

## **Influence of Employee Welfare Services on Teacher Absenteesm in Public Secondary Schools in Kajiado Sub County, Kajiado County, Kenya**

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**Abstract:** For decades business and industry have struggled with the problem of employee absenteeism, a fact that is supported by the vast body of literature that addresses the issue. When satisfaction is high, absenteeism tends to be low and when satisfaction is low, absenteeism tends to be high. In fact, absenteeism and staff turnover are the two most frequent outcomes studied in organizational research. Considering current economic conditions in the country, and the emphasis of using education to attain the Vision 2030 goals, it is important that researchers are able to identify true solutions of teacher absenteeism. The financial cost of teacher absenteeism is significant. Teacher absence often means that students have lost opportunities to learn. Further, teacher absences disrupt the routines and relationships which support the learning process, even with fairer workloads and annual leave provisions, and three school holidays a year for students during which teachers must not be in schools, absenteeism still thrives in schools. It was on this basis that the study sought to assess the effectiveness of the mitigation strategies to absenteeism of teachers, currently in use by the employer, and to do a diagnosis on whether the strategies are effective. The study was based on the theories of reinforcement and behavior theory. The study employed a descriptive survey design and targeted a population of 326 secondary school teachers. Stratified sampling was used to select a sample size of 98 respondents, making 30% of the total. The data will be collected, using questionnaires, as it is believed that the general teacher population is elite and capable of handling the questionnaires. Questionnaires are chosen in this survey study because, it's going to save time and costs for the researcher, all respondents receive uniformity of questions, all questions are standardized, and they yield more information for research. Self-administered structured questionnaires were used to collect data. Data was analyzed using correlation analysis. According to the research findings, management style, disciplinary action, employee welfare and teacher mobility have varied effect on teacher absenteeism. Management style had a correlation coefficient of -0.4238 indicating a negative relationship to teacher absenteeism. Disciplinary action had a coefficient of -0.5028 indicating that it has negative relationship with teacher absenteeism. Employee welfare and teacher mobility had significant positive relationship with teacher absenteeism as shown with correlation coefficient of 0.9394 and 0.7608 respectively. This implied that improving of teacher welfare and improving on teacher placements and postings to schools would have positive results on teacher absenteeism. The study sought to establish a functional new solution to teacher absenteeism in Kenyan schools. The researcher therefore recommended for a similar study to be conducted in the in other counties in Kenya to compare the findings.

**Keywords:** business and industry, absenteeism, education.

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### **INTRODUCTION**

For decades business and industry have struggled with the problem of employee absenteeism, a fact that is supported by the vast body of literature that addresses the issue. According to Luthans [1] when satisfaction is high, absenteeism tends to be low and when satisfaction is low, absenteeism tends to be high. This correlation has been found to be moderate; the underlying assumption is that the absence is at least in part, the result of dissatisfaction on the job [2]. One of the key pillars of Vision 2030 in Kenya is provision of quality education. School systems have been engaged in a system of educational reforms designed to change

school culture and to improve student achievement. The financial cost of teacher absenteeism is significant. Teacher absence often means that students have lost opportunities to learn. Further, teacher absences disrupt the routines and relationships which support the learning process [3]. While research has clearly demonstrated that teacher absence has a negative effect on student achievement [5, 4]. The research has not been very demonstrative about the causes or predictors of teacher absence.

Conflicting evidence exists about the effects of some characteristics to absenteeism, such as gender,

age, and experience in teaching, time of week or month, absenteeism of learners, leadership styles and school culture. For instance, some studies have shown that female teachers are absent more frequently than male teachers [6, 7], while others have found that men are absent more frequently than women [8, 9].

The results of various studies appear to be contextual in nature, and therefore, are conclusive for the environs in which they were conducted. As a result, there was need to do a study of the teacher absence behaviours in schools, in the Kenyan context. Gupta [10] cited chronic absenteeism among school personnel as one of the most neglected problems in public education. Attendance management is the process of controlling absenteeism and timekeeping.

Absenteeism is a serious problem. A CIPD survey (IPD, 1993) established that the average absence rate per employee was equivalent to nine working days a year. While teacher absenteeism is widely recognized as a serious problem, there is surprisingly little systematic data as to the extent of the problem in Kenya. Considering current economic conditions in the country, and the emphasis of using education to attain the Vision 2030 goals, it is important that researchers are able to identify true causes of teacher absenteeism, in different schools in order to develop solutions to the problem, or come up with strategies for mitigation, if not for elimination. This study looked into the effectiveness of the mitigation strategies that are used as solutions to teacher absenteeism, in public secondary schools. There are a large number of factors that affects absenteeism, including legitimate factors such as workplaces being too remote or dangerous to feasibly travel to. This study identified a few notable factors from emerging literature that contribute towards absenteeism, but are yet to be addressed using effective interventions.

In relation to absenteeism in public service, the largest range of literature relates to health and education, [Banerjee, 2008] argue that the health and education sectors are “plagued by high provider absenteeism”. A survey across several countries involving visits to primary schools and health clinics found that, on average 19 per cent of teachers and 35 per cent of health workers were absent [8]. The survey also found that even where providers were present, many were not working, hence functional absenteeism.

The argument for employee welfare services at work was well put by Martin [11]: Staff spends at least half their waking time at work or in getting to it or leaving it. They know they contribute to the organization when they are reasonably free from worry, and they feel, perhaps inarticulately, that when they are in trouble they are due to get something back from the

organization. People are entitled to be treated as full human beings with personal needs, hopes and anxieties; they are employed as people; they bring themselves to work, not just their hands, and they cannot readily leave their troubles at home. The social argument for employee welfare services is the most compelling one, but there is also an economic argument. Increases in morale or loyalty may not result in commensurate or, indeed, in any increases in productivity, but undue anxiety can result in reduced effectiveness. Even if welfare services cannot increase individual productivity, they can help to minimize decreases. Herzberg’s two-factor model, in effect, placed welfare among the hygiene factors, but he did not underestimate the importance of ‘hygiene’ as a means of eliminating or at least reducing causes of anxiety or dissatisfaction.

