

A qualitative cross-sectional study on the impacts of truancy on girls' performance in community secondary schools of Msalala district council, Tanzania.

Benecolias Rwehabula Katoto

The Graduate School and Research, Kampala University.

Abstract.

Background.

As discussed, truancy was a major educational problem in community secondary schools, where much attention had to be paid. This study examined the impact of truancy on girls' performance in community secondary schools of the Msalala District Council, Tanzania.

Methodology.

The study employed a cross-sectional design, using a qualitative approach. The targeted population consists of all heads of community secondary schools, teachers, and their students. Simple random and purposive sampling techniques were used to select the study participants. Interviews, focus group discussions, observation, and documentary analysis methods were used to collect the data. Qualitative data was analyzed by transcripts of information based on the search instruments used in data collection in the field.

Results.

52% of the participants were males, and 75% of the respondents identified as head of school. Students have lost interest in learning due to high use of corporal punishment, "If a student is late for only five minutes and identified by the teacher on duty, will be stricken a lot of sticks directed anywhere even if lateness was due to good reasons", it was revealed that students walk an average of 7km to 15km to reach the school in the morning, school administration and teachers were highly condemned as contributing factor to truancy due to their cruelty, absenteeism and inconsistency in dealing with students.

Conclusion.

The study extracted factors that influenced students' truancy in community-based secondary schools, these were corporal punishment, peer group, home-school distance, household poverty, a school environment, understaffing, as well as lack of learning and teaching resources.

Recommendations.

Schools should not be built very far from the villages, and the establishment of the Hostels program in community secondary schools should be considered to ensure that girls stay at school.

Keywords: Truancy, Girls' Academic Performance, Community Secondary Schools, School Attendance, Msalala District Council, Tanzania.

Submitted: 2024-11-16 **Accepted:** 2025-01-13 **Published:** 2025-04-20

Corresponding Author: Benecolias Rwehabula Katoto.

The Graduate School and Research, Kampala University.

Backgrounds.

For any economic development to take place, a high proportion of the population has to receive secondary education (UNESCO, 2000). Therefore, expansion of secondary education in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) and Tanzania in particular is important in achieving the Millennium Development Goal as well as narrowing the knowledge and skill gaps between Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) and other developed regions. The importance attached to secondary education has led the Tanzanian government to embark on a secondary education development program (SEDP) to create a quality population necessary for responding to such national, regional, and global challenges.

The establishment of community secondary schools has been highly influenced by the increased social demand for secondary education resulting from the implementation of the Primary Education Development Plan (PEDP) from 2002 to 2006, which aimed at making primary education available and compulsory to all children. The situation has resulted in an increase in the number of primary school leavers, which has encouraged the establishment of community secondary schools. More importantly, Tanzania sees the strategic role of secondary education for each individual in order to realize socio-economic development. URT (2010) made it clear that secondary education occupies a pivotal role in the stepping up of the economic status of the people and their life well-being.

The Tanzania Development Vision (2025) seeks to have well-educated, knowledgeable, and skilled Tanzanians to competitively cope with political, social, economic, and technological development challenges at national and international levels. In this view, secondary education was considered an important tool in providing the population with the necessary skills in responding to such challenges. Hence, Community Secondary schools have been established by the government in each ward in the country to give standards even to leavers who pass the Primary School Leaving Examination (PSLE) an opportunity for secondary education (URT, 1995). It is therefore a government policy that all pupils who pass class seven examinations should pursue secondary education. On the other hand, it has been claimed by people of Tanzania that most students nowadays drop out of studies due to truancy. The problem has persisted for a long time in the country in both rural and urban areas.

However, Msalala District Education Office statistics (MDEO) (2015), the period from 2015-2018 had 3670 school dropout cases, of which 2356 cases, equivalent to 64 percent, were due to truancy. Since truancy was the first indicator that students are giving up and losing their way, and are more likely to impede the creation of a quality population necessary for socio-economic development, the reasons why students are not attending school needed to be fully explored.

Community secondary schools failed to fulfill their roles due to the problem of girls' truancy. Although there is a possibility of dealing with school truancy, it was directed to individuals, families, the Government, and the community (URT, 2010). As discussed, truancy was a major educational problem in community secondary schools, where much attention had to be paid. If the trend continues, Tanzania may face a major crisis as school truants could become unemployed and engage in criminal acts such as burglary, theft, vandalism, and various sex related crimes, and even murder (Moseki, 2004).

More importantly, relating to the global move for education access and equity, truancy could hinder the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the Tanzanian Vision 2025. All these documents (MDGs and Tanzania Vision 2025) stress quality education for each Tanzanian as a key aspect in realizing socio-economic development. The whole society feels that issues of truancy were significant and being overblown by community members; the problem caused by truancy was threatening to

add another impediment to Tanzania's development effort, particularly in its effort to create opportunities for education for all (UNESCO, 2004). Predominantly, the problem of truancy in community secondary schools in Msalala District Council has not yet been investigated to reveal its causes. This study examined the impact of truancy on girls' performance in community secondary schools of the Msalala District Council, Tanzania.

Methodology.

Research Approach and Design

The study used a qualitative approach to collect data from the field. In this approach, factors influencing truancy in community-based secondary schools in Msalala district were smoothly discovered because the qualitative approach is socially centered. A case study design was used as it was the best for investigating the research problem in its natural setting.

Study Area

The study was conducted at the Msalala district council in the Shinyanga region, Tanzania. The area was selected by the researcher in the sense that the district had adequate community secondary schools, and the problem of girls' truancy and poor academic performance was experienced. Also, very little was known about the factors that influence girls' truancy and poor academic performance in community secondary schools in the district.

Target Population

In this study, the targeted population consists of all heads of community secondary schools, teachers, and their students at the Msalala district council in the Shinyanga region. Up to NOVEMBER 2019, there were eighteen (18) secondary schools in Msalala district, of which one (01) was a private secondary school, and seventeen (17) were community-based secondary schools, and only one (1) seminary school. Seventeen (17) community secondary schools were the targeted population for the study.

Sample and Sampling Procedure.

The Sample Size.

The sample size of the study and its composition are shown in the table 1.

Table 1: Composition of the Sample Size of the Study

SN	Respondents	Male	%	Female	%	Total	%
1.	Head of school	03	75	01	25	04	100
2.	Class teacher	02	50	02	50	04	100
3.	Discipline teacher	02	50	02	50	04	100
4.	School A	05	50	5	50	10	100
5.	School B	05	50	5	50	10	100
6.	School C	05	50	5	50	10	100
7.	School D	05	50	5	50	10	100
Total		27	52	25	48	52	100

Source: Researcher field data –March 2019

Sampling Procedures Purposive Sampling

This is a technique for selecting elements of a sample to be studied in which the researcher selects elements purposefully because they possess important information for the study. In purposive sampling, sample elements judged to be typical or representative are chosen from the population. To get a sample of heads of schools and discipline masters/mistresses. In using the techniques, the researcher considered the gender to select both four (4) heads of schools and four (4) discipline teachers respectively, as shown in the sample frame.

Simple Random Sampling.

In this study, a researcher used simple random sampling in selecting four (4) schools, four (4) class teachers, and forty (40) students from the population who participated in the study.

Data collection methods.

Different data collection instruments were used to cross-check the accuracy of the data gathered and thus maximize the validity and reliability of the study. Data were collected through interviews, documentary review, focus group discussions, and observation.

Interview.

