

**ABSENTEEISM AND LEARNERS PERFORMANCE IN SIAYA  
CENTRAL PRIMARY SCHOOL, SIAYA DISTRICT, NYANZA  
PROVINCE**

**BY**

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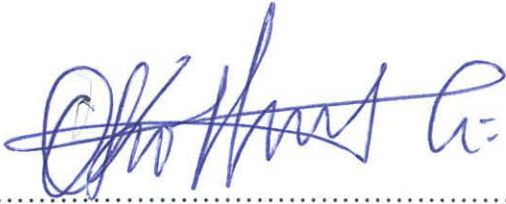
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## DECLARATION

I Vincent OKOTH OWINO hereby declare that this proposal is my own work, and it has never been submitted elsewhere for the award of a degree or any other qualification and all secondary sources in this work have been acknowledged



Signature:.....



Date:.....

## APPROVAL

This proposal has been under my guidance and supervision as a University supervisor and therefore it is ready for submission.

Signature:.....  


GULEBYO MUZAMIR SAID

Date:.....  
20/04/10

## **DEDICATION**

I would like to dedicate this piece of work to my beloved wife Lilian Okoth daughters; Millicent Atieno, Condoleza Trevor, my son Peter Cech for their aspiration for going back to school and the reason why I have to soldier on.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

A good number of people have helped me with ideas, suggestions and time, especially Head teacher Mr. George Ochieng who allowed me to use office time to do my project as well as to print it out and attend the college sessions and all other people who helped me to finish my course.

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## ABSTRACT

The study was to establish the effects of absenteeism on learners' performance in Siaya central primary school in Siaya District, Nyanza Province, Kenya and the research was guided by the following objectives; to establish causes of absenteeism in Siaya primary school, and to establish the ways to reduce absenteeism in Siaya primary schools.

The findings of the study showed that, there are a number of causes of absenteeism included age related problems, gender, learning disabilities, psychological problems, disintegrated family structures, food insecurity, child labor, transport, HIV/AIDS, teenage pregnancy, difficult Subject matter, school fees problems, learner to educator ratio, learner educator relationships, competence of educators, punishment for late-coming and poor school facilities.

The ways to reduce absenteeism included improving the competence of teachers, improve school facilities, improve educator -learner relationship, introduce regular 'spot checks' for specific lesson truancy, rewards for pupils or classes with regular attendance, and Penalize students who are persistently late.

The research concluded that there was there is need to stop absenteeism decreases performance and therefore deserves attention.

Based on the research findings, the following were the recommendations, that there is need for Siaya central primary school to introduce regular 'spot checks' for specific lesson truancy, rewards for pupils or classes with regular attendance , penalties for students who are persistently late and absentees, include absence data on teacher record



to make the teachers fear absenting themselves unnecessarily as it shows poor reputation about them, put in place incentives programs that that will help to improve attendance such as good work conditions, time, equipment to enable good performance form both teachers and learners, and encourage good health as teachers who are healthy are less likely to fall sick which will make the teachers have time free from sickness to get more time to teach which will improve the performance the learners in turn.

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.0 Introduction

This chapter presents the background of the study, statement of the problem, purposes of the study, objective of the study, research question, scope of the study, significance of the study and lastly the conceptual frame work.

### 1.1 Background of the study

In Kenya, parents and guardians are compelled to ensure that learners for whom they are responsible “attend school from the first school day of the year in which such a learner reaches the age of seven years until the last school day of the year in which such a learner reaches class eight, whichever comes first”.

Furthermore, Head of Department is compelled to employ several measures if learners fail to attend school. These include an investigation into the circumstances of the learner’s absence from school, the adoption of appropriate measures to remedy the situation and the issuing of written notices to the parent/s of the learner where necessary.

Nevertheless, relatively little is known about the level of absenteeism in Kenyan schools, and the systems used by schools, districts and provincial head offices to monitor and reduce learner absenteeism from schools. Therefore, this study is partly in response to this lack of available knowledge.

In fact, one of the main focus areas for the study is the management and monitoring of learner absenteeism at different levels of the schooling system. School record-keeping, as well as data collection and analysis at district and provincial levels particularly in Siaya central school were therefore a key data collection focus of the study.

In brief, this report presents an exploratory insight into the extent and reasons for learner absenteeism in Siaya central schools, the monitoring and management of the problem

particularly with regard to information gathering, and recommendations for improved monitoring derived from our research as well as from international best practice.

### **1.3 Statement of the problem**

It is also generally accepted that regular attendance at school and the consequent interaction with peers and teachers is an important determinant of learner achievement. It is often argued that the effects of absenteeism are profoundly negative both for the individuals involved and the communities in which they live. It is argued that learners who are frequently absent are at risk of not achieving their educational, social or psychological potential and their future career prospects are limited.

