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# CAUSES OF TEACHER ABSENTEEISM IN SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS OF KAYUNGA **DISTRICT IN UGANDA. A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY.**

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# Page | 1 ABSTRACT.

# Background:

Teacher absenteeism is when the teacher is out of school either by delaying, leaving before official closing time, not attending school at all, or when the teacher is at school but missing classes. Absenteeism is caused by many factors like personal illness, a relative's sickness, family conflicts, lack of job satisfaction leading to low morale, lack of personal competence, lack of friendly work group norms, poor leadership at the workplace, in effective supervision and inspection, assignment of other duties outside the workplace, bad weather conditions, union influence, and poor working conditions. The study aims to examine the causes of absenteeism in selected secondary schools of Kayunga District in Uganda.

# Methodology:

This is a descriptive survey design in which quantitative research methods were used on 210 who included the DEO, 10 head teachers, 100 teachers, and 100 Students.

# Results:

54.0% of the respondents were male while 46.0% were females. According to teacher responses, 67% agreed that female teachers are usually absent due to family responsibilities, and 58% agreed that male teachers are usually absent because of attending their business to substitute for their income. 52% agreed that old teachers are mostly absent because they lost their morale.64% of the teachers agreed that teachers are absent due to illness. 46% of teachers agreed that teachers of low level of education attend further education programs. (46%) agreed that teachers absent themselves because they are not satisfied with their job.

# Conclusion:

Teachers absent themselves because they are unsatisfied with their jobs, family responsibilities, substitute income, undertaking further studies, lost morale, and are tired and some miss due to illness.

### Recommendation:

School employers should ensure that there is constant supervision and remuneration to motivate teachers as a way of curbing teachers' absenteeism.

**Keywords:** Teacher absenteeism, Secondary schools, Kayunga district Submitted: 2024-03-22 Accepted: 2024-03-26

# **BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY.**

Teacher absenteeism is recognized when the teacher is out of school either by delaying, leaving before official closing time, not attending school at all, or when the teacher is at school but missing classes. Common practices relating to absenteeism include reporting late at work, leaving early from work early, extending tea and lunch breaks, attending personal business during working hours, and forging illness (Musyoki, 2015). Attendance motivation is influenced by how satisfied an employee is with the job situation. This includes both internal and external pressure such as a job scope, leadership style of the manager, job level, stress of the role, and opportunities for advancement. The ability to attend is influenced by personal characteristics such as age, gender, education, and tenure. This can affect attendance through problems such as illness, family problems, and difficulty traveling from home to the workplace, (Smulder, 2020).

Absenteeism is caused by many factors like personal illness, a relative's sickness who has to be attended to, family conflicts, lack of job satisfaction, lack of personal competence, lack of friendly work group norms, poor leadership at the workplace, lack of effective supervision and inspection of employees, assignment of other duties outside the workplace, bad weather conditions, union influence, and poor working conditions, (Nyangarika, 2020). Teacher absenteeism is a major threat to the provision of quality education internationally, nationally, and in particular in Kayunga District, Uganda. Despite the efforts taken by the government to reduce the incidence still, the problem persists. This declares the need to identify the factors that influence teacher absenteeism in public secondary schools.

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### METHODOLOGY.

# Study Design.

In this study, the researcher used a descriptive survey design. Here, information is collected by interviewing or administering a questionnaire to a sample of individuals. Therefore, the researcher used both questionnaires and interview schedules to collect data. The researcher used quantitative research methods. The quantitative method was used on data from questionnaires.

### **Information Sources.**

The researcher used both primary and secondary information sources during the study. Secondary sources

are documented information which includes textbooks, journals, dissertations, internet sources, and magazines while primary sources include information the researcher used from experience, personal analysis, observation, and constructed research instruments like questionnaires.

# **Population and Sampling Techniques.**

# Study Population.

In this research, the study population included DEO, head teachers, teachers, and Students. These are the key people involved in the running of schools. The population of the study is shown in table 1.