The study employed semi-structured interviews, which give the researcher the ability to probe and ask follow-up questions, thereby gaining a deeper understanding of the interviewee's experience, feelings, and perspectives concerning the topic under discussion and collecting information about the world in which the respondents live. Therefore, the researcher conducted individual interviews to collect data from four (4) head of secondary schools, four (4) class teachers, and one (1) from each school, four (4) discipline master/mistress, one (1) from each school and forty (40) students from four selected community secondary schools in Msalala district council. During the face-to-face interview, the researcher built a friendly environment, using

simple and polite language with short and clear interview questions.

Documentary Analysis.

In this study, the researcher went through school admission registers, attendance registers, discipline files, school management files, and school annual reports, which were reviewed. However, different records on students' enrolment, attendance, and the number of regular truants in selected secondary schools were studied. The information from the document was used to counter-check the trustworthiness of the softness information collected through interviews.

Focus Group Discussions.

Under a focus group discussion, respondents from similar backgrounds or experiences discuss a specific topic as designed by the researcher. The strength of focus group discussion relies on allowing the participants to agree or disagree with each other about the issue. It helps to get insight into the issue, the range of opinion and ideas, the inconsistencies and variations that exist in that particular group in terms of beliefs, experiences, and practices. The objective of the focus group discussion was to get high-quality data in a social context where people could consider their views in the context of the views of others. Focused group discussion is considered to be important because it helps to identify the participants' experiences, attitudes, and beliefs about the problem of truancy in that particular school. Focus group discussion allows participants an opportunity for peer commentary expressed by others regarding the topic of truancy. The discussion helps to obtain practical suggestions and recommendations from the participants on the factors influencing truancy in Msalala district community secondary schools.

Observation

In this study, the researcher visited classrooms in the sample schools to observe the classroom setting, available classroom facilities, teaching methodology, and how classes were conducted. An observational checklist was used to

maintain the focus, and the researcher recorded against each item. The observation checklist is found in the appendices.

Data analysis procedure

Qualitative Data Analysis

In this study, qualitative data were analyzed by transcribing information based on the search instruments used in data collection in the field. All recorded interviews were dated, copied out, and labeled according to where and when it was collected. The data gathered was sorted into identified patterns. Procedures started by categorizing data and grouping them on the basis of their themes.

All information and data addressing a particular objective were grouped, and the interpretation of each was done in line with the research objectives. The researcher used content analysis techniques to analyze data gathered through focus group discussions, where he organized oral information collected into themes and categories, continuing to revise the information until a final perspective emerged.

Analyses of the themes were done strictly according to the issues pinpointed in the literature review and the theoretical framework. At this stage, a large amount of unorganized data was reduced into a manageable and analytically meaningful form of data.

Mile and Huberman (1994) argue that data reduction is a logical part of data analysis in qualitative research because processing a huge amount of data is difficult and time-consuming. Data obtained from documents was reviewed and grouped to show trends and widen the scope of understanding on the factors that influence girls' truancy in community secondary schools of Msalala district Council in Shinyanga region, Tanzania. The information from the documentary review, as well as observations, was incorporated with that from the interview so as to get the full picture of them and to see if there was convergence.

Validity and reliability of data.

In order to ensure the validity of the data collected and the reliability of the research instruments, a pilot study was conducted in one of the community-based secondary schools in the Msalala district council. Also, the supervisor assisted in refining the instrument, focusing on the study, research task, and questions.

The collected data were analyzed, and the results from the pilot study helped the researcher to identify and clear out ambiguities caused by the instrument. In all, validation of research instruments continued during the field work by correcting, restructuring, and modifying parts or whole questions whenever the need arises as the study proceeds.

Research ethical considerations:

To carry out this study, a research clearance letter was collected from Kampala University and submitted to the district authority. Thereafter, the researcher was provided the permission letter by the district executive director (DED)

to conduct data collection from schools and other areas where the researcher targeted to get the information in the District. All these are attached to this study in the appendices. An appointment was made to meet all the respondents of the study.

During the process of data collection, a self-introduction was made first. All respondents were assured of the confidentiality of their information and hence not required either to mention their names, or they were not forced in any way to answer question(s) that made them uncomfortable.

Ethical Approval.

To carry out this study, a research clearance letter was collected from Kampala University and submitted to the district authority. Thereafter, the researcher was provided the permission letter by the district executive director (DED) to conduct data collection from schools and other areas where the researcher targeted to get the information in the District. All these are attached to this study in appendices. An appointment was made to meet all the respondents of the study.

During the process of data collection, a self-introduction was made first. All respondents were assured of the confidentiality of their information and hence not required either to mention their names, or they were not forced in any way to answer question(s) that made them uncomfortable.

Informed consent.

A consent form was filled out by the respondents after explaining the purpose of the study to them. The respondents were assured of confidentiality as no names would appear on the questionnaire. No participant was forced to participate in the study, and all the study materials used during the interviews were safely kept under lock and key, only accessible by the researcher.

Results.

In this study, the names of the participants and the secondary schools visited were not mentioned due to confidentiality and research ethics. The interview was tape-recorded, and a notebook was used. Data was transcribed, sorted, and analyzed according to specific objectives of this study on the factors influencing girls' truancy and poor academic performance.

Socioeconomic status.

School administration and teachers' awareness in relation to students' truancy.

Geographical location of schools

Students' awareness and interest in learning.

Social cultural practice.

These factors will be discussed according to the data collected in the field on factors that influence students'

truancy in community-based secondary schools in Msalala district council. Below, we start with students' interest in learning.

Students' awareness and Interest in Learning.

Students' interest in learning can be influenced by many factors, both good and bad. In this study, the analysis of information from interviews and focus group discussions identified eight (08) factors which influence students' truancy in Msalala district community-based secondary schools; these include Corporal punishment, Peer groups, teacher-student relationship, Teachers' absenteeism, Engagement in love affairs, Students' academic background, Globalization, and Illness. The influence of each factor on students' truancy is discussed below.

Corporal Punishment.

Corporal punishment in schools has a relationship with students' truancy in community-based secondary schools. From the findings, 16% of the participants revealed that students' truancy was caused by corporal punishment administered to students in schools. Participants complained that corporal punishments, which were mostly administered by teachers, were mostly caning, others were walking on knees, jumping like a frog, watering flowers, weeding small school farms, digging pits, and uprooting tree stumps.

Corporal punishment and others, as mentioned above, did not stop students' truancy in schools visited, but they hated punishment, especially caning, which was the most hated. In student focus group discussions, co-caning by teachers emerged as a factor that increases truancy instead of reducing it. Also, on the same issue, a student from school 'A' during the interview regarding corporal punishment had said;

"If a student is late for only five minutes and identified by the teacher on duty, they will be struck with a lot of sticks directed anywhere, even if lateness was due to good reasons". A decision of going back home or hiding elsewhere until the school hours' end would be better and safer than facing the teacher".

On the other hand, another student from school 'C' added:

"Someone can be captured on breaking school regulation, let's say by making noise in the class room the teacher on duty or even class teacher would come in and find out the mostnaughty as will be mentioned by the fellow students and perhaps on oppressive basis the student will be assigned to uproot a stump which will take him/her the whole day or two days". Then, due to tiredness, the student must pretend to be sick on the following day to avoid further punishments and justify more absences.

The findings above indicate that students tried to escape events that could lead to corporal punishment by absconding from school for the whole day, or even for several days. Therefore, corporal punishment enhances truancy.

Likewise, teachers, on the other hand, admitted that they used to cane students in line with the Education Act of 1978, which states that caning more than six strokes on the buttocks for boys or palms for girls. These finding from interviews and focus group discussions reveals that corporal punishment in schools was an accelerating factor to truancy rather than reducing it.

