

**IMPACT OF TEACHER ABSENTEEISM ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF
LEARNERS IN SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS OF SIBANGA
SUB-COUNTY MANAFWA DISTRICT**

LUKE WABULA WALUKHULI

RJ22/MUC/BED/041

**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE SCHOOL OF EDUCATION IN PARTIAL
FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE AWARD OF A DEGREE OF
BACHELORS OF EDUCATION OF UGANDA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY**

November, 2024



**UGANDA CHRISTIAN
UNIVERSITY**

A Centre of Excellence in the Heart of Africa


DECLARATION

I, Walukhuli Luke of registration number **RJ22/MUC/BED/041** hereby declare that this research project is my original work and has never been submitted to any University or Higher Institution of learning for an academic award.

Signed: 

WALUKHULI LUKE WABULA

RJ22/MUC/BED/041

Date: 

APPROVAL

I affirm that this research proposal has been carried out under my supervision and is now ready for submission to the board of examiners of Uganda Christian University for the intended award.

Signed:

MS. NABUKENYA ANN

RESEARCH SUPERVISOR

Date: f:>..'1.....

DEDICATION

I dedicate this piece of work to my beloved family members for their financial, spiritual, moral guidance and compassion they rendered to me during my stay at Uganda Christian University.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Glory to God without whose grace and divine provision I could not have accomplished this laborious work. I express my humble gratitude to my supervisor Ms. Nabukenya Ann for her scholarly guidance and perpetual encouragement. I extend my sincere thanks to my lecturers for their professional and academic nurturing. I also extend my sincere thanks to my course mates notably for their fruitful academic discussions, professional encouragement and support. I wish to extend a vote of thanks to my relatives as well for their academic and spiritual guidance that made me bold enough to face my study. Finally, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to my lovely aunt for her parental care and love that inspired me throughout my academic life. May God bless you all.

TABLE OF CONTENT

DECLARATION.....	i
APPROVAL	ii
DEDICATION.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT	iv
LIST OF TABLES	ix
LIST OF FIGURES	x
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS/ACCRONYMS	xi
ABSTRACT	xii
CHAPTER ONE	1
INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.0 Introduction:	1
1.1 Background to the study.....	1
1.2 Statement of the Problem	4
1.3 General objective of the study.....	5
1.4 Specific Objectives of the study	5
The study was guided by the following specific objectives.....	5
1.5 Research Questions	5
1.6 Scope of the study	6
1.6.1 Geographical scope.....	6
1.6.2 Content Scope.....	6
1.6.3 Time scope	6
1.7 Significance of the study	6

1.8 Conceptual Framework.....	7
1.9 Definition of key terms	8
1.10 Limitations of the study	9
1.11 Delimitations.....	9
CHAPTER TWO	10
LITERATURE REVIEW.....	10
2.0 Introduction:	10
2.1 Causes of teacher absenteeism	10
2.2 Effects of teacher absenteeism.....	13
1.3 Strategies employed to reduce teacher absenteeism	17
2.4 Literature gaps	21
CHAPTER THREE	22
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	22
3.0 Introduction	22
3.1 Research design	22
3.2 Area of study.....	23
3.3 Study population.....	23
3.4 Sample Size	23
Table 3.1: Summary of the Study Population and sample size.....	24
3.5 Sampling Techniques	24
3.6 Data collection methods and tools	25
3.6.1 Questionnaires.....	25
3.6.2 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)	25
3.6.3 Facility Survey	26
3.7 Validity and Reliability of instruments	26
3.7.1 Validity of the Instruments	26
3.7.2 Reliability of the Instrument	27
Table 3.2: Reliability statistics.....	27
3.8 Data Collection Procedure	27
3.9 Data analysis	28

3.10 Ethical consideration.....	28
CHAPTER FOUR.....	30
PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS.....	30
4.0 Introduction	30
4.1 UCE analysis for the selected schools covering the scope.....	30
Table 4.1: UCE Analysis for selected schools covering the time scope	31
4.3 Demographic characteristics of respondents	33
4.3.1 Response rate of the respondents.....	33
Table 4.1 Showing the response rate of the respondents.....	33
4.3.2 Age of the respondents.....	33
The table 4.2 below showing the age of the respondents	33
4.3.3 Sex of the respondents	34
Table 4.3 showing sex composition of the respondents	34
4.3.4 Marital status of the respondents	35
The table 4.4 below shows the marital status of the respondents.	35
4.3.5 Level of education.....	36
The table 4.5 below shows the level of education of the respondents.....	36
3.4.3.6 Religion.....	36
The table 4.6 below shows the religious affiliations of the respondents.....	36
Religion	36
Number	36
Percentage	36
4.4 Data analysis and interpretation on objective one.....	37
4.4.1 The causes of teacher absenteeism.....	37
Table 4.7: Key reasons for learner absenteeism.....	37
Table 4.8 Key reasons given by teachers for learner absenteeism in Sibanga Sub-county, September, 2024	39
Table 4.9: Other causes of learner absenteeism associated to low parental involvement presented by learners	41
4.4.2 Presentation on objective two- impact of teacher absenteeism on learners’ achievement. ...	43
Table 4.10: Impact of teacher absenteeism and learners’ achievement	43

4.4.3 Objective Three- to establish the strategies on how absenteeism can be eliminated to improve on learners’ performance in Sibanga Sub-county.....	45
Table 4.11: Ways of curbing teacher absenteeism.....	45
CHAPTER FIVE.....	49
DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	49
5.0 Introduction	49
5.1 Discussion of findings on objective one.....	49
5.1.1 Discussion of findings on objective two.....	52
5.1.2 Discussion of findings on objective Three.....	54
5.2 Conclusion.....	57
5.3 Recommendations	57
5.4 Areas for further study.....	59
REFERENCES.....	60
AAPPENDICES	64
PPENDIX: I FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR LEARNERS	64
APPENDIX: II INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PARENTS.....	66
APPENDIX: III CATEGORY C: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR LEARNERS.....	68
APPENDIX: 1V QUESTIONAIRES FOR BOTH TEACHERS AND HEADTEACHERS.....	70
APPENDIX: V SAMPLE SIZE (S) REQUIRED FOR THE GIVEN POPULATION.....	72

LIST OF TABLES

Table 3.1: Summary of the Study Population and sample size.....	24
Table 3.2: Reliability statistics.....	27
Table 4.1: UCE Analysis for selected schools covering the time scope.....	31
Table 4.1 Showing the response rate of the respondents.....	33
The table 4.2 below showing the age of the respondents.....	33
Table 4.3 showing sex composition of the respondents.....	34
The table 4.4 below shows the marital status of the respondents.	35
The table 4.5 below shows the level of education of the respondents.	36
The table 4.6 below shows the religious affiliations of the respondents.....	36
Table 4.7: Key reasons for learner absenteeism.....	37
Table 4.8 Key reasons given by teachers for learner absenteeism in Sibanga Sub-county, September, 2024.....	39
Table 4.9: Other causes of learner absenteeism associated to low parental involvement presented by learners.....	41
Table 4.10: Impact of teacher absenteeism and learners' achievement.....	43
Table 4.11: Ways of curbing teacher absenteeism.....	45

LIST OF FIGURES

1.8 Conceptual Framework.....8

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS/ACCRONYMS

TVET	:	Technical Vocational Education and Training
UNEB	:	Uganda National Examinations Board
DEO	:	District Education Officer
PLE	:	Secondary Leaving Examinations
UNESCO	:	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
EFA	:	Education for all
CDD	:	Community Demand Driven PTA
	:	Parents Teachers Association
SMCs	:	School Management Committees
FGDs	:	Focused Group Discussions
UPE	:	Universal Secondary Education
PLE	:	Secondary Leaving Examination

ABSTRACT

This study examined the impact of teacher absenteeism on the academic performance of learners in selected secondary schools of Sibanga Sub-County, Manafwa District. The study was guided by the following objectives; i) to identify the causes of teacher absenteeism, ii) to examine the impact of teacher absenteeism on the academic performance of learners and iii) to establish the strategies on how absenteeism can be eliminated to improve on learners' performance in Sibanga Sub-County, Manafwa District. The sample size of 361 respondents was drawn from sampled secondary schools of Sibanga Sub-county, Manafwa District in accordance with Krejcie and Morgan (1970). This involved 6 head teachers, 92 teachers, 165 learners, 98 parents. The study employed a descriptive design where both quantitative and qualitative approaches was used. The questionnaires was administered to teachers and head teachers, interviews guides was used to collect data from parents while focused group discussions was used on learners. The findings of the study were presented in tables and analysed descriptively. The study concluded teacher absenteeism greatly affects learners' performance in all aspects. The study recommended that teachers needed to be rewarded to help in reinforcing their performance. The government should also strengthen the inspection teams of the central and local governments by employing more inspectors of schools and increasing the required resources needed for them to function effectively.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Introduction:

This chapter presents the background to the study, problem statement, purpose of the study, research objectives, research questions, and study scope, significance of the study, conceptual framework, and definition of key terms, limitations and delimitations of the study.

1.1 Background to the study

In the educational system, teachers are most essential part of the society. An important consideration is that they play a crucial role in the development of the student to promote their skills (Myra Pollac, 1997). Einstein words about education are a supreme art of teaching to stir delight in inspired appearance and knowledge. They have a moral duty to train the young generation for the first guiding roadmap soon (Mishra, 2005). Concerning the teacher with student act mostly like a friend, guider, and philosopher. It is better for the student development to provide a relaxed and satisfied environment, it is possible when teacher enjoys in a facilitated environment. In Pakistan, there is two kind of sector one is government sector school and other is private sector school, for the competence it is necessary to provide necessary facilities in the teaching (T.K. Hemchand, 2009).

Moseki, (2004:25), defines Teacher absenteeism as a habitual pattern of absence from school or obligation. It is an indicator of poor individual performance as well as breach of the implicit contract between employer and employee; it is seen as management problem and informed in economic or quasi economic terms. Some scholars in line with (Moseki 2004) view teacher absenteeism as the physical absence from school for an entire day. Partial and full absenteeism can also be distinguished. The former refers to being absent for a certain part of the day and the latter refers to being absent for the whole day. Furthermore, absenteeism can either be authorised

by parents and schools or unauthorised. The latter refers to a situation where a teacher decides not to go school out of his/her own will and without a valid reason. Other concepts which were defined to give a clear understanding of teacher absenteeism included: school phobia, truancy and condoned absence.

Mayer & Mitchell, (1993), asserts that Educators in USA are faced with what to do to keep teachers from incurring excessive absences. This is because excessive absenteeism results in loss of instruction for the student disruption of instruction for the teacher who must provide remediation upon the student's return to school, increased workloads for guidance counsellors, administrators, and social workers who must intervene to try to curb or prevent repeated occurrences, and potential decrease in school funding due to loss of Full Time Equivalence (FTE) counts for students who are absent from school. For example, the Oakland (CA) Unified School District reported a loss of nearly \$4 million per year due to high absenteeism (Phone Master, 1998). Los Angeles Unified School District, also in California, reported a loss of approximately \$200,000 in one calendar year from a single large high school (Mayer & Mitchell, 1993). The above indicates that absenteeism greatly learners' achievement.

That incidence of absenteeism was widely known to be a problem in formal education systems locally and internationally. A study by Reid (2005) titled "The causes, views and traits of school absenteeism and Truancy: in analytical review"; was basically about school absenteeism and Absenteeism. The study was conducted in England and had the following findings; nonattendance and Absenteeism continued due to social inequalities, poverty, education attitudes, and incompetence of some parents, peer pressure, unattractive school buildings and climate. The recommendations made were, preventing and combating absence was expensive in

terms of staff time, costly for schools and the nation. Therefore, more studies in seeking more causes of absenteeism were needed to be taken.

Based on the above, teachers' absenteeism greatly affects learners' academic performance negatively and their right to education which is highly emphasised in Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948). It asserts that: "*Everyone has the right to education, which shall be free and compulsory. All people are entitled to all the rights without discrimination of any kind.*" Over the past seventy years, public education has come under increasing scrutiny and there have been demands at the international, regional, national, and local levels to improve the performance of schools and improve the achievement of learners. This is because of the dangers associated with teacher absenteeism.

The UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIS) conducted a survey in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia and Nigeria on the traits of teacher and found out that learners who dropped out of school was as result of continuous teacher absenteeism due to poor working environment, school and community related factors. Children dropping out from secondary schools were often over-age learners, around one third overall, and in four countries over-age learners accounted for 60% drop outs. Difference in school completion could be attributed to a variation between urban and rural school-going children, poor teacher pupil relationship, long distance to school and lack of meals at home, teacher absenteeism. Bruneforth, (2006:82), reports that in Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Kenya, Mali and Mozambique, more than 80% of rural children who had left secondary school dropped out.

