

**AN INVESTIGATION OF THE CAUSES AND APPROACHES USED IN
THE MANAGEMENT OF TRUANCY: A CASE OF NYAMIRA NORTH
DISTRICT, NYAMIRA COUNTY**

BY

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DECLARATION

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



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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACCRONYMS

CASES	Computerized Administrative Systems Environment in Schools
GEST	Grant for Education, Support and Training
HSPQ	High School Personality Questions
PSE	Personal and Social Education
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Sciences
SRB	School Refusal Behavior

ABSTRACT

The study sought to investigate the causes and approaches used in the management of truancy in Nyamira North district in Kenya. The study was guided by the following specific objectives: (i) to establish the school related causes of truancy in secondary schools in Nyamira North district; (ii) to determine home related causes of truancy in secondary schools in Nyamira North district; and (iii) to establish the approaches used in the management of truancy in secondary schools in Nyamira North district. Literature review on truancy was undertaken in order to eliminate duplication of what has been done and provide a bridge and clear understanding of existing knowledge base in the problem area. The literature review is based on authoritative, recent, and original sources such as journals, books, thesis and academic projects. A descriptive survey was used to undertake the study. The method permits gathering of data from the respondents in natural settings. A census of 36 secondary schools in Nyamira North District was undertaken. In order to obtain data from the students, stratified random sampling was used, where by in each school, forms 1, 2, 3 and 4 were each represented by 8 students, selected at random. A semi-structured questionnaire was used to collect primary data from the Principals of secondary schools in Nyamira North District. Content analysis was employed for data pertaining to the profile of the respondents while data pertaining to the objectives of the study was analyzed by employing descriptive statistics. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used in data entry and analysis. The study findings showed that even though the main causes of truancy vary from study to study, a combination of home, school and individual factors may be involved. The main causal factors of truancy include individual factors, institutional factors, and family backgrounds and community factors. The findings also show that the approaches used in the management of truancy in schools may be categorized into the following: personal traits, school aspects, community aspects and others. In view of the findings, the following recommendations were made: there is need for the management of schools to accord the students opportunities for connection and social bonding; there is need for the management of schools to emphasize students' commitment in schools; the management of schools should endeavor to involve students in as many school activities as possible, including day-to-day management of the schools; and belief and values should be emphasized as they are often not formally written but serve as the moral conscience of the society that determines right from wrong.

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the background information on the seriousness and implications of truancy are discussed. The chapter also includes the statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, delimitation and limitation of the study, assumptions of the study, conceptual framework and operational definition of terms.

1.1 Background of the Study

Educational attainment is an important determinant of diverse health outcomes. According to Stiggins (1997), truancy among adolescents jeopardizes chances of achieving their educational goals. Truant behaviors are also associated with various psychosocial problems. Educational attainment is a crucial predictor of several health-related lifestyles and premature mortality. However truant behaviors have potential to curtail possibilities of meaningful academic achievement. Truancy is a predictor of multiple health risk behaviors among adolescents. Truant adolescents have been reported to engage in risky sexual practices, illicit drug use, alcohol drinking and cigarette smoking (Stiggins, 1997). Truancy affects students of all ages, from all types of communities and socioeconomic backgrounds (National Center for School Engagement, 2004). Heaviside *et al.* (1998) observed that “for instance in the United States of America, unexcused absences can number in the thousands on certain days”. Therefore, in each school day, there are hundreds of thousands of children missing from their classroom-many without a bona fide excuse (Baker *et al.*, 2001).

When truancy leads to school failure or to dropping out of school, youths are also likely to experience higher rates of unintended pregnancies, more criminal behavior, greater instability in career paths, higher rates of unemployment, and lower lifetime earnings

(Brezina, Piquero, and Mazerolle, 2001). Truancy also has immediate and long-term consequences for communities in terms of public safety. Thus, there are two primary purposes for reducing truancy. The first is to have all youth attend and be engaged in school so that they will have successful and productive lives. The second is to increase citizen safety, both in the short term, through having students in school rather than out in the community during school hours, and in the long term, through school engagement and achievement leading to later adult responsibility and productivity (Heaviside *et al.*, 1998).

Whitney (1994) defines truancy as the absence that has not been authorized by the school and where leave has not been given or approved. In this research, the term "truancy" is broadly defined as unauthorized absence from school. The definition is adopted with the assumption that absence with the knowledge and permission of the school and parents or guardian does not constitute truancy. Since the study sought to explore the type of truancy as manifested at secondary schools, both concepts of truancy (blanket and post-registration) are relevant and were investigated. Several different types of interventions have been applied to combat truancy, with differential outcomes. It has been suggested that students' involvement in the creative and performing arts - visual arts, music, dance, and drama - may provide significant motivation for school attendance (Roederheim, 2003).

Truancy is costly. It costs students an education, resulting in reduced earning capacity. Truancy costs businesses, which must pay to train uneducated workers. It costs taxpayers, who must pay higher taxes for law enforcement and welfare costs for drop outs that end up on welfare rolls or underemployed. Students with the highest truancy rates have the lowest academic achievement rates. In addition, truants are most likely to drop out of school, and have the highest dropout rates (Dynarski and Gleason, 1999). School dropouts have

significant fewer job prospects, make lower salaries, and are more often unemployed than the youth who stay in school (Hollinger, 1996). This study sought to investigate the problem of truancy among secondary school students in Nyamira North district.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Azizi and Ramli (2009) reported that about 10% of school non-attendance by children in Kenya was due to truancy. Olley studied 169 street youths in Ibadan, Nigeria (Azizi *et al*, 2009) and about 47% of these had a history of truancy. These studies suggest an association between truancy and being on the streets as well as that truancy is an important contributor of non-attendance at school. Other factors that have been reported as associations with truancy are level of parental education, amount of adolescents' unsupervised time, poor school grades and illicit drug use (Gumpel and Meadan, 2000).

There is, however, limited data on the prevalence and factors associated with truancy among secondary school students in Nyamira North district. Data on the extent and nature of truancy in secondary schools in Kenya is often based on information obtained from class registers. Table 1.1 below presents a summary of data on reported truancy cases in Nyamira North district over a period of three years (2007 to 2009).

Truancy

Table 1.1: Cases of truancy reported in Nyamira North district

Category of truancy	Type of truancy	Number of cases reported		
		2007	2008	2009
School related	Fear of disciplinary action	205	235	265
	Difficult homework	312	356	387
	A lot of homework	214	304	358
	Loitering in urban centers	115	210	212
	Engaging in illegal activities such as drug and substance abuse, drug trafficking and stealing	39	52	61
	Involvement in secret societies	3	5	7
	Gambling	886	929	1051
Home related influence	Quarrels among parents	86	108	169
	Quarrels with siblings	71	99	108
	Feelings of neglect	285	296	309
	Financial constraints - undertaking part-time jobs (such as “Sokohuru”)	610	781	935
	Financial constraints - lack of fees, uniforms and books	3116	814	508

Source: Nyamira District Education Office (June, 2010)

The figures in table 1.1 above show that truancy cases reported in secondary schools in Nyamira district was on the increase save for truancy related to lack of fees, which seems to have been addressed by the introduction of free secondary education in Kenya. However, this information may be inadequate or almost incomplete and limits the understanding of the phenomenon, thus making it difficult to develop appropriate intervention strategies. More insight on how truancy manifests is needed to provide a base on which to suggest, plan and develop effective intervention strategies. Therefore, further research is needed to enable education officials, schools, parents and other professional to manage learners with attendance difficulties more efficiently. This study serves to bridge the information gap regarding the nature of truancy and to provide a picture of the life world of truants in secondary schools in Nyamira North district.

