

ABSENTEEISM IN SCHOOLS

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Absenteeism is referred to as being not in class specifically at school. It is one of the pupils' habits at itezhi tezhi primary school in itezhi-tezhi district. This somehow has led to poor performance in class during mid-term assessments tests, end of tests, grade seven final examinations and grade nine final examinations. The area is quiet known for being fishing oriented and traditional ceremonies. In addition, Keter (2013) defines absenteeism in school to be 'the habit of staying away from school without providing a genuine or any reason for not attending classes. It is a truant behavior that negatively affects the performance among students. Absenteeism from learning is referred to as being not in school. It is the common behavior of the pupils at itezhi-tezhi primary school which has in some way not only lead to poor performance in class during mid-term tests and at both grade 7 and 9 examinations but has also place the district at the bottom of the eleven other districts in the province.

The principle of education for teachers in Africa castles (1995) defines absenteeism as the lack of perfect discipline internally and externally. He seems to indicate that pupils have no boundary and do not operate within their context.

1.1. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

This researcher hoped to conduct a research on factors influencing absenteeism at Itezhi-Tezhi Primary School. This problem was noticed some time back in 2016 when the researcher came across the school results analysis reports for the years 2013, 2014, and 2015. This became the case when the researcher expressed great concern and worries at what the pupils' destinies will be since they value very much their cultures and rituals against valuing knowledge on the importance of education. By talking to a few teachers, the researcher observed that the number of pupils that are enrolled in school has not been performing well and the attendance is very poor in class.

This study has been conducted because of the hierarchy that Itezhi-Tezhi Primary School is ranking in the district and at province level at large. This is so because looking at how the school is performing in terms of results and also behavior wise the performance is not eye catching. The school even when it is one of the most recognized and biggest schools in the district, it has for quite some time now consistently been producing bad results like never before. Concerns have been raised by the community to say poor results that are being produced by pupils is due to the fact that the school has a lot of female teachers who do not teach properly because women have a lot of issues like taking maternity leave, sometimes they can fall themselves and sometimes it's the husbands where they will be required to be on the bed side. All these are the concerns that the community raised to the head teacher to say the pupils are not doing well because of the female teachers who have occupied a lot of space in school.

When the issue was brought back to the teachers during the staff meeting, female teachers had their own answers or defense towards the poor performance of pupils. Teachers defended themselves by saying it is not their will that the earth consists of a lot of females rather than males hence the accusations raised by parents and the community is not valid for they cannot choose for themselves what sex they want. Furthermore, they raised a point to say what a man can do a woman can also do because both parties are blessed by God and given wisdom to do all things possible. Women are able to be educated and go to school to further their education which will in turn enable them to deliver what knowledge they have acquired. They said it is just the pupils who are busy absenting themselves from because of where they come from.

Therefore, it was at this stage that the researcher gained interest to find out more on what could actually be the cause to the reasons of pupils absenting from school. Immediately after the

meeting, the researcher presented the matter to the head teacher to ask for permission to go ahead with the research fortunate enough the head teacher was for the idea that the researcher proceeds with the study.

1.2. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Absenteeism at school is either deliberate or not. It has seriously led to both poor class performance and school performance at class and final examination level in all subjects. It has also greatly affected teachers' preparations. This is according to guidance and counseling department's reports during the PTA executive meeting briefing on 2015 grades seven and nine results.

1.3. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This research study is very important because the findings of the research will help in the provision of useful information about the factors influencing absenteeism at itezhi-tezhi primary school. The study will also reveal the utilization of information that will be made available to all the stake holders; PTA, NGOs, schools, libraries, colleges and universities. Therefore, the information provided will help in restructurising the approach and objectives to improve on how to reduce the factors that lead to absenteeism.

1.4. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This research was limited by time, finances and distance as the researcher was a full time student at Evelyn Hone College. Due to these constraints, the research on this study was conducted at itezhi-tezhi primary school.

1.5. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This research purported to:

- Investigate and establish the factors leading to absenteeism in school.
- Identify solutions to the problems of absenteeism.

- **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The objectives of this study were to:

- Establish the factors leading to pupils' absenteeism
- Investigate the factors leading to pupils' absenteeism
- Outline the leading factors to absenteeism
- Identify challenges that are faced by teachers or school as a result of absenteeism
- Identify solutions to reduce pupils' absenteeism

- **MAJOR RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

- What are the factors influencing absenteeism?
- Is fishing a factor to pupils' absenteeism?
- Do traditional ceremonies cause absenteeism?
- What application can be employed to combat and reduce absenteeism?
- Do counseling programs help to minimize absenteeism?
- Does the PTA Committee talk and sensitise parents in order to reduce absenteeism?