In Tanzania, the report from Mbozi agreed that there are no demonstration rooms; there are very few charts and none of them are recent models or other teaching aids. Most of the schools have inadequate sanitary facilities and teachers and a few of them keep absenting themselves. They

have inadequate teaching materials, poor monitoring and supervision. In some schools teaching aids are kept in a storeroom and libraries and not easily accessible to learners. Teachers are not motivated to teach within the secondary school premises and decided to absent themselves (Government of Secondary Schools in Tanzania, 2010).

In Uganda, teacher absenteeism does not only affect the absent teachers, but also negatively impacts on their ability to plan and present classroom instruction in a logical and organized way. Failure to present classroom instruction in a sequential manner affects the progress of all learners as it complicates general classroom management (DEET, 1999). It is for this reason that a country like Uganda would find itself be obliged to making provisions of free and compulsory basic education for its citizens no matter what abilities or disabilities they possess (Article 30 of the constitution of the republic of Uganda, 1995). This study therefore becomes relevant as it is meant to find out the impact of teacher absenteeism in Sibanga Sub-County, Manafwa District, which is a part of Uganda with many children who do require education despite the teachers, absence hence the study sought to examine the impact of teacher absenteeism on learners' academic performance in order to make appropriate recommendations for improvement.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Much as the government of Uganda has tried to increase the pay for especially Science teachers, most of these teachers have continued absenting themselves. In government aided schools, it is believed that the government has recruited well trained teachers to carry out the curricular and co-curricular activities. However much this happens, the government teachers still have proved to be inconsistent as they don't consider their jobs as well as the work they have to do following the teachers' code of conduct. In Sibanga Sub-County, teachers in government schools are very irregular. A report by the District Educational Officer of 2019 indicates that about 45% of these

teachers absent themselves for selfish reasons. According to Bruno et al., (2007), students in a classroom eventually lose the desire to learn when the regular teacher is frequently absent and the delivery of instruction is by an array of substitute teachers. (Differences in teacher absenteeism rates across large urban geographical areas threaten the promotion of equity and excellence in the schools involved. It is from this background that the study sought to establish the impact of teacher absenteeism on the academic performance of learners in Sibanga Sub-County, Manafwa District.

1.3 General objective of the study

The study sought to examine the impact of teacher absenteeism on the academic performance of learners in selected secondary schools of Sibanga Sub-County, Manafwa District.

1.4 Specific Objectives of the study

The study was guided by the following specific objectives

- i. To analyse the causes of teacher absenteeism in secondary schools of Sibanga Sub-County, Manafwa District.
- ii. To examine the effect of teacher absenteeism on their performance in Sibanga Sub-County Manafwa District.
- iii. To establish the strategies on how absenteeism can be eliminated to improve on learners' performance in Sibanga Sub-County in Manafwa District.

1.5 Research Questions

The current study was guided by the following questions:

1. What are the causes of teacher absenteeism in Sibanga Sub-County Manafwa District?
2. What is the effect of teacher absenteeism on their academic performance?
3. What are the strategies that can be employed to curb teacher absenteeism?

1.6 Scope of the study

The scope of the study was limited in terms of content, time and geographical scope.

1.6.1 Geographical scope

The study was carried out in Manafwa District which is located in Eastern Uganda in the sub-region of Bugisu that consists of the Districts of Bududa, Bulambuli, Manafwa, Manafwa, Mbale and Namisindwa. Manafwa is bordered by Namisindwa District in the East; Bududa District to the North West, Mbale District to the West and Tororo District to the Southwest. The headquarters of Manafwa District is located approximately 27 kilometres (17 miles), by road, south-east of Mbale, the largest town in the sub-region; and approximately 267 km from Kampala the capital city of Uganda. Generally, the study was conducted in Sibanga Sub-County, Manafwa District which is bordered by Bugobero sub-county to the north, Kimaluli sub-county to the West, Khabutoola sub-county to the East and Mulatsi sub-county to the south.

1.6.2 Content Scope

The study examined the impact of teacher absenteeism on the academic performance of learners in selected secondary schools of Sibanga Sub-County, Manafwa District.

1.6.3 Time scope

The study was conducted within a time frame of tree years that is to say 2022-2024. This is the time when there was increased cases of teacher absenteeism in Manafwa and therefore the researcher intended to find out the causes and mitigation to the situation.

1.7 Significance of the study

This study was developed to have relevance in the improvement of the education system of not only Sibanga Sub-county but also Manafwa District and other educational institutions in Uganda and Africa. The study will create awareness to educationists which will help teachers to understand that their absence in the school environment affects the education of learners in

secondary schools. The study was intended to establish the impact of teacher absenteeism on learner academic performance in selected secondary schools of Sibanga Sub-County, Manafwa District. The findings of the current study would help the education system, school proprietors, teachers and parents to create a conducive and ambient atmosphere for learners to learn well;

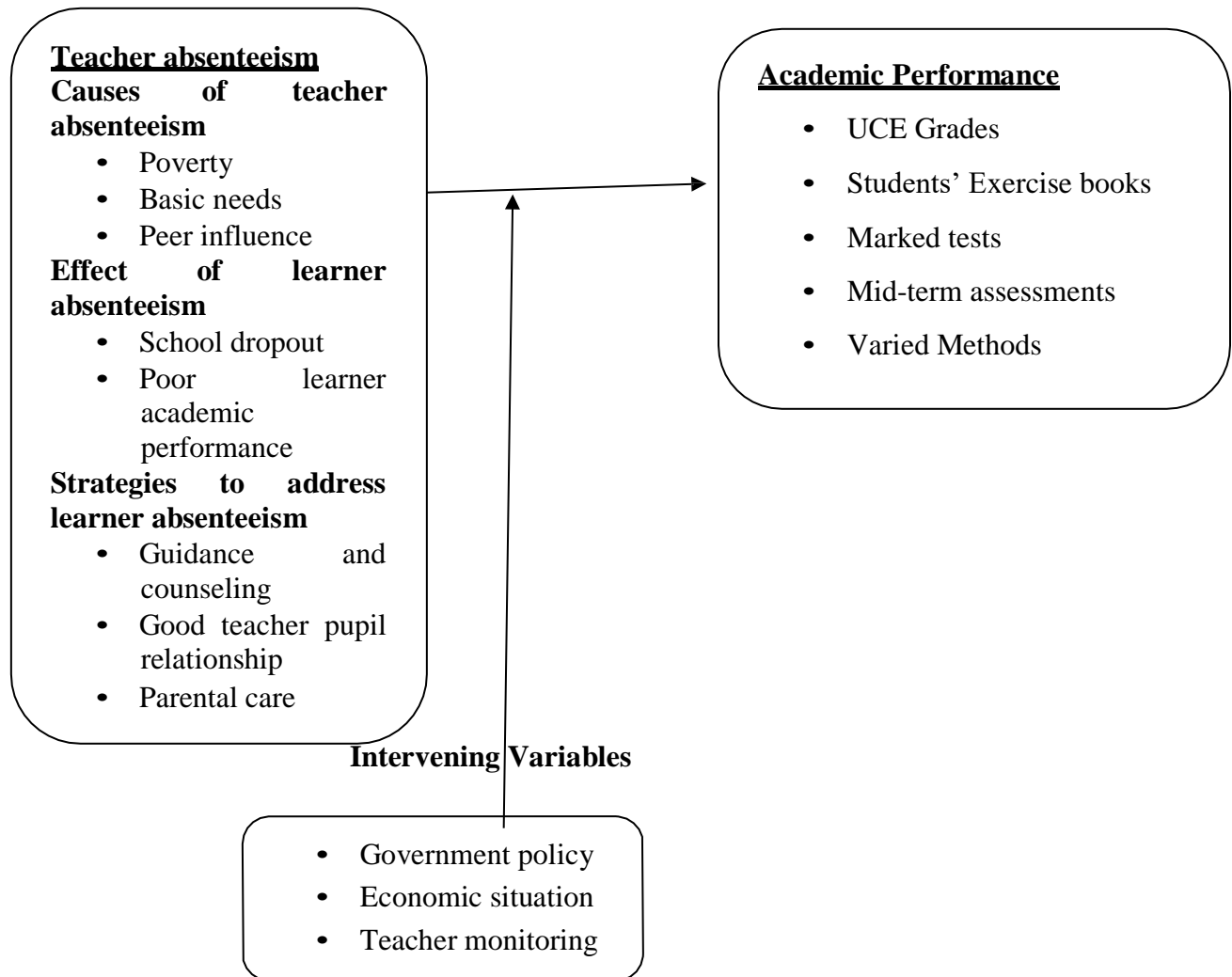
1. It would provide a platform to enable the learners to be responsible by making sure they demand quality services from their teachers as well as parents to reduce violation of children's rights especially right to education and parents among others.
2. The study may provide guidance to learner on how to report absentee teachers to the immediate authority and remediation taken to arrest the situation and its associated effects on learners' academic performance in schools.
3. The study might provide causes, effects and possible solutions that parents and teachers can embrace to eradicate the teachers' absenteeism vice in the secondary schools of Sibanga Sub-County.
4. The study would equip teachers with skills and knowledge so that they are able to act as role models to their learners as this instill and foster discipline.
5. It may avail Head teachers and stake holders to design better techniques of motivating the teachers like career guidance done by parents and teachers.
6. The study might be used by other researchers to review the related literature about the same research problem so as to make the necessary recommendations in order to step up academic performance and also make innovations in the education system.

1.8 Conceptual Framework

Figure 1.1 Conceptual frame work illustrating how teacher absenteeism may affect the academic performance of learners.

Independent Variable

Dependent variable



Source: Secondary Data (2024)

According to Bloom (1982) dependent variables and mediating variables influence greatly students' performance. Figure: 1.1 summarizes the idea contained in the model that if the dependent variables and mediating variables were of high quality, then academic performance would be enhanced. The model examines the relationship between variables, teachers' absenteeism and the academic performance of learners.

1.9 Definition of key terms

Personal absences are defined as a learner initiated absence from the classroom.

Teacher absenteeism is defined in the study as any type of learner absence from the classroom

Professional absences are defined as a school, district, or other governmental agency initiated absence from the classroom.

Academic achievement or (academic) performance is the extent to which a student, teacher or institution has achieved their short or long-term educational goals.

Absenteeism is the term generally used to refer to unscheduled employee/pupil absences from the workplace/ school.

1.10 Limitations of the study

The researcher encountered the following challenges:

Some respondents were biased during the time of giving their responses on the research tools.

Weather changes in Sibanga for example during rainy season limited accessibility to some respondents.

The researcher had a limited time to collect data as he was on course as well as executing daily school duties and family obligations

Financial constraints also posed a threat especially during printing, collecting data from respondents and transport costs.

1.11 Delimitations

The study was conducted in Sibanga sub-county due to limited time and funds that could not allow the researcher to explore the whole Manafwa district. The research tools with difficult terms for respondents were simplified through a translation.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction:

This chapter presents the views of other scholars, carried out so as to explore materials related to the present study. The purpose was to identify ideas and findings generated by different authorities (scholars) from the different parts of the world that enabled the researcher to get tentative solutions necessary for curbing the causes of teacher absenteeism. This was done based on the study objectives in chapter one.

2.1 Causes of teacher absenteeism

Many scholars have had different arguments on what is causing the trend of teacher absenteeism in schools despite international and local condemnation and campaign against the practice and among them are the following.

Talemwa & Eupal (2009), put the blame of teacher absenteeism to the ministry of education, which is mandated to inspect schools as well as ineffective school management committees. They asserted that the problem is so serious and it is associated with teacher absenteeism which is ranked the highest in the world at 35%, with teachers guaranteed to miss at least two days of each week. Whether this is the case in Sibanga Suc-county, is not ascertained due to missing data.

Okurut (2012), divulged that the health status of the teacher and that of his/her family members is, almost invariably, cited by the respondents as a lead explanation for teachers' absence and non- punctuality in all the schools visited. The need by a physically indisposed teacher to attend hospital is taken to be the justification for staying away from school. He noted that while teacher

sickness is the most overriding reason for their absenteeism in the urban schools of the READ type, it only accounts for 13% of teacher absences at national level (UBOS, 2009/10).

