A STUDY OF ABSENTEEISM AND ITS EFFECTS ON ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AMONG MARGINALISED URBAN CHILDREN

BY

GITONGA FRANCIS MWANGI

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DECLARATION

This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree in any other University.

GITONGA FRANCIS MWANGI

This thesis has been submitted for examination with our approval as University Supervisors.

PROF. S.K. BALI
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY
KENYATTA UNIVERSITY

DR. K.M. MUNAVI
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY
KENYATTA UNIVERSITY
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ABSTRACT

A large proportion of pupils who enrol in the first grade of primary school do not complete this within the prescribed minimum period and a significant number do not complete the cycle at all. This has been attributed to high rate of educational wastage. One factor which contributes to educational wastage is persistent absenteeism of pupils from school. This study investigated the problem of absenteeism and its effects on pupils academic achievement.

The subjects of the study consisted of standard seven primary school pupils (N=520) and their teachers (N=70). Purposive sampling was used to select six schools located in marginalised areas in Nairobi. The problem of educational wastage is more pronounced in marginalised urban areas (UNICEF 1993).

An Ex-post Facto research design was used. The tools used for data collection were; school records, questionnaires for pupils and teachers, ability and achievement tests. The dependent variable was academic achievement and the independent variable was absenteeism which was blocked into three main levels of good attendants, fair attendants and persistent absenteees. Five
sub-tests of IDEA battery were used as covariates to control for scholastic aptitude statistically.

The findings of the study showed that the rate of absenteeism was higher in the first month of each term than in the second and third months. The rate of absenteeism was highest in the first month of term 1. The overall absence frequency in the first term was higher than in the second term. The overall average absence duration in the six schools was five days in two school terms. There were school specific differences in the pattern of absenteeism. Analysis of variance was used to investigate the relationship between gender and absenteeism. The F value of .35 was not significant (P<0.01, 518, 1 DF). Therefore there was no specific gender effect on the rate of absenteeism. There was a negative relationship between absenteeism and scholastic aptitude. Correlational analysis showed non significant effect of pupils' socio-economic status on the rate of absenteeism. This could have been due to restriction of range among variables used to measure pupils socio-economic status and the nature of the sample.

Analysis of covariance was used to investigate the relationship between absenteeism and academic achievement. The F ratio of 82.23 was significant (P,0.01, 519, 1 DF). Absenteeism of pupils from school affects their academic
achievement when scholastic aptitude is statistically controlled. Pupils who are persistently absent from school underachieve and this may lead to their dropping out of school.

According to teachers and pupils’ opinions, the main reasons which caused pupils to be absent from school were illness, lack of school dues and lack of learning materials. There were gender differences in reasons for absenteeism. More boys than girls were absent because of truancy, engaging in paid employments and slum community influence. More girls than boys were absent because of helping with house-hold chores, parental withdrawal and maturation problems. Certain school based factors like teacher-pupil conflicts, poor methods of teaching, excessive punishments and excessive homework contributed to pupils absenteeism from school. The most important make-up programmes which could assist pupils learn what was missed were copying notes and discussion with other pupils. The most important intervention programmes for dealing with absenteeism were, provision of learning materials and financial assistance to needy pupils, improving methods of teaching and teacher-parent discussions.

The above findings lead to silent emerging issues for schools, policy makers, parents and researchers. Teachers should organise counselling programmes which should
emphasize the importance of education to both pupils and parents. Schools should emphasize rewards rather than punishments. The curriculum should be sufficiently flexible to meet the needs of wide variety of pupils. The topic of school absenteeism should be covered in all teacher training programmes from multi-disciplinary approach. Parents should provide their children with learning materials and pay school dues on time. Parents should also be involved in the life of the school.

A cross-sectional study should be carried out to determine whether there is a significant relationship between absenteeism and age or level of schooling. A longitudinal study should also be carried out to determine nature of relationship between absenteeism and drop-out.
CHAPTER ONE

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Kenya Government accepts the provision of basic education to the citizens as a right not a privilege. Education, apart from contributing to social and economic progress of individuals, enhances cultural progress and international co-operation. The development plan of 1994-1996, states that, the basic aim of education is to remove disparities between groups and economic regions. The Government and educators should ensure that every child gets basic education.

The new Global Vision on basic education for all involves three elements: The most fundamental being the pursuit of basic education with a simultaneous concern for both satisfactory level of learning and achievement; understanding quality education in terms of overcoming traditional dichotomy between preparing for further learning and for life; and providing education which meets the learning needs and other basic needs in order to realize universal literacy level of eighty percent by the year two thousand.

The main delivery system for basic education of children outside the family is primary school. Primary education must be universal and ensure that the basic
learning needs of children are satisfied. Primary education should also take into account the needs of a particular community. Supplementary alternative programmes can help meet the basic learning needs of children with a limited or no access to formal schooling, provided they share the same standards of learning applied to schools and are adequately supported.

The meagre achievement in basic education can be attributed to the existence of a number of constraints, first among which is a theoretical gap of knowledge regarding three issues related to basic education. These three issues are: Failure of the policy makers and practitioners to access or utilize available research and professional knowledge; economic and demographic constraints; and lack of human resources with local capacity in research, policy-analysis and management in education. In Kenya one of the most important constraint which hinders realization of universal basic education is educational wastage (Achola, et al. 1994).

The enrolment table in Appendix I shows that in 1985 standard one recorded an enrolment of 846,000 pupils. The national ratio of boys to girls was 51:49 in favour of boys. During the first year many more girls dropped out of school, so in standard two the gender composition was changed to 52:48. Between standard four and five more boys than girls dropped out of school. About 73 percent of the
class reached standard five. After that there was a heavy loss of pupils (inspite of ten percent inclusion of repeaters), only 46.4 percent of the children who entered primary school in 1985 made it to standard eight in 1992. The table in Appendix I highlights three points in the primary school when wastage rates are relatively high. These are in the lower primary classes between standard one and two, in the middle between standard five and six and between standard seven and eight. It also shows the effect of repetition in the upper primary classes.

In Kenya there are two main forms of education wastage which have been identified: (i) Drop-outs (ii) Repetition. Sago (1984) in Tanzania showed that there was a significant relationship between educational wastage and absenteeism. He found that an early indicator of dropping out of school was pupils persistent absenteeism from school.

Absenteeism has a negative and profound effect on pupils academic achievement. Pupils who are persistently absent from school have low educational attainment which leads to repetition and eventually pupils drop out of school. There are four main reasons why absenteeism is a problem: (i) Educational (ii) Economic (iii) Psychological (iv) Institutional. Educationally absenteeism is a problem because persistent absentees tend to fall behind in their school work. Economically investment on education does not achieve the desired objectives. Psychologically,
absenteeism is symptomatic of a deeper disturbance within an individual and may foreshadow a more serious condition in later childhood or adult life. Institutionally persistent absenteeism suggests disaffection with the school.

The problem of pupils absenteeism from school is more pronounced in marginalised urban areas (UNICEF, 1993). The slums and other unplanned settlements have very few residents who have completed primary education. The low levels of education in marginalised urban areas partially explains the low income levels. The low income level in turn affect their standards of living and compromises their children’s future access to formal education.

A survey conducted in 1987 by Undugu Society in Mathare Slum of Nairobi reported an illiteracy rate of thirty percent. Pupils attendance in primary school was rather irregular and the overall absence frequency was twenty percent. Sixty percent of the women in Mathare had dropped out of school before reaching standard seven. The main reasons of absenteeism were listed as follows; high cost of education, illness, poor nutritional status, child labour, truancy and negative parental attitude towards education. Lack of basic education prevailing in Mathare is basically true for all other residential estates with similar characteristics.
The basic urban needs assessment conducted by UNICEF in Nairobi in 1989 gave the breakdown of education levels of household members living in certain residential areas. These included Umoja, Kayole, Shauri Moyo, Jerusalem, Kawangware, Kibera, Mukuru and Korogocho. Kibera, Mukuru and Korogocho are slums areas in Nairobi. It was found out that on average, fifteen percent of household members had no formal education at all. Korogocho had amongst the highest number of those who had never gone to school. Out of three hundred and eighteen members interviewed in Korogocho twenty six percent had no education at all. Twelve percent had attained only lower primary education. This means that forty percent of the residents in Korogocho were either totally or marginally illiterate. But, even the thirty six percent respondents who had attained upper primary education could not be said to be functionally literate. The Korogocho Literacy observation indicates how serious the problem of Educational wastage is in Nairobi slum areas.

Although education wastage is more pronounced in marginalised urban areas, the same problem confronts educationist countrywide. In Kenya female wastage continues to be higher than male wastage. Eshiwani (1984) estimated that female wastage was three times higher than that of males at primary school level.

There is an urgent need to understand and identify
reasons underlying this pattern of school wastage. One reason which may account for the high rate of educational wastage as already noted earlier is absenteeism of pupils from school. Pupils who are absent from school fail to learn in spite of their intermittent presence in school. This leads to repetition and drop-outs. To deal with the problem of educational wastage the issue of pupil's absence from school should be systematically investigated.

1.1 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The primary cycle is the basic and arguably the most vital in the Kenyan education system. A large percentage of pupils who enrol in the first grade of primary education do not complete this within the prescribed minimum period and a significant number do not complete the cycle at all. This has been attributed to high rate of educational wastage. There is an urgent need to identify and understand reasons underlying the patterns of school wastage in Kenya.

Pupil's absenteeism from school is a possible reason which may account for the high rate of wastage in Kenyan primary schools. Research in other countries has shown that persistent absentees are less successful on achievement tests and intelligence tests (Ross, 1965; Fogelman et al. 1980). Most persistent absentees do not
attain permanent literacy levels (UNICEF, 1990). Poor academic achievement of persistent absentees leads to repetition and subsequent dropping out. Therefore there is need to systematically study the extent and reasons of absenteeism in Kenyan schools.

More specifically the current study investigated

(i) The extent and frequency of absenteeism among standard seven pupils in marginalised urban areas.

(ii) The effect of absenteeism on pupil’s academic achievement when scholastic aptitude was statistically controlled.

(iii) The reasons of absence among standard seven pupils.

1.2 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The study aimed at describing the patterns of absenteeism among boys and girls in upper primary classes, in schools located in marginalised urban areas. Among others the study investigated reasons which accounted for absenteeism among male and female pupils. Specific gender and school differences on extent and frequency of absenteeism were investigated. The study also suggested some remedial and school intervention programmes for dealing with the problem of pupils absence from school. The study also contributed significantly in understanding the characteristics of pupils who are persistently absent.
1.3 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The current study may help in curbing education wastage and generating interest among pupils in school. The findings of the study may be useful to educational policy makers in Kenya since it is the only one of its kind which provides details on the patterns of absence in primary school.

A major attempt was made to use both qualitative and quantitative approach in investigating reasons which accounted for pupils absence from school both from teachers and pupils perspective. The findings may be of particular importance to teachers for they may use them for guiding and counselling pupils. The study attempted to provide patterns of absenteeism based on gender and school differences, this might help in explaining the differentiated performance of boys and girls in Kenya primary schools and more especially in marginalised urban areas.

1.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Due to limited funds and time the study was conducted in one marginalised area of Nairobi, and hence the results of the study can only be generalized to marginalised urban
areas in Kenya. Six primary schools were sampled in the study and hence the schools may not be randomly representative. A sample of 520 primary school pupils and 70 teachers were used. This sample is not a representative of all pupils and teachers in schools located in slum areas of Nairobi. The study relied on school daily register in obtaining the frequency and extent of absence, in some cases the registers were incomplete. A more direct and accurate measure of academic achievement was not available, and hence City Mock Exam results were used. The study was conducted in only one class in all primary school due to practical and administrative reasons. Use of randomized designs could not have been appropriate since the subjects were self-selected into treatment groups.