It also accelerates the violation of the child's basic rights. It is possible to argue that the violation of child rights in Tanzania has been due to a lack of a common understanding of who is a child (Dachi and Garrett, 2003). As stated elsewhere in this study, students were not against caning or any other corporal punishment, as they admitted to breaking school rules and regulations, but what they said was the right to be listened to and rationality in administering the punishment.

However, students in schools are rational and can judge their position regarding decisions that appear to affect them. In this global zone, students learned from various sources about what goes on in other parts of the world where traditional approaches to punishment are no longer in place. Students need to be told their faults, the consequences of their faults, and possibly the way they could avoid faults.

Although some teachers feel that they need to apply corporal punishment to mold student discipline so as to reduce truancy behaviour, as well as enhance their academic performance. On the other hand, the child welfare organizations have policies opposing the use of corporal punishment. Similarly, many educationalists are against corporal punishment because of the affront to the child's dignity (Larzelere, 1999).

From this study, the researcher discovered that both mild and severe corporal punishment have negative effects on students' confidence, creation of fears and hesitation, and hindrance toward learning, which resulted in irregular school attendance, hence truancy. Moreover, corporal punishment is being used as a means of disciplining children and students worldwide, but as a catalytic action of education, it needs to be planned carefully and executed with great sensitivity. Apart from corporal punishment, peer groups act as a catalyst for students' truancy, as we shall discuss below.

Peer groups.

In this study, it was observed that 15% of the student participants revealed that they practice truancy as they strongly interact with other groups outside the school, taking alcohol, smoking, playing cards, and using pool tables. Findings also show how boys and girls are engaged in various social interactions with themselves and other people outside the schools. This happens when students interact with different people while on their way to or from school.

In this study, the peer group is made up of secondary school students from whom the researcher sought out information about students' truancy in schools. Peer groups were one of the factors influencing students' truancy by tracking

behavioral changes taking place as a result of their involvement in the age group.

However, many students are coming from economically disadvantaged families, to the extent that they lack pocket money to cover their individual needs. This makes some of the student participants engage in sex at a young age. Girls, for instance, engage in love affairs with the villagers. At the same time, it

is difficult for the teachers to monitor all students when they are out of the school environment, doing illegal activities during school hours. The participants were of the view that there was a relationship between peer pressure, pressure from outside the school, and the option of the particular student to attend school irregularly.

During the interview, one student from school A narrated that: “

I was being forced to play truancy because most of my friends had their mobile phones and they had money all the time, so they insisted that I join the same group. To get money and other needs, we should visit friends outside the school during school hours without informing our parents.”

From this view, it was noted that most of the parents in sampled schools were not monitoring the daily behaviour of their children and failed to understand what their children were doing, hence played truancy without awareness of their parents. Peer groups can strongly change the character of the students to be good or bad, depending on the nature of the group's character.

This was also supported by Eastman et al. (2007) in their study, which found that many incidences of school girls' truancy resulted from peer groups. Girl students escape from school and practice sexuality, wishing to prove fertility or enhance their relationship with their friends.

On the other hand, Babcock (2009) insists that peer groups are more powerful than parents in shaping students' values. Teenagers hang out in peer groups that vary in their attitude towards intellectual achievement, and usually, anti-intellectual groups, even in middle-class neighborhoods. Apart from the peer group, other factors also have an influence on students' truancy.

Teacher–Student Relationship

From the findings, 10% of the participants revealed that the teacher-student relationship was the main cause of students' truancy. Students complained that their relationship with some of the teachers was not good, which made them escape from school or sometimes not come at all, which led them to truancy. Teven (2001) also supported that the quality of the teacher-student relationship has an impact on the students' truancy. During focus group discussion with students in school A, one female student commented;

“Teachers frustrate students for no reason. For example, I came into a personal conflict with a teacher as he bit me simply because I denied him when he seduced me. Even other students were forced to leave schools because of harassment”.

Sometimes a male teacher can force a relationship with a female student, but when she rejects, the student faces harassment from the teacher to the extent that school becomes difficult for her. This makes students escape from daily classes or for the whole week to avoid the teacher.

It was evident from such comments that teachers were not friendly to students, as they wanted to fulfill their sexual desire with them. This resulted in snowballing conflict affecting efforts by students to attend school or discouraging parents from pushing their children to school. This goes in line with Raver's (2003) finding, which reveals that teachers' discrimination, cruelty, punishment, and negligence were among the teacher-centric reasons of students' truancy in rural secondary schools. In this study, most students indicated that teachers' uncaring behavior acts as a push-out factor for them, hence truancy in schools. A positive relationship between students and teachers both in and out of class reduces the probability of students' truancy in schools, particularly for students from disadvantaged backgrounds and those experiencing academic difficulties. Furthermore, researchers such as Hale (2001) have observed that most students experience truancy because of conflicts with teachers as well as punishment offered by those teachers. Sumra (2006), in his writings, observed that factors internal to the school, such as disciplinary policies or conflicts with students or teachers, might accelerate students' truancy in schools. The most important thing for students to cope with their environment at school is to have a positive relationship with their teachers; the absence of that made many of the students play truancy in schools, according to the researcher. On the other hand, teachers' absenteeism activates truancy in schools, as we shall learn below.

Teachers' Absenteeism.

Teachers' absenteeism was also mentioned as a contributing factor to students' truancy in schools. The study showed that 14% of the participants revealed that teachers' absenteeism contributes to students' truancy in sampled schools. It was found that teachers spent a few hours in classes, teaching ten to fifteen minutes only, instead of forty minutes, as observed by the researcher in schools A and B, and spent the rest of their time doing their own business instead of covering allocated teaching subject periods. During an interview with a student from school D, in response to the question based on the matter of teachers' absenteeism, he narrated that:

“Imagine, sir, Teachers are busy with their own business and are not attending their allocated periods daily. We are not taught the number of periods. Our parents incurred all these expenses, and after four years, the student is being rewarded with division zero”.

On this issue, even the teacher from school B commented: *“The teacher enters the class, provides the notes, and leaves. It becomes the duty and obligation of the class monitor to write the notes on the blackboard for other students to copy. It will take a while for a teacher to*

reappear in the class, and when he appears, he just passes through the topics very briefly and in such a way that the chance for discussions or even asking questions is not accommodated”.

On the other hand, students admitted that some teachers could not teach at all or attend their periods irregularly; as a result, they poorly cover the required topics of the respective subject. After the examination periods, the failure of the teacher to praise students' work and to accommodate their needs or listen to them creates academic difficulties as students remain alone without any help or assistance from teachers. This atmosphere created irregular attendance among students in some subjects as they felt neglected by their teachers, hence truancy.

Although from the study, a researcher learned students' dissatisfaction with the performance of some of the teachers and the school system in general, which could result in students' truancy. Meanwhile, schools with committed and acceptable teachers' attendance could be the most important influence to reduce students' truancy in schools compared to schools with poor teachers' attendance and low teaching time.

Likewise, different studies have indicated a great teacher's absence of up to 70 percent, which, to a large extent, affected students' morale in schooling (Sumra 2006, URT, 2009).

Teacher absence without any significant intervention could not be counted as something chronic, but as an aspect poorly managed by the inspectors of schools. Currently, the inspectorate is based on a zonal level where they cover several regions. Since most regions have more than 150 schools, it is important to have the inspectorate body decentralized to the regional level.

Another study by Ryan (2001) found that institutional factors such as teachers' absence, boring subjects, gang affiliation, and detention contributed to students' truancy from school. According to this study, it was common to all schools that the absence of teachers made many of the students not attend school; they remained playing in the ground and roaming around the school compound. Therefore, teacher absenteeism led students to other behaviors in schools, including engagement in love affairs among students.

