTAL
		1 ST	2 ND	3 RD	TOTAL	1 ST	2 ND	3 RD	TOTAL	
IVO	2019/2020	40(29)	113(42)	96(28)	249(33)	65(44)	108(43)	106(34)	299(40)	528(36.5)
	2020/2021	859(33)	1586(9)	1201(5)	2558(62)	177*06	1528(70)	1003(88)	3708(541)	6266(58)
	2021/2022	39(06)	72(09)	26(08)	137(08)	60(51)	92(12)	37(08)	189(24)	326(16)
TOTAL		930(63)	1771(4)	1323(30.6)	4032(34.2)	302 (33)	728(41)	2146(43)	3178(39)	7210(36.6)
EDDA	2019/2020	136(12)	165(39)	213(28)	534(16.3)	201 (69)	182(07)	318(37)	701(17.3)	1235(16.9)
	2020/2021	698(23)	1092(2)	305(45)	2095(32.1)	745(31)	1630(43)	226(27)	2601(67)	4696(33)
	2021/2022	197(22)	232(26)	295(41)	724(29.6)	206(17)	281(26)	305(611)	792 (46)	1516(32.1)
TOTAL		1051(19)	1489(2)	813(38)	3353(26)	152(19)	2093(25)	645(41,6)	3890(286)	7243(57.3)
Grand total		6062(24.14)	6042(25.7)	737(26)	19481(25.28)	6130(24.)	6592(307)	8301(33.)	20973(29.)	40454 (27.49)

From Table one, the total male and female pupils attendance rates in the first week of the terms in the sample LGAs were as follows: males 19,481 (25.28%), while that of the females was 20,973(29.7%). This shows that there was a slight difference in the attendance rate between male and female pupils. But the test of hypothesis will reveal if the difference is significant or not.

RQ2: What is the attendance rate of male and female teachers in the first week of school reopening in the sampled L.G.As of Ebonyi state?

To answer this question the output of data analysis contained in the Table2 guided the researchers.

Table2 showing teachers' attendance rates in the first week of school reopening in the sampled LGAs of Ebonyi State



TABLE 2 TEACHERS' ATTENDANCE ON THE FIRST WEEK OF SCHOOL REOPENING IN EBONYI STATE 2019/2020-2021/2022

LGA	YEA R	TERM (MALES)				TERMS FEMALES				GRAND TOTAL
		1 ST	2 ND	3 RD	TOTAL	1 ST	2 ND	3 RD	TOTAL	
IZZI	2019/ 2020	09(90%)	05(100%)	07(78%)	21(89%)	17(85%)	37(93%)	14(74%)	68(84%)	89(87%)
	2020/ 2021	14(70%)	18(95%)	12(100%)	44(83%)	35(85%)	25(89%)	18(92%)	78(88%)	122(86%)
	2021/ 2022	10(83%)	05(83%)	11(91%)	26(86%)	63(95%)	31(78%)	22(67%)	116(80%)	142(83%)
	TOTAL	33(81%)	28(93%)	30(90%)	91(88%)	115(83%)	93(87%)	54(77%)	262(84%)	353(86%)
EBONYI	2019/ 2020	10(91%)	13(92%)	22(87%)	45(90%)	39(95%)	40(92%)	35(87%)	114(91%)	159(91%)
	2020/ 2021	34(83%)	12(86%)	9(90%)	55(86%)	47(89%)	52(84%)	26(93%)	125(89%)	180(88%)
	2021/ 2022	9(100%)	3(75%)	31(96%)	43(90%)	34(85%)	30(83%)	79(87%)	143(85%)	186(88%)
	TOTAL	53(91%)	28(84%)	62(91%)	143(89%)	120(90%)	124(86%)	140(89%)	384(88%)	827(89%)
ABAKALI	2019/ 2020	34(68%)	10(97%)	9(82%)	53(83%)	5(79%)	53(91%)	28(88%)	86(86%)	139(85%)
	2020/ 2021	11(69%)	5(100%)	20(95%)	4(688%)	5(797%)	45(74%)	38(90)	140(87)	176(88%)
	2021/ 2022	5(71%)	3(100%)	15(88%)	23(86%)	39(87%)	39(87)	77(96)	155(90)	178(91%)
	TOTAL	50(69%)	18(99%)	44(89%)	112(86%)	101(88)	137(87%)	143(90%)	381(87)	493(84)
EZZA NORTH	2019/ 2020	12(100%)	2(100%)	8(100%)	22(100%)	56(100%)	10(77%)	11(92%)	77(86%)	99(93%)
	2020/ 2021	25(78%)	9(69%)	15(94%)	49(80%)	38(75%)	30(91%)	25(100%)	93(89%)	142(85%)
	2021/ 2022	8(80%)	2(100%)	7(100%)	17(93%)	11(79%)	10(77%)	48(80%)	69(78%)	86(86%)
	TOTAL	35(86%)	13(90%)	30(98%)	78(91%)	105(81%)	177(82)	84(91%)	366(85%)	444(88%)
IKWO	2019/ 2020	16(76%)	10(100%)	8(80%)	33(85%)	29(94%)	10(94)	8(77%)	47(88%)	79(87%)
	2020/ 2021	6(67%)	15(94%)	10(100%)	31(87%)	85(69%)	20(80%)	31(100%)	136(83%)	167(85%)
	2021/ 2022	3(33%)	8(80%)	8(100%)	19(93%)	27(96)	35(96%)	11(76%)	73(89%)	92(91%)
	TOTAL	25(81%)	33(91%)	26(93%)	84(88%)	141(86%)	65(90%)	50(84%)	256(87%)	340(87%)
IVO	2019/ 2020	5(100%)	6(100%)	3(100%)	14(100%)	12(100%)	15(85%)	12(100%)	39(4%)	53(100%)
	2020/ 2021	96(97%)	90(95%)	30(97%)	216(96%)	105(94%)	49(79%)	22(79%)	177(84)	392(90)



