

**BUSITEMA  
UNIVERSITY**  
*Pursuing Excellence*

**EXPLORING FACTORS CONTRIBUTING TO LEARNERS ABSENTEEISM IN  
SELECTED PRIMARY SCHOOL IN PAYA SUB COUNTY IN TORORO DISTRICT**

**BY**

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**A RESEARCH REPORT SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF SCIENCE AND  
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THE AWARD OF A BACHELORS DEGREE IN EDUCATION  
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**DECLARATION**

I **AWOR DAPHEN** do declare to the best of my knowledge that this is my original work and has been not presented to any university for any award of academic qualification.

Signed  ..... Date 27th 9-2024



**APPROVAL**

I certify that Awor Daphen carried out this research report under my supervision and submitted with my approval.

Signature .....  ..... Date ..... 27/09/2024 .....  
The signature is a handwritten name in blue ink, appearing to be 'AWOR DAPHEN' with a flourish at the end. The date is written as '27/09/2024' in blue ink.

Mr. Anthony Wanyama  
(SUPERVISOR)

## **DEDICATION**

I am proudly indeed privileged to dedicate my research report to my beloved Mother Mary Nyapendi and my dear husband Okongo Joseph Sule, my grandmother Loy Florence and my children Loyo Jemimah Ludvian, Kereen Victoria, Esther, Joel and Junior who missed me and endured for long, staying in my absence as I was pursuing this course.

May the almighty God reward you abundantly and always.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

SES:	Socioeconomic Status
CCTs:	Community Curriculum Tutors
CRC:	Convention on the Rights of the Child
EFA:	Education for All
FPE:	Free Primary Education
GER:	Gross Enrollment Rate
HIV/AIDS:	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
MDGs:	Millennium Development Goals
MoES:	Ministry of Education and Sports
NER:	Net Enrollment Rate
NGO:	Non-Governmental Organization
OVC:	Orphans and Vulnerable Children
PTA:	Parent-Teacher Association
SDG:	Sustainable Development Goals
SPSS:	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
UNESCO:	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF:	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
WHO:	World Health Organization

## ABSTRACT

The general objective of the study was to explore factors contributing to learners' absenteeism in selected primary schools in Paya sub-county, Tororo district. The study was guided by the following objectives: to identify the underlying causes of learners' absenteeism, to determine the effects of absenteeism on learners' performance, and to identify the existing initiatives on curbing learners' absenteeism within Paya sub-county in Tororo district. The study employed a cross-sectional research design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches for data analysis. A cross-sectional survey design was chosen for its ability to provide a systematic and factual snapshot of data at a single point in time. A sample size of 100 respondents was determined using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table for sample size determination at a confidence level.

The findings of the study revealed that the majority of respondents, 70%, were between the ages of 5 and 17 years. Out of the 100 respondents, 30% were male, while the majority, 70%, were female, indicating a higher participation rate among females in the study. In terms of religious affiliation, Protestants made up the largest group, accounting for 65% of the respondents. Catholics were the second-largest group at 32%, and Muslims were the smallest group, making up 3% of the respondents. Chronic health conditions were another major cause of absenteeism, with 80% of respondents having missed school in the past month due to health issues like asthma or diabetes. The majority, 90%, did not miss school due to peer influence, suggesting that this was not a major factor in absenteeism. Furthermore, 75% of respondents thought that students who frequently missed school were less likely to graduate, and a significant majority, 90%, believed that missing school negatively affected their grades. A majority of the respondents felt that the direct disbursement of funds for school inspections to district inspectors had not improved the timeliness of inspection visits, and 70% of respondents observed that parental engagement programs led to noticeable reductions in absenteeism rates in their school or district.

In conclusion, the findings indicated that socioeconomic factors, such as the inability to afford basic school necessities, significantly contributed to absenteeism. Most respondents believed that missing school adversely affected their grades and reduced their likelihood of graduating. Frequent absences were also associated with difficulties in making friends and staying motivated in studies. A significant majority agreed that reducing teachers' burnout could help lower absenteeism rates, highlighting the need for holistic approaches that address both student and teacher well-being.

It was recommended that schools and communities should collaborate to provide essential school supplies such as uniforms, books, and stationery to students from low-income families. This could be facilitated through government programs, non-profit organizations, and community fundraising efforts.

## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.0 Introduction**

This section described the background to the study, the statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, scope of the study and significance of the study and conceptual framework.

#### **1.1 Background of the study**

The background of this research proposal was presented in four ways, i.e. the historical background, conceptual background, theoretical background and contextual background.

##### **1.1.1 Historical background**

Globally, when learners' absent themselves from school frequently it results into poor performance of learners and high rate of school dropout. Absenteeism by learners reduces the amount of instructional time and this result in the syllabi not being completed. This in return results in lower output of work by the learners (Ubogu,2014). According to Bray and Percy (2013), learners' absenteeism has a wide and influential effect in a country's educational system. High levels of absenteeism negatively impacts learners' achievement, tarnishes the school reputation, contributes to the decline of the profession and precipitates in turn learner's absenteeism. A report by World Bank (2011), points out that widespread learner's absenteeism is generally acknowledged as a major obstacle to the effective and sustainable improvements of the country's education system. The report concludes that with high rates of learners' absenteeism, it is difficult for children to learn consistently and to build on their skills throughout the school year.

In developed countries, Like in the USA, Japan, Spain, Canada there are estimates that approximately 4 percent of learners' absent from school on a given workday (U.S Department of Education, 2018). According to Miller, Miller, Murnane, and Willett (2017), a substantial district school with high learners' absences are discretionary, and that higher absences lead to significantly lower learners' performance. A study done in North Carolina found out that learners' absences are associated with lower learners' performance in primary school (Clotfelter,

Ladd, & Vigdor, 2018).

In Sub Saharan, absenteeism affects learners socially and those with poor school attendance miss their friends as the latter find new ones. This is assign that absenteeism does not harm only the learners who do not go to school, but also the other learners at school. Absentees deny themselves the chance to know other learners better because of being away from school many times. A study conducted in Lesotho by Smiley (2011), shows that caregivers provide children material support as well as behavioral guidance, leading them to appear physically well cared for and they tend to follow local norms appropriate for child behavior. Learners who get poor homecare tend to absent themselves from school. A study conducted in 2020 in Nigeria shows that the highest rate of school absenteeism recorded was 25% (Annasi,2021). In Mali, school absenteeism increases together with the learners` age by two percent. Learners aged seventeen and nineteen were found regularly absent from school ( Ahmed,2018).

According to UWEZO survey (2011) 38% of government primary schools in Uganda have a learners' absentee rate of between 10% and 5% and learners' at 3%. This means that in schools more than one learners' is absent at any one time, likely leaving learners unattended and certainly increasing the work burden for the learners' who are present or worst learners are left to learn on their own. Therefore it is against this background that the researcher sought to find out explore factors contributing to learners' absenteeism in selected primary school.

In Paya Sub County, the number of learners' who always fail to go to school has increased in the recent years from 25% to 48% (Paya Sub County, 2019) and this is attributed to high demand of man power to work on plantation, lack of scholastic materials and peer influence. For learners' absenteeism in government schools is more than double in recent years and this is caused by illness, learners' attending workshops or academic postgraduate classes, and learners' being on leave due to other public duties. While the possible causes for learners' absence might be diverse, the effects on learners' performance are unquestionably and unvaryingly disastrous.

### **1.1.2 Conceptual background**

According to Merriam-Webster. (2021), learners are individuals who are engaged in the process of acquiring knowledge, skills, attitudes, or values through study, experience, or teaching.

According to Kearney, (2008), learner's absenteeism refers to the frequent absence of students from school without valid reasons, which can significantly impact their academic performance and overall development.

Absenteeism is the habitual non-presence of an employee or student from their place of work or school, which can disrupt productivity and progress. (Johns, G. 2008).

A primary school is an educational institution where children receive the first stage of compulsory education, typically between the ages of 5 and 11. (UNESCO,2017).

### **1.1.3 Theoretical background**

For the purpose of this study two theories will be employed;

#### **The Ecological Systems Theory**

The Ecological Systems Theory, developed by Urie Bronfenbrenner in 1979, posits that human development is influenced by different types of environmental systems. This theory underscores the importance of studying children in multiple environments, also known as ecological systems, to understand their development comprehensively. The strength of the Ecological Systems Theory lies in its holistic approach to understanding human development. It emphasizes the interconnectedness of various environmental factors, making it a comprehensive framework for exploring the multifaceted nature of learners' absenteeism. For instance, the theory considers the role of family, school, and community in a child's education, thus providing a broad perspective on the issue. A notable weakness of the Ecological Systems Theory is its complexity and the difficulty in empirically testing all its components due to the vast number of interacting systems. Additionally, it may sometimes overlook the internal cognitive processes of the individual, focusing predominantly on external influences. Bronfenbrenner's theory contributes significantly to understanding absenteeism by highlighting the various layers of influence on a child's educational experience. For example, family economic hardship (microsystem), school policies (mesosystem), community values regarding education (exosystem), and cultural attitudes

(macrosystem) can all contribute to absenteeism. Critics argue that the Ecological Systems Theory may be too broad and general, lacking specificity in identifying which factors are most influential in particular contexts. Moreover, the theory's emphasis on external environments may underplay the role of individual agency and personal choice in behavior.

### **The Self-Determination Theory**

The Self-Determination Theory (SDT), formulated by Edward L. Deci and Richard M. Ryan in the 1980s, focuses on the intrinsic and extrinsic motivations that drive human behavior. According to SDT, human motivation is influenced by the need for autonomy, competence, and relatedness. A key strength of SDT is its emphasis on intrinsic motivation and its impact on behavior and engagement. This theory provides valuable insights into why learners might choose to attend or skip school based on their perceived autonomy, competence, and relatedness within the educational environment. One weakness of SDT is that it can be challenging to measure intrinsic motivation and its effects quantitatively. Moreover, the theory may not fully account for external factors such as socioeconomic status or family background, which can also significantly influence absenteeism. SDT contributes to understanding absenteeism by explaining how students' motivation to attend school can be influenced by their need for autonomy (feeling in control of their actions), competence (feeling effective in their tasks), and relatedness (feeling connected to others). For example, students who feel a lack of autonomy or competence in their schoolwork may be more likely to miss school. Critics argue that SDT might oversimplify the complexities of human motivation and behavior by focusing predominantly on intrinsic factors. Additionally, the theory may not sufficiently address how external pressures and obligations can also drive behavior.