Engagement in Love Affairs.

The study also sought information on students' engagement in love affairs. From the findings, 10% of the participants revealed that students' engagement in love affairs was another cause of students' truancy. Regarding students engaging in love while in school, it was discovered during students' focus group discussions that most of the students, both boys and girls, cheated their parents by leaving home in school uniform while keeping civilian clothes in their school bags. Once they left home, they changed from school uniform to civilian clothes and engaged in other business such as visiting friends, engaging in paid labour, and prostitution. One of the students from school B narrated:

“In this school, some students cheat their parents and other community members by claiming they are attending school when they are not. They leave home while in their school uniform and put on civilian clothes in their school bags. On their way to school, they change and put on normal clothes and snake into the labour market or petty trades, while some girls engage in love affairs with boyfriends or other villagers.”

From the information given above and supported by other group members, a school boy or girl was no longer a delicate creature before the community since community members could employ them or engage them in love affairs while knowing they were students. Knowingly, student engagement in Love Affairs While in school is considered a breaking of school rules and regulations, resulting in punishments. Students on their side might consider these to be suppression. Findings revealed that students who engaged in love affairs or broke other school regulations decided to escape teachers because of fear, and this increases the gap between student-teacher closeness, hence increasing the rate of student truancy in schools.

Moreover, students needed to be persuaded to abide by school rules and regulations, and this could be possible through having a well-planned and well-implemented timetable in schools. The findings of this research correspond with Van Breda's (2006) finding that 55 percent of school truants in South Africa had histories of sexual abuse and maltreatment. In this study, the respondent had also explained that sexual misconduct behaviours were adversely affecting the learning atmosphere in their school. During the interview with the students, one student from school C said:

“In our school, some students attend nightclubs and music in dance halls, for which all the costs are incurred by their boyfriends. Normally, they go to clubs during weekends, and on Mondays, they fail to come to school. This makes them miss classes and remain with their boyfriends or girlfriends sometimes in rented rooms or guest houses, while others who miss school are found committing to do other business such as fetching water in tea rooms, playing pool table, playing cards, drinking local beer, and smoking.

Talking with the students' discipline master, it was also discovered that some community members around the school are not cooperative. Some of them hide students in their houses where they perform some domestic chores or fetch water. This situation reaches an extreme case in which some engaged in love affairs with female students. This was discovered in the field when a researcher went through some school discipline files. Therefore, when students have alternative places to hide and are supported by community members, truancy behaviour would be difficult to control. On the other hand, truancy is associated with academic background, as discussed below, teacher-student relationships in community-based secondary schools of Msalala District.

Students 'Academic Background:

The study shows 14% of the participants revealed that students who have a poor academic background in visited schools are reported to lose interest in schooling, hence to play truancy as they faced difficulties in attempting homework and other academic activities. It was also reported by all class teachers that some of those entering form one demonstrated poor academic ability, but they had to accept and register them as they were officially posted to schools. Head of school from a school, a Bon student with an academic background, he had this to say:

For almost three years now, from one entrance, students who are not able to read, write, or count. These students cannot find schooling enjoyable. Since they fail to cope with schooling processes as they should, they play truancy.

The above assertion was further justified by a schoolboy from school B. This student, during the interview, had difficulties even expressing himself in Swahili. Therefore, as the students fail to master the English language, which is the medium of instruction in learning, they found school not friendly to them and found it better not to attend school regularly, hence truancy. Apart from a student's academic background, truancy is influenced by globalization.

Globalization.

In this study, globalization was seen as a contributing factor for truancy since 14% of the participants reported a negative effect of globalization. Students were affected by things such as mobile phones, for which students take most of their time chatting with their mates. Others used to play games on computers in the street, attending social websites on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram with their friends by sending messages. This has resulted in our lives being intertwined with people in all parts of the world via the food we eat, the clothing we wear, the music we listen to, the information we get, and the ideas we hold. It is all about the internet, cell phones, and computers.

The outcome of students' spending time with mobile phones leads them not to finish their class activities on time. This makes them escape their teachers by not coming to school the following day for fear of being punished. About the study, UNESCO (2011) had defined globalization as the ongoing process that is linking people, neighborhoods, cities, regions, and countries much more closely together than they have ever been before.

One of the students from school A commented;

"Sir, some of the students used to go to video games in an internet café during class hours, and some go to play pool tables. Also, students used to mobilize themselves through Facebook, Instagram, and WhatsApp in order to attend social events and nightclubs during weekends. On Monday, they fail to attend school and remain with their mates in rented houses".

From the above statement, it was observed that globalization has a greater influence on both boys and girls, in which most of them fail to attend their regular classes or even fail to

concentrate on their studies at school. This was witnessed during the study, as most of the students were having phones even when they were in the classroom; these could be used to communicate with outsiders. Most of the communications made were not educational, as confirmed by the student from school A during the interview. It was basically on jocks, gossip, and love affairs. Apart from globalization, illness is another factor that contributes to students' truancy.

Illness:

Illness was the least mentioned as another reason because it influenced truancy in community secondary schools visited, but it cannot be ignored; it contributes 7% of the participants' reasons for students' truancy. The mentioned factors under the aspects were poor treatment and malnutrition due to the family's low income.

During the focus group discussion with students in school C, one participant had this to add:

"Some of us remained at home, especially when one gets sick, since some of the parents were not ready to take them to the hospital for proper medical care. The affected student had to remain home before turning to school. Under this situation, the students had played truancy for a period until he/she get well".

Also, another student from the same school commented that: *"Some of the students, for a long time, were away from school due to illness, as some do not receive the proper care and medical services".* Due to this, they messed up their studies, thus increasing the truancy rate at our school. Also, one girl commented that there is no proper care when girls enter their period because at the school, there is no special room to attend to ladies during the menstruation period; In addition to that, there are no towel to help them while they are at school, resulting in they being forced to stay home when they enter their period.

The information gathered through interviews, FGD, and document review confirmed that students' illness had much to do with their truancy in their studies. Illness excuses bring loopholes to lazy students lying sometimes not about attending school as they pretend to be sick. The low income of some parents was a reason for some parents to take their children to poor medical care. Apart from students' illness, the other factor was school administration and teacher attitudes in relation to students' truancy.

School administration and teachers' attitudes about students' truancy

Under the theme, school administration and teachers' attitude about students' truancy, the study comes out with the following factors;

- Lack of facilities and resources
- Under-staffing and incompetent teachers
- Guidance and counseling
- Lack of facilities and resources

From the findings, 30% of students' truancy was due to the lack of facilities and resources in schools. During the interview with teachers and documentary review, the researcher confirmed that teaching and learning in most of the sampled community-based secondary schools in Msalala have been a problem for a couple of years.

This situation was depicted by teachers' respondents from the sampled schools. Teachers revealed that students sometimes tend to stay at home for some hours or even for the whole day. This is because they lack learning facilities such as books, exercise books, a shortage of teachers, and classrooms. In school C, there were not enough classrooms to accommodate all students. Sometimes students were shifting from one room to another with their tables and chairs. Those who failed to find tables and chairs to sit had to remain standing for the whole of the class periods or sometimes share a chair with their fellows.

This situation hinders teachers from making follow-up of class absentees, and therefore, among the students, it is like the normal culture to stay away from classes, as there was no follow-up on them. On this issue, one of the students from school C commented;

"Our school is lacking conducive infrastructure to support learning; some students share one chair during period(s). Situation causes students to compete, even fighting for chairs during the change of classes". The situation encourages others to quit school before the normal departure time due to frustrations.

