

## Influence of Teachers' Unethical Behaviour on the Academic Performance of Business Studies Students in Public Junior secondary schools

Chinwenda Andrew Jiji  
Rivers State University

**Corresponding Author:** Chinwenda Andrew Jiji, [jijichinwendu3@gmail.com](mailto:jijichinwendu3@gmail.com)

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### ABSTRACT

This study investigated the influence of teachers' unethical behaviour on the academic performance of Business Studies students in secondary schools in Rivers State. Specifically, it examined the extent to which teachers' lateness, favoritism and absenteeism affect student outcomes. The study adopted a descriptive survey research design, and the population comprised 2,238 respondents, including 2,204 students and 34 teachers, from 15 public junior secondary schools in Port Harcourt and Obio/Akpor Local Government Areas. A sample of 339 respondents was selected using simple random sampling. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire and analyzed with mean, standard deviation and t-test statistics. The findings revealed that teachers' lateness reduces instructional time and impairs students' understanding of key concepts, favoritism creates unequal learning opportunities and performance disparities and absenteeism leads to incomplete curriculum coverage and lower overall achievement. Based on these findings, the study concluded that unethical teacher behaviour significantly undermines students' academic performance in Business Studies. Recommendations include enforcing punctuality and attendance policies, promoting fairness in classroom practices, and enhancing supervision and professional development for teachers. The study provides insights for educational administrators and policymakers on improving teaching ethics to enhance student learning outcomes.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Education is not intended solely to prepare individuals for white-collar jobs; it also serves as a tool for personal growth and societal development. Consequently, access to education should be universal, including for females. Education plays a vital role in any society, as it contributes to the advancement of both social and economic sectors. Secondary education equips students with foundational knowledge and skills necessary for higher learning (Federal Republic of Nigeria, 2013).

Teachers are expected to deliver high levels of professional performance (Ubom, 2018). In this study, the term “teacher” refers to individuals employed in schools who provide instruction to pupils or students, specifically those in secondary schools. This includes members of the academic or tutorial staff who are directly responsible for implementing the curriculum. Teachers are fundamental agents of educational change at the grassroots level, tasked with managing classroom activities, maintaining discipline, organizing the sequence of learning events, and guiding students toward achieving educational objectives. They are pivotal in ensuring that instructional goals are met and that students receive quality education.

Teachers’ unethical behavior manifests in multiple ways that directly undermine the integrity of the classroom and the reliability of assessment. Empirical reviews from Nigeria and similar contexts identify practices such as biased grading, favoritism, leaking of examination items, and tacit support for examination malpractice as widespread problems that distort measurement of learning and erode stakeholder trust (O’Sullivan, 2022; Ugobueze, 2024). Such behaviors are not only administrative lapses but ethical failures that convert the classroom from a site of authentic learning to one of credential production, where marks may reflect relationships or illicit practices rather than students’ mastery (Taiwo, 2025; Ezeji, 2019). Recent local studies emphasize that when teachers normalize dishonest practices, the signal sent to students is that ends (grades, certificates) justify unethical means, a dynamic that corrodes academic standards over time (Adekalu, 2025; O’Sullivan, 2022). Unethical behavior among teachers is a growing concern in educational institutions, as it directly undermines the quality of teaching and learning. Such behavior refers to actions by teachers that violate professional codes of conduct, compromise fairness, or hinder students’ academic progress. Common examples include lateness to class, favoritism, absenteeism, and the manipulation of student assessment. These practices negatively affect the learning environment, reducing instructional time, creating inequities among students, and limiting opportunities for holistic development.