Graaf (2009), as cited in Talemwa & Eupal notes that the problem represents a major loss to the Treasury since 75% of monies invested in USE, or US\$40 million per annum, go into salaries. According to the Ministry of Education and Sports-Sector Review Report (2009), the intensity of school inspection is low countrywide. For example, in 2009, only 9,013 out of the 14,179 secondary schools in the whole country were inspected at least once in a term. This too leads to teachers' absenteeism impacting negatively on the learners' performance in schools

Wandega (2010), asserted that lack of incentives such as transport allowances and medical allowances, among others as a causative factor of teacher absenteeism which is influencing learners' absenteeism. He added that failure by districts to promote teachers who upgrade makes the teachers to wait for years until the public service commission advertises. This demotivates the teachers especially when they apply and they are sometimes unsuccessful. This too worsens learners' absenteeism because teachers who inspire children at school are absent. The current study is therefore set out to investigate whether this is also one of the causes of teachers' absenteeism in Sibanga Sub-county.

The absence of accommodation at school makes the teachers to move long distances on foot back to their homes, which delays their arrival to school (Edwards, 2010; UNATU, 2010). In addition, they may tend to start late, and finish early (World Bank, 2008).

Additionally, a study by Kimani Wanjuguna (2015) in Kenya revealed that teachers received low pay which couldn't meet their current demands. He stressed that in an effort to make ends meet, some resort to odd businesses which take much of their time, leading to absenteeism in their

schools and this in turn impacted negatively on learner's performance. Low monthly salary inspires secondary teachers to engage in off-classroom business activities which situation may match that of Sibanga Sub-county. This is also fuelled by the president on advising teachers to try plan B if A fails. This too has made most teachers to start income generating projects that consume more time and hence less time is allocated to the learners in schools. This too has encouraged learners' absenteeism in the secondary schools.

The uneven distribution of teachers in the country disadvantages some areas and schools where teachers suffer with big workloads in overcrowded dilapidated classroom structures which reduce their morale to work and cater for individual needs of the learners leading to teacher absenteeism. Urban areas have more teachers but some schools have inadequate and incompetent teachers compared to other schools within the same area (World Bank, 2008, Wandega, 2010).

According to TIU (2012), secondary schools in the districts and municipalities are understood to be under the jurisdiction of Local Governments but ministry of Local Government is not keen on supervising education service delivery. Officials at the MoES headquarters feel constrained and powerless to enforce education policies in Local Governments. These are serious governance issues that require immediate attention.

Female teacher absenteeism, lateness and early departure from school are commonly associated with competing demands of the household responsibilities (EPRC, 2011; ANPPCAN, 2010). Unlike their male counterparts, female teachers and learners have to always wake up very early to prepare their young children to go to school, prepare breakfast for their families and clean their kitchens and compounds before getting prepared for school (ACCU, 2011).

Relatedly, Ngware (2015) argues, teachers are absent from school due to three main reasons- illness, attending to house chores and personal issues. Teachers are human too as much as we don't see it that way. They fall ill and have personal problems to attend to that may affect their academic performance. This same phenomenon applied to Sibanga Sub-county where teachers' absenteeism is on the rise due to unpredictable reasons as result of missing data.

2.2 Effects of teacher absenteeism

According to the Teachers code of code (2012), a teacher is supposed to be a role model to the learners but given his/her deplorable socio-economic status, a teacher ceases to be a role model in the eyes of his/her children. This in turn influences learners into absenteeism.

Similarly, SACMEQ working paper (2011), revealed that higher rates of teacher absenteeism are associated with lower teacher effectiveness. This is largely due to inadequate coverage of the curriculum and shorter time-on-task. High rates of teacher absenteeism can also have a reciprocating effect on student absenteeism whereby students choose not to attend school because they are unsure about whether their teachers will be at school on that particular day.

According to, Barnerjee et al (2005), as cited in Okurut (2012), Children lose interest in formal schooling when they see that their teachers have poor attitudes towards their work as reflected in high rates of teacher absences. Teacher absenteeism thus inadvertently breeds learners' absenteeism.

Muyingo (2012), affirms that the continued absence of teachers is an obstacle to the effective implementation of inclusive education in Ugandan schools. He observed that perennial poor performance in national examinations and high students' dropout are due to teacher absenteeism.

Murnane et al, (2008) verify that teacher absence slows student learning. They noted that substantial share of absences are discretionary, and that higher absences lead to significantly

lower student achievement. A few other studies also estimate the link between absence (measured through direct observation) and student attendance and achievement.

School learners' absenteeism also affects the teacher's ability to present lessons in a sequential and organised way. This can have a deleterious effect on the progress of all the students in the class. Loren, (2011). Asserts that families of habitually absent students can also suffer. For a poverty-stricken family, it may mean a continuation of the poverty and unemployment cycle that may run in the family. This also contributes to family conflicts.

Loren, (2011), "further opines that society suffers when school-age teachers are not in school. These children may hang out on the streets. Since they have nothing to do, they resort to petty crimes like stealing other people's belongings and property". Loren further added that some absentees may become even addicted to drugs or engage in other destructive behaviours and grow up to become liability to society as a whole. Absenteeism related dangers may apply to Sibanga Sub-County but due to missing data cannot be ascertained.

A study carried out by Das, Dercon, Habyarimana and Krishna (2007), in Zambia which involved repeated visits to the same schools over the course of the year, together with measurement of the students' learning gains, by correlating each student's learning gains with the absence of his or her teacher, concluded that absence reduces learning by 4 to 8 percent of a year's learning for the typical student.

Duflo Hanna et al (2007) in another study carried out in rural Rajasthan, India by using cameras to monitor attendance and then verifying the results with random spot checks. The innovative experimental evidence on how teacher absence affects learning gains provided attendance-based bonuses for teachers at NGO schools Compared with the teachers in the other schools that had

been randomly assigned as controls, teachers eligible for the bonuses had much lower absence rates—only 21 present, compared with 42 present for the control teachers. Surprisingly, student learning increased substantially in the experimental schools, by 0.17 standard deviations. The authors estimate that reducing absence by 10 percentage points would increase child scores by 0.10 standard deviations. Because schools had been randomly assigned to experimental and control group, this is a purely teacher effect.

Obeng-Denteh (2011), in his research in a sub-metro area in Ghana found that when a teacher is absent from the classroom, student learning is disrupted more specifically, Obeng-Denteh sought to determine whether student and teacher absenteeism affect the performance of students on Ghana's Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE). The analysis indicated that student absenteeism was significant and teacher absenteeism had an impact on the performance of the students on the BECE. The higher the teacher absenteeism rate Obeng-Denteh concluded, the lower the student means core. Conversely, the lower the teacher absenteeism rate, the higher the mean student score. This shows that whereas the teachers contend that the quality of teaching has improved, it is not reflected in the pupil performance over the years. As a matter of fact, absenteeism of teachers has a correlation with the transformation of the improvement in quality to actual results in students.

The chronic problem of teacher absenteeism has raised many concerns about the persistent decline in student learning and performance at the school in Northern Trinidad. Using teacher-level data from a study conducted in North Carolina, Clotfelter, Ladd and Vigdor (2007) found that lower student achievement is associated with teacher absence in a schools. Miller, Murnane, and Willet (2007) confirmed that higher teacher absence leads to significantly lower student achievement. Records from the school in Northern Trinidad showed that on average teacher

absenteeism ranged from 10% to 11.45% on a daily basis. Additionally, the end of term test scores of students continue to deteriorate over the years with some classes struggling to get overall pass rates of 20% in the various subject areas. Also alarming is the deterioration in the pass rates in the Caribbean Examination Council (CXC) exams which showed, on average, out of a population of 900 students the failure rates in Mathematics, English Language, and Physics at CXC level were estimated to be around 60 to 65% over the past three years. A study into teacher shocks and student learning in Zambia found that a 5% increase in teacher absence rate reduces learning by 4 to 8% of average gains over the year (Das, et al., 2007).

Muralidharan et al (2004), discovered that as teacher absence increased by 10 % it led to a decrease in student test scores by 0.02 standard deviation and a 1-8% decrease in student attendance. This result was supported by a study conducted in rural Rajasthan by Duflo and Hanna and Ryan (2007). They found that a reduction of teacher absence by one half resulted in a 0.17 standard deviation increase in student achievement scores. Additionally, studies conducted in other developing countries found that teacher absenteeism and student performance were negatively correlated (Das et al, 2007; Suryadarma et al, 2006). When regular teachers are absent from the classroom less learning takes place and students become less motivated to attend school thus leading to reduced academic performance.

Additionally, Clotfelter et al (2007), confirmed that teacher absenteeism causes an increase in students misbehaviour thus causing administrators to concentrate more resources in dealing with discipline whilst, Duraisamy, et al, (2009), concurred that teacher absenteeism also encourages students to absent themselves from school. Indeed learners' behaviour at the school deteriorates over the years resulting in a wide array of deviant behaviour. Most interestingly, as teachers absent themselves from school some students take advantage of this opportunity to absent

themselves from school. Based on my experience at school and supporting school records, and these findings, there is a strong possibility that teacher absenteeism does have a negative impact on student learning and performance and this mostly influenced by the teachers.

It was found that when students are exposed to a high quality environment they usually receive a successful educational experience. However, teacher absenteeism causes a discontinuity in sequential learning largely brought about by underprepared substitute teachers or oversized classes or none at all (Chaudhury et al. 2004). Clotfelter et al. (2007), argued that when teacher absenteeism creates discontinuity and other teachers and their students are made to bear the weight of institutional turmoil, the quality of the learning environment is damaged. Ultimately, persistent teacher absenteeism would also damage their motivation to learn.

1.3 Strategies employed to reduce teacher absenteeism

Thornton (2014), on his current research shows that the involvement of family in learning helps to improve student performance through reduction of teacher absenteeism and restore parents' confidence in their children's education. Learners with parents or caregivers who are involved in learners' education, are concerned of their teacher absenteeism which in turn make learners earn higher grades and test scores, have better social skills and show improved behaviour.

Kearney (2014), adds that regular attendance at school is essential for the students' academic achievements, language development and social development. Teachers who attend school regularly -can be successful in their future professional lives through achieving work-related skills such as persistence, problem-solving, and the ability to work with others to accomplish a goal.

Hattie, 2013), asserts that parents can also be involved by means of follow-ups with their children's subject teachers in order to identify areas where the teachers and children are facing challenges. Where children fail, parents go to the extent of contacting their teacher, thus, building and strengthening the teacher and parent relationship which would show their commitment towards their children's learning. This too curbs learner-teacher absenteeism in schools.

According to Ackerman (2004), community mobilization and empowerment to hold service providers accountable is taken to be linchpin policy for the improvement of service delivery. He added that where service recipients may be unaware of the quality of the services they are receiving, or of the available opportunities for improvement, information and mobilization campaigns targeted at the intended beneficiary communities is what may be needed to improve service delivery.

Additionally, parent-teacher partnership makes tremendous impact on children's education. According to Llamas and Tuazon (2016), parents become comfortable when the education system requires their involvement in school activities. The strong collaboration of parents with school authorities can lead to increased improvement in both physical and academic performance of the school. Hence, school administrators have to encourage parents to get involved and make contribution towards helping the school achieve its missions and goals (Sapungan, 2014). This stems from curbing teacher absenteeism in the schools.

Talemwa et al (2009), proposed that school management committees should be made to work since teachers and learners need more motivation and that school management committees (SMCs) often perform poorly due to infrequent meetings, and uneven participation. They divulged that SMCs are required to use a school monitoring score card to measure progress. The

score card acts as an evaluation tool where, parents, learners, head teachers and other members of the school record performance of their schools, which is communicated to the district education officer.

Involvement of CCTs and “associate assessors” in quality monitoring mindful of the importance of inspection with regard to quality education and yet having shortage of inspectors to cover all schools, it was found necessary in all districts to engage area CCTs and head teachers in quality monitoring of schools (UPHOLD, 2003). This will in turn encourage learners to be at school. As trainers/mentors of teachers, CCTs have training skills and when they visit schools, they are able to identify teacher training needs, which is something special the CCTs bring to the inspectorate. In addition, because of the small number of inspectors and the proximity of CCTs to schools (one CCT per resource center and one resource center per division), CCTs serve a gap filling purpose. In fact, CCTs are now fully recognized as providing both supportive and quality control services in secondary schools falling under their areas of operation (Acom 2010; World Bank, 2008). In addition to involving CCTs and head teachers in quality monitoring, another alternative intervention pursued by districts is that of “associate assessors”. This is a group of technical people composed of inspectors, retired teachers/tutors, political leaders, etc, who come together to contribute an inspection team for the purpose of enhancing supervision so that every school can be visited at least once a term. All the three supervision initiatives (engagement of CCTs, head teachers and associate assessors) are formally recognized and coordinated by district education departments to which regular inspection reports are submitted, just like the traditional district inspectorate does (Odubaker, 2006; EPRC, 2010). This too would curb teacher absenteeism in schools to step up academic performance.