A further practical argument in favour of employee welfare services is that a reputation for showing concern helps to improve the image of the firm as a good employer and thus assists in recruitment. Welfare may not directly increase productivity, but it may increase commitment and help in the retention of key employees. A strong case for employee welfare services therefore exists, and the real question is not Why welfare, but what sort of welfare. This question needs to be answered in general terms before discussing the type of welfare services that can be provided and how they should be organized. Welfare services may be provided for matters concerning employees which are not immediately connected with their jobs although they may be connected generally with their place of work. These matters will include individual services relating to employees’ welfare such as private help with counseling on personal problems, assistance with problems of health or sickness and special services for retired employees. Group services may include the provision of social and sporting activities and restaurants. Child-care facilities may be provided for individual employees but on a collective basis. The causes of absence have been analyzed by Huczynski and Fitzpatrick [12] under three headings: job situation factors, personal factors and attendance factors.

Job situation factors include: Job scope, a high degree of task repetitiveness is associated with absenteeism although job dissatisfaction itself is a contributory rather than a primary cause of absence. Stress – it is estimated that 40 million working days are lost each year in the UK through stress. This can be attributed to workload, poor working conditions, shift work, role ambiguity or conflict, relationships and organizational climate. Frequent job transfers increase absenteeism.

Management style, the quality of management, especially immediate supervisors, affects the level of absenteeism. Physical working conditions and Work

group size, the larger the organization, the higher the absence rate. Personal factors include: Employee values, for some workers, doing less work for the same reward improves the deal made with the employer (the effort-reward bargain). The Following positive outcomes of absence have been shown by research to be particularly important to employees: break from routine, leisure time, and dealing with personal business and a break from co-workers. Age, younger employees are more frequently absent than older ones, Sex – women are more prone to sickness absence than men. Personality, some people are absence-prone (studies have noted that between 5 and 10 per cent of workers account for about half of the total absence, while a few are never absent at all) Attendance factors include: Reward systems, as pay increases, attendance improves, Sick pay schemes may increase absenteeism. Work group norms can exert pressure for or against attendance.

Baron A and Armstrong M [13] Believe that: The concept of human capital is most usefully viewed as a bridging concept, that is, it defines the link between HR practices and business performance in terms of assets rather than business processes. They point out that human capital is to a large extent non-standardized, tacit, dynamic, context dependent and embodied in people. These characteristics make it difficult to evaluate human capital bearing in mind that the features of human capital that are so crucial to firm performance are the flexibility and creativity of individuals, their ability to develop skills over time and to respond in a motivated way to different contexts. It is indeed the knowledge, skills and abilities of individuals that create value, which is why the focus has to be on means of attracting, retaining, developing and maintaining the human capital they represent. Davenport, [14] comments that: People possess innate abilities, behaviors and personal energy and these elements make up the human capital they bring to their work. And it is they, not their employers, who own this capital and decide when, how and where they will contribute it. In other words, they can make choices. Work is a two-way exchange of value, not a one-way

Exploitation of an asset by its owner. HR policies can be expressed as overall statements of the values of the organization. The overall policy defines how the organization fulfils its social responsibilities for its employees and sets out its attitudes towards them. It is an expression of its values or beliefs about how people should be treated. Peters and Waterman [15] Wrote that if they were asked for one all-purpose bit of advice for management, one truth that they could distil from all their research on what makes an organization excellent, it would be, Figure out your value system. Decide what the organization stands for. Selznick [16] emphasized the key role of values in organizations,

when he wrote .The formation of an institution is marked by the making of value commitments, that is, choices which fix the assumptions of policy makers as to the nature of the enterprise, its distinctive aims, methods and roles. ‘The values expressed in an overall statement of HR policies may explicitly or implicitly refer to the following concepts: Equity: treating employees fairly and justly by adopting an ‘even handed ‘approach. This includes protecting individuals from any unfair decisions made by their managers, providing equal opportunities for employment and promotion, Considerations and taking into account of individual circumstances when making decisions that affect the prospects, security or self-respect of employees. Organizational learning, a belief in the need to promote the learning and development of all the members of the organization by providing the processes and support required. Performance through people, the importance attached to developing a performance culture and to continuously improve; the significance of performance management as a means of defining and agreeing mutual expectations; the provision off-air feedback to people on how well they are performing. Work-life balance: striving to provide employment practices that enable people to balance their work and personal obligations. Quality of working life: consciously and continually aiming to improve the quality of working life. This involves increasing the sense of satisfaction people obtain from their work by, so far as possible, reducing monotony, increasing variety, autonomy and responsibility, and avoiding placing people under too much stress. Working conditions: providing healthy, safe and so far as practicable pleasant working conditions. These values are espoused by many organizations in one form or another, but to what extent are they practiced when making ‘business-led’ decisions, which can of course be highly detrimental to employees if, for example, they lead to redundancy? One of the dilemmas facing all those who formulate HR policies is, how can we pursue business-led policies focusing on business success, and also fulfill our obligations to employees in such terms as equity, consideration, work-life balance, quality of working life and working condition. Despite the support from the national government, adequate staffing, close supervision from school heads and Quality and Assurance Standards officers from the ministry of education department, provision of commuter allowances, hardship allowances to make life fairer in hardship areas, flexible recruitment plans, where schools with vacancies in different subjects advertise for positions, and interviews carried out by schools board of managements, absenteeism still exists. Barsmase & Shukla [17] Showed that lower income employees perceive higher absenteeism. The major factors that affect absenteeism are: welfare facilities, salary, leave policies, supervisor behavior, present working condition and transport facilities. The financial

cost of teacher absenteeism is significant. Teacher absence often means that students have lost opportunities to learn. Further, teacher absences disrupt the routines and relationships which support the learning process. Even with fairer workloads and leave provisions for sick teachers, with full pay and benefits for sick teachers up to six months, paternal and maternal leaves, compassionate leave provisions for 14 working days, and annual leave provisions, and three school holidays a year for students during which teachers must not be at the work stations fully, unless required by administrators to be in schools, absenteeism still thrives. All in all, teacher absences damage the school reputation and induce parallel pupil absenteeism, while simultaneously denying learners the good mentor/role model image of a teacher [18]. It is the long term implications of these on the future individual and national development prospects that make teacher absenteeism a particularly pervasive phenomenon. The Management of teacher absences therefore ought to be a major entry point for any meaningful education reforms program.