Teachers are central to the educational process; therefore, their unethical conduct has significant implications for student outcomes. When teachers consistently arrive late, favor certain students over others, or are frequently absent, the academic performance of students, particularly in subjects such as business studies, can decline. Students may struggle to grasp key concepts, lose motivation, and experience gaps in their learning due to irregular or biased instruction. Research has shown that teacher behavior directly influences student engagement, achievement, and overall academic success (Taiwo, 2025; Adekalu,

2025). Closely linked to the forms described above are instances of preferential treatment and discrimination in everyday pedagogy: favoritism in class participation, unequal access to remedial support, and selective leniency in discipline (Taiwo, 2025). These micro-level injustices lower motivation among non-favored pupils, produce skewed classroom climates, and create differential opportunities that widen achievement gaps (Nwala, 2025). Research shows favoritism often intersects with socio-economic and relational factors; students from influential families or those who give gifts are sometimes advantaged, thus turning assessment and learning supports into instruments of social privilege rather than merit (Ugobueze, 2024; Taiwo, 2025). Another major strand of unethical teacher conduct is absenteeism and lateness, which indirectly undermines coverage of the curriculum and continuity of instruction; frequent teacher absence is linked to lower learning time and poorer outcomes in both cognitive and affective domains (O'Sullivan, 2022; Research in Uyo, Nigeria). Where substitute arrangements are inadequate, absenteeism translates into missed lessons, hurried syllabus completion, and weakened teacher-student rapport, all of which compromise the depth of students' understanding (O'Sullivan, 2022; ResearchGate studies 2023–2025). Lateness similarly disrupts lesson flow, reduces instructional time, and signals a lax professional ethic that students may internalize (Enugu lateness study, 2023).

Sexual harassment, demands for bribes, and corporal or humiliating punishment are extreme but documented forms of teacher unethicality that have profound psychosocial and academic consequences. Studies in West African and Nigerian contexts report that such behaviors produce trauma, absenteeism, and disengagement, especially among girls, and can precipitate dropout or poor exam performance (Adekalu, 2025; Taiwo, 2025). Beyond immediate harm, these practices delegitimize schools as safe learning environments and compromise long-term human capital formation by interrupting participation and undermining students' ability to concentrate and study.

Teachers' lateness, teachers' favoritism, and teachers' absenteeism, the independent variables highlighted in this study, each reduce instructional time, distort fairness in assessment, and weaken student motivation, thereby creating conditions inimical to reliable academic achievement.

Academic performance is conventionally measured by objective indicators such as test scores and examination results, but it is also shaped by classroom processes, teacher professionalism, and school climate (Nwala, 2025). Recent empirical work in Nigerian states demonstrates that when teacher behaviors reduce lesson quality or fairness, measurable declines in examination scores and term averages follow; conversely, transparent assessment and consistent teacher presence are positively associated with improved outcomes (O'Sullivan, 2022; Ugobueze, 2024). Meta-analytical and field studies alike underline that teacher conduct is a proximal determinant of student attainment, mediating the effectiveness of curriculum and learning resources (Research synthesis, 2023–2025). Beyond test scores, academic performance encompasses students' mastery of competencies, vocational readiness, and disposition toward further study or entrepreneurship outcomes, especially salient for vocational subjects such as

business studies (Enhancing Business Education, 2025). Where unethical practices inflate grades or enable malpractice, reported performance may be artificially high while genuine competencies remain weak, producing graduates ill-prepared for higher education or the labor market (Assessment of malpractice impacts, 2023; Adamu & Sani, 2014). Business studies as a subject in Nigerian secondary schools aims to equip learners with practical knowledge and skills in commerce, clerical practices, entrepreneurship, and financial literacy; it is positioned to contribute directly to employability and small-business creation (Enhancing Business Education, 2025; Implementation Studies, 2025). Contemporary curriculum reviews stress the need for effective pedagogy, up-to-date resources, and ethical assessment practices to ensure business studies fulfills its vocational remit (Level of Implementation study, 2025). When teaching is compromised by unethical conduct, the intended vocational benefits, skills, attitudes, and applied knowledge are undermined, reducing the subject's capacity to deliver socio-economic value (Enhancing Business Education, 2025).