These learners may: become socially isolated, place themselves at risk of harm during periods of absence, be more likely to be involved in socially unacceptable and/or illegal activities, have gaps in their knowledge and understanding of basic concepts, feel insecure in the school environment, be more likely to leave school early, be over-represented in the juvenile justice system, be the victims of bullying and harassment

### **1.4 Purpose of the study**

Purpose of the study will be to establish the effect of absenteeism and academic performance of a learner

### **1.5 Objective of the study**

The study will be guided by the following specific objectives:

- a) Establish causes of absenteeism in schools.
- b) Establish the ways to reduce absenteeism in schools.

### **1.6 Research Questions**

The study will be guided by the following research questions:

- a) What are the causes of absenteeism in schools?
- b) What are the ways to reduce absenteeism in schools?

### **1.7 Scope of the study**

The study was carried out in Siaya central primary school, found in Siaya District, in the Nyanza province. The researcher chose Siaya Central Primary school because it is near his place of residence and it is the same place where he works from, which made it easy for researcher to access all the necessary information required in his study. The study will cover part of the staff members and the learners/pupils.

### **1.8 Significance of the study**

The study will be beneficial to the following parties:

- i. The findings of this research shall be useful to the school administration and management of Siaya central primary school in designing appropriate policies which will help them to address that problem; since it is intended to establish the causes of poor academic performance of learners.
- ii. The findings of this research shall help the researcher to fulfill of the requirement for the award of bachelor's degree in Education.
- iii. The findings of this research shall help future researchers doing research in this topic or related topics as it will add knowledge to the existing one and provide up to date literature for academicians and administrators to be used for future literature review.
- iv. The findings of this research shall help the government of Kenya and other policy makers to come up with decisions concerning institutions such as Siaya central primary school.

### **1.9 Theory**

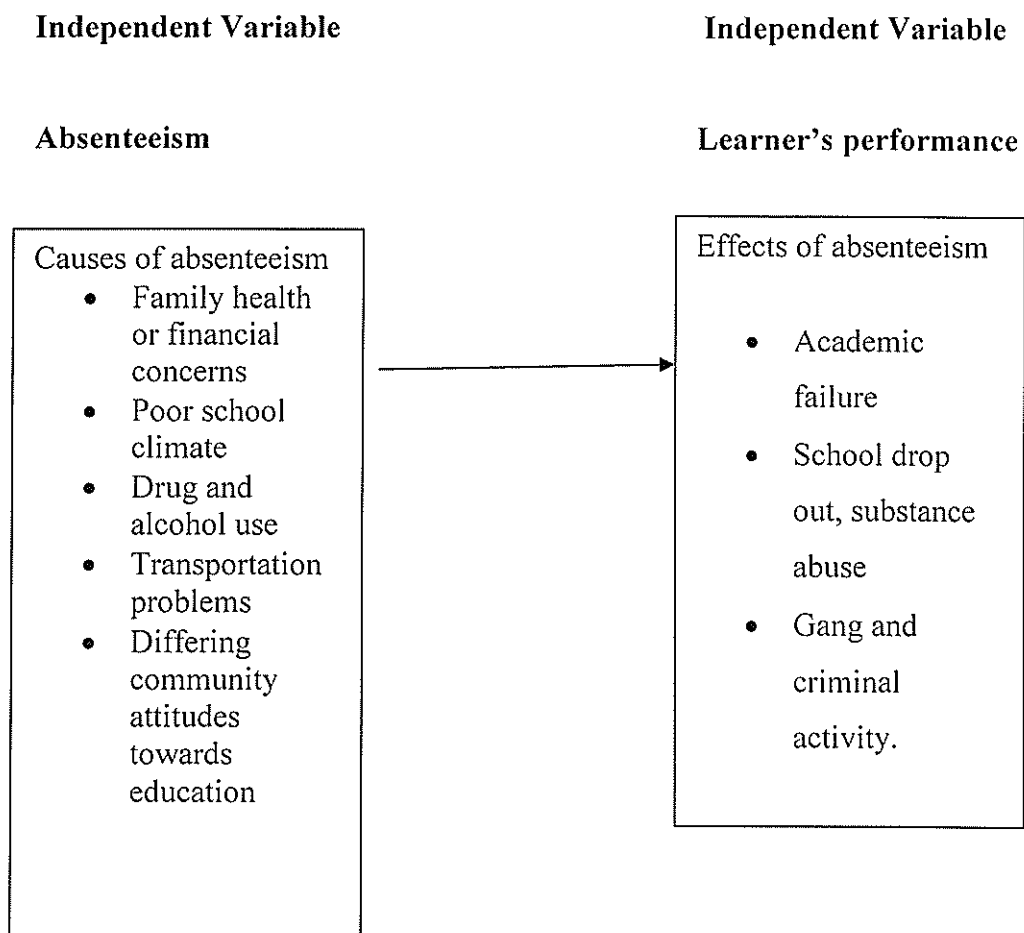
This research was based on absenteeism- performance theory by Shultz who asserts that school attendance is an important factor for school performance among learners. Studies show that higher attendance is related to higher achievement for students of all backgrounds. Students who attend school regularly score higher on achievement tests than their peers who are frequently absent.