The government of Kenya has intended to educate all Kenyan children through the famous free secondary education for all Kenyan children. In relation to absenteeism in public service, the largest range of literature relates to health and education, Banerjee, [19] argue that the health and education sectors are “plagued by high provider absenteeism”. This research sought to understand, the most suitable interventions, in trying to mitigate absenteeism; the study also seeks to establish the effectiveness of the current mitigation strategies in place and in use. Teacher absenteeism is a substantial and growing problem in developing countries OED[20]. The benefits from the growing success in getting children in school are thus undermined as learning time is reduced. This study seeks to establish new information as well as bring into focus, the effectiveness of the traditional approaches documented or already in use, in trying to mitigate teacher absenteeism in schools, in Kenyan context. The study also sought to establish the different variables and the influence they have in absenteeism of teachers, in schools. These research findings will be useful for education policy makers, the TSC discipline department, teacher welfare and counseling unit-with offices at the TSC headquarters, staffing units at county education offices, county directorates of education managers, all human resource officers at sub-county offices, principals and head teachers, school heads of departments, on the way forward towards weeding out absenteeism.

## REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Harrison [21] studies in the article points out that, the structure of Welfare states rest on a social security fabric. Government, employers, trade unions

have done a lot to promote the betterment of workers conditions. Decenzo and Robbinsin [22] their book, “Personnel / Human Resource Management explained the various benefits and services provided by the companies to their employees. According to them, the legally required benefits and services include social security premiums, unemployment compensation, workers compensation and state disability programs. They felt that the cost of the voluntary benefits offered appears to be increasing. Miller [23], Human Resource Management and Human Relations, the provision of intra-mural and extra-mural welfare facilities help in improving the quality of work life of employee’s thereby good human relations will develop among different cadres of employees.

The case for providing employee welfare services rests mainly on the abstract grounds of the social responsibility of organizations for those who work in them. This is not paternalism in the Victorian sense turkeys at Christmas or in the traditional Japanese sense, where the worker’s whole life centre’s on the employer. Rather, it is simply the realization that in exchange for offering their services, employees are entitled to rather more than their pay, benefits and healthy and safe systems of work.

They are also entitled to consideration as human beings, especially when it is remembered that many of their personal problems arise in the context of work and are best dealt with there. People’s worries and the resulting stress may well arise from work and their concerns about security, money, health, and relationships with others. But they also bring their personal problems to work; and many of these cannot be solved without reference to the situation there – they may require time off to deal with sick children or partners, or care for relatives, or advice on how to solve their problems and so minimize interference with their work.

The argument for employee welfare services at work was well put by Martin [24] Staffs spend at least half their working time at work. They know they contribute to the organization when they are reasonably free from worry, and they feel, perhaps inarticulately, that when they are in trouble they are due to get something back from the organization. People are entitled to be treated as full human beings with personal needs, hopes and anxieties; they are employed as people; they bring themselves to work, not just their hands, and they cannot readily leave their troubles at home.

The social argument for employee welfare services is the most compelling one, but there is also an economic argument. Increases in morale or loyalty may not result in Commensurate or, indeed, in any increases



in productivity, but undue anxiety can result in reduced effectiveness. Even if welfare services cannot increase individual Productivity, they can help to minimize decreases. Herzberg's [25] two-factor model, in effect, placed welfare among the hygiene factors, but he did not underestimate the Importance of 'hygiene' as a means of eliminating or at least reducing causes of anxiety or dissatisfaction. A further practical argument in favour of employee welfare services is that a reputation for showing concern helps to improve the image of the firm as a good employer and thus assists in recruitment. Welfare may not directly increase productivity, but it may increase commitment and help in the retention of key employees.

A strong case for employee welfare services therefore exists, and the real question is not 'Why welfare?' but 'What sort of welfare?' This question needs to be answered in general terms before discussing the type of welfare services that can be provided and how they should be organized. Welfare services fall into two categories: Individual or personal services in connection with sickness, bereavement, Domestic problems, employment problems, and elderly and retired employees; group services, which consist of sports and social activities, clubs for retired staff and benevolent organizations. Individual services require personal casework, and the most important principle to adopt is that this work should aim to help individuals to help themselves. The employer, manager or HR specialist should not try to stand between individuals and their problems by taking them out of their hands. Emergency action may sometimes have to be taken on behalf of individuals, but, if so, it should be taken in such a way that they can later cope with their own difficulties [26]. Welfare action must start on the basis that disengagement will take place at the earliest possible moment when individuals Can, figuratively, stand on their own two feet. This does not mean that follow-up action is unnecessary, but it is only to check that things are going according to plan, not to provide additional help unless something is seriously wrong. Personal services should be provided when a need is established, and a welfare need exists where it is clear that help is required, that it cannot be given more effectively from another source, and that the individual is likely to benefit from the services that can be offered. In an organizational setting, an essential element in personal casework services is confidentiality. There is no point in offering help or advice to people if they think that their personal problems are going to be revealed to others, possibly to the detriment of their future careers. This is the argument for having specialized welfare officers in organizations large enough to be able to afford them. Group services, such as sports or social clubs, should not be laid on because they are good for morale; there is no evidence that they are good. They are costly and should be provided only

if there is a real need and demand for them, arising from a very strong community spirit in a company or lack of local facilities. In the latter case, the facilities should be shared in an agreed and controlled way with the local community.

These services aim to provide help and advice to employees absent from work for long periods because of illness. The practical reason for providing them is that they should help to speed the return of the employee to work, although it is not part of the employee services function to check up on possible malingerers. The social reason is to provide employees with support and counsel where a need exists. In this context, a need exists where employees cannot help themselves without support and where such aid is not forthcoming from the state medical or welfare services or the employees' own families [26]. Employee needs can be established, by keeping in touch with an absent employee. This should be not done by rushing round as soon as anyone has been absent for more than, say, 10 days or has exhausted sickness benefit from work. It is generally better to write to sick absentees, expressing general concern and good wishes for a speedy recovery and reminding them that the firm can provide help if they wish, or simply asking them if they would like someone to visit them – with a stamped, addressed envelope for their reply. Such letters should preferably be sent by the employee's line manager. There will be some cases where the employee is reluctant to request help or a visit, and the company may have to decide whether a visit should be made to establish if help is required. This will be a matter of judgment based on the known facts about employees and their circumstances. Visits can be made by the line manager, a personnel officer, or a specialized full- or part-time sick visitor. Some organizations use retired employees for this purpose. Alternatively, arrangements can be made for a colleague to pay the visit. The aims of the visit should be, first, to show employees that their firm and colleagues are concerned about their welfare; second, to alleviate any loneliness they may feel; and, third, to provide practical advice or help. The latter may consist of putting them in touch with suitable organizations or ensuring that such organizations are informed and take action. Or more immediate help may be provided to deal with pressing domestic problem.