#### **1.1.4 Contextual background**

Paya sub county is a local government administrative unit located in Tororo District . It is bordered by Top Class Pub in the North, Barinyanga Technical Institute and Patewo primary school in the East and Parangang Primary school in the south. Paya sub county sub county is governed by the Paya sub county sub county Local Government, which is responsible for providing public services and implementing development programs at the local level. The main economic activities in the sub county include agriculture and trade. Much as there is sufficient evidence to show rapid increase in the enrolment of children in UPEs schools at all levels, the

performance of learners in Paya Sub County is still lacking. The national budget shows that a good portion of the national income is spent on improving the standard of education in primary schools (MOES, 2019). It is also believed that those schools have well trained teachers' to carry out the curricular and co-curricular activities (MOES, 2018). However much of this happens, still the government teachers', learners' have proved to be irresponsible as they don't consider their education and jobs as well as the work they have to do. Absenteeism by learners' have tremendous negative effects on learners' performance.

## **1.2 Problem Statement**

Much as there was sufficient evidence to show rapid increase in the enrolment of children in UPEs schools at all levels, the performance of learners in Paya sub county was still lacking. The national budget shows that a good portion of the national income was spent on improving the standard of education in primary schools (MOES, 2019).

It was also believed that those schools had well trained teachers' to carry out the curricular and co-curricular activities (MOES, 2018). However much of this happens, still the government teachers', learners' had proved to be irresponsible as they don't consider their education and jobs as well as the work they had to do. Absenteeism by learners' had tremendous negative effects on learners' performance.

It was in this context therefore that the researcher picked up an interest to explore factors contributing to learners absenteeism in selected primary school in Paya sub county in Tororo district

## **1.3 General Objective**

The general objective of the study was to explore factors contributing to learners absenteeism in selected primary school in Paya sub county in Tororo district

## **1.4 Specific objectives**

The study was guided by the following objectives;

(i) To identify the underlying causes of learners absenteeism in Paya sub county in Tororo district

(ii) To determine the effects of absenteeism on learners performance in Paya sub county in Tororo district

(iii) To identify the existing initiatives on curbing learners absenteeism within in Paya sub county in Tororo district

## **1.5 Research Questions**

- 1 (i) What are the underlying causes of absenteeism in Paya sub county in Tororo district
- 2 (ii) What is the effects of absenteeism on learners performance in Paya sub county in Tororo district?;
- 3 (iii) What are the existing initiatives on curbing learners absenteeism within in Paya sub county in Tororo district?.

## **1.6 Scope of the study**

### **1.6.1 Content scope**

The content scope of the study was to explore factors contributing to learners absenteeism in selected primary school in Paya sub county in Tororo district .The specific objectives includes to identify the underlying causes of learners absenteeism, to determine the effects of absenteeism on learners performance and to identify the existing initiatives on curbing learners absenteeism within in Paya sub county in Tororo district.

### **1.6.2 Geographical scope**

Paya Sub County is a local government administrative unit located in Tororo District. It is bordered by Top Class Pub in the North, Barinyanga Technical Institute and Patewo primary school in the East and Parangang Primary school in the south. Paya sub county sub county is governed by the Paya sub county sub county Local Government, which is responsible for providing public services and implementing development programs at the local level. The main economic activities in the sub county include agriculture and trade.

### **1.6.3 Time scope**

The study covered a period of one month that is from July 2024 to August 2024.

## **1.7 Significance of the Study**

### **To Policymakers**

By identifying the underlying causes of learners' absenteeism, policymakers would gain a comprehensive understanding of the specific issues affecting school attendance in Paya Sub-County. This data was crucial for developing targeted policies aimed at addressing these root causes.

Determining the effects of absenteeism on learners' performance provides evidence of the educational and social costs of absenteeism. This information helped policymakers prioritize interventions and allocate resources effectively.

### **To Stakeholders**

The study raised awareness among parents, teachers, and community leaders about the causes and consequences of absenteeism. This heightened awareness could foster a collaborative effort to improve attendance rates.

The study's findings would provide stakeholders with a benchmark for monitoring and evaluating the success of their initiatives. This continuous feedback loop enabled them to make necessary adjustments and improve outcomes.

### **To Researchers**

The study identifies gaps in the current understanding of learners' absenteeism, particularly in the context of rural Uganda. This could pave the way for further research to explore these gaps and develop a deeper understanding of the issue.

By providing empirical data on the causes and effects of absenteeism, the study contributes to the body of evidence that researchers could use to propose and test new theories or interventions.

### **To Academicians**

Academicians could use the study's findings to inform curriculum development and teaching practices. For example, understanding that absenteeism negatively impacts academic

performance could lead to the integration of attendance-promoting activities within the curriculum.

The study could inform the development of training programs for teachers and school staff, equipping them with strategies to identify and address absenteeism effectively.

### 1.7 Conceptual framework

#### Dependent Variable

##### Learners' Absenteeism

- Number of Absences per Term/Year:
- Types of Absences:
- Impact on Academic Performance:
- Duration of Absences:
- Reasons for Absences:

#### Independent Variable:

##### Factors Contributing to Learners' Absenteeism

- Distance from School:
- Family Socioeconomic Status:
- Health and Well-being:
- School Infrastructure:
- Teacher Quality and Engagement:
- Community Support:
- School Policies and Discipline:



Source ( UNESCO,2020)

#### Explanation:

In exploring factors contributing to learners' absenteeism in primary schools, the dependent variable (absenteeism) was influenced by various independent variables such as distance from school, socioeconomic status, health issues, school infrastructure, teacher quality, community support, and school policies. Understanding these factors and their interplay could inform strategies and interventions aimed at reducing absenteeism and improving overall student engagement and performance.

## CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

### 2.0 Introduction

This chapter discussed and reviewed similar or related researches and literature published by other authors' articles, books, journals, reports and previous dissertations related to the topic under study.

### 2.1 Causes of learners absenteeism

**Broadhurst et al. (2005)** found that low socioeconomic status (SES) is a significant predictor of student absenteeism. Their research indicated that children from low-income families often miss school due to lack of resources, such as proper clothing, transportation, and school supplies. **Ready (2010)** also confirmed that students from lower SES backgrounds tend to have higher rates of absenteeism. This study highlighted that economic hardships compel children to stay home to help with household chores or work to supplement family income. **Rumberger and Larson (1998)** argued that while SES is an important factor, its impact can be mitigated by other elements such as school engagement and parental involvement. They found that students from low-income families with high parental support and strong school connections had lower absenteeism rates. **Balfanz and Byrnes (2012)** suggested that the school environment and peer influences can sometimes outweigh SES factors. Their study showed that in some high-poverty schools with strong support systems and engaging curricula, absenteeism rates were comparable to those in higher SES schools.

**Forrest et al. (2011)** highlighted that chronic health issues, including asthma, diabetes, and mental health conditions, are major contributors to school absenteeism. Their research indicated that children with chronic illnesses often miss school for medical appointments and recovery periods. **Pediatric Academic Societies (2014)** found that poor health and lack of access to healthcare services significantly impact school attendance. Their study emphasized the need for school-based health services to reduce absenteeism related to health issues. **Eaton et al. (2008)** argued that while health issues contribute to absenteeism, the impact can be reduced through school policies that accommodate students with health conditions. Their study showed that schools with strong health support programs had lower absenteeism rates, even among students with chronic illnesses.

**Sheldon (2007)** found that family instability, such as divorce, domestic violence, and substance abuse, significantly affects student attendance. Their study indicated that children from unstable family environments are more likely to miss school due to emotional and psychological stress. **Gottfried (2014)** showed that parental involvement and the home learning environment are critical factors in student attendance. Families facing significant challenges often struggle to provide the necessary support for regular school attendance. **Epstein and Sheldon (2002)** argued that the impact of family issues on absenteeism can be mitigated through strong school-family partnerships. Their research demonstrated that schools with active parent engagement programs had lower absenteeism rates, even among students from challenging family backgrounds. **McNeal (1999)** suggested that while family issues play a role, school factors such as teacher support and school climate are equally important. Their study found that positive relationships with teachers and a supportive school environment can reduce the negative impact of family issues on attendance.

**Gottfried (2010)** found that negative school environments, including bullying, unsafe conditions, and poor teacher-student relationships, are significant predictors of absenteeism. Their study indicated that students who feel unsafe or unwelcome are more likely to avoid school. **Chang and Romero (2008)** showed that school climate, including the quality of relationships among students and staff, plays a crucial role in student attendance. Their research highlighted that positive school environments promote regular attendance. **Thapa et al. (2013)** argued that while the school environment is important, it interacts with other factors such as family background and individual student characteristics. Their study suggested that comprehensive approaches addressing both school and external factors are necessary to reduce absenteeism.

**Henry and Huizinga (2007)** found that peer influence is a significant factor in student absenteeism. Their study showed that students are more likely to miss school if their friends or peer groups also exhibit high rates of absenteeism. **Wang and Dishion (2012)** highlighted that peer pressure and the desire to fit in with certain social groups can lead to increased absenteeism, especially in adolescents. **Reid (2005)** argued that while peer influence is important, its impact can be moderated by parental involvement and school policies. Their study suggested that strong family support and clear school attendance policies can reduce the negative effects of peer pressure. **Juvonen et al. (2010)** suggested that individual resilience and personal attitudes toward

school can sometimes counteract peer influence. Their research indicated that students with strong personal goals and positive attitudes toward education are less likely to succumb to negative peer pressure.