1.2.1 Purpose of the Study

sought

The study sought to investigate the causes of truancy and approaches used in the management and reduction of truancy in secondary schools in Nyamira North district.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The study was guided by the following specific objectives:

- (i) To establish the school related causes of truancy in secondary schools in Nyamira North district
- (ii) To determine home related causes of truancy in secondary schools in Nyamira North district
- (iii) To establish the approaches used in the management of truancy in secondary schools in Nyamira North district.

1.4 Research Questions

In order to realize the above specific objectives, the study sought answers to the following research questions:

- (i) What are the schools related causes of truancy in secondary schools in Nyamira North district?
- (ii) What are the home related causes of truancy in secondary schools in Nyamira North district?
- (iii) What are the approaches used in the management of truancy in secondary schools in Nyamira North district?

1.5 Significance of the Study

The problems associated with truancy should not prevent further research from being conducted. Solutions should be found, or the causes at least eliminated, because truancy is regarded as a serious problem with socio-economic implications. The specific aim of the

study was to gather information that would be used to guide the whole school community, educational psychologists, social workers and other stakeholders in terms of the relevant interventional approaches and procedures that can be used for managing truancy. Specifically, it is anticipated that the study will benefit the following:

1.5.1 Top management of the ministry of education

Findings of the study will facilitate enhanced management of truancy in secondary schools by the top management of the ministry of education. The policy makers in the ministry will gain a better understanding of the causes of truancy in secondary schools and the approaches that have been used elsewhere in the management of truancy, on whose basis, effective policies was formulated.

1.5.2 The management of secondary schools

The managers of secondary schools, who are expected to play a leading role in implementation of policies formulated by the ministry will get deeper insight of truancy management and replicate worthwhile strategies used in this study sample of schools in their respective schools in order to minimize the problem of truancy.

1.5.3 Parents and teachers of children in secondary schools

The parents and teachers of the schools in Nyamira North district will get the opportunity to better understand their role in the management of truancy amongst secondary school pupils. The knowledge gained will further enhance the strategies to be developed by the parents and teachers in truancy management.

1.5.4 Scholars and Researchers

The problems associated with studies on truancy should not prevent further research from being conducted. Solutions should be found, or the causes at least eliminated, because

truancy is regarded as a serious problem with socio-economic implications. The study will inspire future researchers to carry out further research in the same or related field.

1.6 Delimitation and Limitation of the Study

1.6.1 Delimitation of the Study

The study focused on secondary schools in Nyamira North district. The study respondents were the participating school principals. The study took a period of 3 months, commencing September 2010.

1.6.2 Limitations of the Study

The following limitations, could limit the generalisability of the study results:

To date literature on the extent of truancy, its impact and possible preventive mechanisms, especially in Kenya is scarce. There is thus limited empirical data for comparison. The scope of the study could be a limiting factor in that only one district was selected for the study. The findings may thus not be representative of all the schools in Kenya. In addition, some of the information sought is of a confidential nature, which the respondents either deliberately refused to divulge or may not have had access to the information. The researcher endeavored to reassure the respondents that the information sought would be used for academic purposes only. The respondents were, however, re-assured that all information provided would be treated confidentially.

1.7 Assumptions of the Study

An ideological assumption of this study was related to the researcher's strong belief in the importance of finding solution to the truancy issues in today's society. The researcher expressed the belief that educators, law enforcement and Juvenile Justice Administrators have a responsibility to "save as many children as best as we can as well as prepare those students to become productive citizens." An assumption in this study was that all

participants would answer the interview questions about their perceptions and actions truthfully, freely and frankly. It was assumed that the interviews and observations provided a complete and useful informational source upon which interpretations and conclusions could be drawn.

This study provides only a 'snapshot' of the truancy problem in secondary schools in Nyamira North district. Due to limitations of time and availability of data, this study would have been much more powerful and informative had sample included schools from other districts additional schools or been extended to cover the whole country. Though the researcher would have preferred to administer the data collection tools to the sampled staff, some of them had to delegate to their juniors, they themselves being too busy or away on official duties. It is thus assumed that the respondents gave similar information as would have been provided by the originally sampled staff. In addition, it was hoped that maximum cooperation would be received from the respondents in terms of giving objective answers and observing the time lines given.

1.8 Theoretical Framework and/or Conceptual Framework

1.8.1 Theoretical Framework

Various theories can be used to help explain truancy including strain, differential association, social learning, symbolic interaction, and social control theories, among others. For the purposes of this study, social control theory and its four constructs of social bonding (attachment, involvement, commitment, and belief) are used. Maddox and Prinz (2003) noted that the theory is assumed to be the most effective to understand the truant, their decisions to truant, and their interaction within the middle school from the principals' viewpoint.

Social control theory is ideal for understanding chronic truancy because it has become one of the major theories in understanding delinquent behaviors. Hirschi (1969) determined that connections to people, in the creation of a relationship, are important factors in delinquency. In other words, social bond matters. For middle school students who are exploring their own identity and finding their own sense of self, opportunities for social bonding is an essential ingredient to their academic and future success (DeMido, 1991; Manning, 1993; Eccles, Lord, Roeser, Barber, and Jozefowicz, 1999; Zins, Weissberg, Wang, and Walberg, 2004).

A lack of opportunities for connection and social bonding to school is purportedly linked to students' disengagement and chronic truancy. One hypothesis is based on what Hirschi and other colleague posit the absence of inhibition or lack of strong positive relationships and presence of weak social bonding, especially to school, facilitates engagement in truancy or various forms of antisocial behaviors (Hirschi, 1969; Brezina, Piquero, and Mazerolle, 2001; Sigfusdottir, Farkas and Silver, 2004). Researchers continue to refer to this theory as one of the first theories to examine school social bond as a primary predictor of delinquency and the four constructs of social bond as key protective factors for the school-aged child with even more influence than family (Crosnoe, Erickson and Dornbusch, 2002; Maddox and Prinz, 2003; Eith, 2005).

Toby (1957) has termed this lack of bonding as lack of *stakes in conformity*. Those who have less to lose because they are not attached or committed are more likely to take risks. Early social control theory espoused that this risk is based both on students' personal decisions to not comply and on school principals' labeling of the non-compliant behavior (Reiss, 1951). Ideally, there is a presumed correlation of social bond to school engagement and chronic truancy. However, this relationship may be impacted by certain school

demographics that help to create or inhibit this relationship within the school (Eith, 2005).