Table 1: Respondents that the researcher used in the Study

Sample n (Solven's formula)
- · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·
n= <u>N</u>
$1(\overline{1+Ne^2})$
01
05
·
07
07
07
07
07
07
07
07
07
07
10

# Sample, Sampling Techniques, and Sample Size.

The researcher used purposive sampling techniques to select head teachers and DEO since theyare the ones that deal with school management and are therefore vast with the information on teachers' absenteeism. According to (Amin, 2005), purposive sampling means that the researcher chooses respondents that he/she believes

would be able to provide him/her with important information. A simple random sampling technique was used to select teachers becausethere were many. Simple random sampling is the type of sampling that provides equal chances for every member of the population to be included in the study (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013). Therefore, the use of random sampling gave all teachers and students an equal chance of being selected to participate in the study.

Table 2 shows the sample size and sampling techniques.

Category of Respondents	N	N		Sampling Technique
	F	F M		
DEO	00	01	01	Purposive sampling
Headteachers	02	08	10	Purposive sampling
Teachers	64	236	100	Simple random sampling
Students	300	300	100	Simple random sampling
Total	366	545	211	

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### **Data Collection Instruments.**

The instruments that the researcher employed to gather information included questionnaires and structured interviews.

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# Questionnaires.

In this study, both self-developed structured and semistructured questions were used. Questionnaires were used because they ensure confidentiality of the responses, they are time-saving and they are easy to use on a large population. Questionnaires were self-developed and administered by Headteachers, teachers and students.

### **Interview Guide.**

An interview guide was followed to reduce bias and maintain consistency. An interview was conducted to get more detailed information that respondents may have not included in the questionnaire. Questions to be asked were structured and the researcher used the observation method to gauge the reactions of the respondents. Only DEO and head teachers were interviewed since they are always busy and may have limited time. The researcher moved with a book and when the interviewees were responding to the questions, he was noting the answers down.

# **Procedure for Data Collection.**

The researcher designed data collection instruments and reviewed them with the supervisor. The researcher got an introductory letter from the Dean School of Graduate Studies of Kampala University, Uganda that he presented for authorization to gather data. Initially, a pilot study was conducted in one school that is not part of the targeted schools to guarantee the validity and reliability of data collection instruments. The researcher then asked for authorization from the head teachers of the selected schools to gather information. Before this, a good relationship was established by explaining to the respondents the intention of the study. After, the researcher gave out questionnaires to the respondents. respondents had After completed questionnaires gathered the the researcher them. He thereafter made arrangements with interviewees on the time they were free such that interviews could be administered. While conducting the the researcher down the major points which was used later in data analysis.

# **Quality/ Error Control.**

The phrase control in research is employed to refer to the prohibition of experimental situations (Kothari, 2013). The researcher avoided bias by using two methods of data collection i.e. questionnaire and interview to promote quality information for the research. To guarantee data quality, the researcher edited all the filled

questionnaires and double-checked the data carefully to remove all the disparities.

# Validity.

Validity is the magnitude to which the instrument quantifies what it is designed to measure (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013). To safeguard validity, data collection instruments were shared with the supervisor and pretested for precision before applying them in the study. The researcher ensured that the instruments were relevant and would measure what they were intended to measure. Therefore, for this study, the researcher consulted the supervisor to determine whether the questionnaire and interview guides were applicable before proceeding with data collection.

# Reliability.

Reliability is how consistent a research instrument is. It is the degree of consistency displayed in a study. Reliability implies the dependability of an instrument to get data. Specifically, reliability is the consistent results that an instrument yields when the unit being quantified has remained the same (Leedy & Ormrod, 2013). To ensure the reliability of the study, the elements on the questionnaire were assessed for uniformity and honesty in their responses from a pilot study by different. The researcher also picked up schools without personal preference. The researcher also designed questionnaires in an easy and understandable language appropriate for the respondents.