In this situation, Bunto (2002) has something to comment on, as it shows the quality of education in most of the Sub-Saharan countries is affected much by the inadequacy of teaching and learning facilities. It is a fact that the lack of teaching and learning facilities in schools has been the source of the students' truancy in Msalala District council community-based secondary schools. Apart from a lack of

facilities and resources, understaffing and incompetent teachers influence students' truancy.

Under-Staffing and Incompetent Teachers.

The study findings show 27% of the participants revealed that Under-staffing and employment of incompetent teachers were other reasons for students' truancy in community-based secondary schools. Under-staffing also caused some of the teachers to take multiple roles in schools and become overloaded with many teaching periods, while heads of school/s were forced to use form six leavers to teach as part-timers.

The evidence on this was given by one head of school from school C, who commented:

Because of the shortage of science teachers, I am forced to hire part-time teachers, mostly from six leavers who were not trained as teachers, to reduce the teaching load.

Another head of school from school A added:

"I usually use teachers to act as an accountant or storekeeper because the required staff for the post was not employed. Therefore, for that task, they cannot afford to attend all the allocated period and to pass students' assignments; I had to use them".

This is obvious; students did not come to school regularly once they learned there were no teachers for their respective subjects. From the present study, the lack of teachers was noted to cause truancy among students in the sampled secondary schools. From the sampled schools, there was an acute shortage of science teachers in both schools B, A, D, and C, where the teacher-student ratio was 1:53, 1:101, 1:102, and 1:249, respectively. For example, among the visited schools, one school had only one science (Physics and mathematics) teacher, and unfortunately, he was the head of the school.

Table 2 shows records of teachers in sampled schools.

Sampled school	Science Teachers			Social Science Teachers		
	R	A	S	R	A	S
A	16	05	11	16	22	+06
B	22	08	12	22	26	+04
C	11	01	10	11	12	+01
D	17	05	12	17	10	+07

Source: Field data (March 2019)

Key: R=Required, A, =Available, S=Shortage

The table shows that all sampled schools had a shortage of science teachers with degree and diploma qualifications. Although both schools, A, B, C, and D, had managed to employ eight (08) form six leavers as teachers, they did not teach regularly as both schools were lacking funds for their salaries. Their payment depends on parents' contributions, which were unpredictable due to poverty and the unwillingness of parents to pay. Apart from the lack of payment to untrained teachers, it is not proper for them to

teach in secondary schools because they are not qualified, they lack teaching techniques, and they do not know secondary education.

However, even if these untrained teachers were committed and enthusiastic in teaching, the findings were against the first SEDP that by the year 2009, all secondary schools would have a student-qualified teacher's ratio of 1:30 (URT,2010).

Likewise, URT (1995) maintains that diploma teachers should teach in form one and two, while graduate teachers should teach from form three to form six; due to a lack of qualified teachers in their schools, the rules are not followed. This has an impact on students' truancy because they are taught by untrained teachers.

It is evident that in all sampled schools, despite the shortage of teachers, there was insufficient utilization of the few available teachers. It can be argued that teachers performing non-academic roles during working hours reduce their capability to perform their roles of teaching. Therefore, a lack of or insufficient teaching staff members caused students to lack what they were intended to get from schools; this encourages truancy in those schools. On the other hand, guidance and counseling also contributed to students' truancy.

Family economic status and students' truancy

This is a measure of a person's work experience or a family's economic and social position compared to others, based on income, education, and occupation. Low income and education have been seen to be strong predictors of a student's truancy in schools. This has led to many students not attending school as required due to hunger and failure to pay school fees.

From the findings, the researcher has observed family economic status from two perspectives as mentioned below:

i) Household poverty

ii) Child labour

iii) Parents' education level. Family activities

Household Poverty

In this study 53% of the participants revealed that poverty or family economic instability was the circumstance connected to truancy among students, as parents failed to meet school needs in the Msalala district council. The study sought information from students, class teachers, and heads of schools in investigating the factors influencing student truancy in community-based secondary schools in the district.

According to Smith (2005), the factors associated with truancy are many and varied. He pointed out that family economic condition is one of the leading factors associated with truancy. However, through documentary analysis, when the day school administration decided to send students home to collect school requirements, almost half of the students in each class went home.

On top of that, the head of school B added:

"Student truancy in this area is because of parents' low economic income. The majority of them are peasant/subsistence farmers, and their earning depends on those activities relying on rain-fed agriculture. Thus, when their children were sent back home to bring school dues, they failed to make payments even in installments; hence they remained at home with their children".

The painful observation by this student stresses that the major financial concern was no longer the fees that one had

to pay, but other costs associated with schooling in community-based secondary schools. By implication, an average of T.shs 155,000/= per year skewed much from the normal fee of T.shs 20,000/= set by the government after seeing the inability of most parents to pay for education. This situation has led to truancy of students from poor families, especially after being punished for lack of these contributions, and spelled out until they pay school fees and other contributions.

In this respect, one student in school A had this comment:

"I want to be educated because I want a good job in the future; therefore, I don't want to miss school, but my parents are very poor. They cannot afford to pay all school contributions, such as school fees and other contributions, which can amount to Tsh. 150. 000/= per year out of breakfast and lunch requirements".

These activities have accelerated truancy among students. The prevailing financial situations of the students create distress that affects their concentration in school. On the other hand, UNESCO (2011) and Reid (2000) observed that students from poor families were closely linked to poor school attendance, with a high percentage ranking child labour as a leading factor for students' truancy. This was an indication that child labour was indispensable to the survival of some households, while schooling represented a high opportunity cost to poor families sending children to school. However, from the study, it was also discovered that parents contributed much to child labour as they engaged their children in farm work in the morning before they allowed them to attend school. The interview with teachers revealed that some parents sent their children to school unwillingly simply because they had passed their primary school leaving examination (PSLE), and failure to do so would cause them to face the law. These parents, even if they were invited to school by heads of school to discuss matters concerning their children's behavior and progress they never turn up. According to Dachi and Garrett (2003), child labour represents a high degree of wastage of talent and incomplete participation throughout a given education cycle, and this could be due to the lack of a common understanding as to who is a child in Tanzania. The argument was further supported by Burke and Beegle (2004) that there is evidence that parents are reluctant to send their children to school, given the low expected returns, coupled with the cost of schooling and the opportunity cost of children's time. An effort to guarantee the full participation of students in school was important to create the aspired quality population. Lack of proper needs for better schooling was said by all schools to be a significant factor for truancy. This was said by all schools and leads to the conclusion that household poverty is a threatening factor that prevents children from exercising their right to education. This is also mostly contributed to by parents' education level.

Parent Education Level:

Household poverty had been a result of the parents' education level. From the study, teacher participants revealed that parents' educational level had an effect on students' truancy. This is because, according to them, some parents were not much concerned with the attendance of their children at school, although they are paying school expenses such as school fees and other contributions. The students' attendance roles were left to the teachers. Lack of education and parental supervision of the students has been a great reason for truancy in most of the community-based secondary schools. On this assertion, one student from school D had this to say:

"My parents never ask me anything concerning my school attendance; they don't know when or at what time I am supposed to be at school. The only thing they know is that I am a student, so whenever I miss school, they never question; even if I go back home early before noon, they never ask me anything. For example, yesterday I didn't attend school simply because I had a problem, but neither of my parents asked me anything".

The above assertions signified that there was poor parent follow-up and supervision of their children to attend school, and this was one factor for truancy. It was evident from the dictum(s) that, to some, community schools appeared like superimposed institutions having to do with government obligations and forced entities to communities. Perhaps, parents had no vision or time to tell their children why they should go to school and for what future purposes.