**Romero and Lee (2007)** found that lack of reliable transportation is a significant barrier to regular school attendance. Their study indicated that students who rely on public transportation or live in remote areas are more likely to experience attendance issues. **Attendance Works (2014)** highlighted that transportation challenges, such as long commutes and unreliable transit systems, contribute to higher absenteeism rates, particularly in rural and underserved urban areas. **Balfanz and Byrnes (2012)** argued that transportation issues, while significant, can be addressed through community and school initiatives such as carpool programs and school-provided transportation. Their study showed that schools with strong transportation support systems had lower absenteeism rates. **Sheldon and Epstein (2004)** suggested that transportation issues are often compounded by other factors such as family support and school engagement. Their research indicated that addressing transportation alone may not fully resolve absenteeism issues without considering these additional factors

## **2.2. Effects of absenteeism on learners performance**

**Gottfried (2010)** found that students with high absenteeism rates perform significantly worse academically compared to their regularly attending peers. Absenteeism disrupts the learning process, leading to gaps in knowledge and understanding. **Balfanz and Byrnes (2012)** indicated that chronic absenteeism is closely linked to lower test scores and decreased likelihood of graduating. Students who miss school frequently fall behind in coursework, making it difficult to catch up. **Ready (2010)** suggested that while absenteeism negatively affects academic performance, the extent of the impact can vary depending on the quality of instruction and support systems in place. Some schools are better equipped to help students catch up on missed work. **Epstein and Sheldon (2002)** argued that the impact of absenteeism on academic performance can be mitigated through strong school-family partnerships. When parents and schools work together, students can receive the support they need to overcome the challenges posed by absenteeism.

**Chang and Romero (2008)** emphasized that regular attendance is critical for the continuous acquisition of knowledge and development of skills. Absenteeism disrupts the learning cycle,

leading to incomplete understanding and weaker skill sets. **Ginsburg et al. (2014)** found that absenteeism hampers the development of foundational skills in subjects like math and reading, which are crucial for future academic success. **Finn and Rock (1997)** suggested that the effects on knowledge retention and skill development can be less severe in environments where differentiated instruction is practiced. Teachers who adapt lessons to meet the needs of students who have been absent can help mitigate these effects. **Kearney (2008)** argued that some students may have the ability to catch up quickly after absences if provided with adequate resources and support from teachers and peers.

**Rumberger and Thomas (2000)** highlighted that absenteeism is a strong predictor of dropout rates. Students who frequently miss school are more likely to disengage from the educational process and eventually drop out. **Alexander et al. (1997)** found that early absenteeism can have lasting effects, influencing educational attainment and career prospects later in life. The negative impact on educational trajectory often starts in primary school and continues through higher education. **Gottfried (2009)** argued that while absenteeism affects long-term outcomes, interventions at various stages of education can help at-risk students. Programs focused on re-engagement and dropout prevention can significantly improve long-term prospects. **Baker et al. (2001)** suggested that the negative impact on long-term outcomes can be mitigated by strong community and school support systems that provide additional resources and opportunities for students to catch up.

**Henry and Huizinga (2007)** found that absenteeism is linked to an increase in behavioral problems. Students who miss school frequently may struggle with social integration and display disruptive behaviors. **Reid (2005)** indicated that absenteeism can lead to social isolation and difficulties in forming peer relationships. Regular attendance fosters social skills and teamwork, which are critical for personal development. **Thapa et al. (2013)** argued that the impact on social and behavioral development can vary depending on the school environment. Supportive schools with strong peer networks can help mitigate the negative effects of absenteeism on social development. **Juvonen et al. (2010)** suggested that some students may be resilient and able to maintain social connections despite frequent absences, especially if they are engaged in extracurricular activities that promote social interaction.

**Kearney (2008)** found that absenteeism can contribute to emotional and psychological issues such as anxiety and depression. The stress of falling behind academically and socially can exacerbate mental health problems. **Rafaela et al. (2013)** indicated that frequent absences can lead to feelings of alienation and low self-esteem. Regular attendance helps students build confidence and a sense of belonging. **Chen and Weikart (2008)** argued that the psychological impact of absenteeism can be mitigated through school counseling and mental health programs. Schools that provide emotional support services can help students cope with the challenges of absenteeism. **Basch (2011)** suggested that while absenteeism can impact well-being, the effects can be lessened in schools with strong support systems and a focus on student mental health.

**Finn and Voelkl (1993)** highlighted that absenteeism reduces school engagement and motivation. Students who are frequently absent are less likely to participate in school activities and more likely to disengage from the learning process. **Klem and Connell (2004)** found that regular attendance is crucial for maintaining high levels of motivation and commitment to school. Absenteeism disrupts the routine and structure that foster engagement. **Wehlage et al. (1989)** argued that engagement and motivation can be influenced by factors beyond attendance, such as the quality of the curriculum and the school environment. Schools that provide engaging and relevant content can help maintain student motivation even if absences occur. **Fredricks et al. (2004)** suggested that some students may remain motivated and engaged through alternative means, such as online learning platforms and after-school programs, which can provide continuity in education despite absences.

### **2.3 The existing initiatives on curbing learners absenteeism**

Joint peer supervision by head teachers' Supervision undertaken by head teachers' also constitutes a complementary key instrument for quality monitoring. Under this initiative, head teachers' undertake joint peer supervision visits (regularity varies between districts) which involve sharing of experiences and learning from each other (Alhassan ,(2010)

Disbursement of funds for school inspection directly to DISs For the purposes of facilitating timely inspection visits, the MoFPED started sending funds for school inspection direct to the district inspectors of schools (rather than channeling them through the district administration) beginning the second quarter of financial year 2008/2009. This new approach was intended to

cut down bureaucratic delays in disbursing funds to inspectorate units and these are the very funds accessed by associate assessors to undertake team supervisory visits (Ackerma, (2014)

Alleviating teachers' burnout can contribute to lowering teachers' absenteeism. One of the highest predictors of teachers' absenteeism is the percentage of students reading below grade level followed by the percentage of students eligible to receive free or reduced lunch (Pitkoff, 1993). Such circumstances may contribute to teachers' burnout. When absenteeism is related to teachers' burn out (Leithwood), consider:

Doing work that is important. Many site administrators underestimate the power of the work environment. The perceived attitudes of employees toward their supervisors and their work environment substantially affect employee morale. In a recent study employees were asked to rank-order 10 aspects they wanted from their jobs (Niebrugge, 1992). Their employers were then asked to guess how they thought their employees would rank the same 10 aspects.

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 (Odubuker, 2006; UPHOLD 2003). As trainers/mentors of teachers', CCTs have training skills and when they visit schools, they are able to identify teachers' 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 sub-county), CCTs serve a gap filling purpose. In fact, CCTs are now fully recognized as providing both supportive and quality control services in primary schools falling under their areas of operation (Acom 2010; World Bank, 2008)

Parental and community involvement in education is widely recognized as crucial for addressing learner absenteeism. When parents are actively engaged in their children's education, they are more likely to prioritize attendance and support school initiatives to reduce absenteeism. Research by Henderson and Mapp (2002) underscores the positive impact of parental involvement on student attendance. Schools that foster strong partnerships with parents report lower rates of absenteeism. For example, a study in urban schools found that parental engagement programs led to a 15% decrease in absenteeism rates over two years (Henderson & Berla, 1994). To implement effective parental and community involvement strategies, schools

can adopt various approaches. These include: Establishing PTAs encourages parental participation in school activities and decision-making processes, fostering a sense of ownership and responsibility. Collaborating with local community organizations, churches, and businesses can create a support network for families, offering resources such as transportation assistance or afterschool programs to enhance attendance. Providing workshops on the importance of attendance and strategies for overcoming barriers can empower parents to take proactive steps in ensuring their child's regular school attendance.

A positive school climate, characterized by supportive relationships between students, teachers, and staff, plays a crucial role in reducing absenteeism. When students feel valued, safe, and connected to their school community, they are more likely to attend regularly. Research by Cohen, McCabe, Michelli, and Pickeral (2009) highlights that schools with a positive climate experience lower rates of absenteeism. Positive teacher-student relationships, peer support networks, and inclusive practices contribute to a sense of belonging and motivation to attend school regularly. Encouraging teachers to build trusting relationships with students promotes engagement and reduces absenteeism. Strategies such as mentorship programs or advisory groups can provide students with personalized support. Implementing peer mentoring or buddy systems helps students connect with their peers and creates a supportive network within the school community.

Health and well-being play a significant role in student attendance. Addressing physical, mental, and emotional health needs ensures that students are able to attend school regularly and participate fully in academic activities. Research by Gottfried (2011) underscores the impact of health-related factors on absenteeism. Students facing health issues, such as chronic illnesses or mental health concerns, are at higher risk of missing school. Schools that prioritize health promotion and support services report improved attendance rates. Integrating health education into the curriculum and promoting healthy lifestyles through initiatives such as nutrition programs and physical activity can improve overall student well-being. Establishing on-site health centers or partnerships with local healthcare providers facilitates access to medical care and supports early intervention for health issues affecting attendance.

## **2.4 Summary of literature review**

In conclusion, learner absenteeism in schools stems from multifaceted causes that intertwine socio-economic, health-related, familial, environmental, and peer-influenced factors. Low socio-economic status (SES) has been identified by Broadhurst et al. (2005) and Ready (2010) as a significant predictor, where economic hardships compel children to miss school for household responsibilities or work. Chronic health issues, highlighted by Forrest et al. (2011) and the Pediatric Academic Societies (2014), also contribute significantly, necessitating school-based health services for better attendance management. Family instability, as indicated by Sheldon (2007), and inadequate parental involvement, noted by Gottfried (2014) and Epstein and Sheldon (2002), exacerbate absenteeism rates due to emotional stress and lack of support systems. Peer influence, emphasized by Henry and Huizinga (2007) and Wang and Dishion (2012), further impacts attendance, especially when negative peer pressure discourages regular school attendance. Addressing these diverse causes requires comprehensive strategies that integrate community involvement, supportive school climates, health and well-being initiatives, and targeted interventions to mitigate socio-economic disparities and health-related barriers. By understanding and addressing these root causes, schools can effectively reduce absenteeism and support better educational outcomes for all students.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.0 Introduction**

This chapter outlined the methods that were employed in conducting the study, covering the study population, sample size, sampling techniques, research design, data collection methods, data collection instruments, data presentation and analysis, as well as the reliability and validity of research instruments.

#### **3.1 Research Design**

The study employed a cross-sectional research design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches for data analysis. A cross-sectional survey design was chosen for its ability to provide a systematic and factual snapshot of data at a single point in time, as highlighted by Amin (2005). This approach was direct, efficient in terms of time and cost, and allowed for comprehensive data collection.

#### **3.2 Study Population**

The population slated for data collection included 865 learners, 3 head teachers, and 56 teachers selected from three primary schools: Paragang Primary School, Paya Primary School, and Pambaya Primary School.