Many factors can lead to student absenteeism. Family health or financial concerns, poor school climate, drug and alcohol use, transportation problems and differing community

attitudes towards education are all conditions that can affect whether or not a child is attending school.

Chronic truancy (regular unexcused absence), in particular, is a predictor of undesirable outcomes in adolescence, including academic failure, school drop out, substance abuse, and gang and criminal activity.(Railsbak,2006).

### Conceptual frame work



Adopted from Reynolds, 1987; Railsback, 2004; Crouch, 2006).

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.0 Introduction**

This chapter looks at concept of absenteeism, causes of absenteeism and managing learner absenteeism.

#### **2.1 Defining learner absenteeism and related concepts**

Although there is a legislative context in terms of the South African Schools Act for learner absenteeism (Buchel, 2006), the Act does not define the term “learner absenteeism”. In fact, the local and international material located for this literature review highlight the fact that there are a plethora of definitions (and terminology) relating to learner absenteeism (Budlender, 2007). The concept learner absenteeism is often used as a collective concept that includes various “types” of absenteeism. Much of the literature and reports on studies conducted on absenteeism, tend to focus on a particular “type” of absenteeism.

Brookes, Shisana, and Richter (2004), generally distinguish between unauthorized absence from school (also labeled truancy, by Crouch 2007) and authorized absence from school. Authorized absence from schools can be “authorized” by parents, schools or both.

Furthermore, authorized absence from school can be defined as legitimate or illegitimate (Crouch, 2007). Also sometimes labelled school phobia, (Crouch & Mthethwa 2002) Legitimate absence will be authorized by the parents and the school and refers to factors such as illness of a learner. Illegitimate, but parentally authorized absences include; child labor, excessive household responsibilities, or perceptions within communities or families that school attendance and/or education is less important than the tasks assigned to the child. School phobia refers to the phenomenon where a learner is unwilling to attend school, and stays at home with the knowledge of his or her parents. Factors contributing to school phobia include fear of failure and concerns about the health and welfare of parents. Finally, absence can be partial - absent for part of the day or full - absent for an entire day. (Daily News Reporters, 2006)

Unauthorized or illegitimately authorized partial absenteeism is also referred to in the literature as post-registration truancy. (Department of Education, 2005) The wide range of interpretations and variety of definitions for learner absenteeism naturally has complex consequences for research design, including the design of instruments and choice of method and for data analysis (particularly comparative analysis). It is also important to note that terms like absenteeism and truancy have been given different meanings by different writers and conclusions reached in one study cannot automatically be regarded as being supported or refuted by conclusions reached in other studies

Based on the literature review and the definitions employed in the surveyed schools, this study opts for the following (simple) definition of learner absenteeism: a learner is considered absent when the learner is not at school for an entire day. This is also the definition currently employed by the majority of schools surveyed for this study when recording attendance and absenteeism. Nevertheless, it would be useful to distinguish in policy and data capturing and recording methodologies between partial absenteeism (absent for part of the day) and full absenteeism (absent for the entire day). Absenteeism (whether partial or full) can be authorized (by parents or schools) or unauthorized. Further, authorized absenteeism (by parents) can be legitimate (e.g. due to learner illness) or illegitimate (e.g. parent does not consider education important or engages the learner in child labor).

## **2.2 Causes of absenteeism**

### **Individual and personal characteristics as contributing factors**

**Illness:** Illness is one of the primary reasons for recorded absenteeism rates and is certainly the primary reason for legitimately authorized absenteeism in South Africa and elsewhere (Moses, 2000)

**Age:** There is some evidence (Murgatroyd, 1987) to suggest that age is inversely correlated with absenteeism rates. International research (National Treasury, 2007) shows

that the number of unauthorized absences in secondary schools in Victoria, Australia increases steadily with age and that the majority of learners that engage in unauthorized absenteeism are found in secondary schools.

The Labor Force Survey data from March 2006 shows that attendance rates decrease with age, particularly for the 16 to 17 year age group. (Oregon Department of Human Services, June 2002) It is worth noting, however, that the National Treasury's 2006 Provincial Budgets and Expenditure Review Report, suggests a contradictory estimate of the correlation between learner absenteeism and age, due to the focus on learner days for primary schools, rather than primary and secondary.

Gender: There does not seem to be any conclusive evidence that gender contributes to absenteeism. Moseki (2004) found that in the Northern Cape males were more likely to be absent without authorization, but that this difference was not statistically significant. There is nevertheless a gender dimension to some of the factors that contribute to learner absenteeism (particularly in South Africa) i.e. the negative impact of violence and sexual harassment and assault and the dangers associated with walking to school is increased for female learners.

Learning Disabilities/ Learning difficulties/Difficulty coping academically: Phurutse, (2005) argued that learners who admitted having learning problems (or were less academically successful), were more likely to be absent without authorization.