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	2021/ 2022	-	5(100)	3(75%)	8(58%)	12(71%)	15(79%)	12(75%)	39(75%)	47(67)
TOTAL		101(66)	101(98 %)	36(91%)	238(85%)	129(88%)	79(80)	146(85)	254(84)	492(85)
EDDA	2019/ 2020	13(87%)	9(82%)	6(86%)	28(83%)	14(88%)	28(100%)	13(93%)	55(94%)	83(90%)
	2020/ 2021	79(98%)	25(83 %)	27(96%)	131(92%)	80(72%)	45(83%)	34(100%)	159(85%)	290(89%)
	2021/ 2022	6(100%)	5(83%)	5(71%)	16(85%)	26(90%)	18(86%)	40(98%)	84(91%)	100(88%)
TOTAL		98(95%)	16(83 %)	38(84%)	152(89%)	120(83%)	91(90%)	87(97%)	298(90%)	450(90%)
Grand total		395(81 %)	237(91 %)	266(91)	898(87%)	831(86%)	764(85)	654(88%)	2249(86 %)	3147(87%)

From Table 2, the total male teachers' attendance in the period studied was 898 representing 87% rate while that of the females was 2,249 representing 86% attendance rate. Apparently, the males' attendance is higher than the females but the test of hypothesis will reveal, if the difference is significant or not.

RQ3. What is the cumulative pupils' attendance rate in each of the sampled L.G.As; of Ebonyi State?

To answer this question, the researchers consulted table 3 for the output of the descriptive data analysis on cumulative pupils attendance rate in the sampled LGAs.

Table 3 the cumulative pupils' attendance rate by L.G.As in the first week of school reopening in Ebonyi State.

	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	Total	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	Total	Grand total
Abakaliki	873(45%)	651(34 %)	129(27)	2815(35%)	100(21%)	905(32%)	1723(27%)	3628(27%)	6443(31%)
Ebonyi	844(21.6 %)	725(15 %)	1656(13.3 %)	3225(17%)	911(24.3%)	828(16.3 %)	724(15.6%)	2463(18.7%)	5688(17.85%)
Izzi	551(17.7 %)	371(25 %)	357(22.6%)	1459(21.7 %)	866(27.7%)	558(40%)	706(34.7)	2130(34%)	3588(28%)
Ezza North	780(20%)	414(18 %)	955(24.6%)	21.9(20.8%)	791(2137%)	544(32%)	1245(38%)	2580(304%)	4729(27.5%)
Ikwo	186(2.27 %)	621(17 %)	802(26%)	2409(21.9 %)	108(28%)	886(21%)	1112(33%)	3106(27%)	5516(24.5%)
Ivo	938(23%)	1771(4 9%)	1323(30.6 %)	4032(34.2 %)	302(33%)	728(41%)	2146(43%)	3178(39% %)	7210(36.6%)
Edda	1051(19)	1489(2 1%)	813(38%)	3353(26%)	1152(19%)	2093(25 %)	645(41.6%)	3890(28.6%)	7243(27.3%)