A research by Okurut (2012), revealed the initiatives undertaken by head teachers in their bid to deter teacher absenteeism. Among the techniques used by head teachers include, guidance and counselling, reporting absentee learners to relevant authorities for disciplinary action, use of attendance registers, directly talking to absentee learners, Regular support supervision, Provision of breakfast, midday meal, Inviting inspector/MEO/DIS to talk to teachers about absenteeism and warning the teachers too about the dangers associated with their absenteeism.

The same research by Okurut (2012), stressed the need for developing a wellness program to stem sickness as the commonest cause of teacher absenteeism in the READ schools. He defined a wellness program as a multifaceted, multidisciplinary workplace care, support and treatment program aimed at benefiting all staff by creating an enabling, caring and supportive working environment. He further revealed that School-based lifestyle education for learners and teachers should be encouraged with emphasis on the following preventive measures: Regular medical screening; Diet and healthy nutrition prescriptions; Regular exercise, relaxation and meditation; Regular checking by fellow employees on the sick colleague; Safer sex practices to avoid HIV infection for teachers, transmission or re-infection; Limiting unhealthy practices such as alcohol consumption and smoking; etc. Healthy teachers and learners are less likely to fall sick or report illness. Wellness programs can also incorporate measures to reduce stress including encouraging learners to always express their feelings/problems instead of bottling them up; to have willingness to compromise; be more assertive; to be good time managers and to focus more on the bigger picture. I am of the opinion that if the wellness program is taken up by stakeholders of Sibanga Sub-county, absenteeism among learners and teachers will be a thing of the past hence promotes pupil achievement.

In their study of teacher incentives in Latin America, Vegas and Umansky (2005), defined nine types of incentives affecting teachers which include; internal motivation, social prestige and recognition ,job security, pensions and other non-salary benefits such as health insurance, professional growth, non-salary job characteristics such as availability of adequate facilities and materials with which to teach, sense of mastery in one's job, having to satisfy clients and respond to supervisors, salary differentials and other monetary benefits. Among the teachers, the researchers propose that salary differentials may be based on seniority, training, and characteristics of the school or its students, performance or other variables. The nine types of incentives can together work to attract, retain, and motivate effective teachers who would reduce teacher absenteeism.

Mandy in Talemwsa & Eupal (2009), stresses the need for some head teachers who are unable to control their schools to be relieved of their duties. He wonders, *“can you imagine in some schools head teachers don't hold staff meetings on issues related to teacher absenteeism?!”* The above proposal seems to be practical in curbing teacher absenteeism should it be enforced in Sibanga Sub-county

2.4 Literature gaps

In line with the literature and researcher's findings, the researcher notes that none of them had researched in depth on the impact of teacher absenteeism on academic performance of learners on secondary schools. This therefore, was identified as a gap to be researched on under the topic impact of teacher absenteeism on academic performance of learners in secondary schools in Sibanga Sub-County Manafwa District.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents details on the procedure that was followed in collecting data for the study.

The chapter covers the research design, area of study, target population, sample size, sampling techniques, data collection methods and instruments, ethical procedure, ethical issues and data analysis techniques.

3.1 Research design

The study adopted a descriptive research design with a quantitative approach using structured questionnaires. According to Hedrick et al (1993) the purpose of a descriptive study is to provide a picture of a phenomenon as it naturally occurs and to draw a picture of a situation or show how things are related to each other. Mugenda & Mugenda (2008), shares the same views that a descriptive research design provides a foundation upon which a phenomenon can be described to indicate disparities or certain characteristics. This study described the impact of teacher absenteeism on the academic performance of learners in selected secondary schools in Sibanga Sub-County Manafwa District. The design was considered because it focuses on the collection, analysis and interpretation of information on the teacher absenteeism on the academic performance with the view of making value judgment. According to Marks and Coleman (1989), a descriptive design study is the one which attempts to assess the worth of an event or situation with the sole purpose of making a judgment about it. In the same way, the present study sought to assess the impact of teacher absenteeism on the academic performance of learners with the sole purpose of making a judgment about it. The researcher used a descriptive design with the help of quantitative and qualitative approaches. Quantitative methods were used to collect, interpret and analyze numerical data which was done in form of tables, figures and frequencies

while qualitative methods was used to analyze verbal data hence the design was found suitable for the study.

3.2 Area of study

Geographically, the study was conducted in Sibanga Sub-County, Manafwa District which is bordered by Bugobero sub-county to the north, Kimaluli sub-county to the West, Khabutoola sub-county to the East and Mulatsi sub-county to the south. The following schools were included in the study Sibanga seed school, Khabutoola Seed School, Bugobero High school, Kimaluli High school and Tooma Buta Seed School.

3.3 Study population

The study was carried out among teachers and other stakeholders in the selected secondary schools in the constituency. The target population of the study was estimated at 6000. This included 06 head teachers, 294 teachers, 3300 learners and 2400 parents. These groups were selected because they directly worked with teachers who were affected by absenteeism.

3.4 Sample Size

The study sample size was 361 respondents. This included 165 learners, 98 teachers, 6 head teachers and 92 parents. Learners were chosen to represent the rest of the learners because they could read and interpret the questions asked and were so conversant with school and family challenges associated with absenteeism. This was because the learners were the ones directly affected by teachers' absenteeism. Head teachers were selected because they supervised and monitored the teaching-learning process in schools. The head teachers were selected because they were the ones whose absenteeism affected their job performance and the learners' academics also. Parents were considered because they were the secondary caregivers of the learners. They would provide most of the physiological needs to the learners. The six sampled schools were given specific codes, for easy identification, anonymity and analysis, as follows:

C1, C2, C3, C4, C5 and C6. Head teachers and teachers were represented by codes ranging from H1 to H6 and T1 to T98 respectively. Parents' codes ranged from P1 to P92 whilst learners' code from L1 to L165

Table 3.1: Summary of the Study Population and sample size

Category of respondents	Target population	Sample size	Sampling technique
Learners	3300	165	cluster sampling
Teachers	295	98	Simple random Sampling
Head teachers	05	605	Purposive
Parents	2400	92	Convenience
TOTAL	6000	361	Krejcie and Morgan's (1970)

Source: Source: Manafwa District Education Report (September, 2024) and Education Statistical Abstract (2020).

3.5 Sampling Techniques

For the purpose of the current study, selection of respondents was categorised as;

Cluster Sampling which was used in choosing learners from secondary five to secondary seven to represent the rest of the learners since lower secondary and middle secondary classes would find it difficult to answer open ended interview questionnaires and questions on FGDs

Simple Random Sampling was used for selection of teachers because it gave an equal opportunity to each individual in the defined population to participate.

Head teachers were chosen **purposively** as they were secondary source of information concerning the whereabouts of learners and teacher absenteeism in schools.

Convenience sampling on the other hand were used to select parents. Convenience sampling is type of non- probability sampling which involves the sample being drawn from that part of the population at will. That is, readily available and convenient. The researcher using such a sample

method may not scientifically make generalizations about the total population from this sample because it would not be representative enough. The researcher collected the views of other members of society in such an area at different times of day and several times.

3.6 Data collection methods and tools

Four main methods were employed in the implementation of the study which included a desk study, Focus group discussions, a sample survey of teachers and physical spot checks at the selected schools.

3.6.1 Questionnaires

Questionnaires were used to collect data from the selected respondents in line with the research topic. Kothari (1990;124) argues that questionnaires have the advantage of being free from bias of the interviewer since answers are in the respondents own words and large samples can be used and thus the results used are more dependable and reliable. The respondents to whom the questionnaires were administered were head teachers and teachers. The method helped to collect data with a high rate of response. The questionnaires collected information on causes of teacher absenteeism and the impact of teacher absenteeism on their performance. However questionnaires took a lot of time, required a lot of papers, some respondents had bias on answering questions and some of them were not returned to the researcher.

3.6.2 Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)

Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) was used with the target learners, and parents. Simple user-friendly interview schedules and FGD guides were developed by the researcher. The main thrust of the questions were directed at gaining an understanding the reasons why learners and teachers absent themselves; the impact of teacher absenteeism on their academic performance; and the possible ways of curbing the vice.

3.6.3 Facility Survey

The study comprised a facility survey that was conducted using two methods.

a) *Interviews* were carried out with head teachers, with a view of establishing the factors underlying absenteeism within schools, as well as existing interventions within the schools to curb absenteeism.

b) *Unannounced spot check visits*: a visit was made to each of the selected schools to assess whether teachers were present at the school, and in class with the learners. In the case of absences, the researcher established reasons why a particular teacher and learner was absent from school and action that could be taken.

3.7 Validity and Reliability of instruments

In an attempt to achieve quality data, the researcher made an analysis with respect to instrument validity and reliability.

3.7.1 Validity of the Instruments

Validity refers to quality of data gathering instrument or procedures that enables it to measure what it sought to measure (Best and Kahn, 2004). To determine the validity of instruments, the researcher conducted a preliminary survey at Mulatsi Secondary School located in Mbale District since this had the same characteristics with the schools under study. The questionnaires and interviews were piloted to 8 teachers and 5 students before the larger actual survey was conducted in Sibanga sub-county. This was done to discover the ambiguities and some grammatical errors in the question items before they were corrected. This helped to cross check the validity of the instruments. The researcher had an opportunity to discuss with the respondents especially on difficult vocabularies or grammatical errors or rather with ambiguity statements in order to rephrase or delete them. In addition, the researcher sought for expertise advice from his supervisor who helped to improve on the clarity on the items from the questionnaires and

interviews. The Content Validity Index (CVI) of the instrument was calculated using the formula below. The instrument were considered valid if the value of 0.6 and above was achieved.

$$\text{CVI} = \frac{\text{total number of relevant items}}{\text{Total number of items}}$$

3.7.2 Reliability of the Instrument

Reliability means the degree of consistency and precession in which the measuring instruments demonstrates. Reliability of the instrument is the measure of consistence over time and over similar sample (Cohen et al, 2007). The Statistical Packages of Social Scientists (SPSS) were used to ascertain it. Cronbach’s Alpha of a minimum reliability analysis of 0.70 and above was taken as reasonable measure of internal reliability. The score obtained was 0.818; the instrument was therefore adopted as being reliable. The points were achieved when the valid items were divided by the total number of items times one hundred;

$$17/21 \times 100 = 80.95.$$

Table 3.2: Reliability statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	No of Items
0.818	21

Source: Primary Data, (2024)

3.8 Data Collection Procedure

The researcher went to the field after getting an authorization letter from the Head of Department Uganda Christian University, Mbale University College, which introduced him as a student of the University from the Department of Education. The head teachers of the selected schools of Sibanga sub-county helped the researcher to collect data by giving him a go ahead. The researcher then collected the data in the Sub-county.

3.9 Data analysis

Data analysis is a systematic process involving working with organizing data and breaking them into manageable unity (Bagdon & Biklen, 1992). It is also concerned with systematizing data searching for patterns, discovering what is important, what is to be learnt and deciding what to tell others (Cohen et al, 2007). All information that is collected from interviews and questionnaires was subjected to content analysis which involved identifying coherent and important examples, themes and patterns in data collected from the field work. Qualitative approach therefore, was analyzed through thematic analysis where data was categorized according to their relevant themes and patterns developed accordingly. Quantitative data from the questionnaires was analyzed through simple descriptive statistics after tabulation and conversion into frequencies and percentages for descriptive purposes. In the first place, data was cleaned from errors and then coded. After coding, data was analyzed through content analysis to examine its influence on learners' academic performance.

3.10 Ethical consideration

Research ethics refers to moral principles guiding research (Horman, 1991). It means conducting research in a way that goes beyond merely adopting the most appropriate research methodology, but conducting research in a responsible and morally defensible way. Mugenda & Mugenda (2008) notes that protecting the rights and welfare of the participants should be the major ethical obligation of all parties involved in a research. To provide these protections, all parties must be able to review, conduct or oversee research that involves human participants in an ethically and sound manner. Mcburney & White (2010) note that ethical principles fall into four major categories. They included avoiding harm to participants, ensuring informed consent, respecting the privacy of participants and avoiding deception. This was by use of friendly language, being honest and having high level of integrity.