1.8.1.1 Four constructs of the social bond

Hirschi (1969) delineates his four major constructs of the social bond. He describes *Attachment* as affection or close relationships with others. This element suggests that students with stronger attachments are less likely to truant and violate school regulations because they are actively engaged. The truants who do not feel attached to persons or entities within the school may not be engaged in opportunities that build social bonds; thereby, they do not embrace the schools' values and norms, and have less of a stake in the school. The second major element is commitment.

Commitment describes the investment made in conventional activities such as peer relationships and school activities. When students invest time, energy, and personal resources into school, they are less likely to abandon it (Hirschi, 1969). Therefore, middle school students who feel committed and invested in school, via academics, extracurricular activities, leadership opportunities, and relationships with a good teacher, friend, or peer group may be less likely to disengage from school and truant. The third element is involvement.

Involvement speaks directly to what individuals find themselves doing to keep busy and deterred from delinquent activities. The more they are invested and engaged in pro-social, structured activities (studying habits), like school, leadership in a club or sports team, the less likely they are to engage in deviant activities, like truanting because they are busy. However, when they cannot find or are not involved in conventional activities that bring them joy in the school, they are more likely to invest in unconventional activities. The last of the four elements of social bonding is belief.

Belief and values are often not formally written but serve as the moral conscience of the society that determines right from wrong. This element speaks to the degree to which students have belief in the value of school and feel that the school's rules and societal values are fair. Moral education is seen as having a direct effect on students' decisions to truant (Siegel and Senna, 2007). Many of these values are taught in the home and are often emphasized in the school. The societal belief in the value of education is a key factor in choosing (or not choosing) to be truant. Many students that are truant do not yet believe that without an education they are bound to failure or limited opportunities.

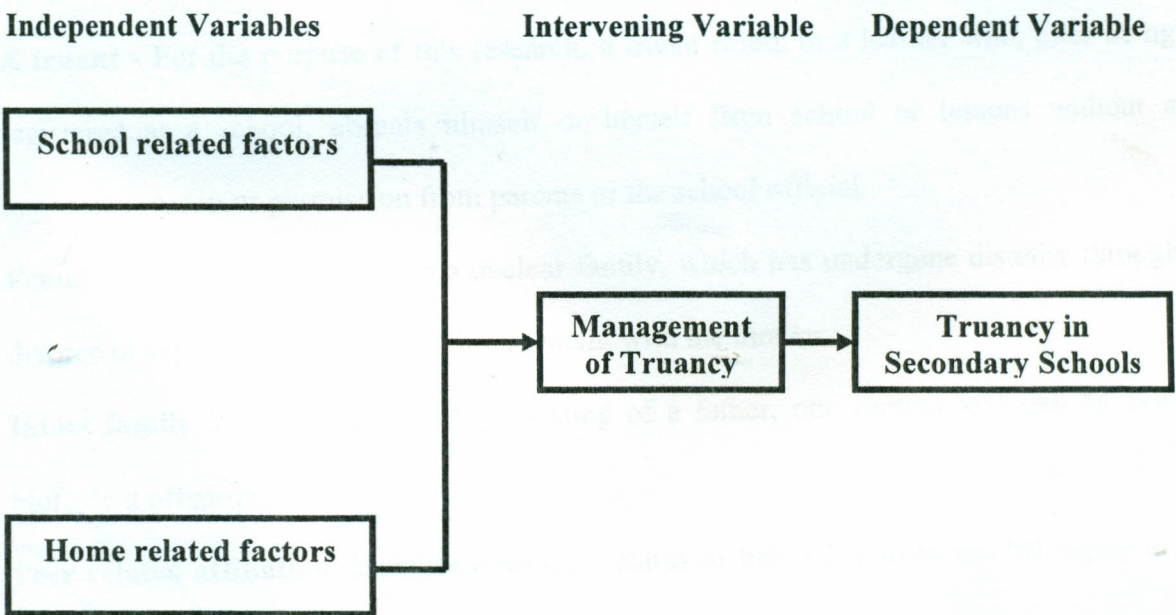
Social Control theory postulates that the higher the presence of these four constructs, the higher the level of social bonding. The seven needs of middle school students outlined by Lipsitz (1984) earlier in this chapter appear to mimic Hirschi's four constructs of social bonding – attachment, involvement, commitment, and belief. *Attachment* is clearly present when Lipsitz calls for positive social interaction with peers and adults, *involvement* when Lipsitz calls for meaningful participation in school and community activities, and *commitment* when Lipsitz asks that schools provide opportunities for students to explore diversity, self-exploration, and show competence and achievement to meet their personal needs for connection. *Belief* is the last of Hirschi's four constructs and is also addressed by Lipsitz' needs. Lipsitz discusses the schools' provision of clear limits, rules, and norms in the school's organizational structure. Both Lipsitz and Hirschi offer different organizing frameworks for addressing the needs of adolescents.

While social control theory proposes that strong personal bonds deter delinquency, it is an individually driven theory, bringing into question the need to include community and structural community factors. The theory was not originally organized as a way to answer 'why people break the norms of society such as through delinquency but what impacts

those decisions. Researchers like Hoffmann (2002) and Kornhauser (1978) suggest that social bonds are impacted by deteriorated structural and community-driven factors that further facilitate involvement in negative behaviors such as truancy. Evidently, where one lives and spends most of their childhood (the school environment) does influence behavior (Catalano and Hawkins, 1996; Herrenkohl, Hawkins, Chung, Hill, and Battin-Pearson, 2001; Sheidow, Gorman-Smith, Tolan, and Henry, 2001). In addition, this study included selected demographic variables and controlled for their effect on schools opportunities for social bonding and principal's perceptions of students' social bonding on rates of chronic truancy.

1.8.2 Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for the study is presented in figure 1.1 below.



Source: Author (2012)

It is evident that truancy is a resultant effect of school related and home related factors. The school related factors include: dilapidated school building and poor facilities, school size, movement between classes during lesson changes, classroom management, bullying, educator-learner relationship and teaching or instructional approach. The home related factors

include: socio-economic status of parents, marital status of parents, poor involvement and supervision by parents, peer influence, violence and drug use.

Truancy should be managed by using the following approaches:

Personality aspects: tutoring and mentor systems; and counseling and therapy.

The school Aspects: using reinforcement and reward systems; using a variety of instructional approaches; effective monitoring, registration and recording of attendance; welcome back to school; and student welfare

Community aspects: life-skills education; in-service training; acting fast on learner Absence; ordinances; and attending or truancy officers

1.9 Operational Definition of Terms

Throughout this research investigation the following list of terms and concepts are used most extensively; therefore, in order to avoid any misunderstanding, they are operationally defined as follows:

A truant - For the purpose of this research, a truant refers to a learner who, after being registered at a school, absents himself or herself from school or lessons without a legitimate reason or permission from parents or the school official.

Female headed family refers to a nuclear family, which has undergone disunity through divorce or separation, and the children, remain with the mother.