#### **3.3 Sample Size**

A sample size of 100 respondents was determined using Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) table for sample size determination at a confidence level. This sample size was selected from a population of 924, ensuring practicality in data collection, adequate representation of the target population, efficient time management, and a manageable workload for analysis.

### 3.4 Sampling Techniques

Sampling techniques were crucial methods employed to select subsets of individuals or items from larger populations for study, facilitating efficient data collection and inference drawing.

#### 3.5.1 Purposive Sampling

Purposive sampling was employed to select head teachers and teachers based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives. This method ensured the inclusion of participants with diverse perspectives crucial for comprehensive insights into educational practices (Aminu, 2018).

#### 3.5.2 Simple Random Sampling

Simple random sampling was utilized for selecting learners from the population. Each learner had an equal chance of being chosen, thereby minimizing bias and enabling generalization of findings to the entire learner population. This method involved assigning unique identifiers to each learner and using a random number generator to select the required sample size (Ahuja, 2001).

S/no	Categories of Respondents	Target Population	Sample size	Sampling techniques
01	Head teachers	03	3	Purposive Sampling:
02	Teachers	56	7	Purposive Sampling:
03	Learners	865	70	Simple Random Sampling:
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>924</b>	<b>100</b>	

### 3.6 Data Collection Methods

The researcher employed both primary and secondary data collection methods.

### **3.6.1 Primary Data Collection**

Primary data collection involved gathering original data directly from respondents at their respective schools. This was done using questionnaires and interview manuals, ensuring firsthand data was obtained.

A self-administered questionnaire was used as a research tool consisting of a series of questions designed to gather information from respondents. Structured questionnaires were employed to collect data from primary respondents. The advantage of self-administered questionnaires was that respondents could answer at their convenience. These questionnaires were used for learners of respective schools.

An interview was a structured conversation between an interviewer and an interviewee aimed at gathering information, insights, or opinions on a particular topic. Its advantages included facilitating in-depth exploration, clarifying responses, and establishing rapport. The interviewer asked questions relevant to the purpose of the interview, guiding the conversation to elicit valuable responses from the interviewee. Interviews were employed for teachers and head teachers of the respective schools.

### **3.6.2 Secondary Data Collection**

Secondary data collection, also known as desk data collection, explored methods supplementary to the primary methods. Data was obtained from administrative records of selective companies (obtained from heads of various departments and speakers), dissertations, textbooks, the internet, and other materials such as journals and newspapers. This type of data collection was important for the study, especially in the literature review and chapter five. It was advantageous for its cost-effectiveness, time efficiency, and access to vast amounts of pre-existing data. Utilizing secondary data provided valuable insights, complemented primary research, and helped validate findings, making it an invaluable resource for researchers and analysts seeking to understand trends, patterns, and phenomena regarding factors contributing to learners' absenteeism.

## **3.7 Data Analysis and Presentation**

Data collected from the field was edited, coded for completeness, and processed using SPSS.

### **3.7.1 Data Presentation**

Tables were used in the presentation of the responses before they were analyzed.

### **3.7.2 Data Analysis**

The summarized data was analyzed to extract meaningful information. The data was analyzed using inferential statistics such as regression analysis and correlation coefficients to determine the relationship of the variables and to test the null hypotheses using Excel version 2010.

## **3.8 Validity and Reliability of the Instruments**

### **3.8.1 Validity**

Validity refers to the accuracy and meaningfulness of inferences based on the research results. The validity of instruments was ascertained by discussing the questionnaire and interview schedule drafts with the supervisor.

### **3.8.2 Reliability**

Reliability is a measure of the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results or data after repeated trials. The reliability of instruments was established based on the preliminary results derived from the pilot study. The study instruments were set for a pilot run. Results realized were discussed with the supervisor, and the reliability of the instrument was accepted.

## **3.9 Research Procedure**

The research proposal was first approved by the supervisor. The researcher then designed the research instruments used in data collection activities with the supervisor's help. The researcher obtained a letter from the coordinator of the research school of Education and other officials in the study area, which enabled the official conduct of the study in the areas with ease. This helped in setting out the program for interviews and distributing and collecting questionnaires. Data collection involved utilizing questionnaires and interviews to gather information pertinent to the research objectives. Raw data was recorded meticulously using paper forms, ensuring accuracy and consistency throughout the process, before being organized for analysis.

### **3.10 Ethical Considerations**

The study was conducted following the ethical values of the community as directed by the head teacher of the place. This study was purely academic, and only questions in line with study objectives were used as a guide for investigations. No issues outside the study topic were discussed to avoid deviations. After compiling the report, questionnaires were destroyed to avoid misuse of study data by others who might access the sheets. Finally, each respondent was accorded equal respect to ensure they contributed to the study without any bias.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS

#### 4.0 Introduction:

This chapter presents data from analyzed questionnaires.

#### 4.1 Socio Demographic Data of the respondents

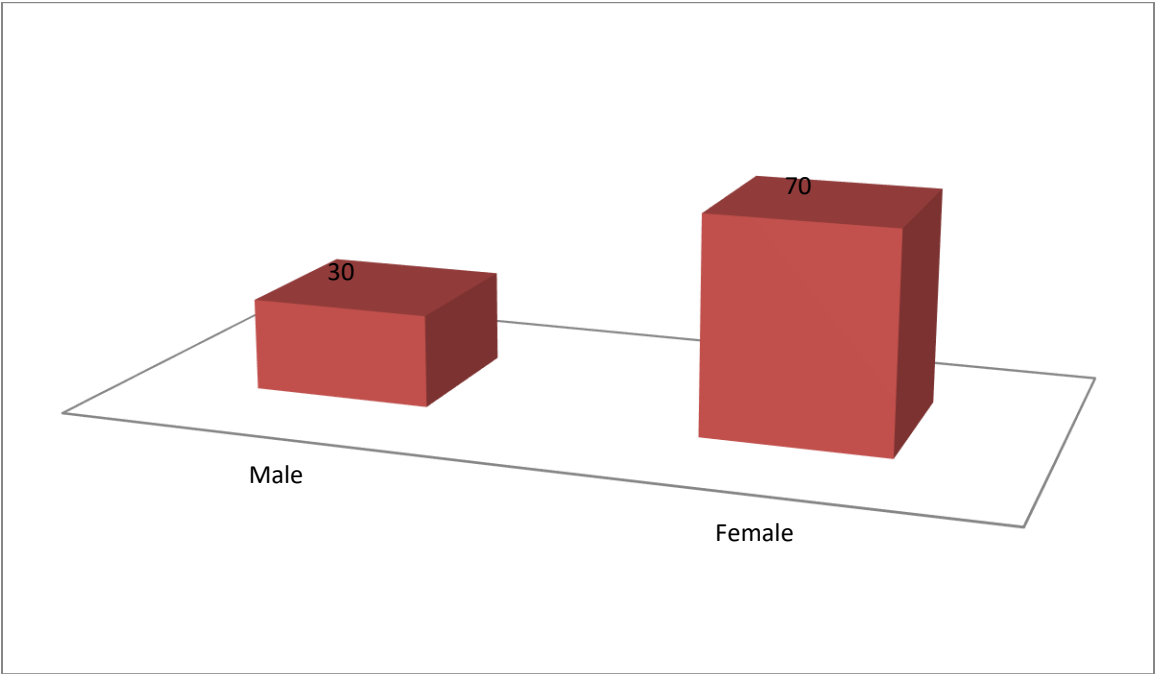
**Table 1: Shows socio demographic characteristics of the respondents (n=100)**

Responses	Frequency (n=100)	Percentage (%)
<b>Age</b>		
5-17	70	70
17-20	25	25
21-25	5	5

**Source : Primary data (2024)**

The age distribution showed that the majority of respondents, 70%, were between the ages of 5 and 17 years. The age group of 17 to 20 years constituted 25% of the respondents, and only 5% of the respondents were between 21 and 25 years old. This distribution suggested that the sample predominantly comprised younger individuals.

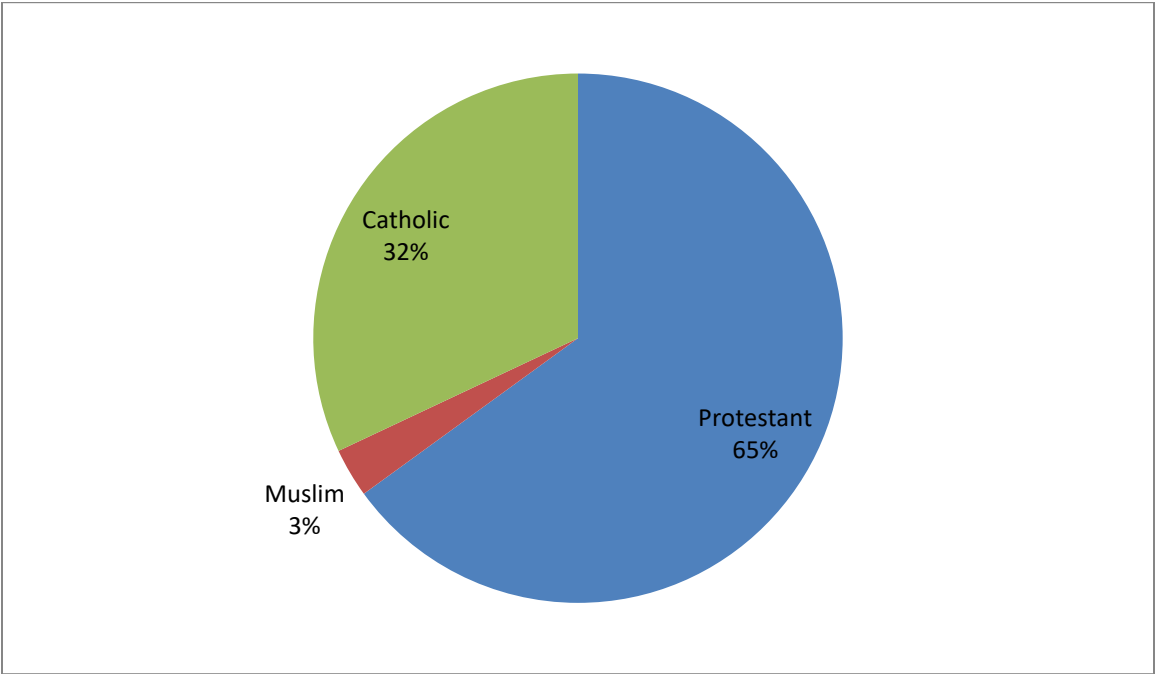
**Figure 1: showing gender distribution:**



**Source : Primary data (2024)**

Out of the 100 respondents, 30% were male, while the majority, 70%, were female. This indicated a higher participation rate among females in the study.