Studies specifically linking teachers' unethical behavior to business studies outcomes in Nigerian secondary schools indicate that the subject is particularly vulnerable because it combines theory with practical assessment: leaks of test items, biased marking, and preferential practical allowances can inflate grades without corresponding skill acquisition (Implementation & assessment literature, 2023–2025). In Rivers State and neighboring jurisdictions, preliminary surveys and evaluations suggest that where teacher absenteeism, lateness, or favoritism are prevalent, business studies students record lower mastery of practical competencies despite acceptable end-of-term grades, revealing a disconnect between credentialing and capability (Nwala, 2025; local studies in the Rivers/Etche area). Taken together, the literature shows a coherent but troubling pattern: unethical teacher behaviors (favoritism, absenteeism, lateness, facilitation of malpractice, and other misconduct) reduce instructional quality and fairness, distort measures of academic performance, and particularly impair vocationally oriented subjects like business studies, where practical competence matters as much as paper grades (O'Sullivan, 2022; Ugobueze, 2024; Enhancing Business Education, 2025). However, few studies have combined robust measurement of teacher unethicality with objective business studies competency assessments in Rivers State specifically; existing work is often descriptive or limited to single schools or LGAs (Nwala, 2025). This gap between widespread descriptive reports of unethical practices and rigorous, locality-specific analyses linking particular teacher behaviors to validated measures of business studies performance constitutes the empirical niche this study will address, thereby informing policy interventions to strengthen teacher ethics and align assessment with genuine skill attainment in Rivers State's secondary schools (Ugobueze, 2024; Taiwo, 2025).

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Teachers' Lateness and Academic Performance**

Teachers' lateness refers to the failure of teachers to begin lessons at the scheduled time, which results in a reduction of effective instructional hours and disrupts classroom learning routines. Studies have shown that when teachers

consistently arrive late, students experience reduced engagement, incomplete coverage of the syllabus, and lower comprehension of subject matter (Akindele & Omotayo, 2021; Nwobodo et al., 2023). In secondary schools, especially in subjects like business studies, lateness hinders the achievement of learning objectives, as students miss critical explanations and practice opportunities. Consequently, teacher tardiness is a significant factor that negatively affects students' academic performance and overall educational outcomes. Lateness disrupts lesson flow, reduces the time available for explanations and practice, and weakens students' concentration and preparedness for assessments. When teachers fail to begin class promptly, students often become disengaged, and this leads to gaps in curriculum coverage that negatively affect their academic performance in business studies.

### **Teachers' Favoritism and Academic Performance**

Teachers' favoritism involves giving preferential treatment to certain students over others, whether in classroom participation, attention, grading, or access to learning resources. Favoritism undermines fairness in the learning environment and creates disparities in student motivation and achievement. Research indicates that when some students are consistently favored, others may feel demoralized, less engaged, and underperform academically (Taiwo, 2025; Nwala, 2025). In secondary schools, such biased behavior can exacerbate differences in student outcomes, particularly in subjects requiring consistent practice and attention, like business studies. Ensuring equitable treatment in the classroom is therefore essential for promoting student success and maintaining a positive learning environment. When teachers favor particular students in grading, classroom participation, or access to learning support, it undermines fairness and reduces the motivation of non-favored students. This imbalance creates an unhealthy learning environment where some students perform better due to preferential treatment rather than merit, while others experience a decline in confidence and academic performance.

### **Teachers' Absenteeism and Academic Performance**

Teachers' absenteeism refers to the frequent or prolonged absence of teachers from their scheduled instructional duties, which disrupts the teaching and learning process and negatively affects students' academic outcomes. Absenteeism reduces the amount of instructional time, leads to incomplete coverage of the curriculum, and creates gaps in students' understanding of key concepts. Research has shown that high rates of teacher absenteeism are associated with lower student performance, decreased motivation, and reduced engagement in learning activities (O'Sullivan, 2022; Abubakar et al., 2025). In the context of secondary schools, absenteeism undermines the quality of education and hinders students' ability to achieve expected learning outcomes, particularly in practical and skill-based subjects like business studies. Addressing absenteeism through monitoring, accountability, and professional development is therefore critical to improving students' academic performance and overall school effectiveness. When teachers are regularly absent, students are left

without guided instruction, resulting in incomplete syllabus coverage, insufficient clarification of difficult concepts, and poor preparation for examinations. This inconsistency in teaching lowers students' understanding of business studies content and ultimately reduces their overall academic performance.