1.5 ASSUMPTION OF THE STUDY

The study assumed that the school population did not vary significantly. It was also assumed that the resource allocation among the six study schools was the same. Finally it assumed that parental occupation, family size, person lived with by the pupil and method of payment of school fees was a good index of pupils' socio-economic status.
1.6 DEFINITION OF TERMS

Absenteeism: Physical absence of the pupil from the classroom at the time the register was filled in the morning and afternoon.

Absence frequency: Number of times a pupil is absent in days irrespective of the reason.

Absence session: Absence of pupil from the classroom either in the morning or afternoon as was indicated in the school daily register.

Absence duration: Total number of sessions missed due to absenteeism on two schooling terms.

Good attendants: Pupils who had missed less than 26 absence sessions in two schooling terms.

Fair attendants: Pupils who had missed between 28-51 absence sessions in two school terms.

Persistent absentees: Pupils who had missed more than 52 sessions in two schooling terms.

Truancy: Absence of pupils from school without the knowledge of parents and teachers.
Parental withholding: Absence of pupils from school due to non-medical reasons but with knowledge and consent of the parents.

Health related absence: Absence of pupils from school due to medical reasons.

Scholastic Aptitude: This is a psychological construct used to predict academic success in school. It involves development of a classificatory schemata due to search of similarities in meaning among some elements and as measured by five sub-tests of intelligence and Developmental Test of East Africa.

Academic Achievement: Total Score obtained by pupils in English and Mathematic tests in the mid-year city mock exams.

Marginalised urban areas: Those were areas in Nairobi province characterised by over crowding, poor housing condition and lack of infrastructure.

Education wastage: Pupils who after enrolling in the first grade of primary education do not complete the cycle within the prescribed minimum time, or drop-out of school.
CHAPTER TWO
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter contains a critical review of Literature on absenteeism. As noted elsewhere little research on absenteeism has been done in Kenya and therefore the bulk of critical review comes from outside Kenya sources. The Chapter is organised into six main sections. The first section provides a theoretical rationale on the problem of absenteeism. The second section explains the relationship between pupil’s socio-economic status and absenteeism. Section three highlights various psychological explanations on the problem of absenteeism. Section four deals with age and sex differences and how they relate to absenteeism. Section five contains a brief review on how absenteeism affects school performance and general educational attainment. The last section explains the relationship between intelligence and absenteeism.

2.1 THEORETICAL RATIONALE

Bart (1952), Adriola (1953), Hay (1955) all influenced by Freudian theory of psychoanalysis viewed absenteeism as an attempt on the part of children to: (i) Avoid pressures
and responsibilities which accompany maturity and adulthood

(ii) Escape real or fancied injuries or intolerable psychological situations  
(iii) Retreat from normal intellectual growth brought about by unstable ego, possibly caused by psychological or developmental trauma. The above theory has been supported by Broadwin (1962). According to him, a child who is absent has obsessional neurosis and runs home from school in terror. When he is at home, he seems unhappy and carefree, when he is at school he is miserable and anxious. These turn of events leads to depression.

Most neo-Freudians have commented on depression in children who do not want to go to school. In most children the depression is transitory, only in few children it is pathological. School refusal and absenteeism should not be regarded as true clinical entity with uniform aetiology, psychopathology, causes, prognosis and treatment, but, rather as a collection of symptoms occurring against the background of a variety of psychiatric disorders.

Persistent depression leads to school withdrawal which is a form of escape behaviour. Escape is the underlying construct of interest in most withdrawal studies. This refines the pain avoidance approach by focusing on escape component across behaviour. The withdrawal response is therefore on escape approach to attractive non-school outcomes (Morgan, 1976). The importance of pupils self
concept is also apparent. The precise relationship between pupil's self concept and absenteeism should be investigated.

Reid (1982) in the Shiefield study used the Brookover Self-Concept of Academic Ability Scale and shortened form of Copper Smith Self Esteem Inventory with 77 absentees and two control groups. The findings showed that persistent absentees had significantly lower self-concept than pupils in the two control groups, however there was no significant difference between male and female pupils.

Benson (1980) proposed that absenteeism is a coping mechanism maintained by short term reduction of frustration and discomfort and little regard for long term consequences.

An aversive school environment creates a non-specific avoidance response in which means of increasing distance from the noxious stimulus is sought. Absenteeism is therefore a coping mechanism to help pupils avoid school environment.

In summary it is clear that some pupils are better able to cope with all forms of negative reinforcement, socio-psychological and institutional than their peers irrespective of whether they are males or females. Persistent absentees becomes more accustomed to patterns of
failure at school more than their regularly attending peers. Consistent patterns of failure at school leads some pupils to withdraw from the offending stimuli. The school is a place that rewards the able more than the less able, hence schools can also be blamed for absenteeism as much as the pupil’s parents and their background.

Most persistent absentees have low self-concept of academic ability and low achievement motivation, hence they have poor attainment in school which leads to persistent school absenteeism.

2.2 SOCIO-ECONOMIC REASONS FOR ABSENTEEISM

Research findings have been fairly consistent with regard to family factors associated with absenteeism. Low socio-economic status, higher than average family size, poverty, poor housing condition have all been significantly associated with absenteeism.

Children who through their domestic and personal circumstances are forced to acquire adult status too early often become persistent absentees. Thereafter, school life becomes boring, irrelevant, petty and restrictive. Such attitude leads to withdrawal and conflicts (Jones 1980; Bird et al., 1980; Grunsell, 1980).
Tyerman (1968) compared 23 persistent absentees selected by education Welfare Officers with controls selected from two child guidance centres from the same area. The children were matched for sex, age and township. He found out that, the absentees were more likely than their peers to; have parents who exerted control principally by corporal punishment, to live in unclean and overcrowded homes with more than three children in the family, and lack emotional ties with their parents. He also found out that fear of a teacher was advanced by nine out of twenty three absentees as the reason of their absence.

Rutter (1975) stated that there is little doubt that parents help shape the child’s behaviour. This takes place by means of their selective encouragement and discouragement of certain behaviours. Parents also differ in the amount of freedom they allow. Rutter (1975) compared families in two contrasting locations. He found that families in the inner regions suffered more social disadvantages, including worse housing conditions, greater family discord, more family disorders and increased incidence of criminality. In addition their siblings were found to have behavioral, emotional and reading disorders. Broken homes were associated with delinquency and psychiatric disorders. Rates of absenteeism were higher in the inner region. Valarm (1974) showed similar association between home and social background and reading problems.
In another study Mitchell (1975) in Scotland, using a sample of 1086 primary school pupils showed that, persistent absentees came from families where the father was unskilled or semi-skilled worker. There was no significant relationship between mothers's occupation and absenteeism.

Galloway (1982) in Britain noted that, children from his four samples of persistent absentees came from very large families. Galloway (1982) noted a very strong relationship between number of persistent absentees and number of pupils authorised to receive free school meals on account of their parents low income.

At a seminar held in Mombasa Polytechnic in August 1984 by Heads of Primary Schools, the Head of Guidance and Counselling in the Ministry of Education cited absenteeism and truancy as the main causes of problems confronting secondary schools.

Eshiwani (1984) investigated the causes and effects of absenteeism on selected primary schools. He noted that persistent absentees and truants came from low social-class families, and that truancy and absenteeism were extensions of anti-social behaviour. She however did not show how she came up with those conclusions as she only used a questionnaire which was filled by teachers. Her study confirmed previous research that more girls are
persistently absent than boys, but she did not show whether the difference was statistically significant. She concluded that, children with lower intellectual ability may be more persistently absent than those with higher intellectual ability. Her study however did not include any measure of intellectual ability.

Eshiwani's study showed that, absentees came from socially deprived homes. The general picture which emerged was struggle for identity and affection both at home and school.

Absenteeism and truancy were found to be unsatisfactory alternatives to daily routines of certain types of pupils who were vainly searching for ways of alleviating their distressing circumstances. According to Eshiwani the main reasons of absenteeism are psychological, institutional and socio-economic.

Mueni (1984) in Machakos analyzed some factors which contribute to pupils absenteeism. Her findings concluded that the main reasons of absence among primary school pupils were; extended illness; family problems; parental withholding; truancy and school phobia. In her study, most teachers expressed the opinion that, persistent pupil's absenteeism affected individual performance.

In Kapenguria District in Kenya the Board of Education
banned all the youth who were under eighteen years from prospecting for minerals. Parents were advised not to allow them to do so since this had led to the problem of persistent school absenteeism and subsequent dropping out.

In a study of factors associated with wastage in primary school education in Kenya, Achola et al. (1994) found out that, the environmental conditions tended to be responsible for the irregular attendance by pupils. A good number of teachers and head teachers from Baringo and Kibera concurred that, the attendance patterns of the pupil in the area were rather irregular. The irregularity in school attendance seemed to be more prevalent in Kibera due to the fact that it had more day schools than Baringo.

In a study of 1,383 standard eight pupils in 50 primary schools in Kiambu, Kajiado and Nairobi, Appleton (1993) found out that boys performed markedly better than girls in K.C.P.E. and District Mock Examination. The overall absentee rate was 12 percent. The overall absentee rate was markedly higher in Kajiado at 21 percent. The inferior performance by girls may be due to greater absenteeism among girls.

Davie et al. (1976) and Matrimore et al. (1982) showed that absentee rates for single parent homes had no significant difference from two parent homes when subjects were matched for socio-economic factors. In each of their
absentee sample more than two thirds of the families had four or more children. The regular attendants were significantly more likely to be; oldest, youngest, or only child in their family than persistent absentees.

One of the main reasons for high school wastage and absenteeism in Kenya is parental poverty. Poverty affects the female pupils more than the male pupils. Children particularly girls are withdrawn from school so that they can help earn money for the family. Some become house-girls and house-boys (Kirui, 1982) hotel attendants and matatu touts (Nkinyangi, 1977); handcart drivers (Waka, 1980), or even help in other activities at home which contribute to family income (Nderitu, 1987).

Many pupils come to school hungry because of lack of food at home. This results in malnutrition and illness which could lead to persistent absenteeism (Sago, 1984).

Even though school fees has been abolished in Kenya, parents continue to experience difficulty in buying school uniform and paying additional school levies. This may force them to withdraw their children from school. Therefore, more children from poor and unenlightened homes are persistently absent and subsequently drop out of school (Liondo, 1987; Sago, 1984; Eshiwani, 1984; Kirui, 1982; Mbunda, 1983; Waka, 1980).
In general the events that are observable over the years are that, the absentees are more likely to originate from: Families of low socio-economic status (Davie, 1976; Fogelman and Richardson, 1974; Hay, 1955; Fogelman, 1980). Families living in overcrowded conditions (Tyerman, 1968; Fogelman, 1980), Families experiencing marital disharmony such as parental divorce, separation or one parent family (Elliot, 1975; Ferri, 1976), Families with a large number of children (Brook, 1962; Mitchel, 1975).

In Kenya children, mostly girls, are withdrawn by parents to help with house-hold chores which might produce tangible results. The parents are happy when their children engage in some activities which contribute to family income. A child might not attend school or might enrol in school late or even withdraw before completing primary school because he has to work and contribute to the family's meagre income. In such situations children do not absent themselves deliberately.

The high rates of absenteeism in Kenya schools could be caused by early drive for money, by pupil's parental poverty, lack of regular fees remittance by parents and low educational motivation from parents. Most children in Kenya, through their personal and domestic circumstances, are forced to acquire adult status too early and this leads to the problem of persistent pupils absenteeism. From the above cited literature a significant negative relationship
between pupils socio-economic status and absenteeism was expected.

2.3 PSYCHOLOGICAL REASONS FOR ABSENTEEISM

Psychological reasons include a myriad of personality factors like low self concept of academic ability, introversion, isolationism, and school phobia. Depression has been cited by several researchers as one of the common reasons of absenteeism. Champbell (1959), Agra (1959) cited depression as one of the symptoms of school withdrawal. The depressed child does not want to go to school because depression has made his work too difficult for him.

Some researchers in the field of persistent absenteeism have expressed the view that absenteeism might indicate an early prodromal stage of schizophrenia (Glazer, 1959). Withdrawal has been cited as one of the major symptoms of juvenile schizophrenia. However it should be noted that schizophrenic withdrawal has a quality of its own that distinguishes it from both depressive withdrawal and general withdraw, generally observed among most persistent absentees.