- **8. ASSUMPTION OF THE STUDY**

This study was conducted under the assumption that the school, the Ministry of General Education and other stakeholders will make correct measures to find the results to improve the situation.

- **OPERATIONAL DEFINITION OF TERMS**

Reading – a complex cognitive process of decoding symbols in order to construct or derive meaning.

SEN- Special Education Needs

N.G.O- Non Governmental Organisation

ICU- Information and communications university- one of the private institutions of higher learning in Zambia

UNZA- University of Zambia- the highest government institution in Zambia

PTA- Parents and Teachers Association. An organ in the school that comprises of parents and teachers' representatives to look into school affairs

PRP- Primary Reading Programme

NBTL- New Breakthrough to Literacy

PLP- Primary Literacy Programme

GCT- guidance and counseling teacher.

ZL- Zambian Language.

Ritual- actions carried according to customs of a particular society or group of rules or the prescribed procedure for conducting religious ceremonies.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter reviewed literature in related areas of the topic; factors influencing absenteeism in Zambian schools in particular Itezhi-Tezhi Primary School. The following books were used because of their significance and the relevant information that they have to this research work. It was noted that there were some factors influencing absenteeism in Zambian schools, hence causing poor performance in these schools.

2.1 ATTITUDE

Kelly (1999), argues that the major roles played by teachers in education include; competence, commitment and expertise. He went on to say that the behavior of those in the teaching profession's attitude towards work should assist the education system to yield meaningful results. But once teachers and pupils' mind become that of income generation, then educational programs do not take off well and cause the mentioned absenteeism. The aspect of attitude does not only concern itself with the teachers but with the pupils also. If the pupils have a negative attitude towards a subject or an individual teacher, chances of yielding good performances are slim if at all they do exist. It will be very difficult for a pupil to put more efforts towards a subject because hatred has covered up the child which will in return cause him/her to produce bad results in that field.

2.2 SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURAL FACILITIES

Mbiti (1996) suggested that "infrastructure of the school with inadequate and improper classroom furniture, water and transport had some bearing to the teaching and learning process in school", hence caused absenteeism. These were the likely things that stake holder see to it that teachers and the pupils lack do not lack anything such as; good and adequate infrastructure for they motivates learners and their teachers to work hard. The condition of infrastructure dictates the attitude users developed towards the institution. This also includes lack of libraries and sporting facilities are a hindrance to attendance of school among pupils. The lack of recommendable of language laboratories would make the teaching of language a huddle let alone Zambian language.

2.3 PEOPLE OF COLOUR

Kenneth (2000) defines the term people of colour in reference “to non-white group members” but reflects recent demographic realities of the United States that people of colour refers to such as African Americans, Mexicans, Americans and Native Americans because these groups were in many schools with respect to cultural differences. So many voices begin to criticise the use of the collective terminology such as people of colour where pupils fear to be criticised and therefore decide to stay away from school. This act therefore turns out to be absenteeism. This then means that the way others view their friends may not be because of their outlook possibilities but the order of the day was absenteeism.

2.4 PHOBIC ADOLESCENTS

According to Sikuvwaza (2013), echoes that during this stage of growth, the learner are growing into teenagers, there is a lot of fear that developed as a result of physical changes that takes place in the body. For example; pimples, turbulent emotions and so forth actually do scares pupils from coming to school to an extent that they would rather not attend lessons or if parents are strict and pushes them to go to school they would rather hide on the way instead of going to school.

2.5 LACK OF INTEREST

According to this challenge Abadzi (2006) states that students could not have interest in the content and may have resorted to staying away simply because they couldn't understand the content or they may just have perceived it to be too much difficult. This pushes them out of school. Teenagers learn what they want and in most cases it is when they want it. This means that they only choose what to like if they are nicely and wisely guided or counseled. This is because there are times when a child thinks and see things as if the elders, parents, and guardians does not see anything. It is at this level that if a child is left without direction, they can easily slip away and loose track.

2.6 PEER PRESSURE

Over this challenge (1978) emphasizes that adolescents as already highlighted under phobic adolescent tent to develop power in groups and influence each other. In this way even the learners that are doing fine can easily be misled by the friends and start dodging classes in which they were doing better simply because they want to be identified by the group of friends. Children at this level can dodge a subject without any reason at all. Sometimes both parents and teachers may not even know better the behavior of their son or daughter.