Psychological Dysfunction/ Problems: There is some evidence to suggest that (particularly among wealthier learners and in developed countries) psychological problems such as poor social skills and low self-esteem result in absenteeism. (Railsback, June 2004)

#### **Socio-economic reasons**

Lack of Parental involvement: Reid, (1987) in the subject area report a positive correlation between parental/ care-giver involvement in learner education and attendance.



According to the 2005 CSSR report, the more adults there are in a household, the more likely it is that the individual concerned will be in school.

Dysfunctional/ Disintegrated Family structures: This is an important factor influencing the extent of learner absenteeism in South Africa. In a study conducted in the Eastern Cape, teachers reported that 74% of learners were affected by problems relating to an unstable home environment (including poverty, physical and mental disabilities and social and emotional needs, (University of Glasgow SCRE. 2002) International literature supports the argument that unstable or insecure home environments contribute to absenteeism. (Reynolds, 1987)

Food insecurity: It is estimated that 14% of Kenyan children go to school having had either nothing to eat or only a cup of tea in the morning – in the Nyanza province the estimate is as high as 22%.(South African Human Rights Commission, January 2007). School feeding/nutrition programs, therefore, contribute significantly to increased attendance. The National School Nutrition Program which is administered by the Department of Education and which fed approximately five million children in 16 000 schools at a cost of R838 million is a step in the right direction, but is not yet sufficient. (Staffordshire Education Department, 2001) During the South African Human Rights Commission's public hearings on the basic right to education in 2006 a number of criticisms (Stoll P. 1990) of the program were raised. These include; (1) the program stops feeding children at a particular grade and does not extend to secondary schools and (2) the reliability of the service was questionable in some areas.

Urban vs. Rural problem: In Kenya, children on farms are reportedly much less likely to attend school than children living in urban areas. Taylor, (2001) reported that when compared to the base category of urban formal areas, attendance is about two percentage points lower in urban informal areas, five percentage points lower in the previous homeland areas and fourteen percentage points lower in the commercial farming areas. This discrepancy can in part be explained by the unique pressures experienced by learners who attend rural schools. Rural learners tend to be engaged in time-consuming

domestic and agricultural chores and transport to schools is particularly inadequate in rural areas.

**Child Labor:** Studies have found that one of the most common reasons for children not attending school in Kenya (and particularly in rural areas) is that their families need them to work. Children have extensive domestic duties. An estimated 38% of Kenyan learners engage in some form of household/domestic labor such as cooking or cleaning, with African girls most likely to have these responsibilities. Many rural learners spend a certain amount of time each day, both before and after school, on domestic and agricultural chores, such as herding cattle or fetching firewood or water.

**Transport problems:** It is estimated that good number of Kenya's learners get to school late (i.e. partial absenteeism). Inadequate public transport systems and poverty combine to contribute to late coming and absenteeism (and in some cases to drop-outs). This is irrespective of the National Department of Education's policy to assist learners who have to walk further than five kilometers per day. In many cases, it is both expensive and threatening to walk to school, especially for girls. The long distances to school increase the chance of road accidents and the threat from criminals, who in some areas have been known to rob or rape learners going to school. (Wako, 2003)

**HIV/AIDS:** HIV/AIDS is potentially an important factor in determining the extent of learner absenteeism in Kenya. In 2004, the National Household HIV Prevalence and Risk Survey of African Children found that HIV/AIDS was prevalent in 5.4% of children aged 2 to 18. There was no significant difference by gender or age group within the 2-18 year band. (Whitney, 1994)

**Teenage Pregnancy:** Research on education in African rural communities found that teenage pregnancy, absenteeism, poverty and unemployment are causally inter-related. The report on this research states that: "Being a mother provides a sense of importance and purpose that many young people lack when they live in deprived conditions. Sometimes having a child is a positive and rational decision from the viewpoint of certain

teenagers, especially if they feel that education has little to offer.” While pregnancy contributes to absenteeism in the short-term, in the longer-term pregnancy tends to result in drop-out from school

### **School-based reasons/contributing factors**

Subject Matter related problems: Subject matter and particularly boredom with the school curriculum has been reported as contributing to absenteeism. Survey findings in various cities in the United Kingdom, for example, revealed that Mathematics and Science lessons are most frequently missed by learners (Moseki, 2004). In a study of the causes of absenteeism conducted by the Department of Education situated in Glasgow, many learners said that the reason that they wanted to miss school was boredom (Malcolm et al, 2003)

School fees problems: There is substantial evidence to suggest that the requirement to pay school fees contributes to absenteeism. Although Phurutse (2005) observes that there is substantial variation in the average annual school fees across the provinces, with Gauteng charging the most (an average of R800) and Free State charging the least (average of R100),<sup>66</sup> it has been reported that; “School fees and other costs such as uniforms and books are among the key barriers preventing school attendance.”<sup>67</sup>

Learner to Educator Ratio, In Kenya, rural provinces tend to have proportionally more schools with fewer learners than the more urbanized provinces, which tend to have proportionally fewer schools with more learners. (Kenya Institute of Education)

Learner and Educator Relationships: The literature surveyed suggests that authorized and unauthorized absenteeism rates are lower in cases where relationships between learners and educators are positive. Moseki’s study of truancy also focused on the relationship of educators to learners. It suggests that unauthorized absenteeism and truancy, in particular, occurs because some learners avoid certain teachers. Moseki states: “Negative attitudes

displayed by some educators may drive certain learners out of the school.....insults and humiliating remarks by educators lead to school non-attendance.”