For Abakaliki L.G.A, the Table showed that there was a cumulative attendance rate of 6443 representing 31%. This was made up of 2815(35%) for males and 3268(27%) attendance for females. For Ebonyi LGA, the Table showed a total attendance of 5,688 representing 17.85%. This was made up of 3,225 (17%) for males and 2,463 (18.45%) for females. In Izzi LGA, Table 3 showed that 3588 (28.%) pupils turned to school within the first week of school terms Of this number, 1459 were males, which represented 21.7% of enrolled male pupils, while 2130, representing 34% of enrolled females were present. In Ezza North, 4729 (27.51%) of enrolled pupils attended in the first week of the school, this was made up of 2,149 (20.8%) of enrolled males and 2,580(30.4%) of enrolled females). In Ikwo LGA a total of 5,515 (245%) of enrolled children were present. This was made up of 2404 (21.9%) of enrolled males and 3106(27%) of enrolled female reported to school on the first week of school reopening. For Ivo L.G.A; there was a total of 7210 (36.6%) of enrolled pupils in school in the first week of school reopening. This was made up of 4032(34.2%) males and 3178(39%) females in the L.G.A. Finally, in Edda L.G.A, the attendance to school in the first week was 7243(27.3%) of children who were enrolled an schools. The breakdown of this number showed that 3353 representing only 36% of enrolled males were present while 3890, representing28.6% of enrolled females were present. Based on the figures in the Table, it can be said that none of the sampled LGA. recorded up to 50% of school attendance in the first week of school reopening for the three years. Finally, the TSable showed that the least percentages was recorded by Ebonyi (17.9%) while the highest percentage attendance was recorded by Ivo LGA (36.6%)

R.Q.4 what is the cumulative teachers' attendance rate to school in each of the sampled L.G.As of Ebonyi State?

LGA	Terms (males)				Terms (females)				Grand
	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	Total	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	Total	
Izzi	33(81%)	28(93%)	30(90%)	91(88%)	115(88%)	93(87%)	54(57%)	262(84%)	353(86%)
Ebonyi	52(91%)	28(84%)	62(91%)	143(89%)	120(90%)	124(86%)	140(89%)	384(88%)	877(88%)
Abakaliki	50(69%)	18(99%)	44(89%)	112(26%)	102(88%)	137(84%)	143(90%)	381(87%)	493(87%)
Ezza North	35(86%)	13(90%)	30(98%)	78(91%)	105(81%)	177(83%)	84(1%)	366(85%)	444(88%)
Ikwo	25(81%)	23(91%)	26(93%)	84(88%)	141(86%)	65(90%)	50(84%)	256(87%)	346(*7%)
Ivo	101(66%)	101(98%)	36(91%)	238(85%)	129(88%)	79(80%)	46(85%)	254(85%)	492(85%)
Edda	98(98%)	16(88%)	38(84%)	152(89%)	120(83%)	91(90%)	87(97%)	298(90%)	450(90%)



To answer the research question , the researchers relied on the output contained in Table 4 Table 4 showing the cumulative teachers' attendance by L.G.A in the first week of school reopening in Ebonyi State by L.G.A.s

From, the Table 4, the cumulative teachers' attendance rate in the first week of school reopening in the sampled LGAs in Ebonyi State were as follows: Izzi LGA, the attendance rate was 355 (86%). This was made up of 911(88%) males and 262 (84%) females. In Ebonyi, it was 827(88%). This was made up of 143 (89%) male and 384 (88%) female teachers. In Abakaliki LGA, the total attendance was 493, representing 87% rate. This was made up of 112(87%) for males and 381(87%) for females. For Ezza north, it was 444 representing 87% rate. This was made up of 78(91%) for males and 366(85%) for females. For Ikwo LGA. It was 340 (87) attendance. This was made up of 84(88%). males and 256(87%) for females. For Ivo LGA, the total attendance was 492(85%). The male pupils recorded 230 (85%) while that of the females was 254(84%). Finally in Edda LGA, the attendance was 450 (90%) attendance, with males recording 152(89%) while the females recorded 298 (90%) attendance. The LGA with the highest attendance rate was Edda (9(0%) while the LGA with the lowest attendance rate was Ivo with 85% attendance.