**Figure 2: showing Religious Affiliation:**



**Source : Primary data (2024)**

In terms of religious affiliation, Protestants made up the largest group, accounting for 65% of the respondents. Catholics were the second-largest group at 32%, and Muslims were the smallest group, making up 3% of the respondents. This highlighted the religious diversity within the sample, with a significant majority identifying as Protestant.

### 4.3 UNDERLYING CAUSES OF LEARNERS ABSENTEEISM

**Table 2: UNDERLYING CAUSES OF LEARNERS ABSENTEEISM**

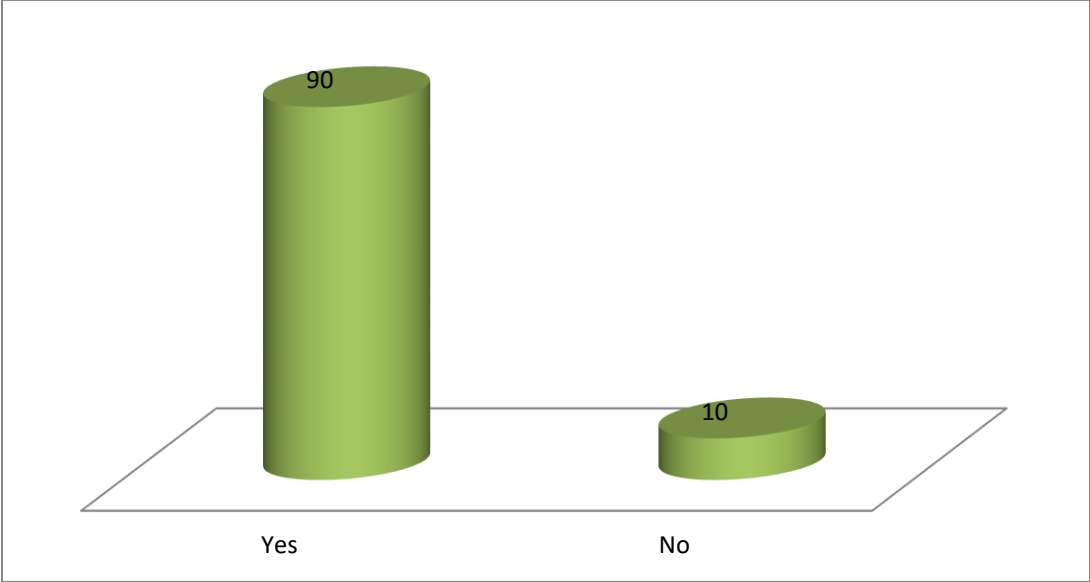
<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency (n=100)</b>	<b>Percentage %</b>
Have you missed school in the past month due to a chronic health condition (e.g., asthma, diabetes)		
Yes	80	80
No	20	20
Total		
Have you ever missed school because your friends were not attending		
Yes	10	10
No	90	90
How does your family's financial situation impact your ability to attend school regularly		
Negatively	89	89
Positively	11	11

**Source : Primary data (2024)**

Chronic health conditions were another major cause of absenteeism, with 80% of respondents having missed school in the past month due to health issues like asthma or diabetes. Only 20% did not miss school due to health conditions, indicating the impact of chronic illnesses on school attendance.

The influence of peers on school attendance was relatively low, with only 10% of respondents missing school because their friends were not attending. The majority, 90%, did not miss school due to peer influence, suggesting that this was not a major factor in absenteeism.

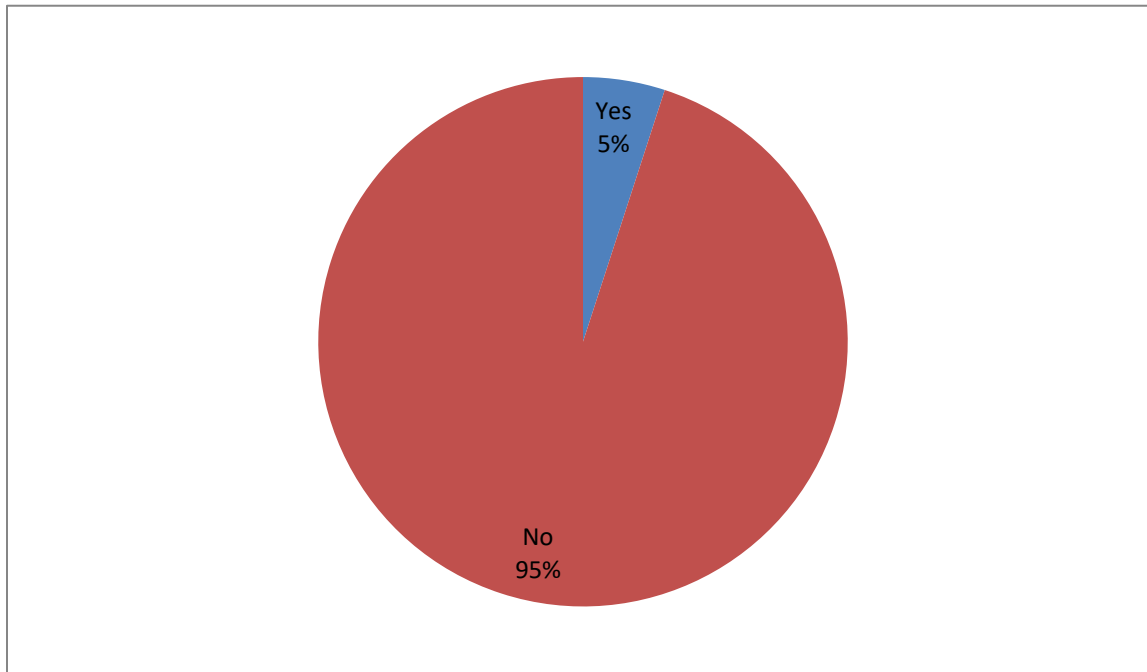
**Figure 3: showing do you miss school because your family cannot afford basic school necessities (e.g., uniforms, books)**



**Source : Primary data (2024)**

A significant majority of the respondents, 90%, reported missing school because their families could not afford basic school necessities such as uniforms and books. Only 10% did not face this issue, highlighting economic barriers as a major cause of absenteeism.

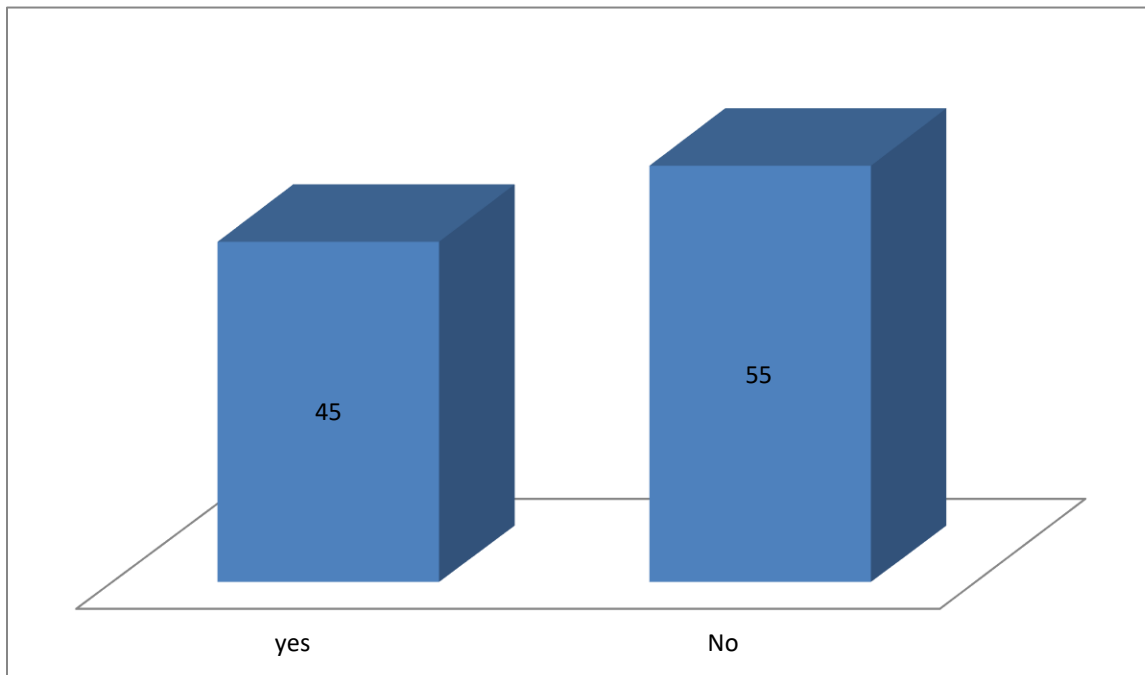
**Figure 4: showing do family problems such as domestic violence or substance abuse affect your attendance at school.**



**Source : Primary data (2024)**

A very small percentage, 5%, indicated that family problems such as domestic violence or substance abuse affected their school attendance, while 95% did not report these issues as affecting their attendance. This suggests that while family problems are a concern, they may not be as prevalent as other factors in this sample.