Excessive anxiety and fears are often found in persistent absentees. They are expressed as; fears of
being devoured, of bullies, of sexually menacing children of the opposite sex, of arousal of sexual longings. Sometimes the children's excessive anxiety could only be inferred from symptoms like insomnia and fainting.

Parents of persistent absentees have indicated that their children have obsessional symptoms. Some mothers speak of their children as been over-tidy or exceptionally neat and orderly.

There is a relationship between persistent absenteeism, delinquency and psychopathic traits. Persistent absentees besides presenting the major symptoms of school refusal and its somatic concomitant, show a greater variety of symptoms in emotional fields and depressions. Most persistent absentees show withdrawal, irritability and aggressive behaviour (Benson, 1980). Therefore absenteeism can be linked to fear anxiety, projective paranoid symptoms and compulsive obsessions. Anorexia, insomnia, hypochondriasis, and nail bitting are less common among persistent absentees (Morgan, 1976).

Feidhusen (1977) showed that persistent absentees tend to be impulsive, unpredictable, assertive and aggressive in their relationship. They were found to be less responsive than their regularly attending peers to praise and encouragement. The above findings were confirmed by Rutter (1967).
Some of the best long range predictions of absenteeism are the original behaviour status as identified by the teachers responses, intelligent quotient and reading scores (Feidhusen, 1977). Kavangah and Caroll (1977) used a personality inventory and reported that persistent absentees were high on neurotism but average on extroversion.

Lack and Savitz (1976) in Philadelphia reported that delinquent behaviour within school can be a major factor which causes absenteeism. The link between delinquency and absenteeism has long been established (Healy, 1915; Bart, 1952; Hodges, 1965; Tennet, 1971; West and Farringtong, 1980; Monroe, 1973; Finlyson, and Loughran, 1976; Hogughhi, 1978; West, 1982).

Benson (1980) reported that among London school boys, appreciable amount of stealing took place during truancy, especially among persistent absentees. This would seem to suggest that, truancy prevention reduces Juvenile crimes.

Frazer (1979) showed that successful campaigns to reduce Juvenile delinquency and school absenteeism was marked by the disappearance of Juveniles from shopping centres and a decrease in shop lifting in Kilmanolck area.

Farringtong (1980) and West (1982) showed that high delinquency rate schools had correspondingly poor
attendance rates. Their research showed that the most significant predictor of truancy in primary school was rating of pupils as troublesome by teachers and their peers. Farringtong concluded that, adverse home background produce anti-social people and absenteeism and truancy are extension of this.

In another study Tattum (1982) suggested that many persistent absentees are socially inept and they lack skills necessary to handle difficult situations. West (1982) undertook a study of 411 young males recruited at the age of eight from six state primary schools. All the children came from a working class area. He followed the same group up to the age of 25, by that time, a third had acquired a criminal record. The basic aim of the study was to analyze factors which leads to delinquency. West concluded that delinquency and absenteeism in later life are related.

Reid (1982) used Brookover et al. (1967) Self Concept of Academic Ability Scale and the shortened form of Copper Smith Self Esteem Inventory with 77 persistent absentees and two control groups. The study was carried out in a large comprehensive school in South Wales. The study showed that persistent absentees had statistically significant lower self concept of academic ability than pupils in the two control groups. A closer inspection of the findings obtained using Brookover Scale revealed that
the absentees rated themselves as having much less ability than pupils in the two control groups. Reid (1984) used Rutter Scale B on Children Behaviour Questionnaire. The results showed that persistent absentees depicted higher level of anti-social and neurotic tendencies in minority cases.

In general the findings which recur in the literature have shown that persistent absentees have neurotic and introversion tendencies (Kavangah and Caroll, 1977; Farrington, 1980; Reid, 1984). Majority of pupils who are persistently absent in school are anti-social, aggressive and have obsessional symptoms (Hersov, 1960; Douglas and Ross, 1965; Stott, 1966; Rutter, 1975; Benson, 1980; Frazer, 1979; Farrington, 1980; Tattum, 1982; Reid, 1984). Most research is in general agreement that there is significant relationship between absenteeism and low self concept of academic ability and low self esteem (Reid, 1984).

In Kenya no study has ever examined the precise relationship between psychological factors and absenteeism and future studies on absenteeism should focus on this.

2.4 AGE AND SEX DIFFERENCES

Most studies reveal that more girls are absent than
boys. However more boys play truants than girls. Tyerman (1968) investigated the incidence of absenteeism in London primary schools. The absence rates of girls and boys were significantly different. Girls were found to be more persistently absent than boys. The Scottish Education Council report (1953) also concluded that more girls are absent than boys.

Galloway, (1981) analyzed prevalence of absence by sex in four age groups. From 1974 to 1976, there was no significant difference in absence rates of boys and girls. In 1975 the only significant difference was that, more 16 year old girls were absent than boys of the same age (P<0.001). More boys played truants than girls (P<0.001).

Eshiwani (1984) in Kenya showed that more girls were persistently absent than boys. Appleton (1993) using a sample of 1,383 standard eight pupils from Kajiado, Nairobi and Kiambu, showed that girls had higher rates of absence than boys.

Mitchell (1975) in Scotland reported that more girls are absent than boys in primary school, but in infant classes the reverse was true. By contrast, the Department of Education and Science in Wales reported that there was a slight difference in attendance rates for boys and girls. More girls were however absent than boys with parental consent.
Absenteeism generally increases with age. In Scotland, Mitchel (1975) found a consistent trend for absence rates to increase with age, especially among girls, absenteeism reached a peak at around the age of 13.

Fogelman (1980) extended the analysis of national child development study to the age of sixteen. His findings showed that poor attendants at the age seven were not educationally retarded at sixteen compared to their peers provided they had been attending regularly at the age of fifteen. On the other hand, continued poor attendance was related to poor educational attainments. This suggested that children who miss considerable amount of schooling time at an early age can catch up through subsequent regular attendance.

Shepherd (1980) also showed that absenteeism increased with age. In his sample, nearly twenty percent of his persistent absentees first began to miss school at the junior stage.

Galloway's (1985) findings showed that overall absentee rates tended to increase with age. He found an age related increase in the rates of absence, with a sharp increase in the final year of compulsory education. At that time the sharp increase in absence rates among fifth years was attributed to the raising of the school leaving age.
Absenteeism is a progressive phenomenon which increases with age. More girls are absent than boys. Girls are withheld at home to help with various household chores. Where there are financial problems, most parents prefer sending their boy-child to school because of cultural factors. A significant difference between absence rates of boys and girls was hypothesized to exist with higher rates of absence among girls.

2.5 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AND ABSENTEEISM

Most studies done in the area of persistent absenteeism have noted a link between absenteeism and attainment (Copper, 1965; Douglas, 1968; Rutter, 1975; Fogelman and Richardson, 1974; May, 1975; Farrington, 1980).

Still (1962), in America found that his sample of persistent absentees were poor readers and attained low positions.

Chazan (1962) in Colorado reported that more than half of his persistent absentees sample were experiencing a greater difficulty with their school work in contrast of Hersov's (1966) persistent absentee sample, only eight percent showed poor standard of work. Copper (1986) and Still (1962) obtained similar results.
Douglas and Ross (1965) in Britain compared composite scores of intelligence, reading, vocabulary and maths test with attendance in previous years. All of the children in the sample were eleven years old. In general, they found a positive relationship between attendance and attainment. This relationship did not hold for a group of upper middle class children. Children in this group with an average attendance of eight weeks absence per year, did not have lower test scores than those obtained by good attendants. A significant proportion of persistent absentees were under achieving a state which was exacerbated by their absenteeism. It was evident that, as persistent absentees grew older, most of them were found in the bottom bands. Some were in the higher bands than their intellectual abilities suggested.

Jardine (1984) in Northern Ireland carried out a research on deduction of good attendants and persistent absentees on their final year of compulsory education. Most absentees expressed the opinion that they were not capable of doing well in their final exams.

Gray (1985) in Britain used a scale derived to provide pupils score on performance in the main public examination at the end of fifth year. He noted that persistent absentees had a mean score of 9.9 while good attendants had a mean of 25.3. The difference was statistically significant (P<0.001). Those whose attendance was
considered fair compared more closely with persistent absentees with a mean score of 16.3. Pupils with high attendance rates obtained on average higher scores on tests of reading, comprehension and mathematics.

Pupils who are persistently absent frequently under achieve and are backward at school. Most experience difficulty in learning and understanding what they are taught. (York, 1972; Varlaam, 1974; Fogelman, 1980; Galloway, 1982). Reid (1984) used the method of socio-anthropological approach to study persistent absentees. His enquiry showed that there was a marked decline in progress of persistent absentees prior to, and following their absences as measured by comments and grades in their school files.

Reynold (1985) investigated attitude of teachers towards persistent absentees in London primary schools. Most good attendants were described by their teachers as being above average in academic achievement. Their reading ability was always in advance of their chronological age. The interviews highlighted the fact that, poor or good attendance was not solely related to ability. Many of the persistent absentees were capable of obtaining good passes if they so wished.

Fogelman (1980) in Britain investigated the relationship between attendance, attainment and pupil's
behaviour. They recorded the attendance patterns of eleven year, old born in one week of March 1958. Reading comprehension, mathematics and general ability test scores showed an overall relationship with attendance in the previous year. But when the social-economic status of the pupil was put into account, the relationship reached statistical significance only for children whose fathers were in the manual occupations. The simple relations between attendance at age 17 and 15 showed that there was a marked significant relationship between reading comprehension, mathematics, general ability scores and attendance. The difference in the mean between those with 70 percent or less attendance at 15 and those with better than 95 percent was roughly one standard deviation of the total sample score. The overall slight sex difference was more surprising and that was due to greater incidence of illness among adolescent girls. There was a significant interaction effect between reading scores and sex. The findings showed a positive relationship between attendance and attainment.

Mueni (1984), in Machakos District showed that absenteeism leads to poor performance. Muturi (1987) working in Murang'a District in Kenya attributed poor performance in examinations in Kandara and Muruka Division to persistent absenteeism that had been observed in the area.
Studies done in the area of persistent absenteeism of pupils from school have noted a link between absenteeism and academic achievement. A significant proportion of persistent absentees are poor readers and attain low positions. Most studies have established an inverse relationship between reading comprehension, mathematics and general ability with absenteeism. Most persistent absentees frequently under achieve and are backward at school.

Where as most writers have commented on poor educational attainment of persistent absentees, the opposite has been found and reported in several studies. In Kenya no study has ever examined the nature of relationship between absenteeism and academic achievement. Therefore it was hypothesised that a significant negative relationship between absenteeism and academic achievement existed even after scholastic aptitude was statistically controlled.

2.6 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ABSENTEEISM AND INTELLIGENCE

The precise relationship between intelligence and absenteeism is difficult to measure. Intelligence is both acquired and genetical. The genes and environment however contribute differently to the intellectual ability of individuals.
Absenteeism is more environmental than genetical though some psychological factors associated with absenteeism are genetical. Bart (1952) reported that poor attendants were passive rather than assertive and that their behaviour was related to their intellectual ability.

Copper (1960) found out that, persistent absentees were working up to the standard for their intelligence although their intelligent quotient tended to be lower than that of their regularly attending peers.

Tyerman (1968) compared intellectual abilities of persistent absentees and two control groups of good attendants. His group of persistent absentees seemed to be significantly inferior to their two controls in intellectual ability. They seemed to be working below their ability level.

Whereas most writers have commented on low intelligence of persistent absentees, the opposite has been reported in several studies. According to Shephered (1980) Chazan (1962) Leventhol and Still (1964) and Berg (1980) most persistent absentees have above average to superior intelligence. The child's intellectual competence does have some effect on how he or she will enjoy school. Failure to enjoy school is linked to absenteeism.