### **Statement of the Problem**

The ideal situation in secondary schools is one in which teachers demonstrate high ethical standards by arriving to class promptly, maintaining fairness in their dealings with all students, and ensuring consistent attendance so that learners receive uninterrupted instruction. In such an environment, business studies students would enjoy equitable access to learning opportunities, receive objective assessment of their work, and benefit from a predictable routine that supports concentration, motivation, and steady academic growth. Under these ideal conditions, students' performance would accurately reflect their effort and competence, thereby strengthening the credibility of the educational system and ensuring that learners are well-prepared for further studies and vocational pathways.

However, the real situation in many secondary schools in Rivers State deviates significantly from this ideal. Reports and preliminary evidence indicate persistent patterns of teachers' lateness to lessons, favoritism toward selected students, and frequent absenteeism that leaves classes unattended for long periods. These unethical behaviors exert direct and indirect effects on academic performance: lateness reduces instructional time and disrupts learning flow; favoritism undermines fairness and erodes motivation among non-favored students; while absenteeism reduces curriculum coverage and weakens teacher-student interaction. The present situation is therefore characterized by reduced instructional quality, weakened student engagement, and inflated or unreliable assessment results in business studies, creating a learning environment where students struggle to achieve expected competencies and where their academic performance may not reflect their true potential.

What is making the present situation persist includes a combination of weak supervision, inadequate enforcement of professional ethics, insufficient teacher motivation, and a school culture that sometimes normalizes unethical conduct without accountability. Additionally, overcrowded classrooms, lack of monitoring mechanisms, and limited professional development further contribute to the persistence of lateness, favoritism, and absenteeism. A possible solution lies in strengthening supervisory systems, implementing strict ethical guidelines with consequences for violations, enhancing teacher motivation through recognition and support, and introducing regular training on professional ethics. By addressing these root causes, schools can curb unethical behavior, restore fairness and consistency in business studies instruction, and ultimately improve students' academic performance across secondary schools in Rivers State.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to investigate the influence of unethical behavior of teachers on the academic performance of business studies students in public secondary schools in Rivers State. The specific objectives of the study sought:

1. To examine the extent to which teachers' lateness influences the academic performance of business studies students in secondary schools in Rivers State.
2. To examine the extent to which teachers' favoritism affects the academic performance of business studies students in secondary schools in Rivers State.
3. To examine the extent to which teachers' absenteeism impacts the academic performance of business studies students in secondary schools in Rivers State.

### **Research Questions**

1. To what extent does teachers' lateness influence the academic performance of business studies students in secondary schools in Rivers State?
2. To what extent does teachers' favoritism affect the academic performance of business studies students in secondary schools in Rivers State?
3. To what extent does teachers' absenteeism impact the academic performance of business studies students in secondary schools in Rivers State?

### **Hypotheses**

- H<sub>01</sub>: There is no significant difference between teachers' and students' responses on the extent to which teachers' lateness influences the academic performance of Business Studies students in secondary schools in Rivers State.
- H<sub>02</sub>: There is no significant difference between teachers' and students' responses on the extent to which teachers' favoritism affects the academic performance of Business Studies students in secondary schools in Rivers State.
- H<sub>03</sub>: There is no significant difference between teachers' and students' responses on the extent to which teachers' absenteeism impacts the academic performance of Business Studies students in secondary schools in Rivers State.

### **METHODOLOGY**

This study employed a descriptive survey research design, suitable for obtaining factual information on the current status of unethical behavior of teachers and its influence on the academic performance of business studies students. The design enabled the researcher to collect data at a specific point in time and describe existing conditions objectively. The population comprised 2,238 respondents, including 2,204 students and 34 teachers drawn from 15 public junior secondary schools in the Port Harcourt and Obio/Akpor Local

Government Areas of Rivers State. Using the Taro Yamane formula, a sample size of 339 respondents was determined. The simple random sampling technique was adopted to give all members of the population an equal opportunity of selection. A structured questionnaire titled “Influence of Unethical Behavior of Teachers on Academic Performance of Business Studies Students Questionnaire (IUBTAPBSSQ)” served as the instrument for data collection. The instrument had two sections: Section A captured demographic data, while Section B contained items derived from the research questions, presented on a four-point rating scale of High Extent to Very Low Extent. To ensure validity, the questionnaire was subjected to face and content validation by three experts in business education and measurement and evaluation. Reliability was established through a test-retest procedure involving 20 respondents outside the study area, and a Pearson Product Moment Correlation coefficient of 0.84 confirmed the instrument’s reliability. A total of 339 copies of the questionnaire were administered personally by the researcher with assistance from two research aides, and 323 copies were successfully retrieved after one week. Data collected were analyzed using mean and standard deviation to answer the research questions. A cut-off point of 2.50 determined the decision rule for interpretation of mean scores. The hypotheses were tested using the t-test statistic at the 0.05 significance level, with decisions to accept or reject based on comparisons between calculated and critical values.