**Incompetence of Educators:** The Kenya Human Rights Commission found during recently public hearings that although there are “many teachers who are passionate, committed and hard working, there is evidence of many teachers who have low morale, spend too little time in the classroom, are unqualified, are not sufficiently trained in the new curriculum, use outdated teaching methods in classes that are too big and who are disconnected from the communities in which they teach”.

**Punishment for late-coming:** International literature suggests that schools that employ coercive methods to combat absenteeism have less success than schools that employ inclusive methods (i.e. involving learners, parents and the school in a open and supportive way) to encourage attendance. Nevertheless, Kenya learners reported to the KHRC that punishment for late-coming at many schools was so severe that they would rather stay away from school on those days when they are very late (even with legitimate excuses). It was also found that many schools still practice corporal punishment and that learners would engage in unauthorized absenteeism in order to avoid such punishment.

**Violence in Schools (excluding corporal punishment):** There is consensus in the local and international literature that bullying contributes to absenteeism. Studies have shown that South African schools are sometimes places of intolerance and human rights violations that include sexual harassment, sexual assault, bullying and abuse. Buchel (2006) cites a media source, saying that as much as a third of all child abuse cases in Kenya are perpetrated by teachers

**Poor school facilities:** Various studies and research projects have found that there are schools that do not have flush toilets and/or electricity. There is some anecdotal evidence to suggest that poor school facilities contribute to absenteeism. During our fieldwork, for example, one or two interviewees indicated (during informal discussions) that girl

learners tended to stay at home when they were menstruating because the sanitation facilities at schools were inadequate.(Moseki, 2004).

### **2.3Managing learner absenteeism: International best practice**

Murgatroyd (1987) outlines 5 broad strategies for combating persistent absenteeism:

- ❖ Student learning contracts: individual instruction which is negotiated by learner and school;
- ❖ Home visits: improving links between home and school. (This method was also successfully used by the Social Exclusion Unit in the United Kingdom).
- ❖ Remediation: correct skill deficits which may have encouraged absenteeism;
- ❖ The open school approach: the nature of school is changed so that a variety of learning approaches are used to encourage motivation to learning; and
- ❖ The Counseling Approach: It is assumed that Learner Absenteeism results from a variety of motivational modes, and that consequently individual counseling is needed.

Reynolds (1987) has identified additional factors associated with high performing schools which have, amongst other things, curbed learner absenteeism. They include:

- Purposeful leadership by the principal, marked by power-sharing and consultation;
- Involvement of the deputy principal in policy decisions;
- Involvement of teachers in curriculum planning and curriculum guidelines, as well as class allocations;
- Consistency amongst teachers in terms of teaching approach;
- A structured day marked by teacher supervision as well as learner-freedom within the structure;
- Intellectually challenging teaching approach (marked by 'higher order' questions and statements);
- A work-centered environment;
- A limited focus within sessions;

- Maximum communication between teachers and pupils (especially communication with groups or the whole class);
- Thorough record-keeping of pupil progress;
- Parental involvement (reading at home, educational visits). In the United States, for example, many very successful truancy programs contain components that provide intensive monitoring, counseling and other family-strengthening services to truants and their families.
- A positive climate in the classroom (less emphasis on punishment and more on reward).

A useful source of measures taken to manage absenteeism in the UK, the US and Australia is to be found in the Hargreaves Report: "Improving Secondary Schools", released by the Inner London Education Authority. Amongst other things, the report associates good practice in maintaining an effective attendance policy with:

- A senior teacher being charged with the specific responsibility for pupil attendance;
- A list of absentees being produced quickly, ideally by morning break, for use by appropriate teaching and office staff;
- A sensitive scheme for the immediate follow-up of the absentees (by letter or telephone). (In an assessment of approaches and methods utilized in the United

Kingdom it was also found that the "key to success" was to always contact the parents immediately).

- ❖ Heads of year and teachers with responsibility for pupil attendance having regular meetings with welfare officers;
- ❖ Regular 'spot checks' for specific lesson truancy;
- ❖ Rewards for pupils or classes with regular attendance. This strategy has also been successfully employed by the Social Exclusion Unit in the United Kingdom and by many schools in the United States.
- ❖ Penalties for students who are persistently late; and

- ❖ Absentees and truants being welcomed back to school and efforts made to reintegrate them socially and academically. A similar approach was followed in Victoria, Australia<sup>94</sup> where it was found that suspensions from school was not a suitable deterrent for truants, and that it was more useful to maintain the student school link.