Hampe (1975), studied a large population and found
that persistent absentees and the general population did not have significant differences on tests of intelligence.

May (1975), in Britain found that at the age of nine plus, persistent absentees had statistically significant low intelligence quotient scores. His sample of persistent absentees had a mean intelligent quotient which was fully 15 points lower than that of good attendants.

Reynold and Murgatroyd (1973) in South Wales found that persistent absentees obtained lower scores on Raven’s Standard Progressive Matrices test.

Fogelman and Richardson (1974), used general ability and attainment scores on primary school pupils in the National Child Development Cohort and found Inverse relationship between absence and test scores for pupils in the working class background. Hence in general a negative relationship exists between intelligence and absenteeism.

2.7 SUMMARY

Research carried out previously has shown that high rates of absenteeism in Kenya schools could be caused by parental poverty. Pupils from low socio-economic status have higher rates of absenteeism compared to those from high socio-economic status. Certain psychological factors may also contribute to pupil’s absenteeism from schools.
Absenteeism is a progressive phenomenon which increases with pupil’s age. The rate of absenteeism among girls is higher compared to that one of boys.

Most studies done in the area of persistent absenteeism of pupils from school have noted a link between absenteeism and academic achievement. Most persistent absentees frequently underachieve and are backward at school.

2.8 RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The following research hypotheses were generated based on the review of literature.

1. There would be a significant negative relationship between absenteeism and academic achievement when scholastic aptitude had been statistically controlled.

2. There would be a significant relationship between gender and absenteeism.

3. There would be a significant negative relationship between gender and pupil’s socio-economic status. To investigate the relationship between gender and pupil’s socio-economic status the following specific research hypotheses were used.
(i) There would be a negative relationship between person lived with by the pupil and absenteeism.

(ii) There would be a negative relationship between pupil's family size and absenteeism.

(iii) There would be a negative relationship between pupil's order of birth and absenteeism.

(iv) There would be a negative relationship between pupil's parents occupation and absenteeism.

(v) There would be a negative relationship between method of school fees payment and absenteeism.

Details of the methodology which was used in the study are presented in the next chapter.
3.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the methodology which was used in the study. This is discussed in six main sections. The first section contain details of the research design and descriptions of the variables. The second section describes the population. The third section contains details of the sample and the sampling technique. Section four highlights the measurement and instrumentation procedure. Section five describes procedures used in data collection. The last section contains the statements of the null hypotheses and methods used to analyze the data.

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

An Ex post Facto research design was used. Ex post Facto design is aimed at discovering possible causes for behaviour patterns by comparing subjects in whom this pattern is present with similar subjects in whom this pattern is absent or present to a lesser degree.

In Ex post Facto design, the causes are studied after they have presumably exerted their effects on another
variable. Ex post Facto design is used in psychological research to test hypotheses about cause and effect relationships, because many of the relationships that we may wish to study do not permit experimental manipulations.

Ex post Facto design is also used to search for the effects of an observed difference between groups. It was impossible due to administrative and ethical reasons to expose pupils to various levels of absenteeism. In order to investigate the relationship between absenteeism and achievement. An Ex post Facto design was therefore appropriate because the effects of absenteeism were studied after exerting its influence on academic achievement.

In this study the independent variable was absenteeism which was blocked into three levels of good attendants, fair attendants and persistent absentees. The dependent variable was academic achievement. The covariate was scholastic aptitude. Due to the fact that the subjects are self-selected in Ex post Facto research, it is not possible to use balanced and randomized groups.

3.2 POPULATION

The population from which the subjects of this study were selected were on average fourteen years old standard seven urban primary school pupils and their teachers. An
urban population was used because schools in these regions are more accessible and there are higher rates of educational wastage because pupils are easily attracted to certain options which in turn makes school life restrictive and unattractive.

The study was conducted in marginalised areas of Nairobi. A survey conducted by Undugu Society in 1987 in Nairobi reported an illiteracy rate of thirty percent. The survey also highlighted irregular school attendance by pupils. The overall absence frequency was twenty percent. A basic need assessment conducted by UNICEF in Nairobi in 1989 gave the breakdown of education levels of household members living in certain residential areas. These included Umoja, Kayole, Shauri Moyo, Jerusalem, Kawangware, Kibera, Mukuru and Korogocho. Kibera, Mukuru and Korogocho are marginalised areas in Nairobi, and it was found out that these regions had among the highest number of those who had never gone to school at all. About forty percent of the residents in Mukuru, Korogocho and Kibera were either totally or marginally illiterate. This therefore indicates how serious the problem of educational wastage is in Nairobi marginalised areas.

Mathare Division was purposively sampled out of all the administrative divisions in Nairobi. Mathare Division was selected in the study because it has a higher number of marginalised areas. In Mathare Division there are six areas
which could be said to be marginalised as compared to other areas. These areas are characterised by over-crowding, poor means of communication and presence of semi-permanent structures. Residents in these areas have no professional qualifications, most are either unskilled or semi-skilled workers. There is relatively higher number of single parents and poor health facilities (UNICEF, 1989). The six areas which were used in the study were Ngomongo, Mukuru, Kiwanja, Kamae, Korogocho and Mathare Valley.

3.3 SAMPLE AND SAMPLING TECHNIQUE

The sampling unit was primary schools in the six selected marginalised areas of Mathare division. Mathare division has both private and public schools, but only public primary schools managed by Nairobi City Council were used in the study. Mathare division has about twenty seven primary schools, but only six are located in marginalised areas. Hence the six schools were selected purposively.

3.3.1 PUPILS SAMPLE

A total of 520 standard seven pupils from the six primary school took part in the study. Standard seven pupils were selected in the study because it had been shown previously that absenteeism increased with pupil’s age. Standard 7 pupils had sufficient mastery of English
language to respond to the questionnaire. Standard seven pupils also formed a nearly homogeneous sample and this helped in reducing the effect of extraneous variances, in the later inferential analysis. The table below shows the pupils sampled by gender and school.

**TABLE 3.1 PUPILS SAMPLE BY GENDER AND SCHOOL**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th>Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>520</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.1 above shows that a total of 260 boys and 260 girls took part in the study. Table 3.2 below gives the age range of the pupils by school.
TABLE 3.2  PUPILS AGE BY SCHOOL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCHOOL</th>
<th>AGE IN YEARS</th>
<th>MEAN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The mean age of the pupils was 14 years. This implies that majority of the pupils were over-age since standard seven pupils should be approximately 13 years old. This could be due to repetition or retention of school going children at home by their parents. Most pupils indicated that they lived with both parents. About twenty eight percent of the pupils came from single parent homes.

3.3.2 TEACHERS SAMPLES

A total of 70 primary school teachers responded to the questionnaire. Table 3.3 below shows the teachers sample by school, qualification and gender.
Table 3.3 shows that all the teachers were professionally qualified. The highest percentage had a qualification of P1, ten percent had a qualification of S1 and few had a qualification of P2. Female teachers outnumbered male teachers.
outnumbered male teachers. This can be attributed to the fact that most public primary schools in Nairobi are staffed with female teachers because they have to stay with their husbands.

3.4 INSTRUMENTATION

This section describes the various instruments used for data collection.

3.4.1 Measure of Absenteeism

School daily register was used to measure the frequency and duration of pupils absence from school. The frequency of absence was obtained by counting the number of times each pupil had been absent irrespective of the duration. The daily class register is filled in twice per day by the respective class teacher, in the morning and in the afternoon. Each day is therefore composed of two sessions, a morning session and an afternoon session. Each absence session was used to represent one absence duration. The overall absence duration for each pupil was recorded at the end of each school term. In the current study an overall absence session was obtained by summing the absence duration in term one and term two. The school daily register was also used to estimate specific gender and
school based patterns of absence. The pattern of absence was investigated on monthly and termly basis.

The information obtained from the daily register was used to categorise pupils into three treatment groups, in all six primary schools. Group one comprised of pupils who had missed less than 26 sessions in two schooling terms. This group was labelled as good attendants. The second group comprised of pupils who had missed between 27-51 sessions, this group was labelled as fair attendants. The last group comprised of pupils who had missed at least 52 or more absence sessions. This group was labelled as persistent absentees. This criterion of selection was used successfully by Farrington, 1980; Reid, 1982 and Galloway, 1981. These three groups were later used to investigate the relationship between absenteeism and academic achievement when scholastic aptitude had been statistically controlled.

TABLE 3.4 NUMBER OF PUPILS IN EACH GROUP BY GENDER

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GENDER</th>
<th>LEVEL OF ABSENCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Good Attendants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>297</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3.4 shows that more girls were persistently absent than boys. A total of 297 pupils were good attendants, and 63 pupils were persistent absentees. Those whose attendance was considered fair were 160 pupils.

3.4.2 MEASURE OF SCHOLASTIC APTITUDE

Scholastic aptitude assesses cognitive capacity or potential that predicts how individuals will perform according to a criterion, prior to receiving training and instruction. Scholastic aptitude is important in predicting degree of success in school.

Five sub-tests of intelligence and Developmental Tests of East Africa, IDEA were used as the measures of scholastic aptitude. The test series consists of 15 different ability sub-tests. Eleven of the tests are speeded to some extent and four are administered under power conditions.

The results of factor analysis of IDEA battery showed that the highest correlation was between the verbal reasoning tests, that is Word Exclusion and Word Analogy. The remaining reasoning tests that is Figure Exclusion, Symbol Exclusion and Mathematics were closely related to this cluster.
An inductive reasoning factor (Factor 1) accounted for twenty two percent of the total variance. The tests with the highest loadings on this factor were the four reasoning tests (Word Exclusion, Word Analogy, Symbol Exclusion, Figure Exclusion) and Mathematics.

Factors derive their meaning from the test with the highest loadings on them, on the other hand factor loadings also gives information about the meaning of individual tests. Thus the fact that Figure Exclusion, Symbol Exclusion, Word Exclusion, Word Analogy and Mathematics show high loadings on the same Factor can be taken to support their categorization as measures of scholastic aptitude.

Bali et al. 1984 investigated the relationship between IDEA sub-tests with C.P.E. examination. The study showed that all the five sub-tests correlated higher than 0.4 with the C.P.E. total score, and three of the tests (Mathematics, Word Exclusion and Word Analogy) even higher than 0.6. Inspection of the specific patterns with respect to different examination subjects indicated that high multiple correlations could have been obtained for all of them. Hence the five sub-tests measured scholastic aptitude since they predicted success in C.P.E. examination.

The sub-tests will be discussed individually. The
meaning of the sub-tests is based on concept framework suggested by French et al. 1963.

(i) Figure Exclusion: This is a Non verbal test. In rows of five geometric figures four are similar in some respect. Pupils were supposed to indicate one Figure which did not accord with the principle. This sub-test has a KR reliability coefficient of 0.77. This was a power test with 27 items.

(ii) Word Exclusion: This is a verbal test with KR reliability coefficient of 0.73. Rows of words were presented to the pupils, four of which were similar in some respect. Pupils were supposed to indicate the word that did not match with the rest. This was a power test with 40 items.

(iii) Word analogy: This is a verbal test. The testes were presented with analogies in which the last word was missing. The testes were supposed to choose the missing word from five alternatives. This is a power test with 40 items and KR reliability coefficient of 0.88.

(iv) Symbol Exclusion: This is a non-verbal test the testes were presented with five groups of numbers or letters, four of which were similar in some respect. The testes were supposed to indicate one that did not fit the rule. This is a power test with 40 items and KR reliability coefficient of 0.82.

(v) Mathematics: This is a measure of numerical facility it consisted of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division problems. The pupils were supposed to check the correct solution for each item from five alternatives. This is a speed test with 40 items and split half reliability coefficient of 0.85. The predictive and concurrent validity of IDEA had been previously established.

The five sub-tests were administered to standard seven pupils in the month of September 1995. Each sub-test was prefaced with an instruction page giving several examples. After the instructor had explained the principle of the
test, the examples were discussed and the response procedure was explained. Pupils did the practise items individually and later they discussed them with the instructor before the actual testing was started. The five sub-tests were later scored dichotomously. Table 3.5 below presents the quality and characteristics of the five sub-tests.