R.Q.5 what is the overall pupils' attendance rate in the first week of school reopening in Ebonyi state.

To answer this question the researchers relied on the output on Table 5..

Table showing the overall pupils' attendance rate in the first week of school reopening in Ebonyi State

Male (terms)				Females (terms)				Grand
1 st	2 nd	3 rd	Total	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	Total	Total
6062(24.150)	60.42	7377	19481	6130	6592	8301	20973	40454
	(25.7)	26%	25.28)	24.9)	30.9)	(33.2)	(29.7)	27.49)

From the data contained on table 5, the overall pupils attendance rate in the sample LGA on the first week of school reopening was 40454(27,49%). This was made up of 19481 (25.28%) for males and 20973(29.7%) for females. It is oblivious that the attendance rate on the first week was very poor.

RQ 6. What is the teachers' overall attendance rate in the first week of school reopening in Ebonyi State.

To answer this research question, the researchers relied on data contained in table six.



Table 6 showing the overall pupils' attendance rate in the first week of school reopening in Ebonyi state.

Male (terms)				Females (terms)				Grand
1 st	2 nd	3 rd	Total	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	Total	Total
395(81%)	237	266	898	831	764	654	2,249	3147
	(91)	(91%)	(87%)	(86%)	(85%)	(88%)	86(5)	(87%)

From the descriptive output of the analysis presented in Table 6, the total teachers' attendance rate was 3147 representing 87% of total teachers in the sampled L.G.As. This was made up of 898 (86%) for males and 2249(86%) for females. This shows that teachers turn up to school in good numbers on the first week of schools reopening in the sampled L.G.As in Ebonyi State.

Hypothesis

Four hypotheses were formulated to guide this study. These hypotheses were tested at a significance level of 0.05.

HOI: There is no significance difference between male and female pupil's attendance rates to school in the first week of school reopening in the sampled L.G.A. of Ebonyi State.

To test this null hypotheses; the researchers used the Mann Whitney UTest Statistics (a non-parametric test), the output is displayed in Table 7.

Table seven (7) A and B showing Mann Whitney UTest of differences between male and female pupils' attendance to school on the first week of the term in the sampled L.G.As of Ebonyi State.

7A Ranks

Attendance to school by sex	Numbers of terms	Mean rank	Sum of Rank
Male	3	58.12	3724.500
Female	3	67.88	4278.50
Total	126		

7B (test statistics)

Mann Whitney U	1708.5
Wilcoxon W	3724.5
Z	-1.347
Asymp sig. (2taded)	0.178

From the combined outputs on Tables 7A (Ranks) and 7B (test statistics), the Mann Whitney U sum rank test at 0.05 alpha level compared males (n=63) and females (n=63) number of terms



of attendance in the first week of school reopening. The mean rank ($n=58.12$) for males and ($n=67.88$) for females, Z test statistics was -1.347 , P-value was 0.178 , while the Mannwhitney U test was 1708.5 . Since the P-value (0.178) is not less than 0.05 , the researchers failed to reject the null hypothesis, but rather upheld the null hypothesis of no significant difference, since there is no evidence to say that the true mean is different from the two groups. The rank biserial correlation coefficient was calculated and it yielded a value of -0.15 . This further confirms that female pupils attend basic school more than the males on the first week of school reopening in the sample LGAs of the state.

HO₂: There is no significance difference in the male and female teachers' attendance rate to schools in the sampled LGAs on the first week of school reopening in Ebonyi State.

To test this null hypothesis of no difference, the researcher conducted a Mann Whitney U test on the data collected from their attendance rates within the period of consideration. The outputs are displayed on Table 8A and Table 8B.

Table 8A and 8B showing the out of data analysis on teachers (male and females) attendance rates on the first week of school reopening in Ebonyi State.