Intact family is a nuclear family consisting of a father, one mother and one or more biological offspring.

Peer related affiliation describes a person's status as belonging to or not belonging to a known group.

School-parent efficacy describes the extent to which a school provides parents active participation opportunities in a student's learning process.

Secondary school is a school that admits or registers and educates learners in Forms 1 – 4.

Truancy is defined as absence that has not been authorized by the school and where leave has not been given or approved

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a review of the literature related to the purpose of the study. The chapter is organized according to the specific objectives in order to ensure relevance to the research problem. The review is undertaken in order to eliminate duplication of what has been done and provide a bridge and clear understanding of existing knowledge base in the problem area. The literature review is based on authoritative, recent, and original sources such as journals, books, thesis and dissertations. This research paper highlights the conceptual difficulties, causes, and risk factors associated with truancy. The differences and similarities between truancy and school refusal behavior are also discussed in this chapter. The importance of early intervention and the effectiveness of working with younger children are also presented. The literature review concludes with a summary of previous research findings.

2.2 Types and Categories of Truancy

2.2.1 Types of Truancy

According to Reid (1999), there are at least three types of truancy:

(i) *Specific lesson absence* – those students who skip a particular class, such as Math, English, or PE; (ii) *Post registration truancy* – those students who register for class as present and then leave; and (ii) *Parental-condoned truancy* – those students whose parents agree that they can miss school for various reasons (Reid, 1999). In addition to the types of truancy, Reid (1999) offers a list of possible categories for truants.

2.2.2 Categories of Truancy

Having researched and studied truancy extensively, Reid (2000) believes that there are four major categories of truants: (i) traditional, (ii) psychological, (iii) institutional, and (iv) generic. The *traditional truant* is often shy, has a low self-concept, and removes him or herself from unaccommodating surroundings, therefore missing school primarily for social conditions or difficulties. The *psychological truant* more typically shows behavioral manifestations of laziness, illness, fear of a person or thing, or other issues, thus missing school for emotional factors (Reid, 1999). Third, the *institutional truants* are often leaders. They head their own peer groups and are generally not physically absent from school – often engaged in bullying and harassment. Institutional truants are withdrawn from lessons and skip school mainly for reasons related to the school itself or contextual school factors. Lastly, the *generic truant* is absent from school haphazardly for various reasons and shows evidence of many of the other categories of truants (Reid, 1999).

2.3 Causes of Truancy

Identifying causal factors of truancy is vital in developing preventive methods and interventions (Lehr, Sinclair, and Christenson, 2004; Reid, 2005). Recent research suggests that even though the main causes of truancy vary from study to study, a combination of home, school, and individual factors may be involved (Reid, 2005). This literature review discussed the three main causal factors of truancy that have been identified in the literature. These factors include individual factors, institutional factors, and family backgrounds and community factors (Reid and Kendall, 1982; McCluskey, Bynum and Patchin, 2004; Lindstadt, 2005; Ventura and Miller, 2005).

2.3.1 Individual Factors

Personality is defined as the individual's psychological, physical and spiritual characteristics that determine his behavior. (Meyer and Viljoen, 2003). Therefore, the contributing causes of truancy are intrinsic and located within the learner. Some of the personal attributes of truanting learners that have been identified in the literature are the following:

2.3.1.1 Anxiety and Fear

In a South Africa Study aimed at predicting truancy, Nel (1975) found that truants tend to be more anxious, and experience more stress related to frustration than non truants. It appears that this study is consistent with research finding where High School Personality Questions (HSPQ) test results revealed that truants are more sensitive and emotionally less stable than non-truants (Malan, 1972). The concept of anxiety is often associated with psychoanalytical theory. According to the psychoanalytical theory of Freud, reality anxiety is fear about the actual dangers in the environment (Meyer and Viljoen, 2003). In terms of this theory, truancy can be regarded as response that a learner adopts in an effort to avoid a potentially anxiety-provoking situation or event.

2.3.1.2 Poor Social Skills

Lewis (1995) asserts that boredom, isolation and lack of friends may be factors that pull a learner off school. It appears that an inability to cope with the demands of making friends triggers a strong impulse to escape from the anxiety-provoking situation, thus leading to truancy. This means that some learners respond to a socially challenging or emotionally threatening situation at school by playing truant.

2.3.1.4 Low self - esteem

Research indicates that certain personality traits, including lower levels of self esteem, make some learners more prone to absenteeism than their peers Reids (2002). However, research conducted by Sommer and Nigel (1991) failed to show a link between truancy and low self-esteem and to some extent confirmed results obtained earlier in South Africa, where truants studied by Malan (1972) tended to be more assertive and dominant than the study population.

2.3.1.5 Anti-social Behavior

Reynolds, Jones, Leger and Murgatroyd (1980) define anti-social behavior as “a diagnostic label used to describe children and adolescents who display a persistent and repetitive pattern of antisocial behaviors that violate the right of others”. Antisocial behaviors that an individual with conduct disorder displays include defying authorities, lying, fighting, cruelty to animals and people, as well as truant behavior. Therefore, a well-behaved learner can easily make friends and suffer little isolation, and is more likely to cope with the stresses of schooling.

2.3.1.5 Scholastic Failure

Truants tend to perform poorly in examinations. Gray and Jesson (1990) state that, in England, secondary-school learners who admitted that they have once engaged in serious levels of truancy were likely to report low levels of exam performance. A recent study conducted earlier in South Africa, about 30.7% of truants failed the final Grade 8 examination, compared to 11% of the population (Malan, 1972). A recent study conducted in some secondary schools in South Africa reveals that more truants than learners who are not truants failed three times or more (Mashine, 1997). That is, learners who play truant are more likely to have repeated a certain grade at school. This study suggests that truants

are mostly learners who are likely to fail their exams and be retained in a grade. Van Petegem (1994) asserts that poor school results often precede obstinate truancy even though Research evidence suggests that there is no direct relationship between intelligence and truancy.

2.3.1.6 Learning Problems

According to Le Ritchie (1988), a lack of academic success creates a sense of frustration and a constant fear of failure. It appears that learners who experience difficulty with schoolwork often play truant in an attempt to evade frustration. An inability to cope with academic expectations and demands can contribute to truancy in secondary schools. Truancy appears to be a response to frustration and anxiety associated with difficult lessons. In many instances, lesson difficulty contributes more to post-registration truancy than blanket truancy (Kilpatrick, 1998). Truancy is linked to a lower level of academic self-concept, since these learners tend to perceive themselves as having less ability than their peers (Reid, 1999).

2.3.1.7 Cognitive Style

It is not enough to assume that learners have difficulty with schoolwork and play truant as a result, without investigating how they learn and process information. Cognitive style is defined as a consistent and typical manner in which an individual organizes and processes information (Riding and read, 1996). There are two basic dimensions of cognitive style, namely the wholistic - analytical style, which indicates an individual's preference for processing information either as a whole or in parts, and the verbal-Imagery style, which shows a tendency to represent information during thinking either verbally or in mental images (Rayner and Riding, 1996). Rayner and Riding (1996) conducted research on learners who have a condition that is known as school refusal. Learners who have such

condition refuse to attend school but stay at home when not in school, complain about headaches, stomach pains or nausea and show signs of anxiety and depression (Egger, Costello and Angold, 2003). In addition, such children tend to be compliant and well behaved, and, unlike truants, they stay at home with the parents' knowledge. Some children tend to display characteristics of both school refusal and truancy (Egger *et al.*, 2003).