**TABLE 3.5. QUALITY AND ITEM CHARACTERISTICS OF THE FIVE IDEA SUB-TESTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sub-Test</th>
<th>No. of Item</th>
<th>Testing Time (Mins)</th>
<th>Reliability Coefficient</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Figure Exclusion</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.77 (KR-20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word Exclusion</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0.73 (KR-20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word Analogy</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0.88 (KR-20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Symbol Exclusion</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0.82 (KR-20)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mathematics</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.85 (Split-half)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.4.3 MEASURE OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Achievement tests are designed to measure the effect of a specific programme of instruction or training. Results of mid-year Nairobi City Mock Exams were used as the measure of academic achievement. The City Mock Exams are developed by experienced teachers drawn from primary schools managed by Nairobi City Council. The City Mock Exams were used because there was no standardized achievement battery which was available for use with
standard seven pupils. Mock Exams are usually parallel to the final K.C.P.E. examination. The same number of subjects are tested in the Mock Exam as in the K.C.P.E. Exam. They have similar item characteristic with the K.C.P.E. examination and all the pupils in City primary schools sit for this exam. The Mock exams are scored at different centres, which are drawn randomly from all primary schools in Nairobi Province. They are scored by teachers drawn from primary schools in Nairobi and hence there is objectivity in scoring.

Pupils scores in English and Mathematics were used in the final analysis. English and Mathematic scores were used because their individual correlation with the total score for all subjects was more than 0.8 (Bali, et al. 1984). In this study a composite score which was used as the index of academic achievement for each pupil was calculated by adding pupil's score in English and Mathematics.

The Mathematics paper contained fifty objective items. The paper consisted of basic addition, subtraction, multiplication and division problems. The paper was scored dichotomously and converted into percentage. The English test contained two sections. The first section was testing the pupils on their grammatical ability. It contained fifty items which were scored dichotomously. The second section of the English test, was testing pupils ability to
construct an original essay. This section was scored subjectively. The total score for the English test was obtained by adding the scores in the two sections for each pupil. The results of the City Mock Exams were obtained from the head-teachers of the study schools at the end of second term in the month of July.

3.4.4. PUPILS' QUESTIONNAIRE

The main purpose of the questionnaire was three fold

(i) The questionnaire was used to investigate pupils socio-economic and family background.

(ii) It was also used to seek pupil’s opinions on what causes absenteeism in primary schools.

(iii) Lastly the questionnaire was used to seek pupils opinions on how they thought they could make up for the lost school work during their absence sessions. The administration procedure was as follows: The instructor first read the question, and gave the possible explanation, and then pupils simultaneously answered the question. The questionnaire was administered in English. The questionnaire is presented in Appendix II.

Prior to the main study the questionnaire was pretested with pupils from a parallel primary school to the ones used in the study. The details of the pilot study are presented in Appendix IV.

The questionnaire contained a total of 17 Items. Items 1-5 collected information about pupils demographic
variable like age, school, gender and the estate from which they came. Items 6-8 and 14 dealt with pupils socio-economic and family background. This included the persons lived with by the pupil, family size, pupil’s order of birth, parental occupation and the mode of school fees payment. A composite index of family size was later obtained by totalling all the number of siblings of the same mother with the pupil. Items 10-13 investigated reasons which accounted for pupils’ absence in first and second term. Items 15-17 sought pupil’s opinions on possible remedial and school intervention programme for dealing with the problem of pupil’s absenteeism. The questionnaire was administered to all standard seven pupils of the selected schools in the month of June 1996.

Once administered the questionnaire was coded with the help of two research assistants, for further analysis. Table 3.6 below presents the inter-correlations of indices of pupil’s socio-economic status.
TABLE 3.6 INTER-CORRELATIONS OF INDICES OF PUPIL'S SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Lives</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Family size</td>
<td>.26</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Order of birth</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Mother’s occupation</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>-.16</td>
<td>-.16</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Father’s occupation</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>.23</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Payment of school fees</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One way of obtaining information about psychological meanings of variables is to examine the ways in which they are related to each other. Variables that are hypothesized to measure the same thing should show relatively high correlations. Therefore the extent to which the above variables measured pupil's socio-economic status can be examined empirically by means of correlational analysis. The highest correlation was between family size and pupil's order of birth. This implied that pupils with higher order of birth came from large families. This type of relationship was expected. There was a negative relationship between family size and mother’s occupation. Mothers who were professionally qualified had fewer children than those in the manual and semi-skilled occupations. This kind of relationship was also expected. Since most of the variables were positively related, and given the relatively large sample size they are valid and
reliable measures of pupil's socio-economic status. This information was later used to test hypotheses on relationship between absenteeism and pupil's socio-economic and family background through correlation analysis.

3.4.5 TEACHERS QUESTIONNAIRE

The purpose of the questionnaire was to investigate

(i) Important teacher demographic variables like gender and professional qualifications.

(ii) Pupil's patterns of absence and its impact on their academic achievement.

(iii) Teachers perceptions on possible causes of pupil's absence and school intervention programmes which could be used to deal with the problem of pupil's absence from school. The questionnaire was filled by all teachers in the study schools. Teachers were given sufficient time to respond to the questionnaire.

Prior to the main study the questionnaire was pretested with teachers from parallel primary school with the ones used in the study. The details of the pilot study are given in Appendix IV.

The questionnaire contained 10 items (see Appendix III). Items 1-3 dealt with teacher demographic variables. These were: school, professional qualification and gender.
Item 4 probed into teachers perceptions on possible causes of absenteeism among boys and girls in primary schools. Item 5 investigated the pattern of absenteeism on monthly and termly basis. Items 6-7 investigated impact of absenteeism on pupil's academic achievement. Items 8-10 investigated the intervention programmes which are used in schools to deal with the problem of pupils absenteeism.

The responses of the teachers were content analyzed. The results of the content analysis are described in the next chapter along with pupil's responses.

3.5 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

Administration of pupil's questionnaire took place in the month of July 1995. All standard seven pupils present on the day in the six study schools responded to the questionnaire. All the pupils were tested at the same time on each school. This made the administration of the questionnaire easy and maximised pupils' co-operation. Pupils responded to the same item of the questionnaire at the same time. Later a code book was developed and the questionnaires coded systematically. Administration of teachers' questionnaire also took place in the month of July. This was done through the head-teachers of the respective schools. All teachers in the study schools responded to the questionnaire. Teachers were given ample time to respond to the questionnaire. The completed
questionnaires were later collected from the head-teachers of the respective schools.

Data on pupil's performance in the City Mock Exams was collected at the end of second term. These marks were obtained from the head-teachers of the respective schools. They were entered in computer sheets for further analysis. Data on frequency, extent and patterns of pupil's absence was collected in the month of September 1996. With permission of the school head this information was obtained from the school daily register. This information was later systematically organised and entered in computer coding sheets, for later analysis. The last phase of data collection took place in the month of October. This involved the administration of the five sub-tests of IDEA. In each study school pupils were tested together. This made the administration of the test easy and made the testing session as non-threatening as possible. Later the tests were scored dichotomously and the marks for each pupil were entered in coding sheets for further analysis.

3.6 DATA ANALYSIS

The data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences.

Descriptive statistics were used to describe the sample, measures of academic achievement, measures of
questionnaires were later collected from the head-teachers of the respective schools.

Data on pupil's performance in the City Mock Exams was collected at the end of second term. These marks were obtained from the head-teachers of the respective schools. They were entered in computer sheets for further analysis. Data on frequency, extent and patterns of pupil's absence was collected in the month of September 1996. With permission of the school head this information was obtained from the school daily register. This information was later systematically organised and entered in computer coding sheets, for later analysis. The last phase of data collection took place in the month of October. This involved the administration of the five sub-tests of IDEA. In each study school pupils were tested together. This made the administration of the test easy and made the testing session as non-threatening as possible. Later the tests were scored dichotomously and the marks for each pupil were entered in coding sheets for further analysis.

3.6 DATA ANALYSIS

The data was analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences.

Descriptive statistics were used to describe the sample, measures of academic achievement, measures of
scholastic aptitude and pupil's patterns of absenteeism. Where appropriate contingency tables were prepared and these helped in summarising the information obtained.

To test the null hypothesis that there was no significant relationship between absenteeism and academic achievement when scholastic aptitude was statistically controlled, one way analysis of covariance was used. The dependent variable was academic achievement and the independent variable was absenteeism which was blocked into three levels. Five sub-tests of IDEA were used as the covariates. The level of significance used in this study was 0.01 with 519 degrees of freedom.

The statistical technique of analysis of covariance is used to control statistically initial differences between groups. The effect of analysis of covariance is to make the groups statistically equal with respect to a concomitant variable. If a difference is still found between the groups one cannot use the concomitant variable to explain the effects. Analysis of covariance is useful in Ex post Facto studies because one cannot always select comparison groups that are matched with respect to all relevant variables except one that is of main concern to the researchers investigation. Analysis of covariance also enables the researcher to remove potential sources of bias that are difficult to control through randomization, matching or using a homogenous population.
Analysis of covariance combines the advantages of regression analysis with those of analysis of variance. The procedure involves measuring one or more concomitant variables called covariates in addition to the dependent variable. The concomitant variable represents a source of variation that has not been controlled by the researcher but it is believed to affect the dependent variable. Through analysis of covariance the dependent variable can be adjusted so as to remove potential sources of variation due to the covariate.

Scholastic aptitude has been shown to be significantly related to pupil's scores in English and Mathematics, and pupils differ in scholastic aptitude ability. Therefore the effect of scholastic aptitude on pupil's academic achievement had to be controlled. As noted earlier absenteeism was blocked into three levels, hence there were three group means. Post-hoc Turkey-statistic was used to compare difference among the means. Before comparison of the means was made, they had to be adjusted for the effects of the covariates.

To test the null hypothesis that, there was no significant relationship between gender and absenteeism, one-way analysis of variance was used. The independent variable was gender, the dependent variable was absence duration. The level of significance at which the null hypothesis was rejected or accepted was 0.01, with 418 and
1 degree of freedom. Analysis of variance uses the concept of F distribution. This sampling distribution is used to test hypothesis about two population variance. The most common use of the F ratio is testing hypothesis regarding equality of two or more population means. Hence analysis of variance was used to test where there are differences between mean absence duration for boys and girls. The F ratio in analysis of variance provides a test of null hypothesis that two population means are equal. The F distribution is very robust with respect to violations of many assumptions associated with its mathematical derivations.

To test the null hypotheses that, there was no significant relationship between pupil’s socio-economic status and absenteeism correlational analysis was used. The level of significance at which the null hypotheses were rejected or accepted was 0.01 with 418 degrees of freedom. In this study five variables were used as the measure of pupil’s socio-economic status, therefore the following null hypotheses were tested separately.

(i) There was no significant relationship between the pupil’s living arrangement and absenteeism.

(ii) There was no significant relationship between pupil's family size and absenteeism.

(iii) There was no significant relationship between pupil’s order of birth and absenteeism.

(iv) There was no significant relationship between parental occupation and absenteeism.
(v) There was no significant relationship between mode of school fees payment and absenteeism.

The independent variable was the index of pupil's socio-economic status and the dependent variable was absence duration.

Correlational analysis involves attempts to clarify relationships through the use of correlation coefficients. The correlation coefficient main purpose is to express in mathematical terms the degree of relationship between two variables. Correlation analysis is useful in Ex Post Facto designs because it permits one to measure a great number of variables and their interrelationships simultaneously. In this study socio-economic status was measured using five different variables and hence correlational analysis was an appropriate statistical technique.

Statistical significance when applied to correlational analysis describes whether or not the correlation coefficient is different from zero at a given level of significance. The significance of a correlational coefficient is determined to a greater degree by the sample size. In most correlational studies practical significance is more important than statistical significance. The major weakness of correlational analysis is that it does not allow the establishment of cause and effect relationship.
The last phase of data analysis used content analysis. Content analysis was conducted on pupil’s and teacher’s questionnaire to investigate

(i) Pupils actual and perceived reasons of their peer absence from school.
(ii) Instructional programmes which could help pupils learn what they miss.