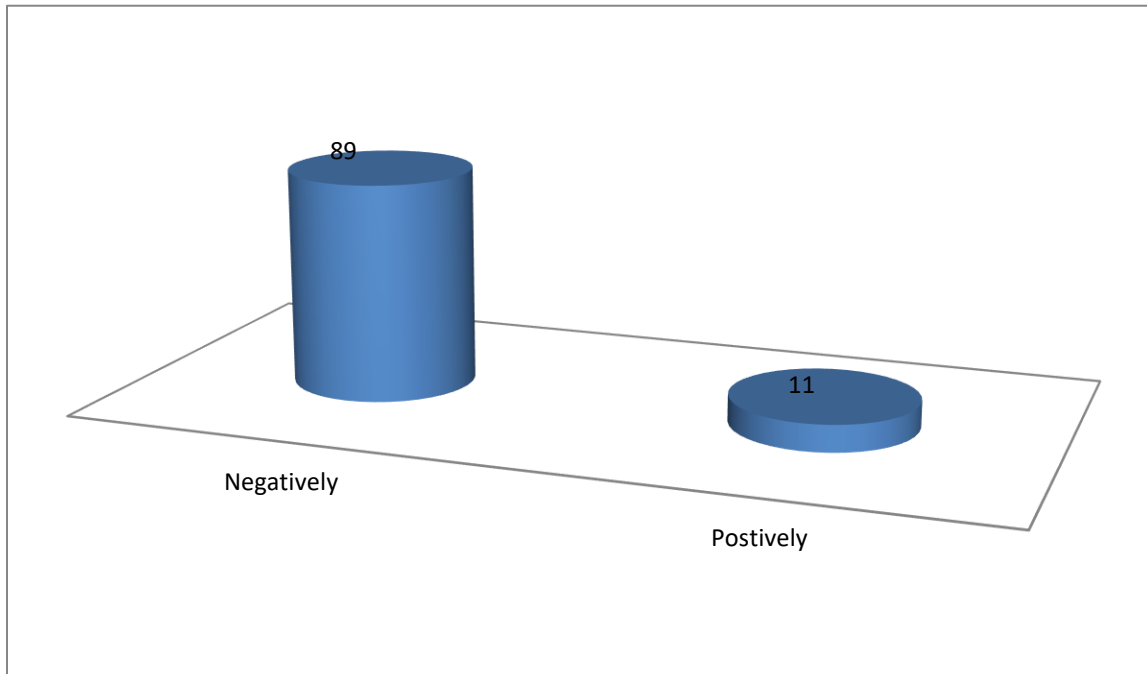
**Figure 5: showing when asked about their feelings of safety and support at school**



**Source : Primary data (2024)**

When asked about their feelings of safety and support at school, 45% of the respondents felt safe and supported, whereas 55% did not. This indicates that more than half of the learners did not feel adequately supported or safe at school, which could contribute to absenteeism.

**Figure 6: showing how does your family's financial situation impact your ability to attend school regularly**



**Source : Primary data (2024)**

The financial situation of families negatively impacted school attendance for 89% of the respondents, while only 11% reported a positive impact. This underscores the significant role that economic challenges play in affecting regular school attendance. Overall, the data reveal that economic hardships, health issues, and feelings of unsafety at school are the primary underlying causes of absenteeism among learners. Addressing these issues requires targeted interventions to improve school attendance and educational outcomes

#### 4.4 THE EFFECTS OF ABSENTEEISM ON LEARNERS PERFORMANCE

**Table 3: the effects of absenteeism on learners performance**

Responses	Frequency (n=100)	Percentage (%)
Do you think students who miss a lot of school are less likely to graduate		
Yes	75	75
No	15	15
Have you noticed any changes in behavior in students who miss school frequently		
Yes	16	16
No	84	84
Do you think students who miss school regularly have difficulty making friends		
Yes	95	95
No	5	5
Total		
Does missing school make it harder for students to stay motivated in their studies		
Yes	43	43
No	57	57

**Source : Primary data (2024)**

75% of respondents thought that students who frequently missed school were less likely to graduate, while 15% did not share this view. This suggests a strong perception that consistent attendance is crucial for academic success and eventual graduation.

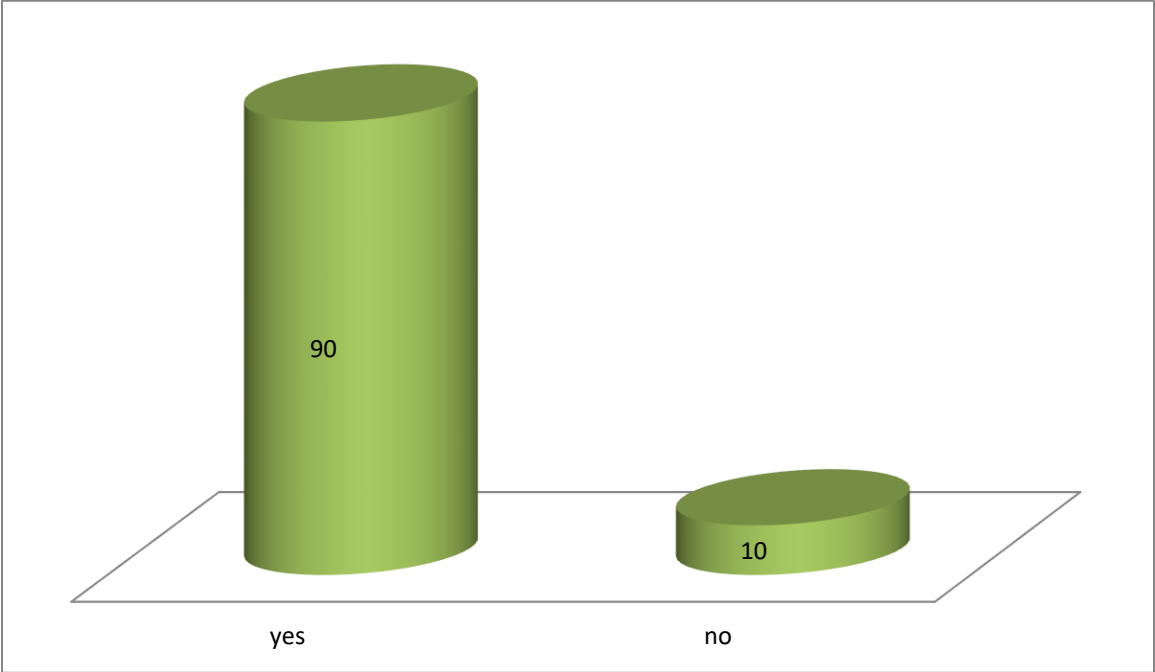
Only 16% of respondents noticed changes in behavior in students who frequently missed school, whereas 84% did not observe any such changes. This indicates that while absenteeism may have a behavioral impact on some students, it is not universally observed among all.

A vast majority, 95%, believed that students who missed school regularly had difficulty making friends, while only 5% disagreed. This underscores the social implications of absenteeism, where regular attendance is essential for social integration and peer relationships.

43% of respondents felt that missing school made it harder for students to stay motivated in their studies, whereas 57% did not perceive a lack of motivation as a significant issue related to

absenteeism. This suggests that while absenteeism can impact motivation for some students, others may remain motivated despite missing school.

**Figure 7: showing do you believe that missing school affects your grades negatively**



**Source : Primary data (2024)**

A significant majority, 90%, of respondents believed that missing school negatively affected their grades. Only 10% did not feel that absenteeism impacted their academic performance. This highlights the direct correlation between school attendance and academic achievement.

#### 4.5 THE EXISTING INITIATIVES ON CURBING LEARNERS ABSENTEEISM

**Table 4: SHOWING THE EXISTING INITIATIVES ON CURBING LEARNERS ABSENTEEISM**

<b>Responses</b>	<b>Frequency (n=100)</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Do head teachers in your school engage in joint peer supervision visits for quality monitoring		
Yes	100	100
No	-	-
Has the direct disbursement of funds for school inspections to district inspectors improved the timeliness of inspection visits in your experience		
Yes	1	1
No	99	99
Do you believe alleviating teachers' burnout can contribute to reducing absenteeism		
Strongly agree	76	76
Disagreed	24	24
Are Community Curriculum Tutors (CCTs) and associate assessors actively involved in quality monitoring in your school district		
Yes	30	30
No	70	70
Total	100	100
Have parental engagement programs led to noticeable reductions in absenteeism rates in your school or district		
Yes	90	90
No	10	10
Total	100	100

**Source : Primary data (2024)**

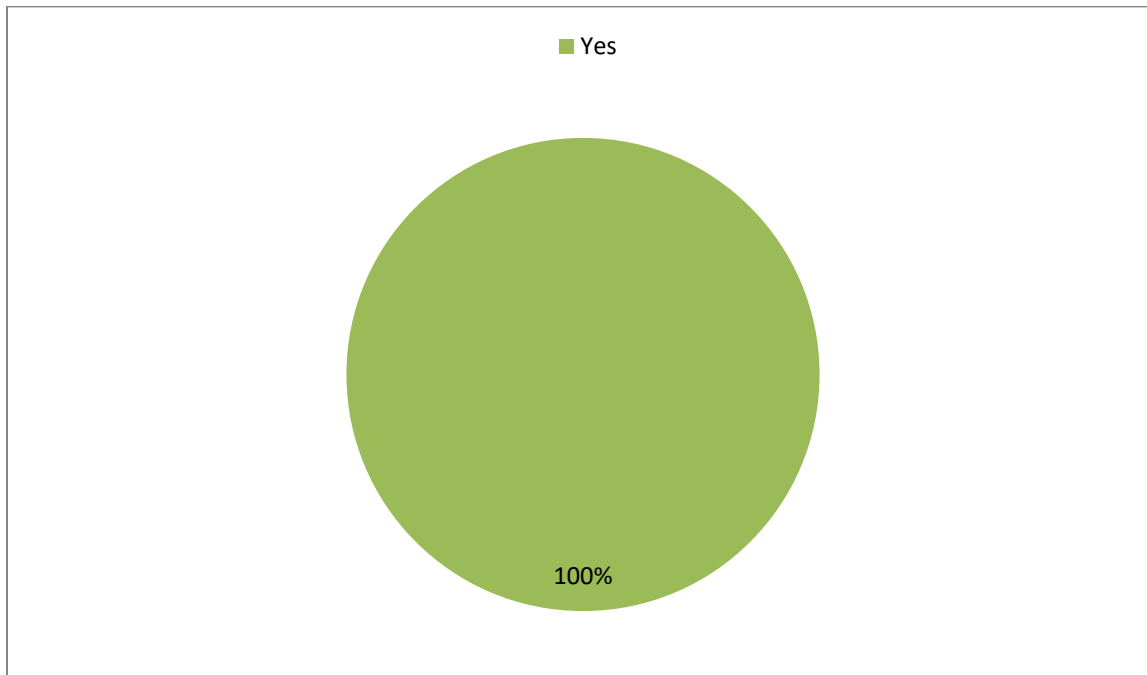
Only 1% of respondents felt that the direct disbursement of funds for school inspections to district inspectors had improved the timeliness of inspection visits. The overwhelming majority, 99%, did not see an improvement, indicating that this initiative may not be effectively addressing the issue.