2.3.1.8 Poor habits arising from initially legitimate reasons

In some instances, a learner stays away from school as a result of poor health or need to look after a sick family member. This pattern of absence may be common in the current era of the HIV/AIDS epidemic where a learner's initial absence is legitimate and may not be considered as truancy. However, such absence may lead to the generation of a pattern of non-attendance that is unacceptable, particularly if it is unauthorized. The effect of HIV/AIDS is evident in some parts of the country. Firstly, official absence may lead to a habitual pattern of absenteeism that can turn into truancy. Thus, a long period of absence needs to be followed up and monitored. Secondly, the initial reason that a learner gives for asking permission for absence is for the same reason. Furthermore, absenteeism that is initially official may later turn out to be categorized as truancy. Therefore, learners must be made aware of circumstances under which absence is officially allowed or excused and of their responsibility with regard to notifying the school about personal problems and other concerns.

2.3.2 Institutional Factors

Reid (2005) identified student-teacher relationships, the content and delivery of the curriculum, and bullying as some of the main causes of truancy. Others argue that truancy and nonattendance is the result of personality conflicts with teachers and students

(Fornwalt, 1947). Fornwalt explained that teachers who subject their students to shame, sarcasm, name calling, ridicule, and humiliations are the direct causes of truancy. Additionally, the author stated that teachers who encourage their students not to attend class or who do not have any attendance policies are also a leading cause of truancy. Fornwalt stated that truancy is an escape mechanism and boys who truant are trying to get away from something, in this case the teachers. These findings are similar to the findings of Lindstadt, in which a correlation between teacher attitudes and truancy were found.

Barth (1984) and McCluskey *et al.* (2004) identified unsafe school environment, lack of effective and consistent school policies related to attendance, and teachers with low expectations for student achievement as some of the factors that cause truancy. Reid and Kendall (1982) found that schools that were characterized as small in class size, had lower institutional control, had less rigorous rule enforcement, had closer parent-school relationships, and had student involvement in the management of schools had lower rates of absences than schools that were custodial-oriented, had high levels of control, and had inflexible organizational systems. Reid and Kendall also found low attendance rates in schools that had well-planned curricula and realistic expectations of their children. Additionally, they found that irrelevant or unstimulating subject matter, lack of challenging school work, and poor relationships between teachers and students were factors associated with high absentee rates.

2.3.2.1 Dilapidated school building and poor facilities

In an attempt to find ways of combating truancy, Reid (1999) looked at evidence of research into effective schools and found that, among other factors, school buildings that are clean and well cared for are likely to make learners feel welcome. Attractive school buildings and a good atmosphere seem to create a sense of pride and belonging in learners.

Reid states that an unattractive school environment, which is characterized by poor toilet facilities, a lack of proper ventilation and heating dilapidated buildings is unlikely to encourage school attendance.

2.3.2.2 School Size

According to Cohen and Ryan (1998), school size tends to affect the rate of truancy negatively, in that data collected from Tasmania (Australia) show that larger schools have higher rates of absenteeism. Further, a study of 175 rural schools in the USA shows that larger schools tend to have high rates of truancy and misbehavior. School size is likely to affect the school by making it difficult to control disruptive behavior, particularly when there are more learners than the educators can manage.

2.3.2.3 Movement between classes during lesson changes

In many instances, learners are expected to move between blocks of buildings to attend different lessons. This practice is common in subjects that involve practical work, for example, when learners have to go to a science laboratory. According to Hallman and Roaf (1995), walking long distances between the different classrooms during lesson changes may provide opportunities for skipping lessons.

2.3.2.4 Classroom management

Another aspect that affects regular attendance during lessons is classroom management and the way in which attendance is monitored. Administrative inefficiency in terms of registration and poor classroom management can contribute to lesson skipping (Lewis, 1995; Reynolds *et. al*, 1980). Classroom management requires a great deal of dedication and commitment from both the learners and the educator.

2.3.2.5 Bullying

Bullying is defined as the behavior that occurs when one or more individuals repeatedly inflict physical, emotional or verbal abuse on another (Fried and Fried, 2003). Physical abuse involves actions such as fighting, throwing an object at someone or taking someone's money or lunch; verbal abuse may include name-calling, or an intimidating text message sent by mobile phones; emotional bullying may involve pointing, laughing at, or socially isolating another child. Sexual bullying is also said to occur between male and female or can be male-to-male, but also female-to-female, for example, ridiculing a girl whose breasts jiggle when she runs (Fried and Fried, 2003).

2.3.2.6 Educator-learner relationship

Black (1996) observed that "negative attitudes displayed by some educators may drive certain pupils to school non-attendance. What this author reveal is that both blanket and post-registration truancy occur because some learners avoid certain teachers. When learners show a tendency of disliking a lesson, it might be that particular educator responds negatively to those learners. This leads to poor relationships between the two parties. This poor educator-learner relationship can also occur as a result of what is regarded as intentionally disinviting practice. According to Mashiane (1997), an educator functions at the level of intentionally dis-iniviting when he or she goes out of his or her way to send messages that destroy a learner. Learners may find such educators and subsequently the school, repulsive and may become truants. Another practice that contributes to truancy is shouting at learners in class (Black, 1996) and in some instances the negative remarks may even appear in the learner's books.

2.3.2.7 Teaching or instructional approach

The contribution an educator makes in perpetuating or causing truancy is not only related to how or she treats or relates to learners. The educator's instructional approach and his or her feelings towards his or her work may be one of the factors that cause some learners to play truant. An enthusiastic educator instills enthusiasm and motivation in learners. On the other hand, a demoralized educator who shows little interest in his or her work discourages learners. Furthermore, the educator's attitude towards his or her work could either be negative or positive, is contagious and often affects the learners (Donald, Lazarus and Lolwa, 1997). Enthusiastic educators may be perceived to have positive attitude towards their work and are more likely to be keen to vary their instructional approaches.

2.3.3 Family and Community Factors

Recent research has recognized families as having a major impact on student attendance (Epstein and Sheldon, 2002). According to NCSE (2004), most truant students have been exposed to poor living conditions and negative circumstances. Also, they report that factors such as child abuse and parental irresponsibility have a major impact on students. Similarly, Barth (1984) found that a lack of resources and family social support can cause difficulties with parents and thus prevent them from bringing their child to school. Factors such as family socioeconomic status, parenting skills, and child neglect have also been identified as factors that prevent children from attending school (McCluskey, Bynum, and Patchin, 2004).