8A RANKS

Attendance to school by gender	Number of term	Mean rank	Sum of ranks
MALES	63	69.17	4358.00
FEMALES	63	57.83	8643.00
TOTAL	126		

8 B Test Statistics

Man Withney	1627.00
Wi/coxon	3643.00
Z	-1.752
Asympt sig. (2tailed)	0.080

From the outputs displayed on Tables 8A (Rank) and 8B (test Statistics), the Mann Whitney U test sum rank at 0.05 alpha level compared male teachers attendance for ($n=63$) terms and female teachers' attendance for ($n=63$) terms', first week of school reopening in Ebonyi state basic education. The mean rank ($n=69.17$) for males and ($n=57.88$) for females, with Z test statistics of -1.752 and P-value of 0.080 , while the calculated Man Whitney u test value was 1627.00 . Since the P value (0.080) is higher than p value of 0.05 , the researchers failed to reject the null hypothesis. They therefore upheld the null hypothesis of no significance difference. Hence, there is no sufficient evidence to state that the true mean is different from the two groups. The researchers carried out the rank biserial correlation co-efficient, using the formular $rb = 2 \times (R_1 - R_2) / n$, this



yielded a value of 0.18 this shows that more male teachers attend school on the first week of school reopening in the state.

HO₃ the attendance rates of pupils to school in the first week of school reopening in the sample LGAs of Ebonyi State do not differ significantly between the L.G.As

To test this hypothesis, of non-significant differences in the attendance rate of pupils across the sampled L.G.As, the researchers applied Kruskal Wallis test, to test the data collected from the L.G.As, the outputs of the test are displayed in Tables 9A, 9B and 9C Respectively.

Tables 9A, 9B and 9C showing the outputs of Kruskal Wallis test on the differences of pupils' attendance to school on the first week of the term among the sample L.G.As.

9A Kruskal Wallis Test

Group	Number	Mean rank
Abakaliki	3	15.00
Ebonyi	2	26.00
Izzi	1	9.50
Ezza North	4	21.88
Ikwo	4	13.63
Ivo	1	9.65
Edda	2	17.75

9B DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

N	MEAN	STD. DEV.	MIN	MAX
126	12	2.008	9	15

9c Test Statistics

N	MEAN	STD. DEV.	MIN
126	12	18.13	0.112

P < 0.05

The Tables 9A, 9B and 9C respectively were the outputs of a Kruskal Wallis H test which was conducted to compare the attendance rates of pupils to school on the first week of school reopening. The test examined whether there were statistically significant difference in the attendance rate of pupils to school amongst the seven LGAs. The means of their ranks were Abakaliki (15.00), Ebonyi (26.00); Izzi (9.50); Ezza North (21.88); Ikwo (13.63); Ivo (9.65) and Edda (17.75); respectively. The result of the Kruskal Wallis Test Indicated that there was no statistically significant difference in the pupils attendance to school on the first week of school reopening across the seven (7) L.G.As, $H(12) = 18.13$ while $P = 0.112$. This suggests that the L.G.As does not significantly impact on rate of school attendance within the sample L.G.A. Hence, the researchers failed to reject the null Hypothesis of no significant difference.



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HO4. The attendance rates of teachers on the first week of school term in the sample L.G.As do not significantly differ among the sample L.G.A in Ebonyi State.

To test this hypothesis, the researchers carried out a Kruskal Wallis test on data collected from the attendance rates of the teachers. The outputs are displayed on table 10A, 10B and 10C respectively. Tables 10A, 10B and 10C showing the outputs of Kruskal Wallis test on the difference in teachers attendance to school on the first week of school reopening in Ebonyi State.

Table 10A Kruskal Wallis Test

Group	Number	Mean Rank
Izzi	18	
Ebonyi	18	
Abakaliki	18	
Ezza North	18	
Ikwo	18	
Ivo	18	
Edda	18	

10B Descriptive statistics

N	MEAN	STD. DEV.	MIN	MAX
126	12	2.008	9	15

10C Test statistics

N	Df	X	Asympt sig.
126	6	1.246	0.976

Tables 10A, 10B and 10C were outputs of Kruskal Walis H test, which compare teachers attendance rates to school on the first week of school reopening in sample L.G.As of Ebonyi State. The test determined if there were statistically significant differences in teachers' attendance rates on the first week of school reopening between the samples L.G.As. The rank means of the L.G.As were Izzi(58.44); Ebonyi (61.31); Abakaliki (59.31); Ezza North (5.83) Ikwo (69.36); Ivo (65.94); and Edda (64.00). The result of the Kruskal Walis test indicated that there was no statistically significant difference in the teachers' attendance in the seven LGAs, $H(6) = 1.246$; $P = 0.976$. Since $P > 0.05$, is indicating that there is no statistically significant difference between teachers' attendance in the LGAs, the researchers did not reject the null hypothesis of no significant difference.