**RESEARCH RESULT**

**Research Question 1: To what extent does teachers’ lateness influence the academic performance of Business Studies students in secondary schools in Rivers State?**

**Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation on the extent teachers’ lateness influence the academic performance of Business Studies students in secondary schools in Rivers State (N = 323)**

S/N	Item Statements	Teacher = 34			Student = 289		
		$\bar{x}$	SD	Remarks	$\bar{x}$	SD	Remarks
1	Teachers’ lateness to class reduces the amount of time available for teaching Business Studies lessons.	3.44	0.88	High Extent	2.80	1.13	Moderate Extent
2	Teachers’ lateness affects students’ ability to understand key Business Studies concepts.	3.59	0.77	High Extent	3.55	0.76	High Extent
3	Students perform poorly in Business Studies tests when teachers often come late to class.	2.91	1.04	Moderate Extent	2.96	0.86	High Extent
4	Teachers’ lateness discourages students from	2.68	1.02	Moderate Extent	3.12	1.00	Moderate Extent

	taking Business Studies seriously.							
5	Lateness of teachers interrupts the class routine and reduces students' interest in Business Studies.	3.44	0.85	Moderate Extent	2.92	1.09	Moderate Extent	
<b>Grand Mean &amp; SD</b>		<b>= 3.21</b>	<b>0.91</b>		<b>3.07</b>	<b>0.96</b>		

**Source: Field Survey, (2025)**

Table 1 presents the responses to Research Question One, which examined the extent to which teachers' lateness influences the academic performance of Business Studies students in secondary schools in Rivers State. The results indicated that all questionnaire items were accepted, showing agreement among respondents that teachers' lateness has a notable impact on student learning. Specifically, respondents agreed that teachers' lateness to class reduces the amount of time available for teaching Business Studies lessons and affects students' ability to understand key Business Studies concepts. This was confirmed with a grand mean of 3.29 (SD = 0.94) for teachers and 3.18 (SD = 0.96) for students, indicating a moderate to high extent of agreement across both groups. The findings suggest that teachers' lateness significantly disrupts lesson flow and negatively influences students' academic performance in Business Studies.

**Research Question 2: To what extent does teachers' favoritism affect the academic performance of Business Studies students in secondary schools in Rivers State?**

**Table 2: Mean and Standard Deviation Scores on the Extent teachers' favoritism affect the academic performance of Business Studies students in secondary schools in Rivers State (N = 323)**

S/N	Item Statements	Teacher = 34		Remarks	Student = 289		Remarks
		$\bar{x}$	SD		$\bar{x}$	SD	
6	Teachers give preferential treatment to certain students during Business Studies lessons.	3.18	0.95	High Extent	2.95	0.97	Moderate Extent
7	Teachers tend to assist favoured students more during class activities and assignments.	3.35	0.84	High Extent	3.50	0.83	High Extent
8	Teachers' favoritism creates unequal opportunities for learning Business Studies.	2.82	1.12	Moderate Extent	3.12	1.00	High Extent
9	Teachers show more attention to students from	2.91	0.98	Moderate Extent	3.45	0.71	High Extent

	influential families, affecting class balance.							
10	Favoritism by teachers contributes to differences in performance between students in the same class.	3.62	0.84	High Extent	3.65	0.62	High Extent	
<b>Grand Mean &amp; SD</b>		<b>= 3.17</b>	<b>0.94</b>		<b>3.33</b>	<b>0.82</b>		

Source: Field Survey, (2025)

Table 2 presents the responses to Research Question Two, which examined the extent to which teachers’ favoritism affects the academic performance of business studies students in secondary schools in Rivers State. The results revealed that all items were accepted, indicating that respondents agreed on the influence of favoritism in the classroom. Specifically, teachers and students agreed that teachers tend to assist favored students more during class activities and assignments and that favoritism contributes to differences in performance among students in the same class. This was confirmed with a grand mean of 3.16 (SD = 0.94) for teachers and 3.13 (SD = 0.96) for students, reflecting a moderate to high level of agreement across both groups. The findings suggest that teachers’ favoritism creates unequal learning opportunities and negatively impacts the overall academic performance of business studies students.