Crow et al. (2006) add that the principle of consent means that research participants are provided with sufficient and accessible information about the study so that they make an informed decision as to whether to become involved or not. To ensure these ethical considerations are taken into account, the consent of the respondents and confidentiality was sought and they were assured that the data they provided would be strictly for purposes of this study. In addition, to enhance the participant's privacy, the respondents' names had not been used thus; Confidentiality was practiced by avoiding the use of names but rather initials or codes. The researcher endeavored to respect the rights of the respondents in the process of getting the information; sought for permission from the local leadership before carrying out the study. Coercive approach was as much as possible be avoided in trying to access information from the respondents but rather observe professional ethics in conducting the study. It can be emphasized that this study was original work, and that no known study regarding the impact of teacher absenteeism on academic performance of learners in selected secondary schools of Sibanga Sub-County, Manafwa District had been done.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This concerned with making sense out of the raw data that was collected from the field. In other words, it is all about analysis and interpretation of data for better understanding. This was done in accordance with the study set objectives. The responses and interpretations were presented with the help of tables, all indicating the manner in which respondents gave answers-some similar, while some different.

4.1 UCE analysis for the selected schools covering the scope.

This section opened with UCE Analysis for selected schools covering the time scope, thereafter a brief description of the key elements of the bio-data relating to the teachers, head teachers, parents and students who were the elite informants in this study.

Table 4.1: UCE Analysis for selected schools covering the time scope

SCHOOL	YEAR	DIV1	DIV2	DIV3	DIV4	DIVU	DIVX	TOTAL
C1	Septem ber, 2024	0	25	10	30	0	0	65
	2022	2	22	16	15	5	2	62
	2021	1	19	8	14	3	0	45
C2	Septem ber, 2024	23	67	09	01	00	00	100
	2022	06	68	04	00	00	00	88
	2021	23	57	06	00	00	00	86
C3	Septem ber, 2024	00	01	11	15	01	00	28
	2022	00	00	08	16	01	00	25
	2021	00	10	10	10	00	03	33
C4	Septem ber, 2024	03	66	05	03	00	00	77
	2022	04	48	09	04	00	00	65
	2021	04	32	08	05	00	03	52

C5	Septem ber, 2024	03	54	07	02	01	00	67
	2022	03	51	11	03	00	00	68
	2021	04	54	11	04	00	00	76
C6	Septem ber, 2024	18	58	00	00	01	00	77
	2022	08	53	01	00	00	00	62
	2021	07	51	03	00	00	00	61

Source: Manafwa District Inspector of Schools, 2024

Since Manafwa District is a newly formed district, all the irregularities as reflected in the above table on the performance was attributed to the rampant teacher absenteeism during school learning period. This implies that authorities and all stake holders needed to play their roles toward elimination of teacher absenteeism in a bid to improve on the academic success of learners in the area.

4.3 Demographic characteristics of respondents

This included the response rate, age, sex, marital status, and education levels.

4.3.1 Response rate of the respondents

Table 4.1 Showing the response rate of the respondents

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Expected respondents	361	100
Actual respondents	359	99.4
Non response	02	0.6

Source: Primary Field Data (September, 2024)

Out of the 361 respondents sampled for the study 359(99.4%) participated while 02(%) did not. This revealed that, the highest number of respondents participated in the study and findings were collected.

4.3.2 Age of the respondents

When questionnaires, interview guides and focused group discussions were conducted to respondents, the following data was captured regarding the age of the respondents.

The table 4.2 below showing the age of the respondents

Years	Frequency	Percentages
11-19	173	47.9
20-29	72	19.9
30-39	43	11.9
40-49	60	16.62
50 above	13	3.60
TOTAL	361	100

Source: Primary Data (September, 2024)

The results revealed that respondents in the age bracket of (11-19) were represented by 173(47.9%), (20-29) were represented by 72(19.9%), (30-39) were 43(11.9%) of the participants (40-49) were represented by 60(16.62%) and 50 above with 13 (3.6%).

This indicated that the majority of the students in the secondary schools were below the age of 19 years and some are either guardians or parents at the age of 19. This was followed by teachers at the age of 21 years and above while those above 40 -50 years were the least. They were mainly head teachers, parents and local leaders. This implied that, the researcher provided equal opportunity to all respondents of different age groups to participate in the study to ensure reliability and validity of the findings.

4.3.3 Sex of the respondents

Table 4.3 showing sex composition of the respondents

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Male	176	48.75
Female	185	51.24
Total	361	100

Source: Author's field data, (September, 2024).

Based on the analyzed data above, 176(48.75%) of the respondents were males while 185 (51.4%) were females. In line with the above findings, it reflected that most secondary school staffs had more females than males.

4.3.4 Marital status of the respondents

The table 4.4 below shows the marital status of the respondents.

Category	Number of respondents	Percentages
Married	84	23.2
Widowed	42	11.6
Separated	22	6.09
Single	180	49.8
Divorced	33	9.14
Total	361	100%

Source: Primary data (September, 2024)

In respect to table 4.4 above, single respondents were represented by 180(49.8%) and this made the highest response rate. They are still young people and not ready to indulge in marital affairs. Married respondents were represented by 84(23.2%) and this made the second highest response rate which could be attributed to the fact these were mature people who can take on marital obligations. This was followed by widowed respondents who made 42(11.6%) of the respondents, 33(9.14%) represented divorced while the separated were represented by 22(6.09%). From the table above, it therefore revealed that the researcher gave opportunity to different categories of respondents.

4.3.5 Level of education

The table 4.5 below shows the level of education of the respondents.

Level of Education	Frequency	Percentages
Unskilled	189	52.3
Certificate	99	27.4
Diploma	40	11.08
Degree	33	9.14
Total	361	100

Source: field data findings (September, 2024)

Table 4.5 above revealed that 189(52.3%) of the respondents were unskilled, 99(27.4%) had acquired certificates. This is attributed to the fact that having a certificate is one of the requirements to be recruited in the public service as a primary school teacher. 40(11.08%) had acquired diplomas while 33(9.14%) of the respondents were degree holders.

3.4.3.6 Religion

The table 4.6 below shows the religious affiliations of the respondents

Religion	Number	Percentage
Islam	162	44.8
Christianity	199	55.12
TOTAL	361	100

Field survey findings (September, 2024)

In accordance with table 4.6 above, the research findings indicated that the majority of the respondents 199(55.2%) were Christians. The least response came from the Muslims who made 162(44.8%).The low response can be attributed to the fact there were few Muslims compared to the Christians counterparts in the region.

4.4 Data analysis and interpretation on objective one

Objective one aimed at identifying the underlying causes of learner absenteeism in Government aided schools of Sibanga Sub-county, Manafwa District. The presentation of findings on this objective is as shown in Table 4.7.

4.4.1 The causes of teacher absenteeism

Respondents were asked to state the causes of teacher absenteeism. The following responses were enlisted in table 4.7 below:

Table 4.7: Key reasons for learner absenteeism

School	Teachers' absenteeism on the day of visitation	Reasons for absenteeism							No
		Meals	Sickness	Scholastic	Domestic	Transport	Others		
C1	10/27	2	5	1	2	0	0	0	
C2	9/27	1	5	1	1	1	0	1	
C3	8/27	3	2	1	1	1	0	0	
C4	12/28	5	1	2	2	1	0	1	
C5	4/28	1	1	0	0	0	1	1	
C6	13/28	2	6	1	1	1	1	1	
Totals	165	16	20	6	5	4	2	4	
%	100	9.69	12.1	3.6	3.0	2.4	1.2	2.4	

Source: Field notes, September, 2024

As revealed by the explanations given to head teachers, 16/165(9.69%) of the respondents were reported on the day of visitation asserted that teachers absented themselves due to lack of meals.

Therefore, teachers choose to miss lessons because they fear to stay hungry at school; while 20(12.1%) mentioned sicknesses. Head teacher C2 had this to say:

“Teachers especially the female teacher get monthly periods that make them to be psychologically tortured; others take care of their sick children and relatives. Other teachers get engaged in domestic work like planting during the planting season and it was represented by (3.0%). 6(3.6%) reported on lack of scholastic materials.”

Another 2(1.2%) also affirmed, that other reasons like attending burials, peer pressure, poor teacher pupil relationship and trading activities within the division motivated teacher absenteeism. 4(2.4%) hinted on transport. Teachers lamented that they walk long distances to and from school and that at times they get tired and also when it rains they may require transport which is not there. Another 4(2.4%) of the teachers absentees did not bother to furnish the concerned authorities with information regarding their whereabouts on real absenteeism. Head teacher C3 was quoted as saying:

“Some of my teachers walk long distances to and from their homes. They are at times stressed up by their personal problem and resort to.”

Comment

The results revealed that the major cause of teacher absenteeism is sickness. Therefore, it's important that every school is considered for a sick bay. However, during the interviews with the teachers who had reported for duty, a slightly different picture emerged which was suggestive of a contradiction between the official and unofficial explanation of teacher absenteeism.

A summary of the major reasons identified by the teachers interviewed is presented as illustrated in table 4.8

Table 4.8 Key reasons given by teachers for learner absenteeism in Sibanga Sub-county, September, 2024

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Sickness	32	30.7
Trading activities	05	4.8
Lack of school needs	16	15.3
No lunch	28	26.9
Long distance	11	10.5
Teacher pupil relationship	07	6.7
Peer influence	05	4.8
Total	104	100

Source: Field notes September, 2024

The findings with respect to the above table varied. Concerning sickness of teachers and their family members, some respondents gave similar responses while others gave different views. A number of respondents 30.7% affirmed that teachers' absenteeism is due to sickness. Some respondents T15 T20, T33, T45, T65, T88, T89, T90, T91 and T21, however, didn't believe that sickness could cause of teacher absenteeism. T17 and T14 affirmed that over stress themselves while at home and therefore they found it difficult to be at their place of work regularly.

Regarding trading activities, respondents provided divergent views 5(4.8%) revealed that teachers absent themselves because they have to attend to businesses erected by themselves or spouses and friends. The researcher observed that teachers who involved in the sale of paraffin, ride motor cycles, sell clothes, charcoal and milk within the trading centres even during school days. .T20 and T4 specifically said,

“Since Sibanga is near Manafwa town and with opportunities for so many businesses, so many of them are involved in business activities to earn a living. T15, T20, T32, T45 and T49 revealed that most teachers are single parents and stay alone in the houses rented and provided with inadequate food stuffs and when they get finished they are to look for way of surviving other than going to school. This too has increased teacher absenteeism and exposed teachers to STDS”

T16, T55, T48, T94, T56, T90 and T92 asserted that some parents value themselves in their businesses more that school activities. L35 emphasized I cannot come to school when my husband instructs me to sell charcoal from which we raise fees and scholastic materials for our children.”

The lack of school needs accounted for teachers’ children 15(16.9%). T10 commented by saying, ***“I can’t send children without school requirements as they are aware they will again be sent from school to their home. I first look for the scholastic materials then go to teach.”***

However a couple of respondents gave a number of independent reasons ranging from poor pay, administrative lapses as well as absence of lunch 28(26.9%) make teachers to be absent from school. 10.5% of the respondents claimed that long distance to school was another contributory factor to teacher absenteeism in Sibanga Sub-county and Parents and learners validated those of head teachers and teachers For example, regarding school needs T5, T11, T15, T19 and 23 had this to say,

“Much as we want all teachers and learners to be at school all the time from Monday to Friday, it is impossible to achieve this objective 100% because a teacher and a learner can encounter several problems like, sickness, unfriendly weather conditions like heavy

down pour, lack of transport and hunger due to the meagre salary and rising poverty levels in the country.”

A summary of parents’ and learners’ unique responses are summarized in table 4.9 below.

Table 4.9: Other causes of learner absenteeism associated to low parental involvement presented by learners

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Continuous poor performance	88	24.3
Bad manners expressed by children at home and school	75	20.7
Age and body size most especially girls	64	17.7
Poverty of the teachers	66	18.2
Teachers lack time for their families	68	18.78
Total	361	100

Source: Field notes September, 2024

In reference to views about low parental involvement in their children’s education, most of the respondents 68(18.78%) are unwilling due to continuous poor performance. Teachers feel a lot of time is wasted on other peoples’ children while theirs are left out without and as such they end up abandoning their duties. Most of the teachers are town dwellers and so attach less importance to education hence motivating teacher absenteeism. 75 (20.7%) of the respondents hinted on bad behaviours exhibited by the learners both at school and home. In such a situation teachers see catering for such a learner is wastage of time. This in turn culminates into teacher’s absenteeism which results to poor academic performance and school dropout. On the contrary, some respondents P1, P45, P66, P90,P76,P80, P88, P55 and P59 believed that learners who are bad mannered cannot succeed in education as it goes hand in hand with good discipline and can make

some teachers loses their jobs as a result of the government policy. 64(17.7%) affirmed age and body size most especially in the girls force parents to gradually reduce their morale in providing basic necessities to the school girls. These girls get into relationships with teachers which at times results to imprisonment of teachers. P3, P6, P9 and P12 claimed big and aged girls are easily lured into marriage affairs with male teachers. L32, L30, L26, and L31 opined that when you are too old chances of getting a better husband are minimal as men fear menopause that mature women undergo when they reach the age of 45 years above. So, as these teacher-learner relationship exists, the low takes action, hence, absenteeism. Poverty of the parents was reported by 66(18.2%) of the respondents who confirmed that once teachers fail to provide the basic needs of the children in the family, they are prone to absenteeism, suffering and misery. In support of this was L20 who said:

“My parents have never come to check on what I do at school yet we do nothing most of the time and my teacher is always absent.”