Bereavement is a time when many people need all the help and advice they can get. The state welfare services may not be able to assist and families are often non-existent or unhelpful. Established welfare organizations in industry, commerce or the public sector attach a lot of importance to this service. The advice may often be no more than putting the bereaved employee or the widow or widower of an employee in touch with the right organizations, but it is often extended to help with funeral arrangements and dealing

with will and probate matters. Domestic problems seem the least likely area for employee welfare services, but employers who have any real interest in the wellbeing of staff cannot ignore appeals for help. The assistance should not consist of bailing people out of debt whenever they get into trouble, or acting as an amateur marriage guidance or family casework officer. But, in accordance with the basic principles of personal casework already mentioned, employees can be counseled on how to help themselves or where to go for expert advice. A counseling service could be provided by company staff or through an employee assistance programme. It can do an immense amount of good simply by providing an opportunity for employees to talk through their problems with a disinterested person. The help can be provided either through internal counseling services or by means of employee assistance programmes. There is indeed a limit to how much can or should be done in the way of allowing employees to pour out their troubles but, used with discretion, it is a valuable service[24].

Employment problems should normally be solved by discussion between the individual and his or her manager or team leader, or through the company's grievance procedure. There may be times, however, when employees have problems over interpersonal relations, bullying, or feelings of inadequacy, about which they want to talk to a third party. Such counseling talks, as a means of relieving feelings and helping people to work through their problems for themselves, can do a lot of good, but extreme caution must be displayed by any HR people who are involved. They must not cut across line management authority, but, at the same time, they must preserve the confidentiality of the discussion. It is a delicate business, and where it affects relationships between individuals and their managers, it is one in which the giving of advice can be dangerous. The most that can be done is to provide a counseling service which gives employees an opportunity to talk about their problems and allows the counselor to suggest actions the employee can take to put things right

Urgent improvement is needed in the delivery of quality education, if learners will be transformed to

highly productive citizens, according to a World Bank report [20]. The report cites teachers' absenteeism as one of the problems that needs to be addressed if improvement in the education sector is to be seen. Although the average absence in schools is relatively low at 16 per cent, a fifth of schools surveyed had a school absence rate of between 20 and 40 per cent, and for a tenth of schools it is above 40 per cent. The new Service Delivery Indicators for Kenya shows there is an even bigger concern: Teachers who are present at school but absent from class. For every 100 public school teachers, only 55 were in class teaching and 27 were at school but not teaching. This translates to an average teaching time of only two hours and forty minutes in public schools out of a five hours and forty minutes official teaching time per day[19].

The report further said that, senior teachers in public schools, who are also better educated and more experienced are most likely to be absent from class. These senior teachers are also engaged in other management activities in schools which eat up on teaching time. It was established, that absence was also more likely among teachers who teach higher grades, who were born in the same district as the school they are working in and who are on permanent contracts, with long years of service with the teachers employer. On average, one in ten teachers are absent from school at any one time.

Figure 1: shows the fraction of Kenyan government primary schools in different categories of teacher attendance rates. It shows that 38% schools have a teacher absentee rate of less than (70-80%) and a further 13% have an absentee rate of between (90-95%). Thus, around half of all schools have a teacher absentee rate in excess of 10%, and as many as one in ten schools have a daily teacher attendance rate of less than 70%. As the typical (i.e., median) government primary school in Kenya has around 11 teachers, this means that in half of all Kenyan schools more than one teacher is absent at any one time, likely leaving pupils unattended and certainly increasing the work burden for those teachers actually present.

**Table-1: Attendance rates of primary school teachers, Kenyan schools.**

Attendance rates of teachers in %	Percentage of teachers %
Over 95% attendance	11
90-95% attendance	13
80-90% attendance	10
70-80% attendance	38
Under 70% attendance	28

Source; Uwezo (2015) (Annual assessment document)

According to UWEZO, 2015 annual assessment document, there are moderate differences in rates of teacher attendance between schools of different sizes. Smaller schools display slightly higher teacher absentee rates, however this is largely to be expected given the smaller number of teachers in these schools. Also, a number of districts perform particularly poorly as regards teacher attendance. In the following districts more than half of all schools, i.e. 50% and above show a teacher absentee rate of over 20%: Kisumu West, Migori, and West Pokot.

Much attention has been focused on the attendance of children in schools and the impact that frequent student absences have on student learning, however, the same attention needs to be focused on the attendance of teachers who are charged with the responsibility of teaching these children. Many blame teacher absenteeism on poor school cultures, management styles, on supervision structures, lack of strict absence monitoring strategy, on weak disciplinary policies, on geographic locations, reward structures by the employer and many more. In schools the principles maintain a system of signing in and out of the school to try and monitor presence. Some principles use students to record lessons untaught then to single out absence of a teacher. A system of sending weekly returns directly to TSC, on attendance records does not exist, DIQASO-Kajiado-North, Sub-County. However returns are sent on monthly basis through the TSC, units at the districts. However it's worth noting that absenteeism without prior information to authorities is not any different from advance informing by employees of their intentions to be absent. These structures have been abused in the past by teachers signing in but failing to work once in schools (functional absenteeism) or signing in and leaving the workplace for other self-gaining activities.

One unresolved question is whether school principals can reduce teacher absenteeism, and if so, what they needed to do. So a program in Kenya required principals to track of teacher attendance and distribute bonuses to teachers who were present for a minimum number of days [27]. Banerjee and Duo[19] contend that the fact that the program had no effects is indicative of the fact that mediated incentives (i.e., incentives that are distributed by a person, as opposed to being distributed automatically, as in the case of cameras in schools) have no significant effects. Another major unanswered question is whether parents, could be mobilized to monitor and report school activities, including absenteeism, to school committees and allowed them to allocate bonuses among the school staff [27]. Banerjee and Duo[19] take the lack of effects of this program on teacher absenteeism, as evidence that beneficiary control, yields disappointing results. There are multiple reasons to be cautious about the results from this experiment to interventions seeking to

involve beneficiaries in reducing teacher absenteeism. First, it is not at all clear, that beneficiaries weight absenteeism more heavily than other criteria on which they received information (e.g., students' test scores). Gupta, [28] Shows that employee's absenteeism is a major issue for retail sector organization. It gave the inverse effect on organizational growth and development. However the absenteeism could be controlled and minimized by implementing good working conditions and clear work policies and procedures for the employees. In this chapter we explore on the effectiveness of the mitigation structures in use currently to minimize absenteeism.