# Strategy for Data Processing, Analysis and Interpretation.

Data analysis is scrutinizing what the researcher has collected in the surveyor experiment and making decisions. Τt involves unveiling hidden information; eliciting important variables, discovering any irregularities, testing any fundamental assumptions. Data processing, analysis, and interpretation were accompanied by the objectives of the study and the research questions. Data collected was arranged following classifications of the respondents, edited, and coded for accuracy and completeness of the information given. Numerical data from the questionnaires were analyzed by frequencies and percentages and presented in tables and graphs for data interpretation. Descriptive data from interviews were analyzed besides that from the questionnaires.

### **Ethical Consideration.**

The researcher got information from respondents after seeking their consent to be used in the study. The researcher clarified to the informants the purpose of the study and ensured the confidentiality of the information given. The information obtained was only employed in educational objectives. The names of the

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respondents were not included in the dissertation to enhance confidentiality. This helped the researcher to get valid and reliable information since respondents were assured of confidentiality. The respondents were made aware that they could withdraw from the study if they did not feel comfortable without being coerced.

# **RESULTS.**

# **Demographic characteristics.**

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Table 3: Shows the respondents' gender.

Category	Frequency(f)	Percentage(%)
Male	114	54.0
Females	97	46.0
Total	211	100

Source: Primary data.

From Table 3, 54.0% of the respondents were male whereas 46.0% were females. This indicates that there are

more males compared to females in the entire population of secondaryschools in the Kayunga district.

Table 4: Respondents' Age.

Category	Frequency(f)	Percentage (%)
Below 20	84	39.8
20-30	72	34.1
31-40	47	22.3
41-50	08	3.8
Total	211	100

Source: Primary data

From Table 4, the majority of the respondents (39.8%) were below 20 years of age. This wasfollowed by 34.1% who were between 20 and 30 years of age. 22.3% were between 31 and 40 years of age whereas the least number

of respondents (3.8%) were above 50 years of age. An indication that the majority of the respondents were below 20 years of age because they were students.

Table 5: Respondents' marital status.

Category	Frequency(f)	Percentage (%)
Married	82	38.9
Divorced	02	1.0
Separated	7	3.3
Widowed	04	1.9
Single	116	54.9
Total	211	100

Source: Primary data

From Table 5, the majority of the respondents (54.9%) were single. This was followed by 38.9% who were married, 3.3% had separated 1.9 were widowed whereas the least number of respondents (1.0%) were divorced. This means that since the majority were students that is the

justification for a higher percentage of those below 20 years. The second largest category was composed of married respondents because they were teachers and with families.

Table 6: Respondents' educational level.

Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Diploma holders	61	28.9
Graduate Degree holders	46	21.8
Masters Degree holders	04	1.9
Others	100	47.4
Total	211	100

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# Source: Primary data

From Table 6, the majority of the respondents (47.4) had other qualifications since they were students, this was followed by 28.9% who were diploma holders, 21.8% were Graduate Degreeholders and 1.9% were master's degree holders. Others with the highest percentage is an indicator

that most respondents were students with no professional qualifications. Thus, the above figure indicates that since the majority of the respondents were students, that is the major reason why the highest percentage is on other qualifications.

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Table 7: Headteachers' responses on the causes of teachers' absenteeism in selected secondary schools of Kayunga District in Ilganda