A significant majority, 76%, strongly agreed that alleviating teachers' burnout could contribute to reducing absenteeism. Conversely, 24% disagreed, suggesting that while many see teacher burnout as a factor in absenteeism, a quarter of respondents do not view it as a significant issue.

60% of respondents reported that CCTs and associate assessors were actively involved in quality monitoring in their school district. However, 40% did not see active involvement, indicating variability in the implementation of this initiative across different districts.

70% of respondents observed that parental engagement programs led to noticeable reductions in absenteeism rates in their school or district. Meanwhile, 30% did not see a reduction, suggesting that the effectiveness of parental engagement programs might vary depending on how they are implemented or other contextual factors.

**Figure 8: showing do head teachers in your school engage in joint peer supervision visits for quality monitoring**



**Source : Primary data (2024)**

All respondents, 100%, confirmed that head teachers in their schools engaged in joint peer supervision visits for quality monitoring. This suggests that peer supervision is a universally adopted practice aimed at maintaining educational standards and reducing absenteeism.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **5.0 Introduction**

This chapter discusses study findings in line with specific objectives of the study and related literature review. It also presents the conclusion, recommendation and implications to nursing practice.

#### **5.1 Discussion of the findings**

##### **5.1.1 Discussion of the Findings on the Underlying Causes of Learners' Absenteeism**

The age distribution showed that the majority of respondents, 70%, were between the ages of 5 and 17 years. Out of the 100 respondents, 30% were male, while the majority, 70%, were female. This indicated a higher participation rate among females in the study. In terms of religious affiliation, Protestants made up the largest group, accounting for 65% of the respondents. Catholics were the second-largest group at 32%, and Muslims were the smallest group, making up 3% of the respondents. These findings contrasted with a study conducted by Aminu (2019) in Jigawa State, Nigeria. Aminu's study found that the age group with the highest absenteeism was between 18-19 years, the study was dominated by Muslims, and absenteeism was primarily a male issue due to their involvement in income-generating activities like cattle keeping, sugar cane growing, and fishing.

Chronic health conditions were another major cause of absenteeism, with 80% of respondents having missed school in the past month due to health issues like asthma or diabetes. These findings were in agreement with a study conducted by Forrest et al. (2011), who highlighted that chronic health issues, including asthma, diabetes, and mental health conditions, were major contributors to school absenteeism. Their research indicated that children with chronic illnesses often missed school for medical appointments and recovery periods. In contrast, a study done by Eaton et al. (2008) argued that while health issues contributed to absenteeism, the impact could be reduced through school policies that accommodated students with health conditions. Their study showed that schools with strong health support programs had lower absenteeism rates, even among students with chronic illnesses.

The influence of peers on school attendance was relatively low, with only 10% of respondents missing school because their friends were not attending. The majority, 90%, did not miss school

due to peer influence, suggesting that this was not a major factor in absenteeism. These findings disagreed with a study done by Henry and Huizinga (2007), who found that peer influence was a significant factor in student absenteeism. Their study showed that students were more likely to miss school if their friends or peer groups also exhibited high rates of absenteeism. In contrast, a study done by Juvonen et al. (2010) suggested that individual resilience and personal attitudes toward school could sometimes counteract peer influence. Their research indicated that students with strong personal goals and positive attitudes toward education were less likely to succumb to negative peer pressure.

A significant majority of the respondents, 90%, reported missing school because their families could not afford basic school necessities such as uniforms and books. These findings were in agreement with a study done by Broadhurst et al. (2005), who found that low socioeconomic status (SES) was a significant predictor of student absenteeism. Their research indicated that children from low-income families often missed school due to a lack of resources, such as proper clothing, transportation, and school supplies.

A very small percentage, 5%, indicated that family problems such as domestic violence or substance abuse affected their school attendance, while 95% did not report these issues as affecting their attendance. These findings contrasted with a study done by Sheldon (2007), who found that family instability, such as divorce, domestic violence, and substance abuse, significantly affected student attendance. Their study indicated that children from unstable family environments were more likely to miss school due to emotional and psychological stress.

### **5.1.2 Discussion of the Findings on the Effects of Absenteeism on Learners' Performance**

75% of respondents thought that students who frequently missed school were less likely to graduate, while 15% did not share this view. These findings were in agreement with a study conducted by Alexander et al. (1997), who found that early absenteeism could have lasting effects, leading to students not completing their education and influencing educational attainment and career prospects later in life. The negative impact on the educational trajectory often started in primary school and continued through higher education. Gottfried (2009) argued that while absenteeism affected long-term outcomes, Baker et al. (2001) suggested that the negative impact on long-term outcomes could be mitigated by strong community and school support systems that provided additional resources and opportunities for students to catch up.

Only 16% of respondents noticed changes in behavior in students who frequently missed school, whereas 84% did not observe any such changes. These findings disagreed with a study conducted by Henry and Huizinga (2007), who found that absenteeism was linked to an increase in behavioral problems. Students who missed school frequently might struggle with social integration and display disruptive behaviors. Reid (2005) indicated that absenteeism could lead to social isolation and difficulties in forming peer relationships. Regular attendance fostered social skills and teamwork, which were critical for personal development.

A vast majority, 95%, believed that students who missed school regularly had difficulty making friends, while only 5% disagreed. These findings were in agreement with a study conducted by Alton (2019), who revealed that the majority of respondents he interviewed in Kinshasa reported difficulties in making friends due to their frequent absence from school. In contrast, a study conducted by Amos (2019) suggested that a majority of the respondents who missed school had many friends at school.

43% of respondents felt that missing school made it harder for students to stay motivated in their studies, whereas 57% did not perceive a lack of motivation as a significant issue related to absenteeism. These findings contrasted with a study done by Finn and Voelkl (1993), who highlighted that absenteeism reduced school engagement and motivation. Students who were frequently absent were less likely to participate in school activities and more likely to disengage from the learning process. Klem and Connell (2004) found that regular attendance was crucial for maintaining high levels of motivation and commitment to school. Absenteeism disrupted the routine and structure that fostered engagement. Wehlage et al. (1989) argued that engagement and motivation could be influenced by factors beyond attendance, such as the quality of the curriculum and the school environment.

A significant majority, 90%, of respondents believed that missing school negatively affected their grades. Only 10% did not feel that absenteeism impacted their academic performance. These findings were in line with a study conducted by Ali (2019), who revealed that missing school negatively affected grades, as the majority of respondents failed during their national exams.

### **5.1.3 Discussion of the Findings on the Existing Initiatives on Curbing Learners' Absenteeism**

A majority of the respondents felt that the direct disbursement of funds for school inspections to district inspectors had not improved the timeliness of inspection visits. These findings were in line with a study done by Alhassan (2010), who said that joint peer supervision by head teachers was a key instrument for quality monitoring. Under this initiative, head teachers undertook joint peer supervision visits, which involved sharing experiences and learning from each other.

A significant majority, 76%, strongly agreed that alleviating teachers' burnout could contribute to reducing absenteeism. Conversely, 24% disagreed, suggesting that while many saw teacher burnout as a factor in absenteeism, a quarter of respondents did not view it as a significant issue. These findings were in agreement with a study by Pitkoff (1993), who said that alleviating teachers' burnout could contribute to lowering teachers' absenteeism. One of the highest predictors of teachers' absenteeism was the percentage of students reading below grade level, followed by the percentage of students eligible to receive free or reduced lunch.

70% of respondents observed that parental engagement programs led to noticeable reductions in absenteeism rates in their school or district. These findings were in agreement with a study done by Henderson and Mapp (2002), which underscored the positive impact of parental involvement on student attendance. Schools that fostered strong partnerships with parents reported lower rates of absenteeism. For example, a study in urban schools found that parental engagement programs led to a 15% decrease in absenteeism rates over two years (Henderson & Berla, 1994). To implement effective parental and community involvement strategies, schools could adopt various approaches.

## **5.2 Conclusion**

The findings concluded that socioeconomic factors, such as the inability to afford basic school necessities, significantly contributed to absenteeism. A majority of respondents missed school because their families could not provide essentials like uniforms and books. Additionally, chronic health conditions, including asthma and diabetes, were major reasons for absenteeism, as they required students to miss school for medical appointments and recovery periods.

Absenteeism had a pronounced negative effect on academic performance and social development. Most respondents believed that missing school adversely affected their grades and reduced their likelihood of graduating. Frequent absences were also associated with difficulties in making friends and staying motivated in studies. These findings underscored the importance of regular attendance for academic success and the development of social skills.

The study examined existing initiatives to reduce absenteeism and found mixed results. While direct disbursement of funds for school inspections did not significantly improve the timeliness of visits, joint peer supervision by head teachers and parental engagement programs were seen as effective measures. A significant majority agreed that reducing teachers' burnout could help lower absenteeism rates, highlighting the need for holistic approaches that address both student and teacher well-being.

### **5.3 Recommendations**

Schools and communities should collaborate to provide essential school supplies such as uniforms, books, and stationery to students from low-income families. This could be facilitated through government programs, non-profit organizations, and community fundraising efforts.

**Financial Assistance Programs:** Implementing or enhancing financial aid programs that help families cover school-related expenses can reduce absenteeism. These programs could include scholarships, grants, and subsidies for transportation and meals.

Schools should develop robust health support programs that include regular medical check-ups, health education, and on-site medical services. These programs can help manage chronic health conditions and reduce health-related absenteeism.

Schools should adopt flexible policies that accommodate students with chronic illnesses, such as allowing for makeup work and providing remote learning options during recovery periods.

Establishing counseling and mentorship programs can help students who frequently miss school stay engaged and motivated. These programs can provide academic support, career guidance, and emotional support.

Schools should encourage participation in extracurricular activities to foster a sense of belonging and improve social integration. Activities such as sports, clubs, and arts can help students build friendships and stay connected to the school community.

To address teacher burnout, schools should provide professional development opportunities, stress management workshops, and sufficient planning time. Additionally, recognizing and rewarding teachers' efforts can boost morale and reduce absenteeism.