The argument for employee welfare services at work was well put by Martin[29]: Staff spends at least half their working time at work or in getting to work or leaving it. They know they contribute to the organization when they are reasonably free from worry, and they feel, perhaps inarticulately, that when they are in trouble they are due to get something back from the organization. People are entitled to be treated as full human beings with personal needs, hopes and anxieties; they are employed as people; they bring themselves to work, not just their hands, and they cannot readily leave their troubles at home. The very logic behind providing welfare schemes is to create efficient, healthy, loyal and satisfied labor force for the organization. The concept of employee welfare has been used by many organizations as a strategy of improving productivity of employees, especially because work related problems can lead to poor quality of life for employees and a decline in performance [30]. Mwiti [31] Points out that, naturally welfare services may not directly relate to an employee's job but the presence or absence of the services is notable through employee presence and performance at the workplace, it contributes to attitude of the employee towards work, high or low labour turnover.

The teachers provides essential services to the public in Kenya and especially nurturing education needs and mentoring the future of the young generation of this country, thus the teachers employer needs to address their welfare needs, to make them give the learners their all, as a whole generation's future is in the teachers hands. It is argued that, welfare services can be used to secure the labour force by providing proper human conditions of work and living, Manzini and Gwandure [30]. Welfare services may be provided for matters concerning employees in terms of supplementing the income of the workers by providing services such as housing, medical assistance, canteens and recreation facilities [32]. Further, welfare facilities help in raising employees' standards of living. This makes workers to pay more attention towards work and thus increases their productivity [33]. The Teachers Service Commission should develop appropriate

employee welfare structures and benefits for the teachers to enhance their job satisfaction. The Concept of Employee Welfare Services and Facilities, has it that, historically employee welfare services were meant to reduce absenteeism and time off due to illness.

However, today they have taken a broader scope and they include almost all aspects that relate to an employee's wellness and personal development in the work place [30]. The purpose of providing such facilities is to make their work life better and also to raise their standard of living [33]. Employee welfare is a comprehensive term which refers to the various services, benefits and facilities offered by the employer to employees with a purpose of enriching the life of the employees and to keep them happy and contented [32]. The success of this employee welfare depends on the approach which has been taken to account in providing such welfare services to employees and a welfare policy should be guided by ideal situations and human value. Such services include the provision of medical facilities, sanitary and the accommodation of workers employed, amenities and industrial social security measures, transport facilities to work, training and education facilities, and counseling services. Employee welfare activities in both developed and developing societies have an impact not only on the workforce, but also on the facets of human resources [32].

The International Labour Organization (ILO) broadly classifies welfare services into two; intra-mural services which are provided within the establishment such as latrines and urinals, drinking water, washing and bathing facilities, crèches, rest shelters and canteen, arrangements for prevention of fatigue, health services including occupational safety, uniform and protective clothing and shift allowances, ILO.]. Extra-mural activities which are undertaken outside the establishment such as maternity benefits, social insurance measures like gratuity pension, rehabilitation of drug abusers, physical fitness and wellness clinics, family planning services and child welfare, education facilities; such as loans to further studies, housing facilities, opportunities for training and development Recreational facilities including sports, cultural activities, transport to and from the place of work [32].

Mwiti [31] emphasizes the need for effective welfare services in Kenyan parastatals, for the wellbeing of the employees and the entire citizenry and he further argued that employees spend most of their active time at work therefore the personal and occupational problems should be solved at the workplace. Health services included medical care and counseling services as part of employee welfare services. Armstrong [34] argues that, medical services aim to provide help to employees who get absent from

work for long periods because of illness related issues. Health services should aim to speed the return to work.

Stress brought about through intensive work and conflicts at home and workplace is related to the risks of ill-health. Behavioral problems such, domestic violence, workplace violence, negligence at the workplace, absenteeism, and chronic absenteeism, and substance and drug abuse could be reduced through the provision of employee welfare services in an organization, precisely through counseling services. Therefore a calling for welfare measures to reduce, employee stress both on and off the job and excessive absenteeism. Armstrong [34] notes, that welfare services cannot increase individual productivity, but can help to minimize decreases. Armstrong [34] further asserts that employee welfare services increase the loyalty and motivation of employees. Provision of employee welfare services rests mainly on the aspect of the social responsibility of organizations since the workers' whole life centers on the employer. To make teachers responsible of their duties must be addressed through provision of welfare services in order to improve their commitment.

The empirical review of this study was based on empirical evidence from other scholars who have done almost similar works and studies on teacher absenteeism. Some researchers have done studies on cost implications, others on impacts in education, however this study seeks to demonstrate that no research has been done to assess the effectiveness of the current mitigation strategies to teacher absenteeism. So far researchers have not also looked into counseling as a possible strategy to mitigating absenteeism at work for teachers. This empirical review will be based on observed and measured phenomena, and also derives knowledge from actual experience rather than theory or belief. According to Build Africa, a research organization in Uganda, findings after research in 2012, on the nature, causes and magnitude of teacher absenteeism in the Rights, Education And Development (READ) project schools in Uganda, Teacher absenteeism in Uganda has featured prominently in the discourse relating to poor quality of education and service delivery, especially in rural public primary schools. Reducing teacher absenteeism has therefore become an important policy consideration in ongoing efforts to reverse the downturns in access, equity, quality, retention and completion as performance indicators in education. It is within that context that Build Africa's READ project (January 2012 – December 2014) was launched. Teacher absenteeism in Uganda is widespread and unpredictable; widespread because, absences are not just concentrated among a few "ghost teachers"; and unpredictable because, they are as likely on Wednesday as on Friday [19].



Widespread absenteeism implies that, the supervisors or school inspectors, whose duty is to enforce school compliance, with the Ministry of Education and Sports (MoES)/Directorate of Education Standards (DES) Basic Requirements Minimum Standards (BRMS) are either unable or unwilling to combat absenteeism. Persistence in teacher absenteeism, is also indicative of the failure of the government policies and interventions designed to make teachers accountable [MoES/IOB, 2008]. Few teachers, if any, face a serious threat of dismissal from service on account of chronic absenteeism and they continue to be paid full salary irrespective of whether they showed up at school or not [IGG, 2011].