secondary schools of Kayung	SA		A		UD				SD		
Item	F	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	F	%	
Female teachers frequently absent	t-	-	10	100	_	-	-	-	_	-	
themselves from classes, come late to											
school, leave early from school, and											
miss school due to family											
responsibilities											
ie. taking care of the children and	l										
family members											
Male teacher frequently absent	t-	-	10	100	_	_	-	-	_	-	
themselves from classes, come late to											
school, leave early from school, and											
miss school because of attending their											
business											
to substitute their income.											
Young teachers are mostly absent	t6	60	4	40	-	-	_	_	_	-	
from classes, leave early from school											
come late to school, and miss school											
because they engage themselves with											
other issues such as undertaking											
further studies, running their own											
business to substitute their income											
and											
taking care of their young children.											
Old teachers are mostly absent from	4	40	6	60	_	_	_	_	_	_	
classes, leave early school, come late											
to school, and miss school because											
they lose their morale, become tired											
and engage themselves in other											
personal											
business to substitute their income.											
Teachers absent themselves from	1–	-	4	40	_	_	6	60	_	-	
classes, come late to school, leave											
early from school, and miss school											
due to illnesses such as malaria											
diabetes, blood											
pressure and other diseases.											
Teachers of low levels of education	i–	-	3	30	-	_	7	70	_	-	
(diploma) absent themselves from	1										
classes, leave early from school, and											
miss school to attend further											
education programs. ie				1							
degree and master's degree programs				1							
Teachers absent themselves from		20	5	50	-	-	3	30	-	-	
classes, come late											
to school, leave early from school	,			1							
and miss schoolbecause they are no				1							
satisfied with their job.											

Source: primary data

of the children and family members. In addition to the above, the majority of the respondents 100% agreed that male teachers frequently absent themselves from classes, Page | 6 come late to school, leave early school, and miss school because of attending their business to substitute for their income. Findings further revealed that the majority of the headteachers (60%) strongly agreed that young teachers are most absent from classes, leave early from school, come late to school, and miss school because they engage themselves with other issues such as undertaking further studies, running their own business to substitute their

Responses indicate that 100% of the headteachers agreed that female teachers frequently absent themselves from

classes, come late to school, leave early from school, and

miss school due to family responsibilities ie. taking care

income and taking care of their young children. This was

followed by 40% of the same respondents who agreed.

More so, 60% of the headteachers agreed that old teachers

are mostly absent from classes, leave early from school,

come late to school, and miss school because they lose

their morale, become tired and they engage themselves in

other personal business to substitute for their income. This was followed by 40% of the respondents who strongly agreed. 60% of the headteachers disagreed that teachers absent themselves from classes, come late to school, leave early from school, and miss school due to illnesses such as malaria, diabetes, high blood pressure, and other diseases. This was followed by 40% of the same respondents who agreed. Further findings revealed that 70% of the headteachers disagreed that teachers of low level of education (diploma) absent themselves from classes, leave early school, and miss school to attend further education programs. ie degree and master's degree programs. This was followed by 30% of the same respondents who agreed. Finally, the majority of the respondents (50%) agreed that teachers absent themselves from classes, come late to school, leave early from school, and miss school because they are not satisfied with their job. This was followed by 30% of the same respondents who disagreed whereas 20% of the headteachers strongly agreed.

Table 8: Teachers' responses on the causes of teachers' absenteeism in selected secondary schools of Kayunga District in Uganda.

		SA		A		UD		D		
Item	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Female teachers frequently absent themselves from	22	22	67	67	-	-	11	11	-	-
classes, come late to school, leave early from school, and										
miss school due to family responsibilities										
e. taking care of the children and family members										
Male teacher frequently absent themselves from classes,	34	34	58	58	-	-	8	8	-	-
come late to school, leave early from school, and miss										
school because of attending their business										
o substitute their income.										
Young teachers are mostly absent from classes, leave	29	29	54	54	-	-	17	17	-	-
early from school, come late to school, and miss school										
because they engage themselves with other issues such										
as undertaking further studies, running their own										
business to substitute their income and										
aking care of their young children.										
Old teachers are mostly absent from classes, leave early		52	36	36	-	-	12	12	-	-
school, come late to school, and miss school because										
hey lose their morale, become tired, and engage										
hemselves in other personal										
business to substitute their income.										
Γeachers absent themselves from classes, come lateto		11	64	64	-	-	25	25	-	-
school, leave early from school, and miss school due to										
llnesses such as malaria, diabetes, blood										
pressure and other diseases.							-			
Teachers of low level of education (diploma) absent		35	46	46	-	-	19	19	-	-
hemselves from classes, leave early from school and										
niss school to attend further education										
programs. ie degree and master's degree programs.		1	4.5	4.5		1	1.0	1.0		-
	44	44	46	46	-	t	10	10	-	-
to school, leave early from school, and miss school										
because they are not satisfied with their job.										