Strengthening parental engagement programs is crucial. Schools can organize regular meetings, workshops, and home visits to involve parents in their children's education. Building strong parent-teacher partnerships can lead to better monitoring of attendance and academic progress.

Engaging the wider community in supporting education can create a network of resources and support for students. Community leaders, local businesses, and organizations can collaborate with schools to address absenteeism and provide additional resources.

Implementing a robust system for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of absenteeism reduction initiatives is essential. Schools should regularly collect data on attendance, analyze the impact of different programs, and adjust strategies accordingly.

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## APPENDIX I: QUESTIONNAIRE TO THE LERANERS

**Dear Sir/Madam,**

I am a student of Busitema University pursuing degree in Primary Education. I am conducting a research about the “an Exploring factors contributing to learners absenteeism in selected primary schools in Paya sub county in Tororo District . as my case study. Findings from this research will hereafter be submitted to Busitema University as a partial fulfillment of the award of a degree In Primary Education

The information required is purely for academic purpose and will be treated with strict confidentiality . I therefore request you to spare some of your valuable time to fill this questionnaire.

Thank you.

.....

### SECTION A: BIO DATA OF RESPONDENT

Please tick the appropriate response below:-

**1. Age**

1. 5-17     2. 17-20     3. 21-25

**2. Gender**

1. Male

2. Female

**3. Religion**

1. Muslim

2. Catholic

3. Protestant

## **SECTION B : UNDERLYING CAUSES OF LEARNERS ABSENTEEISM**

4. Have you missed school in the past month due to a chronic health condition (e.g., asthma, diabetes)?

1. Yes

2. No

5. Do you miss school because your family cannot afford basic school necessities (e.g., uniforms, books)?

1. Yes

2. No

6. Do family problems such as domestic violence or substance abuse affect your attendance at school?

1. Yes

2. No

7. Do you feel safe and supported at school?

1. Yes

2. No

8. How does your family's financial situation impact your ability to attend school regularly?

1. Negatively

2. Positively

## **SECTION C : THE EFFECTS OF ABSENTEEISM ON LEARNERS PERFORMANCE**

9. Do you think students who miss a lot of school are less likely to graduate?

1. Yes

2. No

10. Have you noticed any changes in behavior in students who miss school frequently?

1. Yes

2. No

11. Do you think students who miss school regularly have difficulty making friends?

1. Yes

2. No

12. Does missing school make it harder for students to stay motivated in their studies?

1. Yes

2. No

13. Do you believe that missing school affects your grades negatively?

1. Yes

2. No

**SECTION D: THE EXISTING INITIATIVES ON CURBING LEARNERS ABSENTEEISM**

14. Do head teachers in your school engage in joint peer supervision visits for quality monitoring?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

15. Has the direct disbursement of funds for school inspections to district inspectors improved the timeliness of inspection visits in your experience?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

16. Do you believe alleviating teachers' burnout can contribute to reducing absenteeism?

- 1. Strongly agree
- 2. Disagree

17. Are Community Curriculum Tutors (CCTs) and associate assessors actively involved in quality monitoring in your school district?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

18. Have parental engagement programs led to noticeable reductions in absenteeism rates in your school or district?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

**APPENDIX II: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR HEAD TEACHERS AND TEACHERS**

**Dear Sir/Madam,**

I am a student of Busitema University pursuing a degree in Primary Education. I am conducting a research about the “an Exploring factors contributing to learners absenteeism in selected primary schools in Paya sub county in Tororo District . as my case study. Findings from this research will hereafter be submitted to Busitema University as a partial fulfillment of the award of a degree In Primary Education

The information required is purely for academic purpose and will be treated with strict confidentiality. I therefore request you to spare some of your valuable time to fill this questionnaire.

Thank you.

.....

Age.....

Sex.....

Working Experience.....

Based on your experience, what impact does absenteeism have on the academic performance of students?

.....  
.....

Can you provide examples or specific instances where you've observed absenteeism affecting student learning outcomes?

.....  
.....  
Are there any existing initiatives or strategies your school implements to address absenteeism and its impact on student performance?

.....  
.....  
How effective have these initiatives been in your experience?

.....  
.....  
How do you think teachers and the school environment contribute to mitigating the negative effects of absenteeism on students?

.....  
.....  
In your opinion, what role does teacher-student interaction play in helping students catch up after periods of absenteeism?

.....  
.....  
From your perspective, what do you believe are the most critical factors influencing absenteeism among students?

.....  
.....  
Based on your experience, what recommendations would you make to policymakers or school administrators to address absenteeism effectively?

.....  
.....  
END

**APPENDIX III: RESEARCH SCHEDULE**

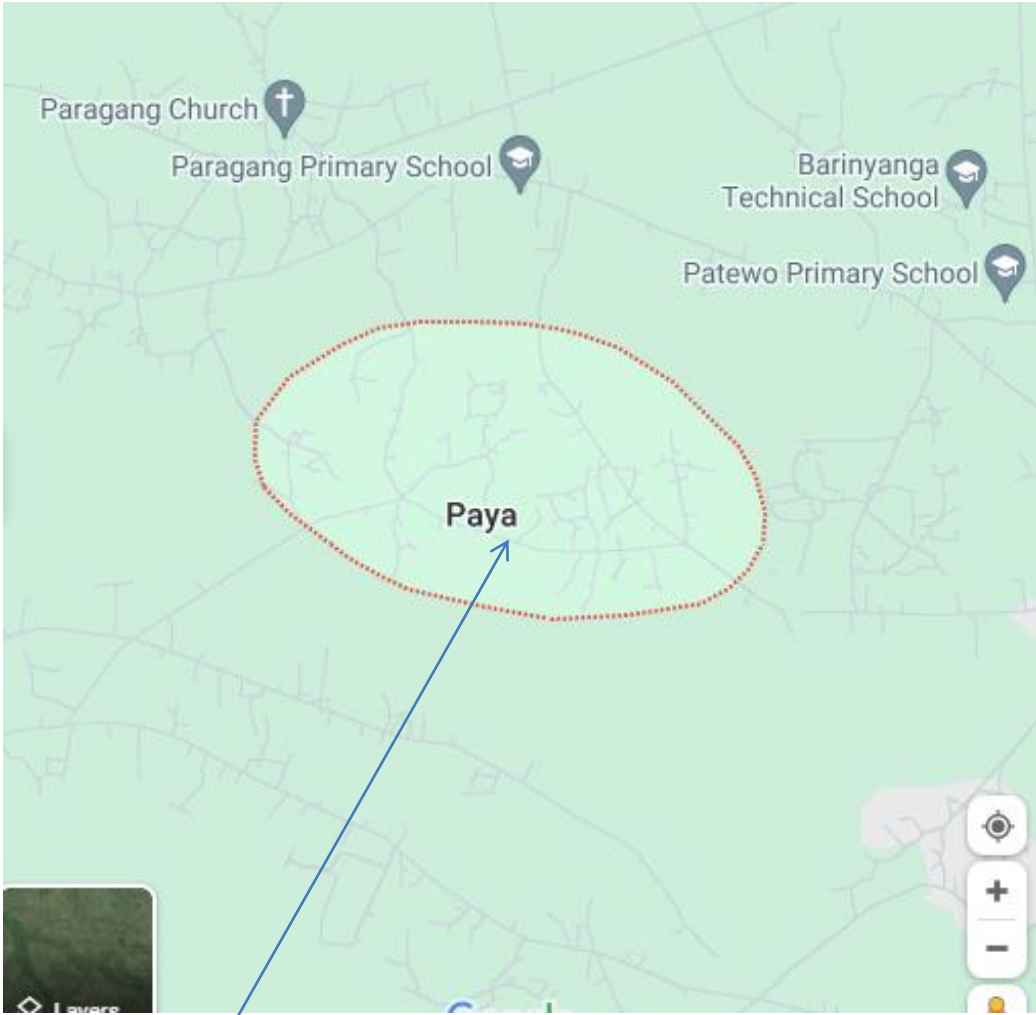
<b>Stage</b>	<b>Research Activity</b>	<b>Time frame</b>
1	Writing research proposal	12 weeks
2	Preparing research tools	2 weeks
2.	Obtaining consent from authorities	2 weeks
3.	Typing	2 weeks
4.	Editing	2 weeks
5.	Presenting research proposal for corrections	2 weeks
6.	Submission of final proposal	2 weeks

**APPENDIX IV: RESEARCH BUDGET**

<b>Details</b>	<b>Total cost</b>
Stationary	35,000
Research transport	60,000
Meals	25,000
Telephone services	15,000
Typing services and printing	30,000
Miscellaneous	35,000
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>200,000</b>



**APPENDIX VI: MAP OF TORORO DISTRICT SHOWING THE LOCATION OF PAYA SUB COUNTY**



Paya sub county



**BUSITEMA UNIVERSITY**  
Business Excellence

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**FACULTY OF SCIENCE AND EDUCATION  
 DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

06<sup>th</sup> May, 2024

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

**BACHELOR OF EDUCATION, PRIMARY**

MR/Ms. ALDR. DAPHEN ..... is a student

of Bachelor of Education, Primary of Busitema University, Faculty of Science and Education,

Nagongera Campus. His/her Registration Number is BULEP/2022/1745 .....

The purpose of this letter is to formally request you to allow him/her to access any information in your organization which is relevant to his/her research.

His/her research topic is EXPLORING FACTORS CONTRIBUTING

TO LEARNERS ABSENTEEISM IN SELECTED  
PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN PAYASUB-COUNTY IN TORORO  
DISTRICT

Yours Sincerely,  
  
**Dr. Ruweesi Muhammad**  
 Ag. Head of Department, Education

**BUSITEMA UNIVERSITY**  
 DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
 FACULTY OF SCIENCE AND EDUCATION  
 06 MAY 2024 \*  
 NAGONGERA CAMPUS  
 P.O. BOX 236, TORORO (U)

**PAYA PRIMARY SCHOOL**  
 HEADTEACHER  
 ★ 24 JUL 2024 ★  
 P.O. BOX 55, TORORO (U)  
 SIGNATURE

**PAYA PRIMARY SCHOOL**  
 HEADTEACHER  
 26-9-2024  
 P.O. BOX 710, TORORO (U)