2.7 POOR TEACHER APPROACH

When talking about the teacher approach, the MOE document Zambia education curriculum framework (2013) says “this means that everything that the teacher does must be focused on what learners want to know, understand and be able to do successfully”. It further states that “when teachers plan and teach, they should focus on helping learners acquire the necessary knowledge, skills and dispositions that will enable them achieve the desired outcomes”. Some methodologies and teachers approach may not be understood by the students and in this sense hence this can easily make them start missing classes. This is because there are times when teachers go to class so that they can be marked present without doing anything sensible there. Some teachers teach a subject they don't like at all that is why they teach without a means of motivation to the learners. Some don't even care if learners understand what they teach or not.

2.8 PAMPERNESS

Anthony (1978) explains on how some parents spoil their children by giving them everything that they demand at the time they demand, this can be from family. The students that are given excessive pocket money from their family are very likely to absent themselves from school especially from subjects they don't like since they need more time to spend that money whilst at school before they go backhome.

2.9 ACTION AND ATTITUDE

According to Brehm and Kassin, (1996) say that attitudes toward those labeled learners are typically more negative than actions taken. In other words, disheartening responses to attitude and acceptability scales notwithstanding, non-labeled others may behave more responsibly when action is required of them. Certainly, this is not a new idea. Social psychologists have long wondered at the apparent disconnect sometimes observed between attitudes and behavior. Cohen (1977) illustrates this phenomenon in her dissertation involving teachers' stereotypes of three groups: teaching disabled students, individuals whose reading requires remediation and their normal peers.

2.10 INFERIORITY COMPLEX

Sikuvwaza (2013) adds by saying common challenges is where learners feel ill-treated or unfairly treated because they learn chi-Tonga while other pupils learn literature in English, pure sciences, accounts etc. every day they get teased by their friends that they are very dull no wonder they learn

ZL. Sometimes this comes as a result of bad tribal sentiments that are made by their friends sometimes but sometimes parents themselves tell their children that they can learn chi-Tonga, si-lozi because they are bad languages trying to change their identity by using different names which are not theirs. Some have even changed their languages so as not to learn the local language by pretending that they don't understand what is being taught.

2.11 TOO MUCH SOCIALISATION

The Itezhi Tezhi Primary School Results Analysis Report (2012) indicates that this is very common among teenagers who form groups and they like to freak around instead of being in class. This report revealed that the school had severe absenteeism. Not only that the pupils feel that, they can make better decision and decide what to learn and when not to learn. Teenagers tend to do what they feel is better for them at that time. They forget about taking care of their futures and how important education is where they are going. Some unguided pupils can be anywhere any time to an extent where they sleep very late and fail to go to school the following morning.

2.12 DUAL LANGUAGE

The document UNESCO (2010) states that despite all the evidence there is clearly some way to go before African parents and governments are persuaded that keeping African languages in school at higher level is beneficial. The document goes on to conclude that but dual language education becomes more widely accepted as many may be failing key examinations that might otherwise have passed with flying colours.

2.13 CONTACT TIME

This is the time that is spent between teachers and pupils during learning and teaching. The document national literacy framework (2013) adds to say that "one of the challenges and threats to literacy instruction is that contact time between teachers and learners is not sufficient". This includes time on task plus the amount of time teachers and learners are engaged in learning which is reduced due to poor lesson planning and absenteeism. It is therefore that much time especially in early grades be allocated or dedicated to literacy instruction. This would make learners busy, committed and less playful.

2.14 HANDICAPS

According to Robert (1999) “not being able to read can be a handicap in mind”. He, in addition, suggests that speaking and deeds, in according to one’s education level and intellectual ability contribute to missing of classes. A pupil who handicapped does not have any fear and worries about being able to speak in another person’s level. He has a relaxed attitude towards his/her abilities and disabilities, where he/she is comfortable in a class of special education than being laughed at in a normal able bodied class of pupils.

2.15 LACK OF MASTERY

The document UNESCO (2010) reveals that the pupils or learners that learn in their local language just for one to four years is not supportive indeed because the pupils during the primary time might have acquired enough knowledge of their first language. This UNESCO report shows that the learners that switched off from Setswana to English only knew about 800 words in English in average.