The following family variables were found amongst truants:

2.3.3.1 Socio-economic Status of Parents

Research conducted in South Africa shows that some family circumstances are factors that contribute to higher rates of truancy (Malan, 1972). It was recently found that truants tend

to come from larger families where parents have a lower level of education and pursue lower socio-economic occupations (Fox, 2000). The research findings cited above are constituent with some of the studies conducted abroad. Overseas researchers indicate that truants predominantly come from poor families living in overcrowded houses and economically deprived families (Le Ritche, 1998; Reid, 1999; Tyreman, 1958).

2.3.3.2 Marital Status of Parents

Another family variable that has been found to contribute to truancy is unstable family relationships, which include, divorce, parental separation and marital conflicts (Hallom and Roaf, 1995). When the relationship between parents breaks down, there is a likelihood that children will live with one parent or in an extended family structure.

2.3.3.3 Poor Involvement and Supervision

Parental involvement is an intentional act whereby a parent makes an effort to relate and interact with the child. Parental involvement include monitoring and helping with homework, attending school conferences and functions and providing as supportive learning environment (Crawage, 1992). When parents experience problems in their own lives that are related to intimate relationships and other external factors, they tend to focus less on their children. This can eventually lead to less involvement or a total lack of interest in the children, and subsequent problem behavior. Lack of parental interest, support or involvement in the learner's education is also associated with truancy (Cohen and Ryan, 1998) and many truants receive little or no parental support and encouragement (Reid, 1999). Nhlaop (1997) found that parents of truants are less interested in their children's schoolwork and encourage competency in children to a lesser extent.

2.3.3.4 Peer Influence

According to a study by Khoza (1997), the friends of truants attend school less regularly than those of learners who are not truants. Learners who play truant attend school only to be with friends and tend to hang around less with their peers who like school (Khoza, 1997). What is cited here is suggestive of the apparent consensus among some researchers that some learners begin to play truant purely to please friends. Such learners might be those with a personality that makes them vulnerable to the pressure of peers.

2.3.3.5 Violence and Drug Use

Maithela (1992) found that truancy levels tend to increase when some learners engage in violence, carry weapons and make other learners fear school. Truancy encourages the formation of gangs and can also result from fear of bullies who are gangsters. Therefore, truancy may have an indirect link with violence. Truants are more likely to be involved in alcohol, tobacco and other drug use; they tend to bond with drug-using peers; and often use drugs while bunking class (Hallfors *et al.*, 2002). The presence of violence, crime and negative peer culture in neighborhoods can cause emotional stress, which makes parenting tasks more difficult.

2.4 Approaches used in the Management of Truancy

2.4.1 Personality Aspects

2.4.1.1 Tutoring and mentor systems

When learners experience learning problems it is necessary to provide support that will help to maximize their chances for academic success, thereby reducing the opportunities for playing truant. Cohen and Ryan (1998) maintain that learners should be provided with counseling and additional tutoring services as a means of reducing truancy. Academic support can be offered to groups or individual learners. Tutoring is particularly important,

since some truants in the study by Malan (1972) indicated that they no assistance and had little time to do their homework at home.

2.4.1.2 Counseling and Therapy

Truantiing learners who show signs of having emotional problems relating to poor social skills receive individual and or group therapy (Davis, 1999). According to Maclodwie (1999), attendance increased by 7% in two schools in Kent when the Education Welfare Officer's intervention measures included counseling lessons.

2.4.2 The School Aspects

It is important to mention that strategies and initiatives that are used at the level of the individual learner also impact on the school in general. The approaches that are discussed in this section mainly address issues pertaining to reducing the impact of school factor as a step towards the management of truancy.

2.4.2.1 Using Reinforcement and Reward Systems

Like all other human beings, learners who play truant^{are} likely to improve or change their behavior if they are rewarded for desirable behavior. Maclodwie (1999) found that developing and dispensing incentives for regular attendance were more effective than applying sanctions to truant.

2.4.2.2 Using a variety of Instructional Approaches

Instructional approaches that promote active exploration challenge learners to think about their own learning while using other media, such as music, movement and art, to enable them to optimize their own cognitive development and to take active control of their own lives (Donald *et al.*, 1997). It is a healthy learning and teaching environment of this kind

that truants need. Cooperative learning activities can also promote the acquisition of social skills, which may be lacking in most learners who tend to play truant.

2.4.2.3 Effective Monitoring, Registration and Recording of Attendance

Research emphasizes the need for effective recording and monitoring as one of the starting points (Lewis, 1995; Reid, 2002). Some researchers propose the use of a computerized or electronic registration system as a tool for monitoring truancy levels (Maclodowie, 1999; Reid, 1999). Computerized registration is said to help identify particular groups of truants, the lessons that are being missed or possible causes of truancy (Social Exclusion Unit, 1998). Learners are less likely to play truant when they know that attendance is being closely monitored.

2.4.2.4 Welcome Back to School

It is also important to ensure that learners feel welcome back to school after a period of absence in order to prevent further absence. According to Maclodowie (1999), the attendance patterns of eight learners improved when one of the strategies included being welcomed back and when their teacher helped them to catch up with the work.

2.4.2.5 Student Welfare

It is only the administrative issues that are important in reducing truancy. The welfare or wellbeing of a student is also important. The need to look at student wellbeing is echoed by Donald et al. (1997), when stating that schools should work towards promoting whole and healthy development in both students and environment. In other words, problems must be “cured” and prevented, and schools must strive towards developing supportive environments. Lewis (1995) also suggests that pastoral systems and additional tutoring for learners who are identified as having poor literacy skills can reduce aspects of the school that tend to use them out of school. Reid (1999) suggests that the introduction of

homework clubs and homework policies can help learners to develop their learning skills and lead to improved academic performance.

2.4.3 Community Aspects

2.4.3.1 Life-skills Education

According to Donald *et al.* (1997), life skills empower individuals to “engage and cope successfully with life and its challenges’ and promote psychological competence. That is, schools must build the resiliency of their learners through life-skills education and thereby reduce the effect of vulnerability towards truancy in “at-risk” learners. Reid (1997) and Lewis (1995) assert that personal and social education programmes should not only help learners with skills that enable them to cope effectively with school and the world of work, but should also include truancy as a theme in their content. Reid (1999) maintains that truancy as a topic should be included or related to themes of the PSE (Personal and Social Education) programmes such as discipline, disruptive behavior, bullying and codes of practice.

2.4.3.2 In- service Training

The teacher In-service Project’s intervention at Modderdam High School is a typical example of school organization development that helped to decrease the level of truancy in South Africa (De Jong, 2000). The author identifies nine major areas of improvement in the school, which include, amongst others, security, physical conditions, relationships between staff and learners, relationship between learners relationships between school and parents, management and governance, quality of teaching and a sense of identity and community.

2.4.3.3 Acting Fast on Learner Absence.

In some instances, truancy reduction efforts focus is on early detection and includes efforts such as Stay in School Program, which targets students in middle school or what is known as the truant during the freshman year (US Department of Education, 1996). Another notable feature of these programmes is that support in the form of counseling for the youth and parenting skills training, and, in some instances, short-term family counseling, are also provided.