Content analysis was also conducted on teachers questionnaire to investigate,

(i) Teachers perceptions on causes of pupil’s absence from school.
(ii) Remedial instructional programmes which could help pupils learn what they missed.
(iii) Intervention programmes which could be used in school to reduce the problem of pupil’s absenteeism from school.

The results and discussions are presented in the next chapter.
4.0 INTRODUCTION

This was a study on absenteeism and its effects on pupil's academic achievement. The study was carried out using 520 primary school pupils and 70 teachers from six primary schools in marginalised areas of Nairobi. An Ex-Post Facto research design was used. The independent variable was absenteeism which was blocked into three main levels of good attendants, fair attendants and persistent absentees. The dependent variable was Academic Achievement. Five sub-tests of IDEA that were measures of inductive reasoning were used as covariates to statistically control for the effect of scholastic aptitude on the dependent variable. Correlational analysis was used to investigate the relationship between absenteeism and pupil's socio-economic status. Pupils were asked to state reasons which accounted for their absence from school. Teacher's opinions were also sought on the possible causes of pupil's absence from school and existing intervention programmes for dealing with the problem of pupil's absence from school.

This chapter presents the results and discussions of
the study findings. These are discussed in five main sections. The first section contains information on patterns of absenteeism and the relationship between gender and absenteeism. Section two presents results and discussion on relationship between absenteeism and academic achievement. The third section presents the results and discussion on relationship between absenteeism and pupil's socio-economic status. Section four contains the results and discussion for content analysis. Finally a summary of the results is presented in the last section.

4.1. PATTERNS OF ABSENTEEISM

Data on absenteeism was collected for a period of two school terms from the school daily register. This data was analyzed in both termly and monthly basis. Table 4.1 (next page) presents absence frequency in days by school and term.

The absence frequency was obtained by counting the number of days the pupil was marked absent in the daily register. The row figures at the upper part of the Table represents the absenteeism category. It was found appropriate to categorise the information on absenteeism because of the varied range of the absenteeism frequency. This helped in summarising the
### TABLE 4.1 FREQUENCY OF ABSENTEEISM IN DAYS BY SCHOOL AND TERM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>O-10</th>
<th>10 Plus</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>O-10</th>
<th>10 Plus</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Grand mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 N=39</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.12</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.12</td>
<td>5.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>97</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 N=105</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.23</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.04</td>
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<tr>
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<td>95</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>99</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 N=76</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.06</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.13</td>
<td>5.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>97</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 N=77</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.25</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>5.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 N=79</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.12</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.18</td>
<td>5.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>96</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 N=144</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.17</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.06</td>
<td>5.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>%</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>98</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>5.15</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.15</td>
<td>5.08</td>
<td>5.12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
data. There were two main categories of absence frequency for each term. The cell entries shows the total number of pupils and their proportions in each category for a given school and term. The mean frequency of absenteeism for each school is presented at the end of the row. The overall frequency of absenteeism for the specific school, for the period of two school term is presented at the right most part of the row. The overall mean frequency of absenteeism was estimated by averaging the mean frequencies of absenteeism for the two school terms. The figures at the lower part of the last row shows frequency of absenteeism in days for the two school terms.

Table 4.1 shows that the frequency of absenteeism was higher in the first term than in the second term. The data also shows specific school differences on the patterns of absenteeism For example, school 3 had lowest mean absence frequency in term one but had the highest in term two. A possible explanation for the above pattern of absenteeism is that the frequency of absenteeism is higher in the first term than the second term because school dues are collected in the first term of each year. Any pupil who is unable to pay these school dues is sent home to collect the dues. Therefore the frequency of absenteeism is higher in first term than in the second term.
Table 4.2 (next page) presents the frequency of absenteeism by school on monthly basis. The columns at the upper part of the table shows the category of absenteeism. The cell entries show the total number of pupils and their proportions who belonged to each category in a given month in two school terms. The mean frequency of absenteeism for each month is presented in the last row. The overall mean frequencies of absenteeism for each month in a term are presented at the bottom of the table.

The above table shows that the mean frequency of absenteeism for the first month of each term was higher than the mean frequency of absenteeism in second and third month. The frequency of absenteeism was highest in the first month of term one. January and May are planting seasons in Nairobi. Parents are known to withdraw their children from schools so that they can help in farm work which would produce more tangible results, rather than attend school. Therefore the absence frequency was higher in the first month of each term. These findings are consistent with Sandon’s findings in America. He found out that weather may influence the rate of absenteeism. Karweit (1987) in Scotland found out that absenteeism increased during rainy days.

The above findings are not consistent with previous findings in Britain. In Britain several studies have shown
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCHOOL</th>
<th>FIRST MONTH</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>SECOND MONTH</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th>THIRD MONTH</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0-10</td>
<td>10 Plus</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>0-10</td>
<td>10 Plus</td>
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<td>%</td>
<td>0-10</td>
<td>10 Plus</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 Term I</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.25</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5.0</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term II</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5.38</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5.12</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Term I</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.04</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N=105</td>
<td>Term II</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.04</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.04</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3 Term I</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.19</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N=76</td>
<td>Term II</td>
<td>69</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5.46</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Term I</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5.58</td>
<td>77</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N=77</td>
<td>Term II</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 Term I</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5.25</td>
<td>79</td>
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<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N=79</td>
<td>Term II</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>91</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5.44</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5.18</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 Term I</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.34</td>
<td>144</td>
<td>99</td>
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<td>5.03</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5.10</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5.03</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

MEAN OF 1ST. MONTH IN TERM I = 5.32
MEAN OF 2ND. MONTH IN TERM I = 5.01
MEAN OF 3RD. MONTH IN TERM I = 5.12
MEAN OF 1ST. MONTH IN TERM II = 5.23
MEAN OF 2ND. MONTH IN TERM II = 5.32
MEAN OF 3RD. MONTH IN TERM II = 5.23
absenteeism to be lower at the beginning of the week than at the end (Trig, 1985; Jackson, 1988). Jackson's study was of interest in demonstrating that in the fourth year of a large comprehensive school, there was a cumulative tendency for rates of absenteeism to increase towards the end of the day, the term and year, except when afternoons were compared with mornings all the differences were statistically significant. Sandon, (1981) in America found absenteeism rate to be higher in January and February, though he did not take into account the possibility that absenteeism in some schools may be affected by teachers not encouraging attendance of older pupils in the last four weeks of the summer terms, when there are no public examination.

4.1.2 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN GENDER AND ABSENTEEISM

To investigate the relationship between gender and absenteeism, the following null hypothesis was tested: There was no significant relationship between gender and absenteeism. One way analysis of variance was used. The independent variable was gender, the dependent variable was number of days a pupil was absent in two school terms. Table 4.3 presents the analysis of variance summary, the level of significance was 0.01.
### TABLE 4.3 ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE SUMMARY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Variation</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>Sum of Squares</th>
<th>Mean of Squares</th>
<th>f Ratio</th>
<th>f Prob</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Between groups</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>150.64</td>
<td>150.64</td>
<td>.35</td>
<td>.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Within groups</td>
<td>517</td>
<td>222821.8</td>
<td>430.99</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>518</td>
<td>222972.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.3 shows that the main effect of gender was not significant at $P<0.01$. Hence the null hypothesis of no significant relationship between gender and absenteeism was accepted. The above findings are not consistent with previous research in Kenya. Eshiwani, (1984) had shown that the rate of absenteeism was higher among girls than boys. However, Eshiwani had used a rural non-marginal population. In Europe, Tyerman (1968), Fogelman (1980), Galloway (1981), Mitchel (1975), had shown that the rate of absenteeism among girls was higher. Appletton (1993), in Kenya using both rural and urban population had also shown that the rates of absenteeism among girls was higher. However none of the studies were based on urban marginalised population therefore the differences is expected.
4.2 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ABSENTEEISM AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

Mathematics and English scores in the City Mock Exams were used as the measure of academic achievement. Table 4.4 presents some important characteristics of the score distributions. These are mean, mode, standard deviation, range, skewness and Kurtosis.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mathematics</th>
<th>English</th>
<th>Aggregate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>40.91</td>
<td>42.53</td>
<td>81.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td>40.00</td>
<td>41.00</td>
<td>80.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mode</td>
<td>39.00</td>
<td>40.00</td>
<td>68.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard deviation</td>
<td>13.41</td>
<td>13.92</td>
<td>14.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Range</td>
<td>80.00</td>
<td>79.00</td>
<td>110.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skewness</td>
<td>.34</td>
<td>.28</td>
<td>.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kurtosis</td>
<td>-.29</td>
<td>-.54</td>
<td>-.49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.4 shows that the scores yielded considerable standard deviation in relation to the mean. The three scores, however did not differ significantly from normal distribution in relation to Skewness and Kurtosis. The performance of
pupils in English was better than their performance in Mathematics.

Table 4.5 presents the relationships between the three scores.

### Table 4.5 Relationship Between the Three Scores (N=520)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. English</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Mathematics</td>
<td>.74**</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Aggregate</td>
<td>.45**</td>
<td>.46*</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

P<0.001

The above table shows that the relationship between English and Mathematics score was 0.74. Pupils who had high scores in English also had high score in Mathematics and vice-versa. The relationship between English and the aggregate score was 0.45. The relationship between mathematics and the aggregate score was .46. Hence the aggregate score was a good measure of academic achievement.

Absenteeism was blocked into three main levels.
Table 4.6 below presents the characteristic of the aggregate score distribution for the three groups.

**TABLE 4.6 CHARACTERISTIC OF SCORE DISTRIBUTION FOR THE THREE LEVELS OF ABSENTEEISM (N=520)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Persistent absentees</th>
<th>Fair attendants</th>
<th>Good attendants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mean</strong></td>
<td>42.14</td>
<td>66.41</td>
<td>89.35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Standard deviation</strong></td>
<td>13.51</td>
<td>19.94</td>
<td>24.41</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.6 shows that the mean aggregate score for good attendants was the highest. The mean score for fair attendants was higher than that of persistent absentees. All the three groups yielded considerable standard deviation in relation to the mean.

To control statistically the influence of scholastic aptitude on academic achievement, five sub-tests of IDEA were used. Table 4.7 presents important characteristic of score distribution for the five-sub-tests of IDEA.
Table 4.7 shows that the five scores yielded considerable standard deviation in relation to the mean, however the distribution did not differ significantly from normal for Skewness and Kurtosis. The means of verbal test are higher than the means for non-verbal tests. Table 4.8 presents the relationship between the five sub-tests and academic achievement.
Table 4.8 shows that all the five sub-tests had positive and significant inter-correlation with each other (P<0.001). The highest relationship was between Word Exclusion and Symbol Exclusion. The lowest relationship was between Mathematics and Figure Exclusion. Since all the sub-tests were positively and significantly related to each other, this justified their use as measures of scholastic aptitude. All the five sub-tests of IDEA show positive and significant relationship with the three measure of academic achievement at P<0.001. The highest relationship observed was between English and Word Analogy. The lowest relationship was between mathematics and Word Analogy. Since all the five sub-tests related positively with academic achievement, this justified their use as measures of scholastic aptitude.
To investigate the relationship between absenteeism and academic achievement one way analysis of covariance was used. The independent variable was absenteeism. The dependent variable was academic achievement. Pupils’ aggregate score in English and Mathematics in the City Mock Exam were used for this analysis. Five sub-tests of IDEA were used as the covariates to control for scholastic aptitude statistically. Table 4.9 presents the analysis of covariance summary, the level of significance was 0.01.