2.16 POVERTY

Kelly (1994) notes “inappropriate policies have caused the personal poverty in which most Zambians life reflects the poor state of the country’s economy which has never experienced steady growth since 1970s”, he went on to say the payment of PTA funds has made many children to absent themselves from schools. Kelly further points out that those truant children tend to be excluded from school in this process because of a cultural bias in favour of investment in a boy child, the girl was likely to suffer. This was further echoed by the research results of the African communities which say that absenteeism is linked to pregnancy, poverty and unemployment.

2.17 GENDER SENSITIVITY

The document UNESCO (2010) goes on to put the interest of learning the local language gender supported as it says “according to the World Bank, girls are therefore more likely to participate in class when learning in their mother tongue. Somehow the girl child may be pushed from school.

2.18 NON AVAILABILITY OF QUALIFIED HUMAN RESOURCE

According to itezhi-tezhi primary school results analysis report (2012) explains that why most children stay away from school is that there are few teachers. For example, itezhi-tezhi primary school has no trained teachers in some fields like business studies, computer studies and social studies (history).

2.19 LABELLING

According McDermott (1993) labeling is believed to be detrimental to self-esteem and self-concept. The pupils to some extent even the teachers themselves do label the pupils that learn Zambian languages and home economics with some names. For example, if a pupil learns chi-Tonga they will be labeled as the Tongas or banabamulaka (children of the tongue) and cooks respectively. This becomes detrimental to the self-images of the learners and it becomes a challenge in the teaching of Zambian languages. A label destroys a powerful mind because it becomes the overall.

2.20 HEALTH

Dintiman (1986) notes “health of learners as key to learning”. Under health of learners, the possible factor could be physical factors like non availability of food in their homes make learners to come to school hungry hence lose concentration in school and learning is not effective and results to hatred of school and ending up absenting themselves from school. Unlike to good health in the homes help learners to develop a strong healthy body, mind and are free to absorb whatever is learnt when in school and end up liking school.

2.21 UNDERAGE

Kenneth (2000) in contrast to early nineteenth century, families believed that children should be in school when they are young. When we encounter families that sends their children out to work there is the sense that they are doing the wrong thing. It doesn't mean that they should be taken to school and do something which has nothing to do with education and at the end indulge themselves into absenteeism.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

- **INTRODUCTION**

The word methodology is defined as a system which comprises the principles, practices and procedures which are applied to a specific branch of knowledge. Methodology refers to the way in which information is found or the way something is done. Methodology includes the methods, techniques and procedures which are used to collect and analyse information. Methodologies may be described as structured sets of steps, techniques, design products and processes, components and perspectives. This term may be used to refer to practices which are widely used across the industry or scientific discipline, the techniques used in a particular research study, or the techniques used to accomplish a particular project. People may also use the term “methodology” to refer to the study of such methods, rather than the methods themselves. Franklin (2012) concludes by saying a method can be considered to include multiple methods, each as applied to various facets of the whole scope of the methodology.

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

Healy (2011) explains that the function of the research design is to ensure that the evidence obtained enables you to effectively address the research problem as unambiguously as possible. Hence the study used a combination of mixed qualitative and quantitative methods of collecting data were employed. The qualitative method was used for the data collected using interviews. The data from respondents was extracted using questionnaires. This study will be carried out at itezhi-tezhi primary school.

3.2 CHOICE OF SITE

The choice of the two sites was very purposive and was based on the following criteria: the school is within reach to the researcher as it is in the township.

3.3 POPULATION

The target population was nine hundred. Teachers were used to provide required information because of their educational and teaching experience, frequent interactions with their pupils and also to get their views on absenteeism of pupils from school in the Zambian society, in particular, at Itezhi- Tezhi Primary School, Itezhi-Tezhi District In Central Province.

3.4 SAMPLE SIZE

The study focused on a sample size of 30 respondent's thirteen (13) girls and thirteen (13) boys and four (4) teachers, who represented the characteristics of the study population and were drawn from the mentioned school. These were drawn from the quotas within pupils' categories in the school. This was in agreement with Creswell (1978).

3.5 SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

The sample will be drawn by using the simple random sampling. It is also known as unrestricted simple random. Here every unit in the population will stand an equal chance of being included in a sample. When this method of sampling will be used, every item of the universe will be given an equal opportunity of being selected in the sample. Probability will be the same. The selection of items in the sample depended on the judgment of the investigator.

3.6 RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

Structured questionnaires and interviews schedules were used to collect data from the respondents in order to capture a wider information base from them. The questionnaires were simple to distribute and respondents did their part at their own time.