The report also focuses on changing the curriculum, emphasizing choice, coherence, breadth, balance and structure, and increasing vocational training. The report suggests that the curriculum should ensure that pupils exercise oral as well as listening, reading and writing skills, and those topics and relevant issues are raised in class to stimulate learners to express their opinions. <sup>95</sup>

Further practical means for curbing absenteeism are suggested by Felsenstein (1987) who states that each school should have procedures for collating absences and sensitive strategies for following them up either by telephone or letter. He adds that schools should also be in close co-operation with appropriate supporting agencies.<sup>96</sup>

In addition to these corrective means, researchers have suggested rehabilitative and preventive measures to deal with learner absenteeism. These include the creation of on-site sanctuaries for learners with difficult home circumstances or poor relationships with teachers.<sup>97</sup> This approach should include the establishment of ongoing truancy prevention programs as have been utilized in the United States.

Citing international literature, Moseki (2004) mentions additional measures for managing truancy in schools. They include:

- Tutoring and mentoring systems for learners with learning difficulties. In the United Kingdom this includes programs to deal with children's literacy and innumeracy problems so that they could "catch up". Including after hours learning and summer schools for students who truant because lessons are too difficult
- Counseling and therapy. This method has also been successfully utilized in Victoria, Australia.
- The use of a variety of instructional approaches for learners with different learning abilities;

- Effective monitoring, recording and registration of attendance. In Victoria Australia this is done electronically.
- Provision of life-skills education; and
- Working with other departments to ensure learner attendance (particular mention is made of the Departments of Safety and Security and Social Services)

Additional measures employed in the United Kin Kingdom (not captured by the authors listed above) include<sup>101</sup>: Truancy “watch-schemes” involving local businesses and the police. This method is also employed in the United States and New South Wales (Australia).

- ◆ Introduction of extracurricular activities such as breakfast clubs, after school clubs, studies support and vocational training.

Additional measures employed in the United States (not captured by the authors discussed above) include:

- ❖ The recognition that absenteeism in all its facets is the product of a range of factors and that successful strategies have to combat the root causes of absenteeism. This includes initiating tutoring programs, additional security measures to combat bullying or drug use, drug prevention measures, mentoring efforts, campaigns for involving parents in their children’s school attendance and referrals to social service agencies. As the findings from our fieldwork (see subsequent section of the report) will show, interventions aimed at reducing absenteeism in South Africa will have to be much broader. The socio-economic inequities that characterize our society and which are a direct result of the unjust policies of the Apartheid system need to be addressed. Absenteeism in South Africa is about poverty, therefore, factors like the provision of infrastructure and public transport, food, and free schooling become much more important.

Lessons from the United Kingdom, the United States, New Zealand, and Australia indicate that the National Department of Education can also play a role in reducing absenteeism by;



- ◆ Holding schools accountable for attendance. In the United Kingdom public schools are expected to set and meet attendance targets and the worst performing schools are monitored.
- ◆ Ensuring that the curriculum is appropriate and ensuring that educators have the required skills to teach it.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

This chapter discusses the research design, population, sampling procedures, research instruments, research procedures, data source, data analysis, reliability and variability and limitations of the study.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

According to Gosh (1999), a research design is a plan of the proposed work; it is a arrangement of conditions for conditions for collection and analysis of data in manner that aims at making the research relevant.

The study used descriptive research design to assess the relationship between absenteeism and learners performance in Siaya Central Primary School, Siaya District, Nyanza Province. The design is preferred because it shall enable the researcher to collect original data and of population, because of limited time and resources. Stratified random sampling shall be used to choose the respondents to who shall include teachers and learners in Siaya Central primary school.

#### **3.2 Population of study**

According to Kakooza (1996), a population is a group or category of human beings, animals or others, which have one or more characteristics in common as a target population of the universe.

The researcher shall interview 25 teachers out of a total population of 30 teachers from the different departments, and 40 pupils out of 1200 pupils to assess the effects of absenteeism and learners performance in Siaya Central Primary.

#### **3.3 Sampling Procedures**

Descriptive random sampling was used to select 25 teachers out of 30 teachers from the different departments in the schools, where 5 teachers from each of the department English, Social studies, mathematics, sciences and Swahili.

Meanwhile 40 pupils participated in this study (five pupils from each class) out of a total population of 1200 pupils at Siaya Central Primary School.

According to Kakooza (1996), a portion of the population selected for purposes of researching the characteristics of the whole population is called a sample. Sample refers to the procedure used to arrive at this; it refers to the manner in which the members of the population are selected as part of the sample. Sampling offers advantages such as enabling the researcher to deal with a greater range of issues in greater depth than would have otherwise been possible, it also minimizes the cost of doing research if the whole population is considered.

### **3.4 Research instruments**

The research used researcher-made questionnaires, observation and oral interview methods to gather the data needed to assess the effects of absenteeism and learners' performance.

According to Jack & Norman (2000), a questionnaire is a set of questions to be answered by the subject of the study.