Furthermore, P77, P90, P51 and P73 revealed that children’s books hadn’t been checked while at home. On the contrary, P42, P46, and P55, claimed that they check in their child’s book daily. P5 and P14 said that they had not engaged in or seen active participation of parents in fundraising activities.

Comment

The results from the findings revealed that poor parental involvement greatly influence teacher absenteeism and the major one considered as poor academic performance. Other factors like sickness, parental positive attitude towards education and sensitization should be rectified by every school having a vote for a program that caters for all irrespective of colour, age, identity,

tribe, religion and any form of disability and disease. This too is in agreement with Bandura (1977) and Abraham Maslow theory of needs which asserts that everyone requires basic needs to enjoy life to the fullest.

4.4.2 Presentation on objective two- impact of teacher absenteeism on learners' achievement.

Respondents from sample schools gave a number of points/ impacts relating teacher absenteeism as illustrated in table 4.10 below;

Table 4.10: Impact of teacher absenteeism and learners' achievement

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Poor learner academic performance	73	20.22
Disruption of learner's learning	42	11.63
Deviant behaviours (poor social interactions)	38	10.52
Barrier to inclusive education	40	11.08
Discontinuity of learning	61	16.89
Leads to school dropout	72	19.94
Inadequate use of instructional time (inadequate syllabus coverage)	35	9.69
Total	361	100

Source: Field notes (September, 2024)

The findings with respect to objective two varied. Concerning poor academic performance of the learners, 73(20.22%) of the respondents believed that learners' poor performance is the exact outcome of teacher absenteeism. P2, P12, P24, P45, P90, P56, P76, P34 and P89 had this to say,

“It is common sense to any sensible mind that absence of a teacher makes some of the learners to drop drastically in their learning and consequently decline in their achievement. My child used to do well but when the teacher he loved most started absenting himself, he started dodging classes, he eventually obtained poor results.”

Relatedly, 43(11.63%) of the respondents concurred that teacher absenteeism leads to disruption of learner’s learning. On the contrary, T15, T56, T67, T78, T34, T90, and T50 said,

“Our absence gives learners opportunity to explore or interact with their peers and may in the process get spoilt. They make mistakes in the process of peer interactions hence a big problem.”

In addition, 38(10.52%) respondents reported that learners develop deviant behaviours. Furthermore, 61(16.98%) respondents claimed that discontinuity of learner’s learning occurs due to being attached to substitute teachers while 35(9.69%) and 72(19.94%) respondents reported inadequate use of instructional time (inadequate syllabus coverage) and school dropout respectively as linked to teacher absenteeism. Finally, 40(11.08%) of the respondents claimed that teacher absenteeism is a barrier to inclusive education policy’s success as no teacher can promote safety and provide necessary adaptations to the children with special needs.

Comment

It seems, according to the results that poor academic performance is the major correlation between teacher absenteeism and learner achievement. Therefore, elimination of teacher absenteeism should be worked upon seriously so as to boost learners’ academic performance in the secondary schools of Sibanga Sub-county, Manafwa District. This too, is in support with Bandura (1977) and Abraham Maslow theory of needs.

4.4.3 Objective Three- to establish the strategies on how absenteeism can be eliminated to improve on learners’ performance in Sibanga Sub-county.

Objective three focused on ways of curbing teacher absenteeism in Sibanga Sub-county. The presentation of the findings on this objective is as shown in Table 4.11

Table 4.11: Ways of curbing teacher absenteeism

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Initiatives by head teachers	68	18.83
Incentives(school needs)	48	13.2
Community mobilization	84	23.26
Involvement of CCTs to monitor and supervise	33	9.14
Development of a wellness program	47	13.01
Career Guidance and counselling	36	9.97
Parental involvement and visitation	26	7.20
Improve good teacher pupil relationship	19	5.26
Total	361	100

Source: Field notes (September, 2024).

As reflected in the presented data in table 4.11, respondents had varied views relating to how best teacher absenteeism can be curtailed in Sibanga Sub-county. To start with, majority of the respondents 84/361 representing 23.26% said that community mobilization and sensitization through guidance and counselling, reporting teachers who keep themselves home to promote absenteeism to relevant authorities for disciplinary action would ensure regular support supervision as well as encouraging children to stay in school and learn. Head teacher C4 was quoted as saying:

“I have made it a point together with my deputies, teachers, parents and local leaders to ensure community mobilization. I have also moved on to establish tools that track absenteeism of teachers, teacher efficiency and teacher and learner motivation has been beefed up to encourage everyone to feel comfortable to cause teaching and learning to take place. A disciplinary committee has been put in place to regulate undisciplined cases and indeed they are minimal because everyone is self-driven and school structures are fully operational.”

68(18.83%) of the respondents asserted that provision of incentives (school needs) would encourage teachers and learners to remain in school and concentrate hence leading to improved performance.

H4, T44, T67, T49, T90, T77, T85, T34, T23, T89, T69 and T88 had a similar comment and asserted that:

“when learners and teachers needs are catered for, they have the morale to learn and teach with zeal and learners are not disturbed for school fees, pens, books and this in turn leads to effective teaching learning process that yield quality results”.

33(9.14%) of the respondents opined that involvement of BoGs to monitor and supervise teaching learning process in schools would equip teachers with current methodologies and approaches required to improve learning standards in the secondary schools. H6, T11, T20T55,T67,T54,T89,T48,T58,T32,T79,T82 T15 and T5, had to say CCTs had the expertise on the methodologies and are also updated on the curriculum reforms and also are technical people

that handle the teachers and learners' psychology that contributes greatly on the teachers' absenteeism.

47(13.01%) of the respondents asserted that development of a program that embraces the needs of everyone in the school and community at large would built a sense of self-discipline and self-motivation. This in turn can enable teachers to develop positive attitude towards learning hence reduction in teachers' absenteeism. The respondents were of the view that development of a wellness program and relieving head teachers of their duties respectively can help in ending teachers' absenteeism through boosting teachers' remunerations. P3 while commenting on irresponsible head teachers had this to say,

“Some head teachers should be relieved of their duties because they have failed us. They are always absent but we are told that they mostly appear when USE fund is released.”
This seems to report that teachers can also accrue to learner absenteeism hence modalities to address to wellness program should be embraced to ensure smooth teaching and learning process in the secondary schools.”

Career guidance and counselling was reported by 36(9.97%) of the respondents. They asserted that this enables teachers to teach with a focus as they have aspirations they intend to achieve within the stipulated period. This in turn encourages teachers to work with passion and zeal towards their success.

26(7.20%) of the respondents opined that stakeholders involvement and visitation would attract teachers and make them attend school regularly. This would create mutual understanding between parents, teachers and learners as the gap between them would be bridged hence leading to effective teaching and learning. 19(5.26%) of the participants suggested that improving on

good teacher pupil relationship would motivate to stay and concentrate wholly on school programs. This is critical because it promotes interest among teachers and hence encouraging them to stay in school and concentrate on their duties.

Comment

In line with the above suggestions teachers' absenteeism can be curtailed and this requires a joint effort. The results show that what should limit teacher absenteeism are the initiatives by the school heads, parents and teachers' vigilance on the learners' needs. This too, calls for the school heads to carry out sensitization of parents and teachers on the government policy. Teachers should also be motivated to effectively teach the learners through capacity building as clearly stipulated by Bandura (1977) and Abraham Maslow theory of needs.

Conclusion

The results from the field revealed that the major remediation to arrest teachers' absenteeism in the secondary schools is community sensitization on the values of education. In addition, the major correlation between teacher absenteeism and learner achievement is poor academic performance which should be eliminated by enhancing teachers' initiatives. Finally, the way forward should be implemented collectively by the various stakeholders. In the next chapter, emphasis was put on discussions, conclusions and recommendations of the current study.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.0 Introduction

This last chapter dwells on discussions, conclusions and recommendations on study findings.

These are all based on research objectives.

5.1 Discussion of findings on objective one

Objective one aimed to identify the underlying causes of teacher absenteeism in Government aided schools of Sibanga Sub-county in Manafwa District. The results from the findings presented by the respondents as a leading cause of absenteeism is sickness and inadequate instructional time should be rectified by every school having a vote for a wellness program.

Most of the respondents said that sickness and poor teacher-learner relationship representing 55% of the respondents are leading causes of teacher absenteeism as reflected in the study findings in table 4.4. P12,P22,P34,P37,P45,P49,P51,P54,P59,P63,P67,P68,P78,P88 and P91 said:

“We cannot send our child to school without basic needs because we are responsible for the general welfare of our children. We don’t just intend to miss school but we have to attend to. Also, I can’t allow my child to go school if he/she has been sent home for fees and other needs, so I need time to secure the scholastic materials to go to school.”

In addition, head teacher C2 was quoted as saying:

“Some learners especially girls have befriended older teachers who are sugar daddies and so at times the teachers may find it difficult to meet with the learners at school and

hence they resort to absenteeism. Other teachers have gotten engaged in personal business like selling charcoal, paraffin, milk among others to earn a living”.

Learners and parents corroborated this in the (FGDs) when they indicated sickness as the “normal” reason for learner “stay a ways” and/or late coming. From the focus group discussion schedule, P5 had this to say,

Much as we want all teachers and learners to be at school all the time from Monday to Friday, it is impossible to achieve this objective 100% because a teacher can encounter several problems like, sickness, unfriendly weather conditions like heavy down pour, lack of transport.

On the question of parental involvement in school activities that benefit learners, it was found out that low parental involvement breeds learner absenteeism and L20 had this to say,

“My parents have never come to check on what I do at school yet we do nothing most of the time and my teacher is always absent.”

About half of the sicknesses affecting learners are malaria-related. However, some of the head teachers cast doubt on sickness as a cause of absenteeism saying absentee learners fake sickness as a way of absenting themselves.

This study findings agree with those of Okurut (2012), who divulged that the health status of the teacher and that of his/her family members was, almost invariably, cited by the respondents as a lead explanation for teachers’ absence and non- punctuality in all the schools visited. He added that the need by a physically indisposed learner to attend hospital is taken to be a justification for staying away from school. Relatedly, Female teacher absenteeism, lateness and early departure

from school are commonly associated with competing demands of the household responsibilities (EPRC, 2011; ANPPCAN, 2010). Unlike their male counterparts, female teachers have to always wake up very early to prepare their children to go to school, prepare breakfast for their families and clean their kitchens and compounds before getting prepared for school (ACCU, 2011).

Relatedly, low pay received by teachers on a monthly basis presents a serious problem toward retaining teachers at school as supported by most of the respondents. This is in line with what Kimani Wa Njunguna (2015) revealed in Kenya where teachers received low pay which could not meet their demands. He added by saying that in a bid to make ends meet, they resorted to odd businesses which took much of their time, leading to learner and teacher absenteeism in schools. The researcher contends that low pay inspires primary teachers to engage in off-classroom business activities.

When seeking to establish whether teachers were accommodated in schools, it was unearthed that in one of the sample schools (C1) only 4 out of 20 teachers' occupied staff quarters as supported by most of teacher interviewees. This study finding coincided with World Bank (2008) report which cited lack of incentives such as transport allowances as a causative factor for teachers' absenteeism. The researcher concurs with the current study and World Bank findings in that an under stimulated mind can't achieve any productive development.

In line with causes of teacher absenteeism, most of the respondents pointed to sickness, poor teacher learner relationship and lack of scholastic materials as the leading cause of teacher absenteeism. More key causes included attending burials, absence of meals, administrative lapses, no parental care and love among others.

5.1.1 Discussion of findings on objective two

Objective two sought to establish the correlation between teacher absenteeism and learner achievement.

It seems according to the results that poor academic performance 73(20.22%) is the major correlation between teacher absenteeism and learner achievement. Therefore, elimination of teacher absenteeism should be worked on seriously. According to the views of the respondents, most of them indicated that there is relationship between teacher absenteeism and learners' achievement. The most outstanding of all the views was poor academic performance mentioned by 20.22% of the respondents as seen in table 4.6. P2 had this to say,

“It is common sense to any sensible mind that absence of a teacher makes the learner to drop drastically in their learning. My child used to do well but when his teachers started dodging to teach, he eventually produced poor results.”