2.4.3.4 Ordinances

According to Pappas (1996), some cities have enacted daytime loitering ordinances and ant-truancy laws. Truants are referred to the juvenile traffic court and may have their driver's licenses delayed, suspended or revoked. The police officer is authorized to take the truants' right hand fingerprints where satisfactory evidence of identity is lacking and in this way to deny them the driving privilege. The loitering ordinance not only improved attendance rates in the whole school district by 2.2% in one year, but also helped to reduce the high school dropout rate by 57%. In addition, a school is expected to send a list of truants to the police agencies for cross-referencing and contacting the youth and their families, and in return the police supply the schools with a copy of the loitering/truancy warning notices.

2.4.3.5 Attending or Truancy Officers

The full-time services of attendance officers help schools to reduce truancy. According to MacLdowie (1999), the appointment of officers had an immediate and lasting effect on attendance in Kent schools. It must be emphasized that the effect was particularly felt when the officers picked up truants on their first day of absence. Gerrard, Burhans and

Fair (2003) also maintain that assigning a truancy to serious cases of truants and their and their families does increase attendance rates.

2.5 Previous Studies on Truancy

Lewis (1995) states that attendance difficulties may broadly result from a combination of “pull” and “push” factors. Pull factors are personal and social aspects that “pull” a learner out of school. The pull factors may be related to the psychological indices mentioned by Reid (2002), such as maladjustment, a lower general level of self-esteem and academic self-concept, anxiety and lower career aspirations. Other factors relating to the school and the classroom include bullying, the curriculum, boring lessons (Reid, 1999), teachers’ humiliating remarks and poor record-keeping and school organization. According to Pappas (1996), truancy is often symptomatic of family dysfunction, since the parents of truants tend to be permissive, undisciplined and unavailable. Some authors believe that truancy is associated with a poor socio-economic background, including poverty, poor housing and unemployment (Bell, Rosen and Dynlacht, 1994). Some researchers state that there is a link between truancy and delinquent behavior (Collins, 1998; Reid, 1999).

2.6 Summary and Conclusions

This literature review has revealed various research findings. For example, intervention during the elementary school years can potentially prevent truancy later on (Ford and Sutphen, 1996). Previous researchers have identified non-attendance or irregular attendance, poor academic performance, and behavioral problems in elementary school as potential risk factors for truancy (Barth, 1984; Ford and Sutphen; Lehr *et al.*, 2004). According to Lehr *et al.*, children at risk for truancy can be identified as early as third grade. Lehr *et al.* explained that it is more effective to work with elementary school children than middle school or high school children because problems tend to be more

complex and intense as children get older. Review of the literature has also shown that boys and girls tend to differ in characteristics and behavior at school (Langsford *et al.*, 1998; Petrides *et al.*, 2005; Weden and Zabin, 2005).

In addition, from the review of literature, it is apparent that high rates of absenteeism and/or truancy are problems that affect many schools in many countries. Students who habitually miss school exhibit loss of learning and instruction, and have been identified as at-risk for dropping out of school altogether. School systems suffer also when students are absent by loss of instructional time that often must be repeated for the absentee student, which in turn leads to loss of instructional time for other students. Several causes for absenteeism have been identified, with statistics to support the theory of school refusal behavior (SRB), which may manifest in many ways, including truancy. Other identified causes for absenteeism include lack of parental involvement and supervision, lack of interesting and challenging curriculum for students, a desire for hedonistic activities with peers, negative self-image and self-esteem, and participation in co-operative work experiences for older students.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

This chapter aims at defining the research design and methodology used in the study. It contains a description of the study design, target population, sample design and size, data collection instruments and procedure.

3.1 Research Design

Research design provides the glue that holds the research project together. A design is used to structure the research, to show how all of the major parts of the project, which include the samples or groups, measures, treatments or programs, and methods of assignment that work together to try to address the central research questions (Brown *et al*, 2003). A descriptive survey was used to undertake the study. The method permits gathering of data from the respondents in natural settings. Descriptive research is designed to describe the characteristics or behaviors of a particular population in a systematic and accurate fashion. Survey research uses questionnaires and interviews to collect information about people's attitudes, beliefs, feelings, behaviors, and lifestyles.

Descriptive design is preferred because no matter what method is chosen to collect the data; all descriptive designs have one thing in common: they must provide descriptions of the variables in order to answer the question. One of the most useful methods of numeric analysis available is statistics and this study used this method to describe and make inferences about measurable characteristics of a large group based on measurements from the representative sample of the population. In particular, frequency distribution which was used in this study is intended to show the distribution (or the count) for each business entity to clearly spell out to what extent each of the various factors influences that particular company's social responsiveness activities.

3.2 Location of the Study

The study was located in Nyamira North District, Nyanza Province.

3.3 Target Population

The study focused on all the secondary schools in Nyamira North District, whose number stood at 36 as at 30th June 2010. A census was undertaken since the schools are only 36 (Appendix III). The respondents in each of the schools were the Principals of the various schools.

3.4 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size

3.4.1 Sampling Techniques

A census of the secondary schools in Nyamira North District was undertaken. In order to obtain data from the students, stratified random sampling was used, where by in each school, forms 1, 2, 3 and 4 were each represented by 3 students, selected at random.

3.4.2 Sample Size

In total, there are 36 secondary schools in Nyamira North District. Since each school was represented by one respondent, the head of the school, the sample size was 36. In addition, a total of 8 students represented each school.

3.5 Construction of Research Instruments

A semi-structured questionnaire was used to collect primary data from the Principals of secondary schools in Nyamira North District. Structured questions were presented on a likert scale. The Likert scale, commonly used in business research was used because it allows participants to respond with degrees of agreement or disagreement. The ratings was on a scale from 1 (lowest impact or least important) to 5 (highest impact or most important). The questionnaire was structured in two main sections. Section I captured the

profile of the Principals or their appointed representatives whereas section II captured information on pertinent issues touching on truancy in secondary schools as per objectives of the study. In addition, information pertaining to causes and possible preventive measures of truancy as perceived by students was collected from the students in the various secondary schools using personal interviews. In each school, forms 1, 2, 3 and 4 were represented by 8 students, selected at random.

3.6 Validity

Validity refers to the extent to which the data collection instrument measures what it is supposed to measure. In order to establish its validity, the questionnaire was given to experts and colleagues to determine content and face validity. According to Johnson and Christensen (2004), content validity is a judgmental act where experts check whether the items represent the construct which is being studied as well as the wording, formatting and scoring of the instrument. On the other hand, face validity refers to the extent to which the respondents will perceive the instrument as being valid to test what it is supposed to test (Black, 1999).