The advantages of using a questionnaire method are that it saves time, it is convenient to respondents as it is filled by the respondents during their own free time, it also reduces bias because of its systematic presentation and it enables the researcher to collect a wide variety of information from respondents, especially if open-ended questions given the respondent write his or her idea(s).

Observation is the conscious examining of something under study by carefully watching, and noting what one sees or observes, smells, hears to mention but a few. The main advantage is that the researcher is able to gather first hand information from the field as the researcher is able to observe things than just being told.

Observation method enables the researcher to get some information that cannot be revealed by the respondents which they think is confidential or sometimes respondents may not be articulate enough but the researcher can observe and understand what is going on.

According to Kothar (2003), oral interview is conducting a research by asking oral questions by the researcher to the respondent and answers are recorded by the researcher or some one else the researcher has entrusted to carry out research.

Oral interview offer the following advantages:

The interviewer is can clarify any question that are obscure or ambiguous and can also ask respondents to expand on answers that are particularly important, and it enables the researcher to read body expressions of the respondents where a meaning can be deduced.

However, oral interviews method has disadvantages which include; the presence of the researcher may inhibit respondents from saying what they really think, it takes much longer time to carry out research than when a questionnaire is used, and it also allows flexibility to the respondents as it gives the respondents another interview mode to enable them to participate in the research which they could have missed.

### **3.5 Research Procedure**

The researcher got an introductory letter from the director of institute of open and distance learning Kampala International University introducing the researcher to carry out research on the effects of absenteeism and learners performance in Siaya Central Primary School, Siaya District, Nyanza Province. The introductory is to seek permission to interview teachers and pupil in Siaya Central Primary School who participated in the research. An acceptance to carry out the research was got from the Head teacher Siaya Central Primary School to the director institute of open and distance learning of KIU.

### **3.6 Sources of Data**

The researcher used data from two sources; primary field (using administered questionnaires, oral interviews, and observation) and secondary data shall be got from the review of university reports, manuals and other documents from libraries and internet sources.

### **3.7 Data Analysis**

The data was collected recorded, edited and later analysed manually.

### **3.8 Validity and Reliability**

The researcher used quality checks such as use of different methods like questionnaires, oral interviews, and observation method to carry out the research.

The researcher pre-tested the research instruments such as the questionnaires before actually using those instruments in the field. This was to make sure that the quality of the Data collected by the questionnaire was of high quality.

The researcher made sure that the respondents fully participated in the research by minimizing drop out let. The researcher made sure that there was a good representation of the respondents a cross the age, gender, and other characteristics in choosing the sample population.

### **3.9 Limitations of the Research**

Some of the respondents were not willing to share with the researcher some of the information that they may consider as confidential to them but the researcher promised to keep the information got as confidential and shall only used for academic purpose.

Language barrier is expected as a problem where some of the respondents could express themselves well and some of the questions are likely to be misunderstood, but the researcher interpreted the questions to the respondents.

Limited literature on information technology and quality service delivery in libraries around shall make the study to be restricted to use a few literature materials that researcher shall manage to access.

### **3.10 Data Quality Control**

The heavy need for data made the researcher to use quality checks such as the use of methodological triangulation that is the use of several research methodologies in the research.

The researcher also pre-tested the research instruments such as the questionnaires before actually taking the questionnaires to the field. This is to make sure that the quality of data collected by the questionnaire is of great quality.

The researcher ensured that the respondents fully participant in this research and dropout rates are fully minimized. The researcher also ensured that there is a good representation across age, gender and other variability is taken into consideration in choosing the sample population.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.0 Introduction

In this chapter presented the findings, analysis and interpretation of the data. The sample population was made up of 65 respondents; 40 pupils and 25 teachers.

In the course of obtaining data, 65 questionnaires were drafted and given to the respondents and all of them were returned indicating 100% response rate.

**Table 4.1 Gender of respondents**

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	32	49%
Female	33	51%
<b>Total</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: primary data

The majority of the respondents were female represented by 51% while 49% were male.

This showed that the gender was balanced; therefore, the responses got from the study were across the different gender and are great value.

**Table 4.2. Age of respondents**

Age	Frequency	Percentage
18-25	45	70%
26-30	4	6%
31-35	5	8%
36-40	6	9%
41 and over	5	8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>100%</b>

Source: Primary data

The majority of the respondents were of the age category of 18-25 who were represented by 70% of the responses, while the minority of the respondents was of the age of 26-30 years, who were represented by 6% response rate. It is clear that Siaya central primary school should put into consideration age brackets of 26-30 as it does everything because they are the majority stakeholders of the school.

**Table 4.3 Causes of exam malpractices**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Food insecurity	6	9%
Child Labor	5	7%



Transport problems	7	7%
HIV/AIDS	6	9%
Teenage Pregnancy	5	7%
School Fees problems	6	9%
Competence of Educators	5	7%
Punishment for late-coming	2	3%
Poor School Facilities	4	6%
Learner and Educator Relationships	4	6%
Dysfunctional/ Disintegrated Family structures	4	6%

Psychological Dysfunction/ Problems	9	13%
Age	6	9%
Others	3	4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100%</b>

The research findings showed that the majority of the findings represented by 13 % indicated that the major cause of absenteeism is psychological dysfunction/ problems, while minority of the responses represented by 3% indicated that the cause of absenteeism is punishment for late-coming.