The main significance of this study was to assess and document the nature and magnitude of teacher absenteeism in schools; explore the attributable

factors; examine stakeholder attitudes towards teacher absences; and use the information generated to suggest functionally smart mitigation measures. The study utilized a multiple participatory data collection approach to engage the informants to tell their own stories and experiences, including face to face interviews, focused group discussions, as well as informal exchanges with some stakeholders. In addition, internet search, document reviews, and non-participant observation were all employed in a mutually supportive manner. The structured responses to the structured questions were cast in tabulated frequencies from which percentages were computed. Conversely content analysis was applied on the unstructured responses and the mass data obtained from literature review with the intent to generate relationships and generalizations.

**Table-2: Teacher Absenteeism in Primary Schools by Region (%) -Uganda.**

Region	Government-run primary schools	Non-government-run primary schools. (%)
Western	20.49	17.88
Northern	27.75	00
Eastern	15.85	9.21
Central	15.44	7.41

Source: UBOS/UNPS (2009/2010)

Statistics on teacher absenteeism in government-run primary schools by region reveal that, the northern region primary school classroom has the

highest level of teacher absenteeism at 27.75% with the central region having the least percentage at 15.44% (Table 2)

**Table-3: The causes of teacher absenteeism, UBOS/UNPS 2009/2010**

Causes of teacher Absenteeism.	Percentages. (%)
Sickness-self and family	34
Lack of teacher housing	19
Attending burials	16
Lack of transport to work	14
Lack of school lunch	13
Other factors	5

Source: UBOS (2009/10).

According to the study above, Causes of teacher absenteeism, there are a host of causal factors but the most frequently cited ones include sickness which accounts for 34% of teacher absenteeism cases in the study schools; lack of teacher housing 19%, attending burials 16%; poor pay 14%, lack of school lunch 13% and other factors 5%. It is worth noting that, while teacher sickness is the most overriding reason for teacher absenteeism in the rural schools of the READ type, it only accounts for 13% of teacher absences at national level [UBOS, 2009/10] . Generally, teacher absenteeism in the rural areas appears to be conditioned more by the systemic problems of poverty, disease and food insecurity than by the school characteristics. The

other contributory factors to teacher absences in the schools include lack of Community participation in school affairs, environmental conditions (weather, terrain, etc.).

As Part of trying to deal with absenteeism, a decision to co-opt head teachers to strengthen quality monitoring of schools; Engagement of “associate assessors” to enhance school supervision at the district level, Capacity building initiatives in the schools aimed at empowering all the stakeholders, Mandatory endorsement of the teachers’ attendance book, were some of the proposals to be put in place to try and curb absenteeism. It’s worth noting that the effectiveness of

the above strategies have not been evaluated viz-a-viz, the strategies that already are in use.

Guerrero, [35] In their paper on, what works to improve Teacher attendance in developing countries, a systematic review, they looked critically at what can be done to improve attendance of teachers in schools but the aspect of effectiveness of the current mitigation measures has not been looked into.

The purpose of this paper, on systematic review, was to report on the systematic review of research on the effectiveness of interventions aimed at increasing teacher attendance in developing countries, as measured by the rate of teacher attendance. The scope of studies that examined the impact of programmes aimed at reducing teacher absenteeism (a measure of teacher attendance was required), the geographical location, studies conducted in developing countries, population: studies carried out with teachers in primary or secondary education institutions, study design: quantitative studies using experimental or quasi-experimental designs. This study aimed at increasing teacher attendance but did not look at effectiveness of mitigation strategies currently use to stop teacher absenteeism. This studies were conducted in developed countries, Kenya however is a developing country, hence a need to do a study on developing country, the above study was carried out for both primary and secondary schools, however issues of absenteeism in secondary schools are unique hence an independent study is required, lastly the study design was different as it involved, quasi-experimental, and quantitative. This study however will involve quantitative and qualitative analysis.

Findings from the above study showed that direct interventions, coupling monitoring systems with rewards have a positive and statistically significant effect on teacher attendance and no effect on student achievement. For indirect interventions, the study found that involving the community in students' education and providing incentives schemes for students had a positive and significant effect on teacher attendance.

Although improving attendance of teachers is not a straight forward process, the results of the systematic review provide evidence that a combination of monitoring and incentives seems to be effective in tackling teacher absenteeism. It's clear from the findings that monitoring and incentives are strategies used before absenteeism actually occurs, they are kind of preventive measures. This paper did not look at effectiveness of measures put in place to change behaviour when absenteeism actually occurs e.g. disciplinary measures, and management styles and how they contribute to reduce or increase absenteeism in secondary schools. Robins, [22] noted that, absenteeism

has a lot of financial implications to the employer. The indirect cost of absenteeism can be up to three times higher than the direct costs of absenteeism. It therefore becomes vital that organizations recognize the extent of this problem due to high costs associated with continued unscheduled absences, and come up with strategies to weed out this vice from their organizations. In the public education sector, Gupta, [10] proposes that it's the most neglected problem. If the current strategies do not work, there is need for a change of approach to the problem, especially culture change in the schools, and other organizations that suffer the same vice. Gupta, [10] Shows, that employee's absenteeism is a major issue for retail sector organization.

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

Denscombe, [36] Outlines a number of ethical issues which practitioners should consider when undertaking action research projects. Denscombe suggests that researchers should be open about their research and that they should ensure that those involved in it give informed consent to what is being proposed.

Research, is a systematic, critical and self-critical enquiry which aims to contribute to the advancement of knowledge and wisdom, Bassey [37] educational research, on the other hand is critical enquiry aimed at informing educational judgements and decisions in order to improve educational actions. The research design used for this study was the descriptive/survey research design, which attempts to describe conditions of the present by using many subjects and questionnaires to fully describe a phenomenon. The research and target population will be made up of teachers from all public secondary schools. The sampling frame was made up of all secondary public school teachers, from Kajiado North Sub-County. An appropriate sample size was estimated from the list of members in sampling frame, according to Mugenda & Mugenda, [38] its 30 per cent of the total population. The Simple random sampling was used as it removes bias by researcher, it also produces representative samples, and it's also an equal probability sampling method.

The data was collected, using questionnaires, as it is believed that the general teacher population is elite and capable of handling the questionnaires. Questionnaires were chosen in this survey study because the respondents are elites, it was going to save time and costs for the researcher, all respondents received uniformity of questions, all questions were standardized, they yielded more information for research.