Summary of Findings

1. The total pupils' attendance rate to school in the first week of school reopening in Ebonyi state was 27.49%, with male attendance rate of 25.3%, while the female had 29.7%. For teachers, it was 87% male upon of 87% for males and 86% for females.
2. Slight difference exist between male and female pupils attendance rate to school on the first week of school reopening in Ebonyi State, but the differences were not statistically significant. For the teachers, the same differences existed but are not statistically significant.
3. The sample LGAs do not vary in school attendance rates of pupils and teachers in the first week of the terms, as this study showed that no significant difference exist between the seven L.G.As
4. More female pupils attend schools in the first week of the term, while more male teachers attend school in the first week of school reopening in the sample L.G.As; in Ebonyi State.

Discussion

The discussions in this section of this paper were strictly guided by the findings itemized in the summary as presented in the last section of this paper. It was shown that the total average attendance of pupils was 27.4%, made up of 25.2% (males) and 29.7% females. This is an indication of low attendance rate. This is poor, retrogressive and portends danger for a state like Ebonyi State classified as education less developed (EBSMoE, 2029). This poor attendance posted in the sample LGAs does not reflect the efforts made by the Ebonyi state government with the support of development partners on enrolment campaign. Evidences contained in the state government's official records located in the state ministry of education showed that huge resources were committed in the conduct of enrolment drive which was considered to be comprehensive and all embracing. Ironically, Izzi, Ebonyi, Ikwo, Edda, Ezza North and Ivo LGAs benefitted from this enrolment drive campaign activity organized by Ebonyi State Ministry of Education with financial and technical supports from UNICEF/UBEC, GPE (Global Partnership for Education) in the state. This trend of low school attendance in these LGAs does not justify the stated huge sum of money invested in the programme. Secondly, the poor attendance rate is an indictment of lack of sustainability of government/donor supported programme by Ebonyi state ministry of education. It is an indication of program summersault as situations turns back to initial bad state immediately the life cycle of an intervention is completed. It is cardinal or imperative for parents/guardians or even the children themselves to understand that school attendance is the nexus of academic activities which leads to academic achievement. Teaching and learning in most learning (especially in the traditional learning) setting takes place when learners present themselves for teachers to teach them. It has been noted by researchers that a missed school day is a lost opportunity for learner to learn. Furthermore, each day of a pupil's absence from school results



0.3 to 0.41 of standard deviation reduction in achievement ((EPPO, 2020). Attendance in the first week of the term is a strong indicator of deep commitment to educational pursuit, this assertion is buttressed by the observation of Children's Commissioner (2020) as it maintained that if a child attends everyday of the first week of the term, that it is a strong indicator that the child will go on to attend school regularly throughout the term. Beynon; (2023) equally asserted that people who absented themselves from school at the beginning of the term are more likely to be persistently absent in the term. For the teachers, the findings of this study showed that their attendance was 87%. This is commendable. What needs to be done is that schools through the local institutions should intensity efforts to ensure that children attend in good numbers as well. The teachers' high attendance rate does not yield meaningful results if the children who the teachers are to teach do not show up in the classroom. Teaching and learning is a two party affair between the teachers and the learners, and cannot take place in the absence of any of the two parties. It is therefore imperative for Ebonyi State Ministry of Education to apply the same strategy used to compel teachers to report to school in good numbers on the first week of school reopening on the learners, so that the teachers wouldn't stay idle while in the school on school reopening week. The findings of this study have shown that the differences between male and female pupils and teachers' attendance to school on the first week of the term were not statistically significant. This funding contradicts the claims by researchers that there exists gender disparity in school attendance. It also confirms Ayoelele (2017) assertions that significant difference does not exists between male and female pupils and teachers attendance to school, especially on the first week of the term. Previous researches on school attendance have claimed that significant differences occasioned by gender stereotypes have created big disparities between the school attendance of males and females (Mwinkainba, 2024, and UNICEF, 2023). Similar claims of significant difference between attendance rate of male and female pupils and teachers were made by Ashenawi; Yagban; Almarabheh; and Shenawi(2021) when they found a statistically significant differences in the attendance rate; of males and female medical students. To FFT Educational Datalab (2022), there exists significant difference between male and female pupils at primary school levels, while at secondary school, the reverse is the case. The findings of the study showed that school attendances across the sample L.G.As were the same, within the first week of the term. This findings contradicted the findings of FFT. Education Data Lab (2022) which showed that absence from school during the different week days of the week, including the first week of the term varies across different locations. The finding equally contradicted Miya (2023) report on school attendance on the first week of the term. To him, rural communities recorded lower attendance rate, because of inadequate supervision of school resumption in those areas. Finally, the findings of the study revealed that girls recorded higher attendance rates than boys on the first week of school reopening although the differences were not statistically significant. This finding is in contrast with Wolf; Mccoy, and Godfrey (2016) assertion