3.7 DATA COLLECTION

The data collection instruments were distributed to all respondents. They were distributed so that they could answer at their convenient time. The questionnaires were administered by the researcher

herself for a high rate of turn over. The responses and observations from all respondents were collected for final analysis.

3.8 DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis used qualitative aspects that involved editing in preparing for the analysis. This was done by arranging the collected data according to themes in relations to the objectives. Data was coded. The qualitative data was computed and presented using Microsoft –excel to facilitate presentation and interpretation of the results.

3.9 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study considered the aspect of ethical issues by seeking permission from spouses of married respondents before administering the questionnaires; avoid calling respondents by their first names. This allowed freedom of expression in such doing nothing else was written in exception of what the respondents were requested of. In this manner, anonymity of the respondents was upheld.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

• INTRODUCTION

This chapter discusses the research findings from the field based on the factors influencing absenteeism in Zambian Schools particularly in chankomo zone of kapiri mposhi district. The study employed questionnaires and interview guides as the main methods of data collection. The data collected was analysed using frequency distribution tables and percentages, bar graphs and explanation and narration on certain themes.

Table 4.1. Sex distribution

Sex	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Female	16	53.3	53.3	53.3
Male	14	46.7	46.7	100
Total	30	100	100	

According to the sex distribution in table 4.1, 53.3% respondents were females and 46.7% were male respondents.

Figure 4.1.2 below shows the distribution of respondents 53.3 for females and 46.7 males. The figure indicates that the majority of participants that took part in the activity where females seconded by males.

Table 4.2 respondents' age

From the table below, it indicates that the majority of respondents are in the ages between 23-25 and 19-22 representing 30% of the respondents each, the ages between 7-10 represents 16.7% of the respondents, and the ages 11-14 representing 13.3% of the respondents and ages 15-18 representing 10% of the respondents.

Age	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
7-10	5	16.7	16.7	16.7
11-14	4	13.3	13.3	30
15-18	3	10	10	40
19-22	9	30	30	70
23-25	9	30	30	100
Total	30	100	100	

According to figure 4.2.1 below, the ages of respondents were 7-10 represented 16.7%, 11-14 represented 13.3%, 15-18 represented 10%, 19-22 represented 30% and 23-25 representing 30%.

Table 4.3 some factors of absenteeism

The table below shows that absenteeism according to respondents showed that 33.3% was caused by poverty as the possible factor, 6.7% was caused by poor infrastructure, 23.3% caused by peer pressure also as a possible factor, 16.7% cause by Pamperness from family, and lastly attitude towards subjects and teachers as another possible factor. The table shows that respondents had something as a possible factor to mention which influences absenteeism in chankomo zone.

Factor	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Poverty	10	33.3	33.3	33.3
Infrastructure	2	6.7	6.7	40
Peer pressure	7	23.3	23.3	63.3
Pamperness	5	16.7	16.7	80
Attitude	6	20	20	100
Total	30	100	100	

Chart 4.3.1 below shows that absenteeism according to the respondents in chankomo zone was presented on a chart as follows; 33.3% was caused by poverty as the possible factor, 6.7% was caused by poor infrastructure, 23.3% caused by peer pressure also as a possible factor, 16.7% cause by Pamperness from family, and lastly attitude towards subjects and teachers as another possible factor.

Table 4.4 other factors responsible

The table below has shown other factors that make it possible for pupils to absent themselves from school and results are as follows; inferiority-36.7%, contact time-10%, handicaps-3.3% and underage-20%.

Factor	Former school pupil	Grade seven pupil	Total	Percentage
Inferiority	11	36.7	36.7	36.7
Contact Time	3	10	10	46.7
Handicaps	10	33.3	33.3	80
Underage	6	20	20	100
Total	30	100	100	

The pie chart 4.4.1 below illustrates the results of respondents on the other factors affecting absenteeism in Zambian schools especially at Itezhi-Tezhi Primary School. The following were the results; inferiority -36.7%, contact time -10%, handicaps-3.3% and underage -20%.

Table 4.5 respondents' educational level

Level	Frequency	Percentage	Valid percentage	Cumulative percentage
Primary	8	26.7	26.7	26.7
Junior	9	30	30	56.7
Secondary	13	43.3	43.3	100
Total	30	100	100	

The distribution of the respondents according to their level of education revealed that 26.7% was at primary level, 56.7% was at junior level and 43.3 respondents was that of secondary participants as represented by figure4.5.1 below,

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

• INTRODUCTION

This chapter analyses and interprets the findings of the collected data. The purpose of the study was to determine the factors influencing absenteeism in Zambian schools particularly in Chankomo zone.