Source: primary data

Responses from Table 8 indicate that 67% of the teachers agreed that female teachers frequently absent themselves

from classes, come late to school, leave early from school, and miss school due to family responsibilities ie. taking

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care of the children and family members. This was followed by 22% of teachers who strongly agreed while 11% of the same respondents disagreed. In addition to the above, the majority of the respondents 58% agreed that male teachers are frequently absent from classes, come late to school, leave early from school, and miss school because of attending their business to substitute for their income. This was followed by 34% of teachers who strongly agreed whereas 8% of teachers disagreed. Findings further revealed that the majority of the teachers (54%) agreed that young teachers are most absent from classes, leave early from school, come late to school, and miss school because they engage themselves with other issues such as undertaking further studies, running their business to substitute their income and taking care of their young children. This was followed by 29% of the same respondents who strongly agreed whereas 17% of teachers disagreed. More so, 52% of teachers strongly agreed that old teachers are mostly absent from classes, leave early from school, come late to school, and miss school because they lose their morale, become tired, and engage themselves in other personal business to substitute for

their income. This was followed by 36% of the respondents who agreed whereas 12% of the teachers disagreed. 64% of the teachers agreed that teachers absent themselves from classes, come late to school, leave early from school, and miss school due to illnesses such as malaria, diabetes, high blood pressure, and other diseases. This was followed by 25% of the same respondents who disagreed while 11% of the said respondents strongly agreed. Further findings revealed that 46% of teachers agreed that teachers of low level of education (diploma) absent themselves from classes, leave early school, and miss school to attend further education programs. ie degree and master's degree programs. This was followed by 35% of the same respondents who strongly agreed whereas 19% of the respondents disagreed. Finally, the majority of the respondents (46%) agreed that teachers absent themselves from classes, come late to school, leave early from school, and miss school because they are not satisfied with their job. This was followed by 44% of the same respondents who strongly agreed whereas 10% of the headteachers disagreed.

Table 9: Students' responses on the causes of teachers' absenteeism in selected secondary

schools of Kayunga District in Uganda

		SA		A	UD		D		S	D
Item	F	%	f	%	f	%	f	%	f	%
Female teachers frequently absent themselves from classes, come late to school, leave early from school, and	32	32	56	56	-	-	12	12	-	-
miss school due to family responsibilities ie. taking care of the children and family members										
Male teacher frequently absent themselves from classes, come late to school, leave early from school, and miss school because of attending their business to substitute their income.	36	36	46	46	-	-	18	18	-	-
Young teachers are mostly absent from classes, leave early from school, come late to school, and miss school because they engage themselves with other issues such as undertaking further studies, running their own business to substitute their income and taking care of their young children.	19	19	64	64	-	-	17	17	-	-
Old teachers are mostly absent from classes, leave early school, come late to school, and miss school because they lose their morale, become tired, and engage themselves in other personal business to substitute their income.	36	36	52	52	-	-	12	12	-	-
Teachers absent themselves from classes, come lateto school, leave early from school, and miss school due to illnesses such as malaria, diabetes, blood pressure and other diseases.	18	18	60	60	-	-	22	22	1	-
Teachers of low level of education (diploma) absent themselves from classes, leave early from school and miss school to attend further education programs. ie degree and master's degree programs.	35	35	46	46	-	-	19	19	-	-
Teachers absent themselves from classes, come late to school, leave early from school, and miss school because they are not satisfied with their job.	34	34	56	56	-	-	10	10	-	-