The finding is supported by the result of (Das et al., 2007; Miller et al., 2008). To Das et al, absence of a teacher reduces student's learning by 4 to 8 % of a year's learning for a typical student whilst Miller et al., noted that higher absences lead to significantly lower student achievement. The researcher contends that teacher absenteeism leads to poor achievement not only in academics but also in other areas of a child's development.

In addition, disruption of learner's learning was revealed by 42(11.63%) of the respondents. This finding concurs with the views of Obenge-Denteh (2011) in his research in a submetral area in Ghana which revealed that when a teacher is absent from the classroom, student learning is disrupted, in fact Obeng-Denteh sought to determine whether teacher's absenteeism affect the performance of students on Ghana's basic education certificate examinations (BECE). To the

researcher, disruption of learners' learning does happen as a result of teacher absenteeism which is engineered by teachers as confirmed by the current study finding.

Child's misbehaviour /poor social interactions accounted for 10% of the respondents. This is in line with the views of Clotfelter et al (2007) who confirmed that teacher absenteeism causes an increase in students' misbehaviour thus causing administration to concentrate resources in dealing with discipline. The researcher feels that learners' inappropriate behaviour is likely to increase in absence of the teacher who is supposed to demonstrate positive behaviours to them so that they emulate. Furthermore, 40(11.08%) of the respondents believed that teacher absenteeism is a barrier to the success of inclusive education. The views raised by the respondents directly agree with those raised by Muyingo (2012) who said that, the continued absence of teachers is an obstacle to the effective implementation of inclusive education in Ugandan schools. He observed that perennial poor performance in national examinations and high pupil dropout rate is a result of teacher and learner absenteeism. To the researcher, it's almost impossible for learners with special needs to get necessary accommodations and adaptations that are so much needed by such learners toward their successful acquisition of needed knowledge and skills for independent living. More 61(16.89%) of the respondents revealed that discontinuity in learning happens as a result of teacher absenteeism. On the contrary, T15 said,

“My absence gives learners opportunity to explore or interact with their peers without fear of punishment in case they make mistakes in the process of peer interactions hence.”

These findings are supported by (Chaudhury et al, 2004; Clotfelter et al, 2007), who divulged that teacher absenteeism causes a discontinuity in sequential learning largely brought about by

underprepared substitute teachers. To the researcher, continued teacher absenteeism brings discontinuity in learning as supported by the above facts. Further still, 19.94% of the respondents believed that teacher absenteeism breeds learner absenteeism and hence leading to school dropout. This finding is supported by that of Duraisamy, Habyarimana, and Tan (2009) who noted that teacher absenteeism encourages students to absent themselves from school. The researcher is of the perspective that teacher absenteeism does cause learners to absent from school since no one will hold them accountable for their absence. Finally, 35(9.69%) respondents claimed that teacher absenteeism leads to inadequate use of instructional time (inadequate syllabus coverage). This is in line with the finding of SACMEQ (2011) that revealed that teacher and learner absences leads to inadequate coverage of the curriculum and shorter time-on-task. As a researcher, it is impossible for absentee teachers to adequately cover the syllabus.

In agreement with research findings under this objective as seen in table 4.6, respondents linked learner absenteeism to learners' poor achievement academically, emotionally and socially. This is because when learners absent from school regularly, they miss lessons and syllabi coverage becomes a challenge leading to negative impacts associated with learners' absenteeism.

5.1.2 Discussion of findings on objective Three

Objective sought to determine the ways of curbing teacher absenteeism

Majority of the respondents proposed community mobilisation (23.26%), involvement of CCTs in school affairs (9.14%), development of a wellness program (13.01%) where teachers can visit each other whenever sickness issues arise as well as relieving head teachers who are unable to control their teachers of their duties. For example, with regard to community mobilisation, Ackerman (2004) asserted that community mobilisation and empowerment to hold service providers accountable is taken to be a linchpin policy for the improvement of service delivery.

He added that where service recipients may be unaware of the quality of the services they are receiving or of the available opportunities for improvement, information and mobilization campaigns targeted at the intended beneficiary is what may be needed to improve service delivery. This too encourages and reminds parents and teachers on the pivotal role of guiding and supporting the learners to attain quality education with minimum disturbances.

Furthermore, results show that what should limit teacher absenteeism are the initiatives by the head teachers 68(18.83%) and hence the school heads should be sensitized to manage teachers effectively through capacity building. Teachers are the counsellors at school who can motivate or demotivate a child to remain at school. Therefore they should be handled with great care because a child stays most of the time at school.

As reflected in the presented data in table 4.7, most of the respondents 68/361(18.83%) said that initiatives by head teachers like guidance and counselling, reporting to relevant authorities for disciplinary action, regular support supervision and use of attendance registers is the way to go in curtailing the vice of absenteeism. This is in line with findings by Okurut (2012), who revealed initiatives undertaken by head teachers in their bid to stem teacher absenteeism including guidance and counselling, inviting inspectors and parents to talk to teachers about teachers' absenteeism. In addition 48(13.2%) of the respondents proposed that provision of incentives like teacher's basic needs, medical care and motivation ,remediation among others can be of great significance in ending teacher absenteeism. However, some respondents contrasted the move by saying incentives can't help the teacher to remain in school. One dissenting voice (P1) was heard as saying:

“In this school (C2) teachers remain home to do their businesses and other domestic activities to earn a living and so being consistent at school becomes difficult. However community mobilization as discussed earlier can address the concern. Some teachers are also demoralized by their head teachers who do not want to pay them their remedial and PTA allowances, and some of them are on staff quarters but nothing positive has been realised...” He argued.

This finding is in line with that of a study by Vegas and Umansky (2005) who defined nine types of incentives affecting learners and teachers which include; internal motivation, child's health, social prestige and recognition, job security, pensions and other known salary benefits such as health insurance, professional growth, on salary job characteristics such as availability of adequate facilities and materials with which to teach, sense of mastery in one's job, having to satisfy clients and respond to supervisors, salary differentials and other monetary benefits. The researcher is of the view that teachers should be paid basing on seniority, training and characteristics of the school or its students' performance or other variables.

It is within this context that the researcher considers community participation and support as indispensability for the advancement of all school development projects, in fact where majority of the teachers are more conservative, ambivalent, non-achievement oriented, they will be less inclined to provide active oversight and oblige teachers to be accountable. 13.01% of the respondents asserted that development of a wellness program can help to deal with the increasing cases of sickness among teachers. This is in line with what Okurut (2012) noted where he defined a wellness program as a multifaceted, multidisciplinary workplace care, support and treatment program aimed at benefiting all staff by creating an enabling, caring and supportive working environment that cater for the needs of the learners too. The researcher is in favour of a

wellness program and should be adopted by all the schools in a bid to increase teachers' retention not only at school but also in their home. Irresponsible head teachers should be relieved of their duties. This is in line with Mandy in Talemwa and Eupal (2009) who stressed the need for some head teachers who are unable to control their schools to be relieved of their duties. To the researcher, relieving of duty for some head teachers would serve as a stern warning to those misbehaving and others who are in the process of joining the bad group.

In line with the study findings, majority of the respondents fronted head teachers' initiatives like guidance and counselling, regular support supervision among others. Apart from this, respondents proposed other ways like giving of incentives, community mobilisation, and involvement of CCTs, development of a wellness program such as meals provision, sensitization of parents on their roles and responsibilities, giving prizes to learners as well as relieving head

5.2 Conclusion

Based on the above findings, it is evident that teacher absenteeism greatly affects learners' performance in all aspects. Therefore devising necessary interventions like guidance and counselling, good parental care, good teacher-pupil relationship, community mobilisation, avoiding child abuse and meal provision that combat challenges associated with academic performance is mandatory.

5.3 Recommendations

Sensitisation of parents and teachers should be carried out with regard to their sick learners and colleagues especially those with HIV/AIDS to stop labelling them.

Rewarding of teachers should be done to help in reinforcing their performance. Such rewards can verbal rewards like thank you for always being there for your class. The teacher can as well be rewarded through the monetary terms.

Government should construct more classrooms and equip schools with more supplies. This in turn would accommodate the increasing enrolment in schools. Causes of teacher absenteeism associated with accommodation is inevitable in solving issues to do with late coming and absenteeism as a result of lacking transport as well as the absenteeism of teachers resulting from their demanding landlords.

Teachers who absent themselves from schools without a sound reason should be reprimanded to enforce discipline among them.

The government should strengthen the inspection teams of the central and local governments by employing more inspectors of schools and increasing the required resources needed for them to function effectively.

Financial empowerment of teachers should be carried out so as to encourage them to save from the meagre salary to stop the borrowing culture especially from micro-finance companies. This can be done through financial literacy to enable them have entrepreneurial skills like financial intelligence and discipline.

Government should increase salaries of all teachers, avail jobs to people to enable access income to support their children in schools so to enhance their productivity.

Participatory leadership structure (Flat structure) should be adopted in all schools as opposed to the hierarchical structural so as to promote a sense of belonging, acceptance and recognition in all teachers.

Finally, the researcher acknowledges that this research is not the end of the impact of teacher absenteeism on learner's achievement. It is recommended that further research should be

undertaken in both private and government schools to have a comparative analysis of what goes on in these settings.

5.4 Areas for further study

- Examining the causes of teacher absenteeism in primary schools
- Examining the roles of stakeholders in combating teacher absenteeism in primary schools
- Investigating the strategies that can be employed to address the concern of teacher absenteeism in primary schools.

REFERENCES

- Ackerman, J. (2004). *Co-Governance for Accountability: Beyond Exit and "Voice"*. World and Development (READ) Project Schools in Uganda. Kampala: Build Africa and Research, Ministry of Education.
- Banerjee, A., & Duflo, E. (2006). Addressing Absence. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 20(1), 117-132.
- Byamugisha, A., & Ogawa, K. (2010). *Universal Secondary Education Policy and Quality*. Calverton, MD: Macro International Inc.
- Carnoy, M., et al. (2011). *The Process of Learning in South Africa: The Quality of Mathematics Teaching in North West Province*. Pretoria: HSRC.
- Chaudhury, N., et al. (2004). Provider Absence in Schools and Health Clinics. Paper presented at the *Northeast Universities Development Consortium Conference*, Montreal, Canada.
- Clotfelter, C., Ladd, H. F., & Vigdor, J. L. (2007). Are Teacher Absences Worth Worrying About in the U.S.? *NBER Working Paper No. 13648*. Cambridge, MA: National Bureau of Economic Research.
- CSO. (2010). *Annual Report 2007 – Education Statistics*. Gaborone: Division of Planning.
- Das, J., Dercon, S., Habyarimana, J., & Krishnan, P. (2007). Teacher Shocks and Student Learning: Evidence from Zambia. *Journal of Human Resources*, 42(4), 820-862.
- Del Rosso, J. (1999). *School Feeding Programs: Improving Effectiveness and Increasing the Development*. Washington, DC: World Bank.
- DHS. (2005). *Mozambique Demographic and Health Survey 2003*. Maputo: Macro International Inc.
- DHS. (2008). *Namibia Demographic and Health Survey 2006/7*. Windhoek, Namibia: Macro International Inc.
- Ehrenberg, R. G., Rees, D. I., & Ehrenberg, E. L. (1991). School District Leave Policies, Teacher Absenteeism, and Student Achievement. *Journal of Human Resources*, 26(1), 72-105.