**TABLE 4.9 ANALYSIS OF COVARIANCE SUMMARY (N=520)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of variation</th>
<th>Sum of squares</th>
<th>DF</th>
<th>Mean of Squares</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Covariates</td>
<td>9783.373</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3956.675</td>
<td>7.75*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Absenteeism</td>
<td>84014.75</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>42007.38</td>
<td>82.23*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explained</td>
<td>103798.13</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>14828.30</td>
<td>29.02*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual</td>
<td>261542.98</td>
<td>512</td>
<td>510.83</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>365341.12</td>
<td>519</td>
<td>703.93</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.9 shows that the main effects of absenteeism were significant. The null hypothesis of no significant relationship between absenteeism and academic achievement was rejected. Therefore the alternative hypothesis of a significant relationship between absenteeism and academic
achievement was accepted. Post-hoc comparison using Tuckey test statistic showed that after the three group, means were adjusted for the covariate, all the means were significantly different. The effect of all the covariates combined was significant.

These findings indicate that pupils' absenteeism from school has negative impact on their academic achievement, even after controlling for scholastic aptitude statistically. These results are consistent with previous work. Gray (1985) in Northern Island noted that persistent absentees had a mean score of 9.9, while good attendants had a mean score of 25.3, in their final year exams. The difference was statistically significant at P<0.001. Mueni (1986) based on her study in Machakos District in Kenya found out that absenteeism lead to poor performance in school. Other studies done in the area of absenteeism have also reported a link between absenteeism and achievement.

A possible explanation of the above is that persistent absentees are not given the opportunity to learn the materials they had missed. This problem is confounded by lack of text books in primary schools hence most absentees lag behind in their school work. Most primary schools in Nairobi have large classes, hence lack of individualized teaching complicates the matter further. When a pupil are continually absent it
follows that he or she is more likely to under achieve and less likely to participate in the continuous developmental programme of experience and instruction in schools, that will meet the pupils present and later needs in life. Achievement tests are designed to measure specific programme of instruction. They represent terminal evaluation of the individuals status on completing an instruction programme. Hence pupils who are absent are bound to lag behind in academic achievement. It is also possible that persistent absentees have low scholastic ability. This may lead to patterns of failure at school which then leads to absenteeism from school.

4.3 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ABSENTEEISM AND PUPIL'S SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS

To investigate the relationship between absenteeism and pupils socio-economic status the following null hypotheses were tested.

. There was no significant relationship between living arrangement of the pupil with absenteeism.
. There was no significant relationship between pupil's family size and absenteeism.
. There was no significant relationship between pupil's birth order and absenteeism.
. There was no significant relationship between pupil's
There was no significant relationship between mode of school dues payment and absenteeism.

There were four main kinds of people with whom pupils lived with. These were both parents, single parents, guardian or others. Pupil's family size was obtained by summing the number of brothers and sisters of the same biological mother with the pupil. Parental occupation was divided into eight main categories. These were; Farmers, unskilled labourers, semi-skilled labourers, skilled labourers, clerical, semi-professional, professional and never employed. There were five main methods through which pupils paid their school dues, these were; both parents, relative, guardian, church or sponsor. Correllational analysis was used to investigate the relationship between absenteeism and pupil's socio-economic status. Table 4.10 presents the relationship between absenteeism and pupil's socio-economic status, the level of significance was 0.01.
Table 4.10 shows that there was no significant relationship between person lived with by the pupil and absenteeism. This finding implies that those pupils who lived with both parent had the same rate of absenteeism with those who lived with either single parents, relative or a guardian. This finding is not consistent with previous findings. The highest percentage of pupils in the study lived with both parents, hence there was restriction of range which could have suppressed the relationship.

There was no significant relationship between pupil’s
family size and absenteeism. Hence the null hypothesis of no significant relationship between absenteeism and family size was accepted. This finding is not consistent with previous findings. Brooks et al (1962) and Mitchel (1972) showed that absentees were significantly more likely to come from families with above average number of children than good attendants. Most pupils in the current study came from families with an average of 1-3 children hence the observed result.

There was no significant relationship between pupil’s order of birth and absenteeism. Hence the null hypothesis of no significant relationship between pupil’s order of birth and absenteeism was accepted. This finding is not consistent with previous research.

There was no significant relationship between parental occupation and absenteeism. This implies that pupils whose parents had professional qualification had the same rate of absenteeism with those whose parents were unskilled or semi-skilled. This finding is not consistent with previous findings. Davie et al. (1972), Fogelman and Richardson (1974), May, (1975), Fogelman et al. (1980), found out that most absentees came from families at the lower end of the social scale, where the parents were in unskilled or semi-skilled occupations. Blythman, (1975), May, (1975), Farrington (1980) found out that most absentees came from
families where the parents were unemployed or irregularly employed. About 80 percent of the pupils sample stated that their parents were in semi-skilled occupation, hence there was a restricted range of parental occupation hence the above finding.

There was a significant relationship between mode of school dues payment and absenteeism. Hence the null hypothesis of no significant relationship between mode of school fees payment and absenteeism was rejected and the alternative hypothesis of a significant relationship between absenteeism and mode of school dues payment was accepted. This finding implied that pupils whose dues was paid by the parents, had lower rates of absenteeism than those whose fees was paid by relative, guardian, church or sponsor. Hence lack of school dues is an important factor which precipitates pupils absence from school. Where parents cannot afford to pay dues they turn to a sponsor church or a relative. Hence there was a relationship between mode of school dues payment and absenteeism.
4.4 SECONDARY ANALYSIS

This sub-section presents results of secondary analysis. These results are based on content analysis of the teacher's and pupil's questionnaire.

4.4.1 REASONS FOR ABSENTEEISM FROM SCHOOL

To identify possible reasons which accounted for absenteeism in primary schools, pupils were asked to state reasons which made them absent from school in items 11b and 12b of the pupil's questionnaire. After a careful analysis the reasons which made pupils absent were listed down. It was noted that pupils' reasons of absenteeism from school in first and second terms were not significantly different, hence for the two items the responses were combined. After content analysis eight main categories of reasons for absenteeism were identified, these were as follows;

(i) Sickness - This was a rather broad category and included situations where pupils were absent from school because of medical reasons. Most pupils said they had headaches, stomachaches, common cold or malaria. In some instances they stated generally that they were sick.

(ii) Lack of school dues - This category of absenteeism included incidences where pupils were absent because of lack of school levies, like building funds, activity fees, P.T.A contributions and funds to meet the examination expenses.
Lack of school books - In certain instances pupils were absent from school because they lacked either textbooks or exercise books hence they were sent home by teachers to collect them.

Parental condoned absence - This includes a myriad of reasons where pupils were absent with the knowledge and consent of their parents. The most common forms of parental condoned absence were, children been left at home to look after younger siblings, helping with domestic chores at home, taking younger siblings to hospital, looking after domestic animal and helping with farm work.

Truancy - some pupils were absent from school without the consent of their parents or teachers. Most truants said they missed school with no genuine reasons. For example it was raining heavily, they overslept and left home for school late, they engaged in paid employment outside home or they lacked interest with school work.

Lack of uniform - Some pupils were absent from school because they lacked proper school uniform. Most pupils said they did not have shoes or socks. In few cases some said they did not have shirts, shorts or skirts for girls. In minority of cases pupils were absent from school because the school uniform was been repaired.

School based reasons - Some pupils were absent from school because of institutional reasons. These included; fear of punishment from teachers, harsh and rude teachers, excessive homework, fear of bullying among pupils, poor teacher-pupil relationship, strict school rules and regulations.

Other reasons - Other reasons of absenteeism from school which could not fit in the seven broad categories were classified together. These included school phobia and inability to cover long distances due to disability, marital disharmony and pupils attending their relatives funeral.

Table 4.11 presents the frequency of reasons of absenteeism from school. Pupils had the opportunity to write more than one reason.
Table 4.11 shows that the most frequent reason of pupil’s absenteeism from school was illness. In Kenya little research has been done on what causes absenteeism in primary schools. This finding is consistent with Branby (1951) research who reported that 96 percent of non-attendance in London Primary Schools was due to medical reasons. Harbison and Caven (1977) in Northern Island showed that 47 percent of absenteeism could have been attributed to medical reasons. These figures for illness are high compared to Reynold and Murgatroyd’s findings who considered 25 percent of absenteeism to be caused by medical reasons.

A possible explanation for the above finding is that the sample of pupils used in the study was drawn from marginalised
urban areas in Nairobi. There are certain specific factors which may promote high incidence of illness in marginalised urban areas. These includes poor sanitation, lack of clean water supply, rapidly declining rates of breast feeding and shorter time mothers in slum areas spend with their children (Amref, 1990). Most children who come from marginalised urban areas are under nourished. A survey done by UNICEF (1993) on urban nutrition survey have associated several factors with under nutrition in marginalised urban areas. These factors include worm infestation, poor feeding practises and poverty. These factor could have led to higher incidences of illness among school going children.

The second most frequent reason of absenteeism from school was due to non-payment of school dues. This confirms previous findings where a significant negative relationship between mode of school dues payment and absenteeism was established. This finding is consistent with previous research in Kenya. Even though school dues has been abolished, parents continued to experience difficulty in paying additional school levies. This may force them to withdraw their children from school. Children from poor and unenlightened homes are persistently absent and therefore they drop out of school. This trend has been established by previous researchers (Liondo, 1987; Sago, 1984; Eshiwani, 1984; Mbunda, 1983; Waka, 1980). Introduction of cost-sharing
at all levels of education has increased the problem of absenteeism since pupils are sent home to collect school dues.

Lack of exercise and text books among pupils also contributed a significant proportion of absenteeism. This was the third most frequent reason of absenteeism. The burden of providing books has been placed on the parents. Most parents from marginalised areas of Nairobi have unstable incomes. Parents have to buy basic necessities like food if confronted with a financial crisis. Pupils will therefore be sent home to bring books to school which leads to absenteeism. Lack of books implies that absentees do not have the appropriate learning materials. This leads to poor performance in schools and hence the significant negative relationship between absenteeism and academic achievement.

A higher percentage of girls than boys were absent with approval of their parents. Parental condoned absence was the fourth most frequent reason of absenteeism. This finding is consistent with Appleton (1993) findings in Kenya and Mitchel (1975) findings in Britain. Mitchel (1975) showed that at the age of nine-plus more girls were absent than boys with the knowledge and consent of their parents. More girls are absent than boys with their parents consent because girls are withdrawn from school to help with various house-hold chores which brings tangible results to the family. Most parents
prefer sending their boy child to school at the expense of girl child if there are financial constraints because of cultural reasons (Wamahiu, 1994).

More boys played truants than girls. Truancy was the fifth most frequent reason of absenteeism. Galloway, (1981) showed that more boys played truants than girls. The difference was statistically significant at P<0.001. Boys are easily attracted to attractive non-school outcomes than girls and hence the above finding.

Lack of school uniform accounted for almost the same frequency of absenteeism for both boys and girls. This was the sixth most frequent reason of pupils' absenteeism from school. Lack of school uniform could be attributed to parental poverty. Certain school based factors made pupils to stay out of school. Few pupils were however absent due to these factors.

To compare actual and perceived reasons of absenteeism, Item 13 on the pupils' questionnaire probed into pupils perceptions on what caused absenteeism among their peers. Ten main reasons of absenteeism had been previously provided in the questionnaire. These were; illness, too much home work from teachers, punishment from teachers, lack of interest in school work, helping with house-hold chores, strict school
rules and regulations, bullying and threats from other pupils, lack of books, lack of school dues and other reasons. Table 4.12 presents perceived reasons of peer’s absenteeism from school in both frequency and percentage.

### Table 4.12 Perceived Reason of Absence from School

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason of Absence</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th></th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>f</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illness</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of School dues</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of learning materials</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helping with house-hold chores</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of interest with school work</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too much homework</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excessive punishment</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strict school rules and regulations</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bullying and threats from other pupils</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other reasons</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>260</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A comparison between Table 4.11 and 4.12 shows that the order of importance for actual and perceived reason of absenteeism is similar. The highest percentage of both boys and girls were perceived by their peers as being absent from school because of medical reasons. This was followed by lack
of school dues. Pupils perceived lack of learning materials to be the third most important reason which contributed to their peers absence from school. More girls than boys expressed the opinion that their peers were absent because of helping with various household chores and this is in close agreement with previous finding where more girls than boys were absent with their parents consent. More boys than girls were absent because of lack of interest with school work. This is consistent with previous finding where more boys played truants than girls. Table 4.12 highlights certain school based factors which pupils perceived contributed to their peers absence from school. These were excessive punishments, too much homework from teachers and strict school rules and regulations. These reasons had not featured earlier.