Source: primary data

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Responses from Table 9 indicate that 56% of the teachers agreed that female teachers frequently absent themselves from classes, come late to school, leave early from school, and miss school due to family responsibilities ie. taking care of the children and family members. This was followed by 32% of students who strongly agreed while 12% of the same respondents disagreed. In addition to the above, the majority of the respondents 46% agreed that male teachers are frequently absent from classes, come late to school, leave early school, and miss school because of attending their business to substitute for their income. This was followed by 36% of teachers who strongly agreed whereas 18% of students disagreed. Findings further revealed that the majority of the teachers (64%) agreed that young teachers are most absent from classes, leave early from school, come late to school, and miss school because they engage themselves with other issues such as undertaking further studies, running their own business to substitute their income and taking care of their young children. This was followed by 19% of the same respondents who strongly agreed whereas 17% of students disagreed. More so, 52% of teachers agreed that old teachers are mostly absent from classes, leave early from school, come late to school, and miss school because they lose their morale, become tired, and engage themselves in other personal business to substitute for their income. This was followed by 36% of the respondents who strongly agreed whereas 12% of the teachers disagreed. 60% of the teachers agreed that teachers absent themselves from classes, come late to school, leave early from school, and miss school due to illnesses such as malaria, diabetes, high blood pressure, and other diseases. This was followed by 22% of the same respondents who disagreed while 18% of the said respondents strongly agreed. Further findings revealed that 46% of teachers agreed that teachers of low level of education (diploma) absent themselves from classes, leave early school, and miss school to attend further education programs. ie degree and master's degree programs. This was followed by 35% of the same respondents who strongly agreed whereas 19% of the respondents disagreed. Finally, the majority of the respondents (56%) agreed that teachers absent themselves from classes, come late to school, leave early from school, and miss school because they are not satisfied with their job. This was followed by 34% of the same respondents who strongly agreed whereas 10% of the headteachers disagreed.

# DISCUSSION.

The study was tested on coming late to school, leaving earlier from school, missing classes, and missing school for the whole day or more than one day. The results showed that female teachers frequently absent themselves from classes, come late to school, leave early from school and miss school due to family responsibilities ie. taking care of the children and family members; male teachers frequently absent themselves from classes, come late to school, leave early from school and miss school because

of attending their business to substitute their income; young teachers are most absent from classes, leave early from school, come late to school and miss school because they engage themselves with other issues such as undertaking further studies, running their own business to substitute their income and taking care of their young children; old teachers are most absent from classes, leave early from school, come late to school and miss school because they lost their morale, become tired and they engage themselves in other personal business to substitute their income; teachers absent themselves from classes, come late to school, leave early from school and miss school due to illness such as malaria, diabetes, blood pressure and other diseases: teachers of low level of education (diploma) absent themselves from classes, leave early from school and miss school to attend further education programs. ie degree and master degree programs and that teachers absent themselves from classes, come late to school, leave early from school, and miss school because they are not satisfied with their job. In support of the above, (McKenzie, 2018) found that gender has a significant relationship with teacher absenteeism as male teachers were found to be more absent than female teachers as they were found to engage with other activities elsewhere rather than teaching and hence reported to leave early from school. On the other hand, the few absent female teachers who were reported by the principals were seen to be absent because they were taking care of sick family members or they were themselves sick.

# CONCLUSION.

Teachers in Kayunga district absent themselves from classes, come late to school, leave early school, and miss school because they are not satisfied with their jobs, they want to attend to family responsibilities like taking care of the children and family members, and they want to attend to their business to substitute their income, they are undertaking further studies programs, most teachers have lost morale and are tired and some miss due to illness like malaria, diabetes, blood pressure, and other diseases.

### RECOMMENDATION.

School employers should ensure that there is constant supervision and remuneration to motivate teachers as a way of curbing teachers' absenteeism.

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### LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.

**DEO:** District Education Officer.

### **SOURCE OF FUNDING.**

No source of funding.

### **CONFLICT OF INTEREST.**

No conflict of interest.

### **AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY.**

Gasiwo Moses Magoola is a student of a master of arts in education management and administration at Kampala University.

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