Parents, as they are of great influence on their children's academic status, further, their irresponsibility makes it easier for their children to abscond from school. Some of the parents failed even to supervise their children in matters concerning school attendance. It was also evident that most of the parents were only responsible for the payment of school fees and other contributions, and left the attendance role to teachers.

This was noted during the interview from one of the students in school A, as she commented:

"My father had never visited me in school since the day of my registration, and now I am in form four. Only my mother visited during parents' day, and when we were required to bring one of our parents to school at any time. In this way, how could he monitor my school attendance? Nevertheless, my parents are standard seven leavers of those years; they cannot even cross-check my school exercise books. Commitment to school is up to me".

Furthermore, it was argued that household preferences for educated parents may be an important factor in the decision to send children to school and ensure their attendance.

Therefore, due to poor supervision of some parents, students who had poor attendance would continue the habit. When the same question was asked to class teachers, one of the teachers from school B had this view:

Some native parents from the area lack awareness of education. Funny enough, while in other societies parents were willing to sell even a cow to send a child to school, in

this area parents appeared to sell cows to withdraw their children from school".

This teacher further narrated that:

"When a parent is called to school to discuss the truancy behavior of his/her child, they regard teachers as oppressors. In this view, it is very difficult to help students in abandoning truancy behavior".

Family activities

The study revealed that 47% of family activities act as a contributing factor for student truancy. Students in rural schools, after their school hours, when at home, engage in different activities such as herding cattle, fetching water, and performing farm work. Family activities affect students' ability to finish their homework assignments. During the interview, one of the students from school D claimed that:

"After I am back from school normally, I do find a lot of work to do, for example, fetching water, cooking, and looking after my young, so I do not get enough time to study and make preparations for the next day."

During the focus group discussion, other students from school B had this to say:

"I always get up early in the morning to perform home activities that sometimes make me late to school. When a teacher on duty or any other teacher comes to punish those who are late to school, I usually find a way to escape punishment. This had made me exercise truancy".

It was also largely claimed by students during focus group discussions that some parents consider them as manpower in economic activities such as agriculture and farming, so as to be able to meet their basic needs.

On this issue, a student from school C commented:

"During farming seasons, normally we harnessed oxen from 4.00 a.m. to 6.00 a.m. to cultivate our farms at home. We do so for the utilization of oxen as sources of power in cooler hours of the day before schooling. This work of two hours in the morning resulted in tiredness and forced me to leave before the departure time from school. Also, girls in the majority of community secondary schools are forced to perform family duties when they return home after school hours; as a result, they become tired and fail to make self-preparation for their studies.

This treatment for school children shows that some parents do not see the importance of education because they did not go to school. Thus, the situation encourages students' truancy. Furthermore, the interviews from class teachers, discipline teachers, and head of schools came with an observation that some parents sent their children to school unwillingly simply because they had passed their primary school leaving examination (PSLE), and failure to do so would cause them to face the law.

These parents, even if they were invited to school by heads of school to discuss matters concerning their children's behaviour and progress they never turn up. From the focus group discussion, students' truancy is mostly caused by home activities proposed by parents to their students. Such activities include farm activities, livestock keeping, fetching

water, and a few to mention. The fourth and last theme discusses findings on the influence of the geographical location of the school on students' truancy.

The geographical location of schools.

The geographical location entails home-school distance and school environment. Therefore, it will be discussed under the following themes drawn from the data.

Home school distance

School environment

Home-School Distance

On the issue of distance, 57% participants commented that it was a serious cause of students' truancy, as some students live far away from school. The student participants complained about wasting much time walking a long distance to school, and they became tired before reaching school. The long walking distance of these students was also affected by weather conditions since there were two distinct rainy seasons in the study area. During such a period, roads and paths become muddy and impassable. Occasional floods may also hinder students' school attendance. From the month of March to early June, it rains heavily in this study area, and the weather is very cold, which forces students to attend irregularly.

On this issue, one of the students from school C had this to say:

"Punishment in school does not shorten the distance one has to walk to reach the school daily. Other students walk an average of 7 to 10km to reach the school in the morning, and most of our teachers are aware of that. Surprisingly, we are severely punished without considering our distance from home to school. We wake up early in the morning to go to school, but unfortunately, we end up being punished. If you are not caned, then you have another task of uprooting tree stumps for one to two days out of classes. This discourages me".

When a researcher was travelling to visit one of the selected schools, he noted the long distance that students had to cover to and from school every day. This long distance could result in tiredness of a student; in this way, attention is reduced due to tiredness, as they are not ready to learn. In this case, those students residing away from the school were the ultimate losers. Movement of students to and from school daily. The above geographical factors contribute to irregular school attendance, hence missing classes. A student from school D had this to say on this issue:

"We normally start our journey from about 4.00 a.m. to 5.00 a.m. to get to school earlier. At school, we are supposed to keep the school compounds clean before classes. Generally, we get tired, and even revising is difficult. During the rainy seasons, the situation is worse, together with the long distances we encountered, local roads or shortcuts are blocked, and the soil retains water. So, we decide to follow the main roadway to school, or sometimes, when we observe many difficulties, we do not go to school at all".

School Environment

From the study 43% of the participants revealed that the causes of students' truancy were due to poor school environment. The school environment from the study is connected with poor students' relationships with their teachers, school rules, and regulations. The presence of a few teachings and learning materials, such as books for teachers and students, contributed much to students' truancy. Insufficient learning resources in schools discourage students from attending school; as a result, they have a hard time mastering their learning activities.

Furthermore, boredom in the classroom and the dislike of their teachers resulted in the occasional skipping of classes. All four sampled schools in the study had a poor teaching and learning environment. Most of the students lack subject teachers, classrooms, teaching and learning facilities, chairs, hostels, and library facilities for private study, and poor infrastructure, such as a toilet, discourages students from attending schools.

During interview and focus group discussions from sampled schools, one female student from school A expressed herself, but with difficulties due to shyness:

"In this school, we have a pit latrine, but it has no water all day. I have not heard any of my colleagues complaining about water for our needs and latrine sanitation. When I am on my period sometimes, I need water to take a simple shower. This normally forces me to stay at home until I complete my circle".

The researcher observed students' latrines and confirmed the lack of water buckets in those toilets. Due to such an environment, several girls fail to attend school as they cannot get supportive facilities while on their periods sometimes.

Furthermore, it is common that the role of teachers in schools is to teach; it is worth noting that the kind of teaching and behaviour that they demonstrate in schools compounds creates students' truancy. This is due to ineffectiveness and deficiencies in components of pedagogical knowledge traced during class observation. Most of the teachers in sampled schools seem busy and develop a culture of providing notes to students in their respective lessons for subject matter coverage, and not imparting knowledge and skills to the learners.

On the other hand, personality, character, attitude, and observable action are all factors that determine the effectiveness of teachers' relationships both with students and colleagues. Those teachers demonstrating quality of kindness, empathy, and understanding radiate warmth among the students. It was also observed that too many extracurricular activities, such as farming activities, fetching water, collecting firewood, grass cutting, attending cattle, and weeding flower gardens, have contributed more to truancy behavior among students. These activities cause them to escape from school and remain at their home places. Moreover, through focus group discussion, the student participants claimed that on the days of opening schools

(after holidays), some students seemed to prefer taking further days off at home, thus increasing the truancy rate at schools.

During the interview, one student from school D had proved this problem of work activities after telling the existing condition at her school:

"I prefer taking more days staying at home, considering that coming to school early on the day assigned would make us face many activities such as cleaning around the school campus, weeding flower gardens, cutting grass, and scrubbing classroom walls".