that girls are more likely to miss school than boys, because they are tasked to stay back home, anytime a member of the family is sick. The finding is also in contradiction with that of Wikipedia (2022). Poverty Action Lab. (2018); Woodsfield (2021) and UNICEF (2023) who had reported that girls' school attendance are jeopardized by various social, economic and cultural factors, which make boys to attend school more than girls. The report on the other hand agrees with that of Wolf; et al (2016) and UNESCO (2017) who maintained that the average attendance of girls to school was found to be higher than the average attendance of boys. The causes of boys low school attendance in the first week of the term were attributed to the fact that they are expected to engage in income generation activities, which sometimes take most of them to cities. Some remain in the cities hustling in the first week of the term, while some do not return back to continue with their school again. For the teachers, it was found that more male teachers attend schools on the first week of the term than the female teachers. This finding is in agreement with that of UNESCO (2022) which affirmed that female teachers recorded higher absenteeism than their male counterpart, although the differences in their attendance rates were not found to be statistically significant as had earlier been discussed. It is imperative for Ebonyi State Ministry of Education to endeavor to attract, hire, and retain dedicated teacher (males and females), as it is obvious that if teachers are not present in school in adequate numbers, teaching and mentorship will not take place (UNESCO, 2022). Furthermore, pupil consider and regard their teachers as role models will strive to emulate their teachers by staying away from schools just like their teachers.

Conclusion

This study on school attendance rate on the first week of the term has highlighted the significance of starting to attend school right from the first day of the first week of the term. Literatures on regular school attendance from the first day of the term has revealed that starting school on the first week of the term promotes academic success, enhances adjustment, builds self esteem and promotes group bonding through social interaction between pupils and teachers, and among pupils themselves. Unfortunately, it was shown that there is a preponderance culture of pervasive low pupils attendance to school on the first week of school terms in the study area. The study further showed that teachers on their own attend school regularly unlike the pupils. But, without a corresponding pupils' attendance, this commendable teachers' attendance will yield no significance impact in the academic achievements of children in study area, as the children who are the important components of the school are not in the school. Consequent upon the findings, educators, policy makers and parents need to work collaboratively to find remedy to the root cause of pupils' low school attendance on the first week of the school terms in Ebonyi State. This is important, as this will ensure that pupils receive the required support they need to succeed both in academic and social development.



Recommendations

In line with the findings of the study, the researchers recommended as follows:

1. Ebonyi state ministry of Education and their agencies should develop workable attendance improvement plans for schools.
2. The ministry and her line agencies should intensify efforts in the conduct of effective school reopening supervision. They should ensure that all schools in the state are visited within the first week of the term. The ministry should strengthen the counseling units of all the school, so that pupils will be counseled on the importance of resuming early to school in term . The counseling will help pupils tackle challenges that contribute to absenteeism on the first week of the term.
 - a. The ministry of education should design strategies to foster engagement, and motivation and a sense of belonging among students.
 - b. The Ebonyi state Ministry of Education should regularly engage with parents and guardians at local and community levels to increase their awareness on the need for pupils to start school on the first week of school reopening.
 - c. Ebonyi state Ministry of Education should domesticate and diligently implement the developed national framework on school enrolment campaign.

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