Consequently the research objectives were to; establish the factors leading to pupils' absenteeism investigate the factors leading to pupils' absenteeism and finally identify solutions to reduce pupils' absenteeism.

5.1 FACTORS LEADING TO PUPILS ABSENTEEISM

From that data collected from the respondents within the school, it indicates that there are factors influencing absenteeism in Zambian school such as poverty, people of colour, peer pressure, underage, labeling, inferiority, attitude, infrastructure, handicaps, health, contact time, dual language, too much socialization, gender sensitivity, lack of mastery, lack of qualified personnel, Pamperness, poor teaching approach etc.

These mentioned factors leads to pupils' absenteeism in schools just as the literature review reviewed. From the findings, it has been noted that factors leading to absenteeism surely exist in each school. It takes teachers to identify these factors and highlight them so as to know the way in which they can be approached with the aim of identifying them and putting up measures to how reduce these factors.

5.2 LEADING FACTORS

According to the data collected, a lot of factors have been brought to light so as to shed more light concerning what the main problem is and how to handle them. It was indicated that inferiority complex was the outstanding factor that ranked the highest according to the respondents reviews. It is so because in the schools where they come from, they are bullied by the so called 'special pupils' who instead take literature in English, principles of accounts and pure sciences rather than chi-tonga and home economics.

Inferiority complex was seconded by poverty which leads to pupils' absenteeism due to the hunger that strikes their homes. According to the collected data, pupils resort to staying home than going to school on an empty stomach because it will be of no use attending lessons whilst the concentration is low. It was put that concentration when one is hungry is very scarce as it requires energy to pay attention to what is happening around especially in a classroom situation.

Of course there are countless factors that will lead to a Child's refusal to attend lessons due to the fact that they are influenced by fellow friends to do that which is not acceptable either within or outside the school environment. Initiation ceremonies have their own impact because children are taken into homes for longer periods that will at the end lead them to missing lessons.

Another factor that ranks on top according to the respondents is being handicap which is the inability to read. This becomes a factor as the learner will not be fully active in class or anything that involves the class. In cases where the learner wants to give it a try in reading when it is time for comprehension, it will be the day of ridicule because the child will not be fluent in reading hence being the laughing stock of the whole class. As a result, the child will no longer be comfortable with attending lessons and the self-esteem will be affected by the same.

Pamperness is also regarded as a factor leading to the absenteeism of pupils to school. This becomes the issue when parents over do what they are supposed to do for instance, giving money to children as they go to school. Some parents are fond of giving too a lot of money to their children as they go to school in order to sustain them as they go for break. This becomes a factor as children will think school is boring hence resort to being home other than going to school for they end up thinking they may miss out the privileges from their parents. In so doing, they do not realise that they are missing out about school which latter affects them.

5.3 CHALLENGES FACED BY TEACHERS OR SCHOOL

After having examined the factors that lead to absenteeism in schools, not only has it caused harm to the pupils but has also created challenges to teachers or schools as a whole. The following laid down points are the challenges that either teachers or schools face as a result of pupils' absenteeism.

It reduces the morale especially if bright pupils are involved. Teacher's morale will be lessened because the class will be more than boring to teach pupils who literally know anything hence the

morale to teach is reduced. It is very interesting and appealing to teach a class that has bright pupils who at least make the class live in terms of participating unlike if there are only mental retarded children

The other challenge that the school faces is that the school is put on the bad side in terms of data capture and those that regularly attend lessons for it will be difficult to provide their availability in school especially if the child is on sponsorship. Capturing data will not be easy as the other pupils would not mind going to school since they know that they are being paid for hence this leads to less input to school depending on the level of the school and user fees which would be reduced.

Absenteeism will cause lots of challenges other one being that the class registers will remain ugly or unpleasant in the sense that it will not look attractive for there will be a lot of absentees in that particular class hence making the register ugly. As pupils frequently absent themselves due to whatever factor, it will lead them to lagging behind which will in turn hold the teachers responsible for their failure.