In general, illness and lack of school dues were the two main reasons for absence for both boys and girls. Truancy accounted for significant proportion of absenteeism among boys, while parental withholding accounts for higher cases of absenteeism among girls. Parental withholding happens because of various reasons; girls may be kept at home to look after younger siblings or sick parents, they may be expected to help their parents with various house-hold chores, or they may remain at home because their parents have simply given up trying to persuade them to attend school.
Teachers' opinions were also sought on what causes absenteeism among pupils in primary schools. Item number 4 on the teachers questionnaire asked teachers to state reasons which they thought accounted for pupils absence from primary school. After content analysis ten main reasons of absenteeism were generated. These were:

(i) Community influences - This included incidences where pupils were absent because of drug problems, anti-education attitude among members of given community, poor school community relationship and lack of good educated role models.

(ii) Illness.

(iii) Lack of school dues.

(iv) Parental withholding.

(v) Negative parental attitude towards their children's education - Teachers hinted that the parents attitude towards education was changing because of lack of employment among educated children.

(vi) Lack of learning materials like exercise and text books, lack of proper school uniform, lack of materials for practical subjects like music, home science and agriculture.

(vii) Truancy.

(viii) Cultural factors - Teachers expressed the opinion that pupils were absent from school because of attending cultural rites like initiation ceremonies, burials of relatives and other cultural ceremonies like cleansing.

(ix) Engagement in paid employments - This included incidences where pupils were absent because of engaging in paid employment like collecting waste paper, collecting scrap metal, picking coffee, pushing handcarts, operating as matatu touts and being house-helps.

(x) Adolescent problems - Some pupils were absent
because of what teachers termed as, 'grouping', 'pairing', 'pushing', 'advent of early sexual relationships' 'maturation', or lack of privacy at home.

Table 4.13 presents teachers perceptions on reasons of pupil's absenteeism from school.

**TABLE 4.13 TEACHERS PERCEPTIONS ON REASONS OF PUPIL'S ABSENTEEISM FROM SCHOOL**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason of absence</th>
<th>Boys</th>
<th></th>
<th>Girls</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>f</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>f</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illness</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of school dues</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental withholding</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative parental attitude toward Education</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of learning materials</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Truancy</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural factors</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaging in paid employment</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescent problem</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community influences</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>70</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.13 shows that teachers also perceived medical reasons as the most important contributor to pupils’ absenteeism. This is consistent with pupils’ opinions in the
previous sections. This finding is also consistent with previous research.

According to teachers the second most important reason for pupils' absence from school was lack of school dues. This is consistent with pupils' opinions. The sample of pupils used in the study came from marginalised urban areas. These areas are characterised by low income. Most parents cannot afford to pay school dues on time, therefore pupils are sent home to collect school dues which leads to absenteeism from school.

Another important reason which contributed to pupils' absenteeism from school was parental withholding. According to the teachers this was the third most important reason which made pupils to stay out of school. More girls than boys were absent from school because of this reason. A basic comparison between pupils' and teachers' perception, shows that teachers had placed a greater weight on the role played by parents in contributing to their children's absence from school.

The fourth most important reason which contributed to pupils' absenteeism from school was a negative parental attitude towards their children's education. Most parents from geographically marginalised urban areas are illiterate or semi-literate, therefore they do not attach a lot of
importance to their children’s education. A closer inspection of Table 4.13 shows that more girls than boys were thought to be absent from school because of this reason. As noted elsewhere parents prefer sending their boy child to school at the expense of the girl child due to cultural reasons or if there are financial problems.

Lack of learning materials contributed almost the same percentage of absence for both boys and girls, according to the teachers who participated in the study. Lack of learning materials could be due to parental poverty and a general negative attitude towards their children’s education. Pupils who lack learning materials like books are normally sent home by their teachers to collect them. This leads to pupil’s absenteeism from school. Lack of learning materials contributes to the dismal performance in school examinations and hence the negative relationship between absenteeism and academic achievement. A basic comparison between pupils’ and teachers’ opinions on the relative importance of the above reason shows that pupils put more emphasize on lack of learning materials than teachers.

More boys played truant than girls. This was consistent with the pupils opinions. Boys are easily attracted to attractive non-school outcomes than girls. This is confounded by the general lack of interest with school work observed
among pupils who had participated in the study. Almost equal numbers of boys and girls were thought by teachers to be absent from school because of cultural factors.

Teachers expressed the opinion that more boys than girls were absent from school because of engaging in paid employments. The study highlighted several kinds of petty employments in which pupils could engage in. The most frequent was collecting scrap metal and picking coffee in the nearby plantations. Most pupils who participated in the study did not highlight this reason. Parents in marginalised urban areas may prefer their children engaging in paid employments at the expense of attending school so that they can contribute to the family's income.

A larger proportion of girls were absent from school because of adolescence and maturation factors. It has long been established that girls' rate of biological maturation is faster than that of boys hence the observed difference. Most families in marginalised urban areas share single rooms and therefore there is no privacy, children are forced to acquire adult status too early which complicates the matter further. More boys than girls were absent from school because of community influences. There were isolated cases where certain pupils were absent from school because they were engaging in anti-social and criminal activities. In general, teachers
provided detailed information on reasons of pupil's absenteeism from school which were related to pupils families and individual personality although they were silent on certain specific school factors which led to pupils absence from school.

4.4.2 INTERVENTION PROGRAMMES

Pupils' ideas were sought on appropriate make-up programmes which could be used to help pupils who have to stay away for a long time learn what they missed during their absence session, on Item 15 of the pupil's questionnaire. Pupils' opinions were content analyzed, and five main make-up preferences of pupils emerged. These were as follows

(i) Copying notes - Included incidences where pupils suggested that the could make-up what was learned through copying notes from other pupils. The opinions in this category were like "copying notes from my friend", "borrowing teacher's notes and copying them", "making summary notes", "writing examples which were given" etc.

(ii) Discussion with other pupils - This included situations where the pupil who was absent probed and learnt from other pupils purely on discussion basis, like "asking my classmate questions", "asking my friend to explain to me", "asking my desk mate to show me an example".

(iii) Extra reading - In this category the particular pupil read what was learnt from the course text; like "reading my history and government book", reading from teacher's notes", "reading from my classmates' notes".
(iv) Discussion with teachers - Included instances where pupils made deliberate efforts to discuss with teachers what was learnt, like "I will ask my teacher to explain", "I would ask the teacher to work out the problem on the chalkboard", "I would ask the teacher to revise during my free time", "I would tell my teacher to elaborate".

(v) Discussion with parents - A significant number of pupils felt that their parents could help them make up for what was learnt, like "My dad would help me", "I would ask mum to show me how to solve the problem", "Dad would have to arrange for tuition", "I would ask my parents to help me".

Table 4.14 presents pupils' opinions on the make-up programmes in order of importance.

### TABLE 4.14 PUPILS' OPINIONS ON 'MAKE-UP' INSTRUCTION PROGRAMMES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of 'Make-up' programmes referred</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Copying notes</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion with teachers</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion with other pupils</td>
<td>900</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra reading</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discussion with parents</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>520</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.14 shows that the most frequent make-up
programmes suggested by the pupils was copying notes. A significant proportion of pupils suggested that their teacher could play a crucial role in helping them learn what was missed. The third most important make-up programme according to the pupils was discussion with other pupils followed by extra reading. Parents could also help children make-up for what was learned. This is only possible with literate parents. Parents could also help in terms of provision of private tutors.

To compare pupil’s and teacher’s opinions, Item 9 on the teachers’ questionnaire probed into teacher’s opinions on make-up programmes which could help pupils learn what was missed. The result of content analysis of teachers’ responses yielded four main categories of make-up programmes. These were as follows

(i) Giving notes - Teachers expressed the opinion that pupils could be helped to learn what was missed if they were given the necessary notes, like "Give concerned pupils notes on the chalkboard", "Give summary notes to pupils", "Ask pupils to copy notes from their classmates", "Ask pupils to make summary notes from their course book".

(ii) Extra tuition - This tuition had to be arranged after the normal time, like "Ask parents to pay for tuition during weekend", "Give private tuition to pupils".

(iii) Revision series - Teachers also expressed the opinion that revision series could be organised in school, like "revise with concerned pupils in the evening", "revise with pupils in morning hours before classes". "revise with concerned pupils
during weekends".

(iv) Extra homework - Pupils could also make-up for what was missed if they were given extra homework, like "give more problems on the topic", "ask pupils to read in their course texts", "giving extra homework".

Table 4.15 presents teachers opinions on make-up instruction programmes in order of importance.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of 'Make-up' programme</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Giving notes</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra tuition</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revision series</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extra homework</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>70</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.15 shows that the most frequent make-up programme suggested by the teachers was giving notes, followed by extra tuition from teachers. This finding was consistent with pupils' opinions, since most pupils had highlighted the fact that copying notes and discussion with teachers would help
them make-up for what was missed. A basic comparison between the pupils and teachers opinions shows that teachers had over emphasized tuition at the expense of pupils discussing with each other or with their parents. This could be due to the fact that if extra tuition were organised this could give teachers financial gains. No teacher expressed the opinion that parents could help their own children learn what was missed.

Teachers' opinions were sought on possible intervention programmes for reducing the problem of pupil's absenteeism from school in Item 8 on the teachers' questionnaire. The results of content analysis yielded eleven main methods. These were as follows:

(i) Providing bursaries to needy pupil - This included all opinions which dealt with provision of financial assistance to needy pupils, like "asking churches to provide funds to needy pupils", "Government should provide building funds to needy pupils", "well wishers and donor agencies should provide bursaries to pupils", "World Vision should assist pupils pay school dues", "individual organisations should sponsor needy pupils".

(ii) Introducing boarding and feeding programmes - Includes instances where teachers suggested introduction of boarding facilities and feeding programme, like "Government should construct boarding schools", "City Council should reintroduce school feeding programmes", "Nyumbani and Undugu Society should give boarding facilities to children from poor background", "World Vision should introduce feeding programmes to all schools worst hit by problem of absenteeism".

(iii) Improving methods of teaching - Some teachers
advocated for pupil centred approach during teaching and improvement of teacher pupils relationship, like "guiding and counselling pupils", "use pupil centred approach", "not labelling pupils as disadvantaged", "improving human relations with pupils", "valuing pupil's views and attitudes" etc.

Parents discussing with teachers - Teachers expressed the opinion that parents played a significant role in education of their children, therefore to deal with problem of pupil's absenteeism from school parents should be involved in various ways, like "inviting parents during open days", "discussing with parents", "involving parents in decision making through P.T.A.", "asking parents to remit school dues on time", "asking parents not to give house-care chores", "asking parents to provide their children with learning materials".

Providing learning materials - Teachers highlighted the fact that most persistent absentees lack the necessary learning materials which affects adversely their performance in school, hence parents, Government and well wishers should provide learning materials for the needy pupils, like "Government should provide books", "parents should buy uniform and books for their children", "donors should provide books to school in marginalised urban areas", "City Council should equip all schools in Nairobi".

Reducing excessive homework - Excessive homework contributes to pupils absence from school. One way of reducing pupil's absenteeism from school would involve reduction in amount of homework given to pupils.

Reinforcing good attendance - Pupils with excellent attendance should be reinforced because of their good behaviour, like "give prizes during open day to good attendants", "give verbal encouragement to good attendants", "clap for good attendants".

Setting school attendance committees in schools comprised of teachers and senior prefects which would evaluate form time to time the nature and pattern of attendance.

Punishing truants, like "caning pupils who play truants", "make truants wash the classroom", "make