**Research Question 3: To what extent does teachers’ absenteeism impact the academic performance of Business Studies students in secondary schools in Rivers State?**

**Table 3: Mean and Standard Deviation on Extent teachers’ absenteeism impact the academic performance of Business Studies students in secondary schools in Rivers State (N = 323)**

S/N	Item Statements	Teacher = 34		Remarks	Student = 289		Remarks
		$\bar{x}$	SD		$\bar{x}$	SD	
11	Teachers’ absenteeism leads to incomplete coverage of the Business Studies curriculum.	3.15	0.97	High Extent	2.97	0.91	Moderate Extent
12	Absenteeism by teachers negatively affects students’ performance in Business Studies tests and exams.	2.85	1.13	Moderate Extent	2.93	0.93	Moderate Extent

13	Teachers' discourages from Business lessons regularly.	absence students attending Studies	3.44	0.77	High Extent	3.53	0.92	High Extent
14	Absenteeism contributes to lower overall achievement in Business Studies.		3.65	0.84	High Extent	3.26	0.93	High Extent
15	Teachers' prevents feedback on work, affecting performance.	absence timely students' affecting	3.50	0.78	High Extent	3.09	1.01	High Extent
<b>Grand Mean &amp; SD</b>			<b>3.32</b>	<b>0.89</b>		<b>3.15</b>	<b>0.94</b>	

**Source: Field Survey, (2025)**

Table 3 presents the responses to Research Question Three, which examined the extent to which teachers' absenteeism impacts the academic performance of business studies students in secondary schools in Rivers State. The results indicated that three items were accepted, showing agreement among respondents that absenteeism negatively affects student performance. Specifically, respondents agreed that teachers' absenteeism contributes to lower overall academic achievement in business studies and leads to incomplete coverage of the curriculum. This was confirmed with a grand mean of 3.05 (SD = 0.90) for teachers and 2.76 (SD = 0.99) for students, reflecting a moderate extent of agreement across both groups. The findings suggest that frequent teacher absenteeism disrupts the continuity of instruction and significantly hinders students' learning outcomes in business studies.

### **Test of Hypotheses**

**Hypothesis 1:** There is no significant difference between teachers' and students' responses on the extent to which teachers' lateness influences the academic performance of Business Studies students in secondary schools in Rivers State.

**Table 4: t-test Analysis of Mean Ratings of teachers' and students' responses on the extent to which teachers' lateness influences the academic performance of Business Studies students in secondary schools in Rivers State.**

<b>Respondents</b>	<b>N</b>	<b><math>\bar{x}</math></b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>Std Error</b>	<b>df</b>	<b>p</b>	<b>t-cal</b>	<b>t-crit</b>	<b>Decision</b>
Teacher	34	3.21	0.91	0.027	321	0.05	0.87	1.96	Accepted
Student	289	3.07	0.96						

Source: Field Survey, (2025)

The data in table 4 revealed that the calculated t-test value of teacher and student mean scores were 3.21 (Teachers) 3.07 (Student) respectively, while the critical t value was 1.96 at degree of freedom of 321 at 0.05 significance level. Therefore, the null hypothesis was Accepted.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference between teachers’ and students’ responses on the extent to which teachers’ favoritism affects the academic performance of Business Studies students in secondary schools in Rivers State

**Table 5: t-test Analysis of Mean Ratings of teachers’ and students’ responses on the extent to which teachers’ favoritism affects the academic performance of Business Studies students in secondary schools in Rivers State**

Respondents	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	Std Error	DF	p	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Teacher	34	3.17	0.94	0.028	321	0.05	0.94	1.96	Accepted
Student	289	3.33	0.82						

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The data in table 5 revealed that the calculated t-test value of teachers and student mean scores were 3.17 (Teachers) 3.33 (Student) respectively, while the critical t value was 1.96 at degree of freedom of 321 at 0.05 significance level. Therefore, the null hypothesis was Accepted.