One of the greatest challenges that teachers face is when it comes to preparation. This becomes an issue for it will be very hard for a teacher to figure out the performance of the entire class. Because of absentees, the class will be totally disorganised due to the draw backs that the truants cause thereby making it difficult for the teacher to prepare on where to start from. The other challenge is the performance that is later realised as a result of absenteeism. This case will not be taken as the Childs doing but rather the failure of teaching methods and approach that the teacher uses to deliver their lessons. In terms of the school, people from higher offices will hold the teachers responsible for not doing their work according and as expected.

5.4 MEASURES ON HOW TO REDUCE ABSENTEEISM

However, instead of sitting indolent without attending to these factors leading to absenteeism, measures or solutions on how to diminish absenteeism in schools have been put in place in order to control the factors at hand. The following are the measures delineated by the school or teachers;

Coming up with feeding activities within the school is one of the activities that has been initiated to reducing absenteeism. This is so because when a child comes from a family that does not have food, they will prefer going to school to staying at home where there is hunger. This activity in the actual sense is implemented deliberately to bring the pupils who are fond of staying back at home due to

poverty in their homes. As already alluded to, poverty is the factor that weighs highest on the rank leading to pupils' absenteeism thereby the school coming up with this invention.

Another measure put in place by the school or government is the issue of sponsorship where the vulnerable children are picked to be sponsored by the government or any organisation so that children cannot have an excuse of not coming to school due to payments. School fees is the most challenging thing to children who cannot afford paying and as a result, they will resort to not coming to school for fear of being embarrassed by the teachers for not paying which will in turn be a draw back on their attendance at school. Hence by providing sponsorships to the less privileged children, the issues of absenteeism therefore reduce.

Similarly, a local policy for discipline has been highly implemented in schools so as to discipline whoever misses class without an appropriate reason. A policy for staying away for more than three days is a punishable offence which will lead to calling parents to hear their side of view about their child's absence from school. This policy is guided by a committee which strictly follows the rules and regulations that pupils are expected to follow failure to abiding to these rules, will call for a discipline session.

The introduction of class registers to be marked by each teacher during lessons as they teach is another measure that has been recognised by the school to reduce absenteeism. This initiative helps diminish absenteeism in schools as pupils will be scared to miss a lesson because these a register that makes sure that a pupil is present in each lesson failure to which a child will be called for in the disciplinary office to be cautioned about the outcomes of his/her doings.

Calling parents is another way of bring pupils to school if they seem not to be coming to school frequently. Mostly, it is the treatment that children are given in their homes that lead to not coming to school which is why parents are called so that they can explain to the committee why their children are frequently not attending lessons. If parents are told on how to treat their children, they should be taken for counselling if no change is seen in the notorious children.

5.5 CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY

Finally, the study revealed that there are countless factors influencing absenteeism in Zambian schools in particular, Itezhi-tezhi primary school. Some of the mentioned factors are; attitude, poor infrastructure, contact time, people of colour, peer pressure, inferiority, underage, health, poor teaching methods, dual language, labeling, poverty, handicaps to mention but a few.

The study further revealed that there are leading factors that are involved in absenteeism of pupils which have been outlined in ascending order from inferiority to contact time. These factors lead to absenteeism regardless of family background. As if not enough, challenges have been raised due to the absenteeism of pupils. These challenges have been dealt with by means of implementing measures to control the situation.

Absenteeism has become a big issue in the school performance of both the pupil and teachers preparation in Chankomo zone. Unless precautions are taken to administer the issue, numbers of drop outs would increase.

Guardians and parents should bear in mind that what they do, children are watching, they have to secure their children's future for they may not always be there to provide everything to their children by educating their children on the importance of education.

5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

In line with the research findings of the study, the research came up with the following recommendations.

Imparting knowledge as one of the recommendations to the school as they educate the learners regarding the importance of attendance, the adverse effects of absenteeism and school rules concerns the same. Extracurricular sessions are also helpful to reduce absenteeism. By organizing clubs and class activities like planning birthday parties or festival celebrations and also encourage learners to participate in the activities taking place. This helps break the monotony of everyday classes and livens up the classroom.

National wide education campaigns in school through school relate activities interactive methods of communication to educate parents on the value of education for pupils. As earlier alluded to in the measures where parents are called to explain on their children's absence, it so happens that other parents do not know the value of education in the lives of their children hence mistreating the children at home either through beatings or giving them a lot of work to do before going to school as a result children abscond from school. This campaign is very vital to those parents who do not know what they are supposed to do no wonder they need to be educated.