Apart from the student in school D, another student from school B had this to add;

"Our school lacks enough furniture, like desks and chairs, to the extent that some of us sit two to three in the same chair or sit down on the ground. These made some of our fellow students go away from school for various periods because they knew they wouldn't catch up with their teachers.

Likewise, enough classrooms and libraries have caused an increase in the rate of truancy. The scarcity of laboratory apparatus and chemicals makes students face some difficulties in understanding other topics in science subjects/periods. On the other hand, a lack of libraries discourages students since they miss a place to get reference materials to support them in their private study. Besides the lack of laboratories, libraries, and congested classrooms, this encouraged students to skip attending classes.

However, most of the community-based secondary schools are located far away from students' family homes. During focus group discussions with students, it was observed that some of the students claimed that they failed to reach school regularly since their homes are far from the school campus; hence, they have even faced other problems, such as tiredness while at school for lessons. In the next chapter, the summary, conclusions, and recommendations of this study are presented.

Discussion of results.

Major Finding.

The major findings in this study on factors for girls' truancy and poor academic performance were girls' interest in learning, school administration, and teacher awareness and interest in schooling, geographical location of the school, and family economic status, as they are related to students' truancy. The summary of the findings is as described below:

Students' Interest in Learning.

From the study, findings indicate that students have lost interest in learning due to the high use of corporal punishment. They avoid it by absconding from school. Hence, this is seen to be an accelerating factor to truancy. Also, the act of students' engagement in various social interactions, including love affairs among themselves and with other people outside the school, was noted to influence truancy in community secondary schools in Msalala district

council. On the other hand, it was discovered that student-teacher conflicts and understaffing have caused poor attendance of teachers in class, hence reduced student interest in attending schools, which leads to truancy. However, from the study, it was found that the poor academic background of the students and the effects of globalization don't encourage students to attend schools.

School Administration and Teacher awareness about the impact of girls' truancy and poor academic performance

In this study, school administration and teachers were highly condemned as contributing factors to truancy due to their cruelty, absenteeism, and inconsistency in dealing with students. They had a lot of bias in dealing with students' academic and discipline issues. This had made some students demoralized and decide not to come to school. The study also found that there were strategies in place to deal with truancy among students, which included suspension, corporal punishment, and calling parents to school. These had led to mistreatments, violations of children's rights, irrationality, and inconsistencies, all of which increased truanies.

On the other hand, the shortage of teachers, students' furniture, and classrooms in schools makes it difficult for the available staff to make follow-up of students' absentees due to the multiple roles they have, including the teaching load they carry. The situation gives a loophole for students to stay away during school hours.

Geographical Location of the School.

Home-school distances due to the geographical location of the schools have contributed to students' truancy. In sampled schools, it was revealed that students walk an average of 7km to 15 km to reach the school in the morning; they waste much time, walk long distances, and sometimes become tired before classes. The radius of travel to the visited schools demoralizes students. Likewise, fear of punishment from teachers and other school authorities due to lateness also contributes to students' truancy.

The majority of community-based secondary schools are mainly found in rural areas. These schools have neither hostel nor boarding accommodations. According to Chaubad (1970), not only can well-equipped schools motivate children's retention, but also the elimination of physical barriers, such as long distances, will maintain effective schooling. Bunto (2002) posits that long distances made the children tired and sleepy, hence less receptive to learning, so they end up with irregular school attendance. Therefore, students face difficulties due to these long distances from home to school, resulting in poor attendance. Apart from the distance factor, the school environment also contributes to truancy.

Furthermore, it is common that the role of teachers in schools is to teach; it is worth noting that the kind of

teaching and behaviour that they demonstrate in schools' compounds creates students' truancy. This is due to ineffectiveness and deficiencies in components of pedagogical knowledge traced during class observation. Most of the teachers in sampled schools seem busy and develop a culture of providing notes to students in their respective lessons for subject matter coverage, and not imparting knowledge and skills to the learners.

This finding was also supported by Smith (2005), who observed that the school setting itself could influence truancy. He identified factors in school that were closely associated with the development of truancy behavior among the students, such as the absence of teachers, the school fence, teaching and learning materials.

Family Economic Status.

Household poverty had led to child labour and poor parent education levels. In the researched schools, it was seen that some students don't attend school as they go for wage labour like fetching water in hotels (MamaNtilie tea rooms). This was among the major causes of truancy, and other parents forced their students to help them sell the goods at the market during school days.

However, household poverty was highly ranked as a cause of truancy, but it was discovered that it has no correlation to truancy, as most of the truant students engaged in personal or family income-generating activities, which could even be used to cover educational costs. In this regard, value placed on education, mindset, and lifestyle prioritization were found to be the causes of truancy rather than material poverty.

The findings were supported by Al-Al-Samarrai and Reilly (2000), who stated that costs incurred during a child's schooling include direct costs like school fees, travelling expenses, school material expenditure, and the opportunity cost of a child's time, like household activities foregone while at school. Given the situation that about 80% of Tanzanian households spend less than Tshs38,600 per month or Tshs1,286 per day, as noted from URT (2009), this created a burden on families, especially large families, single-parent families, and orphans. Given that, the monetary cost of education is incurred before many of the monetary benefits are realized, some households may not have resources available to finance the initial cost of education for some or all of their children (Al-Samarrai and Reilly, 2000). Household poverty leads to child labour. Child Labour, Household poverty situation led some students, especially boys, to engage in petty trade such as fetching water for tea rooms, selling vegetables, charcoal making, bricks making, sugar cane selling, lumbering, mining activities, and some girls even engaged in love affairs, ultimately leading to truancy.

Conclusion.

The factors influencing girls' truancy in community-based secondary schools in Msalala district are compounded.

Hence, no single factor can stand alone to explain factors influencing truancy in community-based secondary schools in Msalala district council. The factors revealed seem to influence students' truancy, particularly girls in those schools.

The study extracted factors which influenced students' truancy in community based secondary schools, these were corporal punishment, peer group, home-school distance, household poverty, a school environment, illness, globalization, engagement of students in love affairs, family activities, student's academic background, teacher's relationship with students, under-staffing, as well as lack of learning and teaching resources. All these factors have been deeply discussed and analyzed in Chapter Four.

The high rate of girls' truancy shows that learning environments in schools have become unfriendly, as truancy among students is increasing. The system of controlling truancy was fragmented, and the strategies for addressing the problem were wrong and misleading. Some strategies were violating the child's basic rights, and there was a poor follow-up mechanism. The existing strategies and practices of student suspension, corporal punishment, and calling parents used in curbing truancy have led to mistreatment, violation of children's rights, irrationality, and inconsistencies, all of which have increased truancy. If the problem of truancy is not solved immediately and education policies are not implemented as required, the quality of individual education levels will fall.

Recommendations

Based on the study findings and conclusions, the following are recommended for action.

Teachers' absenteeism and poor delivery of instructional objectives were found to be contributing factors for truancy. In order to combat the situation, decentralization of the secondary inspectorate unit from the zonal to the district level is needed for close supervision and academic advisory to teachers.

Community secondary schools' planners should consider students' home school distances. Schools should not be built very far from the villages, and the establishment of the Hostels program in community secondary schools should be considered to ensure that girls stay at schools. Also, accommodating girls in Hostels will rescue the girls from various temptations that they face during their journey from home to school and back home daily.

In creating a friendly school environment, schools should establish guidance and counseling departments to help girls solve their problems. Likewise, schools' infrastructures should be constructed to favor girls; for example, there must be special rooms in schools purposely for girls when they enter their period. Also, there should be a good system for providing towels to help the girls when they are on their menstrual period.

The government should subsidize the education cost, including the construction of hostels in community-based

secondary schools where schools are far from villages, to create a conducive environment, which in turn would help to reduce truancy.