This concurs with Moseki (2004), who asserts that the causes of absenteeism include age, gender, learning disabilities, psychological Problems, disintegrated family structures, food insecurity, child Labor, transport, HIV/AIDS, teenage Pregnancy, difficult Subject matter, School fees problems, learner to educator ratio, learner educator Relationships, competence of educators, punishment for late-coming and poor school facilities.

**Table 4.4 Ways to reduce absenteeism**

<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Improve competence of Educators	12	17%
Improve school facilities	10	14%
Improve educator/ learner relationship	10	14%
Introduce regular 'spot checks' for specific lesson truancy	12	17%
Rewards for pupils or classes with regular attendance	16	23%
Penalise students who are persistently late	9	13%
Others	-	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>100</b>

The research findings showed that the majority of the findings represented by 17 % indicated that the major the way to reduce absenteeism is improve competence of educators , while minority of the responses represented by 13% indicated that the of absenteeism is penalize students who are persistently late .

This concurs with Murtagroyd (1987), who asserts that the ways to reduce absenteeism include improving the competence of teachers, improve school facilities, improve educator -learner relationship, introduce regular 'spot checks' for specific lesson truancy, give rewards to pupils or classes with regular attendance, and penalize students who are persistently late.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **SUMMMARY OF THE FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION**

#### **5.0 Introduction**

This chapter represents the summary of the research of findings, conclusions and recommendations based on the findings of the research and areas of further research.

#### **5.1 Summary of the findings**

##### **5.1.1 Causes of absenteeism**

The research findings revealed that the causes of absenteeism included age, gender, learning disabilities, psychological Problems, disintegrated family structures, food insecurity, child Labor, transport, HIV/AIDS, teenage Pregnancy, difficult Subject matter, School fees problems, learner to educator ratio, learner educator Relationships, competence of educators, punishment for late-coming and poor school facilities.

##### **5.1.2 Ways to reduce absenteeism**

The findings of the research indicated the ways to reduce absenteeism included improving the competence of teachers, improve school facilities, improve educator - learner relationship, introduce regular 'spot checks' for specific lesson truancy, give rewards to pupils or classes with regular attendance, and penalize students who are persistently late.

#### **5.2 conclusion**

The research findings revealed that that there was a relationship between absenteeism and learners' performance in Siaya central primary school, as absenteeism decreases performance and therefore deserves attention.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

Based on the research findings the following are the recommendations to reduce exam malpractices and improve learners' performance in Siaya central primary school:

Introduce regular 'spot checks' for specific lesson truancy to see who is in attendance and who is not in attendance.

Rewards for pupils or classes with regular attendance to encourage other people to do the same so that they can also get a reward next time.

Penalties for students who are persistently late and absentees and truants should be welcomed back to school and efforts should be made to reintegrate them socially and academically.

Include absence data on teacher record to make the teachers fear absenting themselves unnecessarily as it shows poor reputation about them.

Put in place incentives programs that that will help to improve attendance such as good work conditions, time, equipment to enable good performance form both teachers and learners.

Encourage good health as teachers who are healthy are less likely to fall sick which will make the teachers have time free from sickness to get more time to teach which will improve the performance the learners in turn.

### **5.3.1 Areas of future research**

There is still need for research to be done on exam malpractice and learners' performance. Further research can also be done in gender and learner' performance.

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**APPENDIX 1:  
QUESTIONNAIRE**

**Dear respondents,**

I am a student of Kampala International University carrying out a research on the effects of absenteeism on learners' performance in Siaya Central primary school, Siaya district, Nyanza province as partial fulfillment for the award of a Bachelor of Education of Kampala International University. Feel free to unveil any information as this research is purely for academic purpose and all information shall be treated with a high degree of confidentiality.

**Questionnaire for the respondents**

**Personal Background (tick (✓) the right answer)**

1. sex

a) Male

b) Female

2. Age bracket

a) 18-25 years

b) 26-33 years

c) 34-41 years

d) 42-49 year

e) 50+

3. Educational Background

a) Primary

b) Secondary level

c) Diploma

d) Graduate +

4. Marital status

a) Single

b) Married

5. Place of residence.....

2. What does absenteeism mean to you?.....

3. a) Do you think absenteeism have effects on learners performance?

Yes

No

b) If yes, please, explain.....

.....  
.....

4. Please explain the causes of absenteeism in Kimai primary school.

.....  
.....

5. What could be your suggestions on how to reduce absenteeism in Kimai primary school?

.....  
.....

6. Are there other factors that affect learners' performance in Kimai primary school.....

.....

Yes

No

9. If yes, please explain.....

**THANKS FOR YOUR COOPERATION**