As one of the factors leading to absenteeism, the environment has to be conducive so as to allow learners to have a free mind even as they will be in class. The environment (infrastructure) is a contributing factor which has to be paid attention to if proper learning and teaching should take place. The school has to be aware of every damage that is within the school to avoid uncaught situations. The environment again has to have all it takes to qualify to be a teaching place because other raised a point to say the reason for their missing lessons is due to the inadequate facilities that the school experience.

Provision of free education material to all pupils at school like uniforms, pencils/pens , books and food in order to excuse all parents who cannot afford to sponsor their children by the government. Sponsorship which is one of the measures to reduce absenteeism, it has also been recommended to the government to consider the vulnerable children instead of dropping out of school to continue with their education. It is not the wish of every parent to see their children at home doing nothing but rather conditions that go beyond their control that lead to doing such. It will as well apply to children who know the value of education but due to the same circumstance, they will be hindered by their vulnerability.

The government should introduce boarding facilities to basic schools and declare absenteeism as an offence to whosoever practices it. As everyone is already aware of the crisis that is in some of the houses in terms of poverty, this introduction will be more of a relief to parents as their children will have something to put in their stomachs. This is also a token to pupils because in fear of being hungry for the rest of the day, they would rather go to school and eat something than staying home without anything to eat.

Other than introducing boarding facilities in basic school, the government should as well come up with food feeding programs in schools with the help of world food programme. Once such an activity is undertaken, pupils will attend lessons in big numbers so as to be given something to eat for poverty is the most striking factor that influences absenteeism in school.

Long distances between schools especially those in rural areas cause absenteeism therefore, the government should build more schools which will be near to the community to allow children attend lessons without difficulties. Motivation is another thing the school or teachers should put into consideration. There has to be different reinforcements to motivate learners to attend classes. By pinning on the attendance sheet on the classroom board is a visual reminder of all classes they have missed. Rewards can be handed out to the learner with the maximum attendance and instead of

punishments, learners with lower attendance can be given the duty to perform different class roles so as to enable them not miss lessons.

Engaging classrooms is another recommendation realised to be done. In this case, plan for active, interactive and engaging class sessions to rule out boredom and disinterest as causes of absenteeism. This can be done by incorporating various active strategies like role playing, debates or through the use of technologies like smart boards, clickers. Adapting social emotional learning programs also plays a part in reducing absenteeism. Many of the learners with chronic absence issues suffer from personal and interpersonal issues. Some don't believe in themselves, some give up whenever things get hard and some find it difficult to work with their peers. The government should as well think of utilizing adventure programs. Adventure programs place learners in an unfamiliar environment for an extended period and involve experimental challenges such as rock climbing, rafting and team building games.

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RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE

RESEARCH TITLE:
**AN INVESTIGATION ON THE FACTORS INFLUENCING
ABSENTEEISM IN ZAMBIAN SCHOOLS DONE CHANKOMO ZONE.**

Dear respondents,

My name is Justine Kabungo a master in education student at information and communications university; I am conducting a research on absenteeism in zambia a case of chankomo zone in kapiri mposhi district.

I would like you to assist me by filling this questionnaire your information will be treated as confidential, for this is purely for academic purposes.

INSTRUCTIONS: Tick where appropriate and fill in the answer spaces provided.

SECTION A: Demographic characteristics of participants

What is your gender?

Male

Female

• What is your age?

7-10

11-14

19-22

23-25

• What is your highest educational level?

Primary

Junior

Secondary

- What is your marital status?

Single

Married

Divorced

Separated

Widowed

- What is your position?
-

SECTION A: FOR TEACHERS

- What have you observed in grade eight classes?
-
-

- Kindly list down the factors or causes to the habit in the above question

-

-

-

-

-

-

- According to the answer in question one, how can you as a teacher help learners?
-
-

- What do you recommend the school as a whole to do in order to reduce this habit?

.....
.....
.....
.....

SECTION B: FOR LEARNERS OR PUPILS

- Are you aware about the habit of absenteeism at your school?

Yes No

- What do you think causes it?

.....
.....

- Do you think teachers also absent themselves from school?

Yes No

- Why do you think they absent themselves?

.....
.....

- Do your teachers motivate you to coming to school?

Yes No

- How well do you relate with your teacher?

Good Bad Moderate

- Do you think all your teachers are good to you?

Yes No

- Do you understand what your teachers teach you?

Yes No

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- What language are you comfortable with?

.....

- Do you have any disabilities?

Yes No

- Do you think education has an impact to your life?

Yes No