Maxwell [39] Who distinguishes between, 'internal' and 'external' 'generalizability. These refer respectively to the generalizability of conclusions

within and outside the setting being researched. As regards the former, unjustifiable selectivity on the part of researchers (for example, in terms of choosing interviewees, or potential respondents to a questionnaire, or particular contexts for observation research) will substantially increase the possibility that their accounts will exhibit bias.

The target population was a well-defined group of individuals with similar characteristics,

regarding to adult age and sharing commonality of being employed by the same employer and working under similar work conditions to some extent, a similar work culture, i.e. the teachers in secondary schools. According to Mugenda [38] target population is the members of a real or hypothetical set of people, events or objects the researcher wishes to generalize the results of the research. The study targeted a population of 326 teachers, from 30 public secondary schools in Kajiado North Sub-county as indicated in the table below.

**Table-4: School Category and Staffing Position in Kajiado North Sub-county**

School Category	Boys	Girls	Mixed Schools	Total no. of schools/teachers.
Number of Schools	4	6	20	30
Number of Teachers	73	56	197	326

**Source: DSO Kajiado North Sub-county.**

The teachers in this study were drawn from Kajiado-north sub-county which is largely cosmopolitan. The county neighbors Nairobi County and vastly spreads to embrace the pastoral communities.

All the schools in the study are publicly managed by the principals who are TSC employees, agents of the commissions, Board of managers and Ministry of Education Officials. This study therefore only required respondents from publicly managed and government secondary schools teachers, to have unique results for secondary schools teachers in public schools that can be generalized to all public secondary schools in Kenya. The sampling frame was made up of all secondary public school teachers, 326 in number, from Kajiado North Sub-county. The assumption is that sampling frame is representative of all employees on

sick leave, maternity leave, or on job assignments outside the school.

Sampling is the procedure, process or technique of choosing sub-group from a population to participate in the study Ogula [40]. The researcher employed stratified random sampling to select the sample size. The target total population was categorized into boy’s schools, girls and mixed schools and a sample of 30% was selected to be included in the sample as recommended by Mugenda & Mugenda[38].

A sample is a smaller or sub- group obtained from the accessible population Mugenda & Mugenda [41]. This sub-group is carefully selected so as to be representative of the whole population with the relevant characteristics.

**Table-5: Sample size for different School Categories**

School Category	Boys	Girls	Mixed	Total
Number of Schools	2	2	6	10
Number of Teachers	22	16	60	98

**Research instruments**

The research instruments for this study for purposes of data collection will be questionnaires, developing a questionnaire. Gillham[42] audit trail (keeping a complete record of the research while carrying it out; this includes raw data such as completed questionnaires, and field notes, as well as the research diary or journal. The questionnaires used items on a likert scale. The data was collected, using questionnaires, as it is believed that the general teacher population is elite and capable of handling the questionnaires[43, 38]. The questionnaire was in sections to cater for different variables. The questions will range and vary from open ended responses, yes/no questions, to opinions responses.

Confidentiality of respondents was assured, and names were not required and neither was any form of identity necessary. This assurance encouraged true information from respondents Questionnaires were chosen in this survey study because the respondents were elites, it was going to save time and costs for the researcher, all respondents received uniformity of questions, all questions were standardized, they yield more information for research.

Data processing means editing, coding, classification and tabulating so that data can be analyzed. Analysis involves computation of certain measures along with identifications of patterns of relationship, in data. For this study data analysis involved the use of correlation analysis.

Correlation analysis measures the relationship between the independent variables and the dependable variable. The resulting values called the correlation coefficient, shows if changes in one item, will result in changes in the other items. The goal of this type of analysis was to see whether changes in the independent variables (in this case management styles, disciplinary actions, employee welfare, and teacher mobility) had a direct impact on the dependable variable in this case absenteeism.

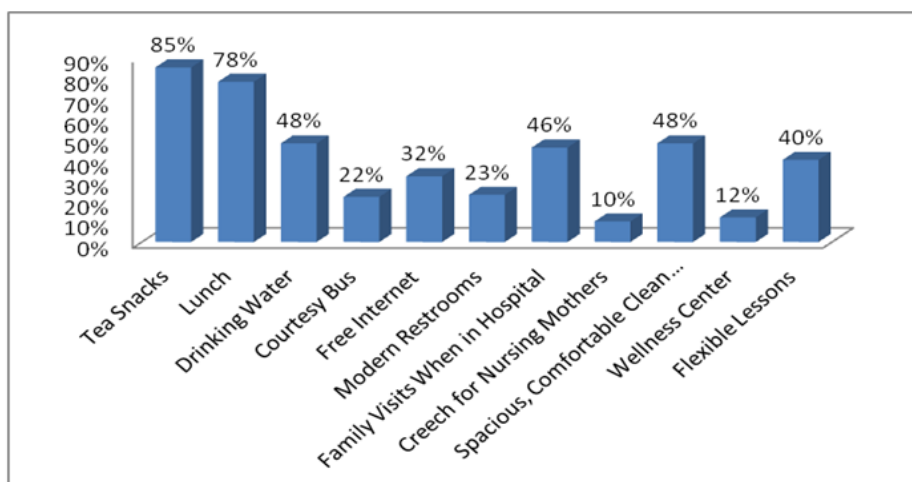
The correlation co-efficient can range between positive, negative 1.00 (plus or minus 1) A co-efficient of +1.00; a perfect correlation means that changes in the independent variables will result will result in perfect change in the dependent variable. A co-efficient of - 1.00, a perfect negative correlation, means that changes in the independent variables will result in a change in the dependent variable in the opposite direction. A co-efficient of 0.00 means there is no relationship between the two items and that a change in the independent variables will not have any effect in the dependent item.

**DEPENDENT VARIABLES AND THEIR MEASUREMENTS**  
**Employee Welfare.**

The respondents were required to indicate what kind of welfare services their schools provide. Eighty five percent (85%) of respondents said their schools provide tea and snacks, 78% said lunch is provided, 48% said drinking water is provided, 22% said a courtesy van or bus is available, 32% said free internet services are provided, 23% said modern restrooms for teachers are available, 46% said their schools visit them and family when they are hospitalized, 10% said their school provide crech for nursing mothers, 12% their school have provided a wellness center and 40% indicated that there is flexible allocation of lesson that is aimed to make teachers to be more available in school. The results show that most of the public schools in Kajiado north Sub County provide a variety of welfare services to the teachers. None of the schools provide all the welfare items required by teachers and therefore there is need for school administrations to improve the welfare of teachers by providing the welfare requirements of teachers.