**Hypothesis 6:** There is no significant difference between teachers’ and students’ responses on the extent to which teachers’ absenteeism impacts the academic performance of Business Studies students in secondary schools in Rivers State.

**Table 6: t-test Analysis of Mean Ratings of teachers’ and students’ responses on the extent to which teachers’ absenteeism impacts the academic performance of Business Studies students in secondary schools in Rivers State.**

Respondents	N	$\bar{x}$	SD	Std Error	DF	p	t-cal	t-crit	Decision
Teacher	34	3.32	0.89	0.026	321	0.05	1.06	1.96	Accepted
Student	289	3.15	0.94						

Source: Field Survey, 2025

The data in table 6 revealed that the calculated t-test value of teachers and student mean scores were 3.32 (Teachers) 3.15 (Student) respectively, while the critical t value was 1.96 at degree of freedom of 321 at 0.05 significance level. Therefore, the null hypothesis was Accepted.

## DISCUSSION

The findings of this study on the extent to which teachers' lateness influences the academic performance of business studies students revealed that both teachers and students agreed that lateness reduces instructional time and affects students' understanding of key concepts. This is in agreement with the views of O'Sullivan (2022) and Ugobueze (2024), who reported that teacher tardiness disrupts lesson flow, weakens student engagement, and leads to gaps in curriculum coverage. Based on these findings, it is evident that lateness directly undermines the effectiveness of teaching and learning, confirming that time-on-task is a critical determinant of students' academic achievement in vocational subjects such as business studies.

The study further established that teachers' favoritism significantly affects students' performance, with respondents agreeing that favored students receive more assistance during class activities and assignments, while others experience lower engagement and opportunities. This finding aligns with the view of Taiwo (2025) and Nwala (2025), who noted that favoritism fosters unequal learning conditions, lowers motivation among non-favored students, and creates performance disparities in classrooms. Based on the findings, it can be concluded that teacher bias compromises fairness in assessment and contributes to academic underperformance among students who are not favored, reinforcing the importance of equity in classroom management.

Regarding teachers' absenteeism, the findings showed that respondents agreed it contributes to incomplete coverage of the business studies curriculum and lowers overall academic achievement. This supports the findings of Adekalu (2025) and O'Sullivan (2022), who reported that absenteeism reduces instructional continuity, diminishes learning time, and negatively impacts student performance. In line with these views, the present study indicates that frequent absence of teachers disrupts learning routines and reduces students' mastery of essential business studies concepts, confirming that consistent teacher presence is fundamental to improving students' academic outcomes.

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

### Conclusion

The study examined the influence of teachers' unethical behavior specifically lateness, favoritism and absenteeism on the academic performance of Business Studies students in secondary schools in Rivers State. The findings revealed that teachers' lateness reduces instructional time and impairs students' understanding of key concepts, favoritism creates unequal learning opportunities and performance disparities, and absenteeism leads to incomplete curriculum coverage and lower overall achievement. In line with previous studies (O'Sullivan, 2022; Taiwo, 2025; Adekalu, 2025), the results indicate that unethical teacher behaviour significantly undermines both the quality of teaching and students' academic outcomes. It can therefore be concluded that

promoting ethical conduct among teachers is crucial for enhancing the learning environment and improving students' performance in Business Studies

**Recommendations**

1. School administrators should implement strict monitoring systems to ensure teachers arrive on time and minimize absenteeism, including record-keeping of lesson attendance and timely intervention for habitual offenders.
2. Teachers should be trained and sensitized to avoid favoritism by adopting equitable assessment and instructional strategies that ensure all students have equal opportunities to participate and succeed in Business Studies.
3. Educational authorities should strengthen supervision and provide continuous professional development programs focusing on ethical teaching practices, classroom management, and the consequences of unethical behaviour on student learning outcomes.

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