Provision of Breakfast and lunch in community secondary schools will be among the factors that will keep students at school and concentrate on their studies effectively.

Guidance and counseling to students should be given priority before thinking of applying corporal punishment, which sometimes causes truancy in some students.

Parents and guardians should be sensitized to keep their responsibilities by providing essential school requirements to students to meet educational needs. Not only that, but also make daily follow-up to and check the academic progress by consulting with their teachers, this will help to curb truancy and improve academic performance.

Acknowledgement

First of all, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to almighty God for blessing me and my ability to conduct this research successfully. Also, I give many thanks to my family (Katoto family), my beloved wife PROSCOVIA VEDASTOA, my sons and daughter for their player that made me perform my studies successfully. More thanks to the Executive Director of Msalala District Council, the District Education Officer, and other officers in the District for assisting me during the entire period when I was continuing with the study program.

My fellow workers at Buyanhulu Secondary School encouraged me when I was very occupied with office responsibilities during the whole period of collecting data to facilitate the dissertation writing. Special thanks to Mwalimu FIDELIS B. SANGA for his assistance in typing, setting, and formatting the dissertation. His assistance made me complete this work successfully. May Almighty God accord him blessings together with his family.

Also, my thanks to The Heads of schools of Msalala District Council for accepting me and allowing me to collect the data from the students and Teachers, which helped me to test the research hypothesis, eventually to come up with complete research finding.

More thanks to my supervisor, Dr. PEACE from Kampala University, for her assistance in the whole period from the proposal writing up to the Dissertation writing, further, to all Lecturers and all staff attendants of Kampala University for their cooperation, may Almighty God bless you all.

All the people mentioned here and others who were not mentioned, I highly honour that their participation was vital to enhancing this Dissertation writing.

List of abbreviations.

DEO: District Education Officer
MOEVT: Ministry of Education and Vocational Training
NECTA: National Examination Council of Tanzania
PEDP: Primary Education Development Program
SEDEP: Secondary Education Development Program
URT: United Republic of Tanzania

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization

VEO: Village Executive Officer

WHO: World Health Organisation

WEO: Ward Executive Officer / Ward Education Officer.

Source of funding.

There is no source of funding.

Conflict of interest.

No conflict of interest declared.

Availability of data.

Data used in this study are available upon request from the corresponding author.

Author's contribution.

Benecolias Rwehabula Katoto designed the study, conducted data collection, cleaned and analyzed data, and drafted the manuscript, and Dr. Peace supervised all stages of the study from conceptualization of the topic to manuscript writing and submission.

Authors biography.

Benecolias Rwehabula Katoto is a student of a master's degree in education management and administration at Kampala University.

Dr. Peace is a research supervisor at the Faculty of Education, Kampala University.

References.

1. Al Samarrai, S.&Reilly, B.(2000). Urban and rural differences in primary school attendance: an empirical study for Tanzania.Journal for African economies,9(4)430-474.
2. Alubanyi,D.(2005). *Comparing the average distance travelled to school by students in primary and secondary schools*. Retrieved on September 23, 2011, from <http://www.utexas.edu/ibj/chasp/publications/download.pdf/DOC3CIESPpa> perdraft.
3. Babcock, P.(2009). *The Rational Adolescent: Discipline, lawsuit, and skill acquisition*. Department of Economics: University of California.
4. Bayerlein, M.M. &Harris, C.L. (2004). Guiding the journey to collaborative work by the system. Pleffer: SanFransisco, California.
5. Bunto,T.N.(2002).Patterns and causes of school Dropout in Arusha and Arumeru secondary schools. Unpublished M. Dissertation. University of Dar-es es Salaam.
6. Burke, K.& Beegle, K (2004). *Why Aren't Children Attending School: The Study of*

- Northwestern Tanzania. *Journal of African Economies*, 13(2), 333-335.
7. Chaubad, J. (1970). *Education and advancement for women*. Paris: UNESCO.
8. Dachi, H.A., & Garret, R.M. (2003). *Child Labour and Its Impact on Children's Access to and Participation in Primary Education*. A Case Study from Tanzania. London: Department for International Development Education Publications.
9. Eastman, G., Cooney, S. M., O'Connor, C. & Small, S. A. (2007). *Finding effective solutions to truancy. What works in the Wisconsin Research to Practice Series?* S. Madison: University of Wisconsin-Madison/Extension.
10. Hale, R.L. (2001). The relationship of hope in the future and perceived school climate to school completion. *School Psychology Quarterly*.
11. Larzelere, R.E., R.E. & Johnson, B. (1999). Evaluation of the effects of Sweden's Spanking ban on physical child abuse: *Psychology Rape*.
12. Mile, M.B. & Huberman, M.A. (1994). *Qualitative analysis: An expanded source book*, 2nd Edition. Thousand Oaks, C.A: Sage
13. Moseki, M. M. (2004). *The nature of truancy and the life World of truants in secondary schools*.
14. Raver, L. (2003). Teachers' qualifications and their impacts on students' achievements: findings from TIMSS data in Israel. Tel Aviv, Israel
15. Reid, K. (2000). *Truancy and school Absenteeism*. London: Hodder and Stoughton.
16. Reid, K. (2002). *Truancy: Short and Long-Term Solutions*. New York: Routledge publisher.
17. Ryan, P. (2001). *The School-to-Work Transition: A Cross-National Perspective*. *Journal of Economic Literature* 39(1), 34-92. Seers, R. M. & Rhodes, S. R. (1978). *Major influences on employee attendance: A Process model*. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, No. 63, pp. 391-407.
18. Smith, M. (2005). School Attendance in Hartford. *Educational Research* 38(2): 226-236. Stake, R.E. (2010). *Qualitative research*. The Guilford Press; New York.
19. Teven, J. J. (2001). *The Relationship among teachers' characteristics and perceived caring*. Communication Education: Renee Robison, Saint Xavier University, Chicago, IL Thungu, J., Wandera, K., Gachie, L., & Alumande, G. (2010). *Mastering PTE*.
20. UNESCO (2001). Background Document. UNESCO International Expert meeting on General Secondary School Education in the Twenty-First Century: Trends, Challenges and Priorities. Beijing, May 21-25, 2001.
21. UNESCO, (2004). *Education Para Todos. El Imperativo de la Calidad*. Paris: UNESCO.
22. UNESCO (2009). *Education statistics in Kenya: Administrative data*. Nairobi: UNESCO Institute of Statistics Press.
23. UNESCO (2011). *World Education Report*: Paris: UNESCO. University of Technology. Unpublished M.A. Dissertation. University of South Africa.
24. URT (1995). Tanzania Education and Training Policy; Ministry of Education and Culture. Dar es Salaam URT (2009). Poverty and Human Development Report 2009. Dar es Salaam: Mkuki and Nyota Publishers.
25. URT (2010). Basic Education Statistics in Tanzania (BEST), Dar-es-Salaam: Ministry of Education and Vocational Training.
26. VanBreda, M.J. (2006). *Guidelines for Empowering Secondary School Educators*, in Local Parents, in Addressing Truancy among Early Adolescent Learners. PhD Thesis, University of South Africa. Retrieved, September 27th, 2010.

PUBLISHER DETAILS:

SJC PUBLISHERS COMPANY LIMITED



Category: Non Government & Non profit Organisation
Contact: +256 775 434 261 (WhatsApp)
Email: info@sjpublisher.org or studentsjournal2020@gmail.com
Website: <https://sjpublisher.org>
Location: Scholar's Summit Nakigalala, P. O. Box 701432, Entebbe Uganda, East Africa