**Table-6:Welfare services provided for teachers**

Welfare item	Frequency	Percentage
Tea Snacks	70	85%
Lunch	64	78%
Drinking Water	39	48%
Courtesy Bus	18	22%
Free Internet	26	32%
Modern Restrooms	19	23%
Family Visits When in Hospital	38	46%
Creech for Nursing Mothers	8	10%
Spacious, Comfortable Clean Offices	39	48%
Wellness Center	10	12%
Flexible Lessons	33	40%



**Fig-1: Welfare services provided for teachers**



**a. Whether welfare services improves teacher availability**

The analysis in table 4.10 and figure 4.8 below show how the respondents would react to the provision of various welfare items by the school administration like free internet services, tea, snack, lunch, modern restrooms, and Creech for nursing mother among others. Majority of respondents (57.32%) indicated that their presence in school will improve, while the other 42.68% of respondents indicated that the provision of these items would not change the availability in school.

**b. Effect of employee welfare on teacher availability**

The responses relating to various welfare issues are shown in the following table 4.11. Majority of respondents indicated that they would be 100% present in school if the school provided various welfare items like lunch, tea, snacks, drinking water and courtesy van/bus among others. This is represented by a mean of 3.8765 and standard deviation of 4.0123.

Majority of respondents (20.73% and 41.46%) indicated that in the last 2 months they have not been away from schools. The respondents who indicated that they have been away from school in the last 2 months because they were taking care of their personal welfare were about 30% of the respondents. These results indicate that the rate of absenteeism in the schools studied is at 30%. This means that at any one time 30%

of the teachers are absent, which translates to 3 in every 10 teachers are always away from school attending to personal matters.

The respondents were also asked to indicate how their presence in school will be affected if the TSC introduced welfare structures to support teachers needs. Majority of respondents (39.02% and 39.02%) indicated that their presence will be 100% if proper structures are put in place to support their needs. The other 10.98% of respondents were not sure if welfare structures will improve their presence in school, while 8.54% and 2.44% disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively that welfare structures will cause them to be in school all the time when required. These results suggested that the TSC can reduce teacher absenteeism by introducing welfare structures that will support teacher needs.

The respondents were required to indicate if their availability in school would improve if the welfare of teachers is improved by the school administration. Majority of respondents (70.73%) agreed that their availability would improve and only 29.27% of respondents indicated that their availability in school will not improve with introduction of welfare services for teachers. The results show that school administrations can minimize teacher absenteeism by introducing various welfare packages for teachers as a motivation to keep them in school always.

**Table-7: Teacher availability would improve if welfare is improved**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	58	70.73
No	24	29.27
<b>Total</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>100</b>

The researcher sought to establish from the respondents if there is a system put in place by the school administration to assist them financially and socially when they encounter problems. The responses received showed that 32.93% of respondents agreed there is a system, 23.17% of respondents indicated that there is no system and 43.9% of respondents indicated

that there is a system at times. These results suggested that in some schools there is a system in place to assist teachers with personal problems, while in other schools such a system is non existent and while still in other schools there are temporary systems that are only activated when the need to assist teacher arises.

**Table-8: Presence of system for solving teacher problems.**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	27	32.93
No	19	23.17
Sometimes	36	43.90
<b>Total</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>100</b>

The respondents were asked to state whether they chose to be posted to their current work stations. Their responses showed that majority of them (63.41%) chose to be posted to the school they are currently teaching, while 36.59% of respondents indicated that

they never chose to be posted to their current work stations. These results indicated that majority of teachers in public secondary school in Kajiado North Sub county had the opportunity to choose the school they wanted to be posted to.

**Table-9: Presence of system for solving teacher problems.**

Response	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	52	63.41
No	30	36.59
<b>Total</b>	<b>82</b>	<b>100</b>

**Correlation Statistics**

Correlation analysis was used to determine the relationship between the independent variables (management style, disciplinary action, and employee welfare and teacher mobility) and the dependent variable (teacher absenteeism). The results as show that management style had a correlation coefficient of -

0.4238 indicating a negative relationship. Disciplinary action had a coefficient of -0.5028 indicating that it has negative relationship with teacher absenteeism. Employee welfare and teacher mobility have significant positive relationship with teacher absenteeism as shown with correlation coefficient of 0.9394 and 0.7608 respectively.

**Table-10:Correlation Statistics**

	Teacher Absenteeism	Management Style	Disciplinary Action	Employee Welfare	Teacher Mobility
Teacher Absenteeism	1				
Management Style	-0.428383642	1			
Disciplinary Action	-0.502894846	0.486575861	1		
Employee Welfare	0.93949686	0.459817634	0.92256763	1	
Teacher Mobility	0.760823926	0.448748431	0.855019801	0.967725223	1

**SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

**Employee welfare services have an influence on teacher absenteeism in public secondary schools in Kajiado North Sub County?**

Welfare services for teachers have an effect on teacher absenteeism. In schools where the welfare of teachers is well catered for cases of absenteeism will be minimal. Majority of respondents (57.32%) indicated that their presence in school will improve if the welfare of teachers is well taken care of. The other 42.68% of respondents indicated that the provision of these items would not change the availability in school.

Teachers often absent themselves from school in order to take care of personal problems and challenges affecting them. This is because they cannot solve their problems while in school or there are no support systems in the school that can help them to solve their problems and continue with the work. If a teacher is facing financial problem and the problem can only be solved by getting money, then the teacher will be forced to look for the money outside the school and this means being absent from school for several days.

**CONCLUSION**

The research findings indicate that management style, disciplinary action, welfare services and teacher mobility are factors that influence teacher absenteeism in public secondary school.

The research focused on the effectiveness of mitigation strategies on teacher absenteeism in public secondary school in Kajiado North Sub County. The

problem of teacher absenteeism is common in schools across the country and is not confined to one region or county. It is therefore suggested that a similar study (ies) should be conducted in other counties in order to make comparison on factors contributing to teacher absenteeism in different parts of the country. Further studies can be done on the absenteeism trends in private secondary schools, which are privately managed, with closer supervision and with a threatened job, to compare the findings.

Further studies can be done with ample population of female and male teachers to give findings that point at the gender views on teacher absenteeism.

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