- Ejere, E. I. (2010). Absence from Work: A Study of Teacher Absenteeism in Selected Secondary Schools in Uyo, Nigeria. *International Journal of Business and Management*, 5(9), 179-185.
- Emiliana, V. (2007). Teacher Labor Markets in Developing Countries. *Vol. 17(1)*, 1-21.
- Government of Uganda. (1995). *The Constitution of the Republic of Uganda*. Entebbe: Government Printers.
- Hartwell, A. (2003). Strategies for Enhancing Basic Education System Performance: The Role, Performance and Contribution of Centre Coordinating Tutors to Education Quality. *Journal of Education Quality*, 3(4), 456-476.
- Kakuru, D. (2006). *The Combat for Gender Equality in Education: Rural Livelihood Pathways in the Context of HIV/AIDS*. Wageningen: Wageningen Academic Publishers.
- Kimani, W. N. (2015, April 29). Address Teacher Absenteeism in Schools. *Daily Nation*.
- Kremer, M., Chaudhury, N., Rogers, F. H., Muralidharan, K., & Hammer, J. (2005). Teacher Absence in India: A Snapshot. *Journal of the European Economic Association*, 3(2-3), 658-667.
- Miller, R. T., Murnane, R. J., & Willett, J. B. (2008). Do Teacher Absences Impact Student Achievement? *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 30(2), 181-200.
- Mizala, A., & Romaguera, P. (2005). Teachers' Salary Structure and Incentives in Chile. In E. Vegas (Ed.), *Incentives to Improve Teaching* (pp. 1-19). Washington, DC: The World Bank.
- MoFPED. (2012). *National Budget 2012 – 2013/2012-2013 FY Budget Estimates*. Retrieved from www.ugandapicks.com/2012/06/national-budget-2012-2013-4863.h.
- Muyingo, J. C. (2012, March 13). Absenteeism Crippling Free Education. *New Vision*.
- Nsubuga, Y. K. (2008). *Analysis of Leadership Styles and School Performance of Secondary Schools in Uganda*. Kampala: Uganda Management Institute.
- Obeng-Denteh, W., Yeboah, E. A., Sam, C., & Monkah, J. E. (2011). The Impact of Student and

- Teacher Absenteeism on Student Performance at the Junior High School: The Case of the Kumasi-Metro School District. *Contemporary Journal of Educational Research*, 4(1), 7-14.
- Okurut, F. (2012). Nature, Causes, and Magnitude of Teacher Absenteeism. *International Journal of Education and Social Sciences*, 2(3), 50-64.
- Suryadarma, D., Suryahadi, A., Sumarto, S., & Rogers, F. H. (2006). Improving Student Performance in Public Secondary Schools in Developing Countries: Evidence from Indonesia. *Education Economics*, 14(4), 401-421.
- Talemwa, M., & Eupal, F. (2009, October 18). Uganda Teacher Absenteeism is Highest in the World. *Observer Newspaper*.
- UBOS. (2010). *Uganda National Panel Survey (UNPS) 2009 – 2010*. Kampala: Uganda Bureau of Statistics.
- Umansky, I. (2005). *A Literature Review of Teacher Quality and Incentives*. Washington, DC: The World Bank.
- UNATU. (2010). *Teachers' Demand for Better Working Conditions: Uganda's Education*. Kampala: Uganda National Teachers Union.
- UNGEI. (2010). *UNGEI at 10: A Journey to Gender Equality in Education*. New York: UNICEF.
- Wandega, A. (2010). Teacher Absenteeism in the Iganga District of Uganda. *ANPPCAN Report*.

AAPPENDICES

PPENDIX: I FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR LEARNERS

Dear learners,

I am **Walukhuli Luke** a student of Uganda Christian University conducting a research study on the **impact of teacher absenteeism on their academic performance in selected Secondary Schools of Sibanga Sub-County, Manafwa District.**” I therefore wish to request you to humbly spare some time and answer some questions below as honestly as possible by ticking or filling in the spaces provided. The data given will be purely for academic purposes and will be treated with confidentiality.

(Please tick in the most appropriate or filling in the black space where necessary.)

A: Causes of teacher absenteeism

- 1) Are there factors that can force you to be absent from school?
- 2) If yes, mention what you think can make you to be absent from school?
- 3) How often do you absent from school?
- 4) How does absenteeism lead to poor academic performance in schools?
- 5) From the causes you have given which one do you consider as the leading cause of teacher absenteeism?
- 6) A) Do your parents visit you at school to check on what you're doing?
B) If yes, how do they participate in your education?
C) If no, what prevents them from participation?

B: Impacts of teacher absenteeism on academic performance

- 1) Do you have some idea on impacts of teacher absenteeism on learner academic performance?
- 2) If yes, please explain
- 3) How do you feel about teacher absenteeism?
- 4) A) Do you think absence from school can make you perform poorly?
- 5) B) If yes give a reason why
- 6) What happens when teachers absent themselves frequently?

7) A) Is it possible that learners can drop out of school if teachers frequently absent from school?

B) If yes support your answer.

8) What do you think is a major impact of teacher absenteeism on academic performance?

C: Strategies to address teacher absenteeism

1. Do have idea on to address the challenges associated with teacher absenteeism in schools?

2. If yes, mention the ways of combating teacher absenteeism in schools?

3. What do you think is the role of parents in combating teacher absenteeism in schools?

Thank You So Much For Your Cooperation

APPENDIX: II INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR PARENTS

Dear parent,

I am **Walukhuli Luke** a student of Uganda Christian University conducting a research study on the **impact of teacher absenteeism on their academic performance in selected secondary schools of Sibanga Sub-County, Manafwa District.**” Therefore, I wish to request you to humbly spare some time and answer some questions below as honestly as possible by ticking or filling in the spaces provided. The data given will purely for academic purposes and will be treated confidentially.

(Please tick in the most appropriate or filling in the black space where necessary.)

A: Causes of teacher absenteeism

- 1) What do you think are the major causes of teacher absenteeism?
- 2) A) As parents, are you actively involved in school activities toward improving on your children’s education?
B) If Yes, how?
C) If No, why?

B: impacts of teacher absenteeism on learners’ academic performance in schools

- 1) Does teacher absenteeism breed learners’ learner poor academic performance?
B) If yes, why?
- 2) Is it possible that teacher absenteeism leads to high learner dropout?
- 3) Identify any effects of teacher absenteeism on learners’ learning.

C: Strategies of combating teacher absenteeism

- 1) Community mobilization and empowerment to hold service providers accountable is inevitable. Do you contend with this statement?
A) If Yes, why?
B) If No, support your answer
- 2) Are CCTs and associate assessors involved in quality monitoring of education in this area?
A) If yes, what contribution do they bring to the education standards in this area?
B) If No, what must be done to avert the learner and teacher absenteeism challenge?

- 3) As parents to the learners in schools, what initiative have you put in place to curb the vice of teacher absenteeism?
- 4) Suggest other various ways that should be employed to address the concern of teacher absenteeism in schools.

Thank You So Much for Your Cooperation

APPENDIX: III CATEGORY C: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR LEARNERS

Dear head teacher,

I am **Walukhuli Luke** a student of Uganda Christian University conducting a research study on the impact of teacher absenteeism on their academic performance in selected secondary schools of Sibanga Sub-County, Manafwa District.

I therefore wish to request you to humbly spare some time and answer some questions below as honestly as possible by ticking or filling in the spaces provided. The data given will purely for academic purposes and will be treated confidentially.

(Please tick in the most appropriate or filling in the black space where necessary.)

A: Causes of teacher absenteeism

- 1) What are the major causes of teacher absenteeism are as noticed and told to you by teachers?
- 2) Comment on the teacher absenteeism in your school?
- 3) How many teachers stay on the staff quarters?
- 4) Has their stay on staff quarters helped to end their teacher absenteeism?
- 5) Have you developed initiatives to curb teacher absenteeism in your school?
 - A) If Yes, which ones?
 - B) If not why?
- 6) What means of transport are used by your learners to and from school?
- 7) A) On average, which sex of the learners absent themselves so often?
 - A) What major(s) reason is presented by the above sex of learners?

B: Impact of teacher absenteeism on learners' academic performance

- 1) In your opinion, does the teacher cease to be a role model in the eyes of his or learners as a result on absenteeism? Yes No
- 2) A) Are you in agreement with the notion that widespread teacher absenteeism is a major obstacle to effective and sustainable improvement of inclusive education?
 - B) If yes, support your answer
 - C) If No, why?
- 3) Is it possible that teacher absenteeism leads to high learner dropout?

A) If yes, support your answer

B) If No, why?

4) Identify any effects of teacher absenteeism on learners' learning.

5) Do absentee teachers adequately cover the syllabus? Yes

No

C: Strategies to combat teacher absenteeism

1) What do you think should be done to combat teacher absenteeism in secondary schools of Sibanga Sub-County?

2) Community mobilization and empowerment to hold service providers accountable is inevitable. Do you contend with this statement? A) If yes, support B) If No, explain.

3) State the role played by school Management Committees (SMCs) and PTA in ending teacher absenteeism?

4) To what extent are CCTs and associate assessors involved in quality monitoring of education in this school?

5) What initiatives have you as head teachers put in place to stem the vice of teacher absenteeism?

Thank You

APPENDIX: 1V QUESTIONNAIRES FOR BOTH TEACHERS AND HEADTEACHERS

Dear teacher/ Head teacher,

I am **Walukhuli Luke** a student of Uganda Christian University conducting a research study on the **“Impact of teacher absenteeism on their academic performance in selected secondary schools of Sibanga Sub-County, Manafwa District.”**

Therefore, I wish to request you to humbly spare some time and answer some questions below as honestly as possible by ticking or filling in the spaces provided. The data given will purely for academic purposes and will be treated confidentially.

(Please tick in the most appropriate or filling in the black space where necessary.)

A: Causes of teacher absenteeism

- 1) What are the major causes of teacher absenteeism?
- 2) Are parents actively involved in school activities? A) If Yes, how? B) If No, explain
- 3) How many seminars/workshops do you attend in a term?
- 4) Are you supervised in your activities? B) If Yes, how often? B) If No, what must be done?
- 5) As a teacher, are you satisfied with the take home monthly salary?
Yes No

B: Impacts of teacher absenteeism on learners’ academic performance

- 1) Can absence of learners breed to learners’ poor academic performance?
If yes, please explain?
- 2) In your opinion, does the teacher cease to be a role model in the eyes of his or learners as a result on absenteeism? Yes No
- 3) A) Are you in agreement with the notion that widespread teacher absenteeism is a major obstacle for effective and sustainable improvement of inclusive education?
B) If yes, support.
C) If No, why?
- 4) Identify any effects of teacher absenteeism on learners’ learning.

C: Strategies to address teacher absenteeism in schools

- 1) What do you think should be done to combat teacher absenteeism in UPE schools?
- 2) A) Community mobilization and empowerment to hold service providers accountable is inevitable. Do you contend with this statement?
 - B) If Yes, why
 - C) If No, give reasons
- 3) What role is played by the School Management Committees (SMCs) and PTA towards your learners and teachers' welfare?
- 4) How often do you receive CCTs and associate assessors in this school?
 - a. What techniques have you as head teachers put in place to stem the vice of learners' absenteeism?
 - b. In your own opinion what do you think is the best strategy to address the concern of teacher absenteeism inn schools?

Thank You So Much for Your Cooperation

APPENDIX: V SAMPLE SIZE (S) REQUIRED FOR THE GIVEN POPULATION

N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S	N	S
10	10	100	80	280	162	800	260	2800	338
15	14	110	86	290	165	850	256	3000	341
20	19	120	92	300	169	900	269	3500	346
25	24	130	97	320	175	950	274	4000	351
30	28	140	103	340	181	1000	278	4500	354
35	32	150	108	360	186	1100	285	5000	357
40	36	160	113	380	191	1200	291	6000	361
45	40	170	118	400	196	1300	297	7000	364
50	44	180	123	420	201	1400	302	8000	367
55	48	190	127	440	205	1500	306	9000	368
60	52	200	132	460	210	1600	310	10000	370
65	56	210	136	480	214	1700	313	15000	375
70	59	220	140	500	217	1800	317	20000	377
75	63	230	144	550	226	1900	320	30000	379
80	66	240	148	600	234	2000	322	40000	380
85	70	250	152	650	242	2200	327	50000	381
90	73	260	155	700	248	2400	331	75000	382
95	76	270	159	750	254	2600	335	100000	384

Source: Adapted from R.V.Krejcie & D.W.Morgan (1970). Determining sample size for research activities. Educational and psychological measurement, 30. 608

APPENDIX VI
INTRODUCTORY LETTER



**UGANDA CHRISTIAN
UNIVERSITY**

A Centre of Excellence in the Heart of Africa
MBALE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE.

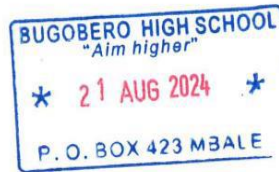
Office of the Academic Registrar

To

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Academic Research

Christian greetings!



Received
21.08.2024
[Signature]

We are honored to introduce to you Mr. Mrs./Miss.....
Of Registration Number..... pursuing a Masters'
Degree/Postgraduate Diploma / Bachelor's Degree

He/ she is required to carry out academic research on the topic

and thereafter produce a well bound hard cover research report (MAROON) in color for undergraduate and three (BLACK)copies for Postgraduate students as a university requirement for the award of a degree/diploma in the academic discipline that he / she is pursuing.

We shall be grateful for the help you may offer to him or her accordingly.
Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

Mr. Akampurira Timothy
Academic Registrar

Received
21/08/2024
[Signature]
16 AUG 2024
HEADTEACHER
KIMALULI HIGH SCHOOL
P. O. BOX 1665 MBALE
Date 21/08/2024

A Complete Education for a Complete Person

P.O Box, Mbale, Uganda, email: academicregistrar@mbale.ucu.ac.ug

APPENDIX VII
A MAP OF MANAFWA DISTRICT SHOWING THE AREA OF STUDY