3.7 Reliability

Zikmund (2003) defined reliability as the degree to which measures are free from error and therefore yield consistent results. The researcher relied on the guidance of the supervisors for reliability of the data collection tool. Reliability analysis was conducted in this study to ensure that the measures of variables had internal consistency across time and across the various items that measure the same concept or variable. Reliability evaluates accuracy of the measures through assessing the internal stability and consistency of items in each variable (Hair *et al.*, 1998). According to Sekaran (2003), "reliability analysis is conducted to ensure that the measures of variables have internal consistency across time

and across the various items that measure the same concept or variable". Reliability evaluates accuracy of the measures through assessing the internal stability and consistency of items in each variable (Hair *et al.*, 1998). Reliability was measured in this study using Cronbach's alpha coefficients.

3.8 Pilot Study

Two procedures were followed during the pre-testing of the questionnaire. According to Cooper and Schindler (2003), the researcher may rely on experts when piloting the instrument to identify changes that can be made with confusing items. Experts and colleagues who are experienced in research were also be requested to examine the questionnaire to check whether there are any items that need to be changed or rephrased, as well as the appropriateness of the time set for completing it. The next step involved the completion of the questionnaire by a sample of learners and head teachers not included in the sample. At the end of the exercise, the items in the questionnaires were considered to be satisfactory in term of both wording and format.

3.9 Data Collection Techniques

The questionnaires were each pre-tested on six randomly selected respondents to enhance effectiveness and hence data validity before being administered. Since all the secondary schools to be studied are located in Nyamira North District, the research assistants administered the questionnaires by hand delivery. A letter of introduction, stating the purpose of study was attached to each questionnaire. In addition, the researcher made telephone calls to the respective respondents to further explain the purpose of the study and set a time frame for the completion of the questionnaires. Once completed, the researcher personally collected the questionnaires. This gave him the opportunity to clarify certain issues arising from the various responses. In addition, personal interviews were

conducted with 8 students (2 students per class) in every secondary school, randomly selected from the class registers.

3.10 Data Analysis

An appropriate method of analysis for this study has been described by Bogdan and Biklen (2003) as working with data, organizing it, breaking it into manageable units, coding, synthesizing it, searching for patterns discovering what is essential as well as showing the findings are important and making it understandable. According to Marshall and Rossman (1999), data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure and interpretation to the mass of collected data. In order to facilitate analysis, the collected data from the questionnaire and other secondary sources was systematically organized. Content analysis was employed for data pertaining to the profile of the respondents while data pertaining to the objectives of the study was analyzed by employing descriptive statistics. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used in data entry and analysis. SPSS is preferred because it is very systematic and covers a wide range of the most common statistical and graphical data analysis. In data presentation, computation of frequencies in tables, charts and bar graphs was widely used. Mean scores was used to present information pertaining to the study objectives.

3.11 Logistical and Ethical Considerations

In undertaking the study, the researcher adhered to ethical issues and the following fundamentals were taken into consideration:

Safeguarding the interests of those involved in, or are affected by the study by way of their work was well thought through. The findings of the study were reported accurately and truthfully. The researcher is convinced that the study is worthwhile and that the techniques to be used were appropriate to enable deduction of any conclusions. The

researcher also ensured that the study is his original idea and that he does not present another person's work as his own. In addition, the researcher ensured that the findings were not misrepresented. The other ethical aspects that are also clearly understood include:

Confidentiality – The research guaranteed the participants' confidentiality and was assured that the information provided would not be made available to anyone who was not directly involved in the study. The principle of anonymity which essentially means that the participants would remain anonymous throughout the study was also strictly adhered to.

The principle of voluntary participation – was also observed and nobody would therefore be coerced to participate in the research. The information obtained was thus treated with confidentiality and any use to be made from such information would need express permission from the individual respondents to be used as such.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Introduction

The study utilized a combination of both quantitative and qualitative techniques in the collection of data. The study focused on all the secondary schools in Nayamira North District, whose number stood at 36 as at 30th June 2010. A census was undertaken and each of the schools was represented in the study by the Principal. Out of the 36 questionnaires sent out, 33 questionnaires were returned completed, (91.7%) response rate. Eight students were targeted in each of the 36 schools, making a possible 288, out of which 242 questionnaires were collected for analysis (84% response).

The data was analyzed by employing descriptive statistics such as percentages, frequencies and tables. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to aid in analysis. The researcher preferred SPSS because of its ability to cover a wide range of the most common statistical and graphical data analysis and is very systematic. Mean scores were used to indicate measures of central tendency while standard deviations were used to indicate measures of dispersion. Computation of frequencies in tables, charts and bar graphs was used in data presentation. The information is presented and discussed as per the objectives and research questions of the study.

4.2 Background information

This section presents a summary of responses with respect to the background information of the school principals.

4.2.1 Time period school has been in existence

The principals were asked to specify their school's period of existence; responses are summarized and presented in figure 4.1 below.

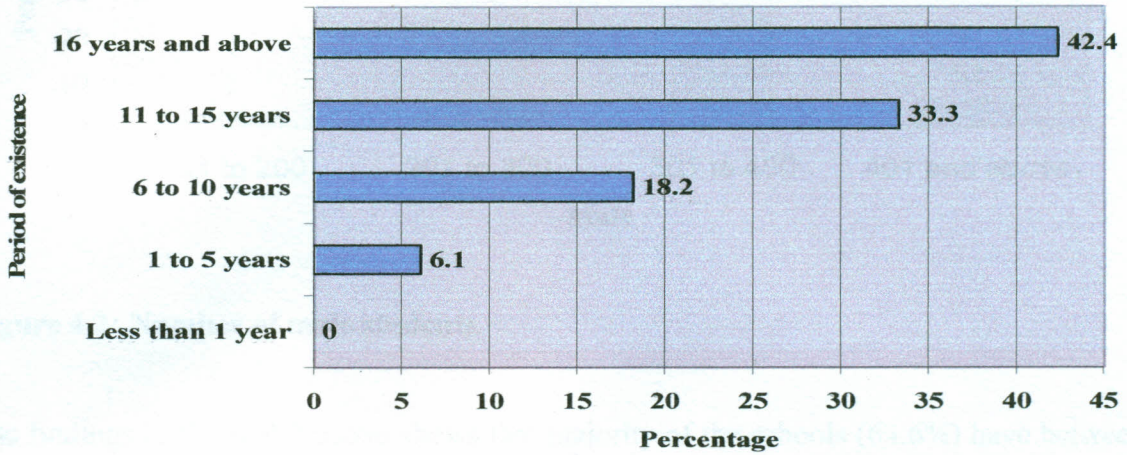


Figure 4.1: Schools' Period of Existence

The findings in figure 4.1 above show that majority of the respondent schools (42.4%) have been in existence for more than 16 years, (33.3%) of the schools has been in existence for a period of between 11 and 15 years, (18.2%) of the schools has been in existence for a period of between 6 and 10 years, (6.1%) of the schools has been in existence for a period of between 1 and 5 years and none of the schools has been in operation for less than an year. The findings show that at least (93.9%) of the respondent schools have been in existence for a period exceeding 5 years, hence the responses were expected to be objective.

4.2.2 Students Population

This section presents the population of students in the respondent schools.

4.2.2.1 Number of male students

The principals were asked to give the number of male students in their schools. The responses are summarized and presented in figure 4.2 below.

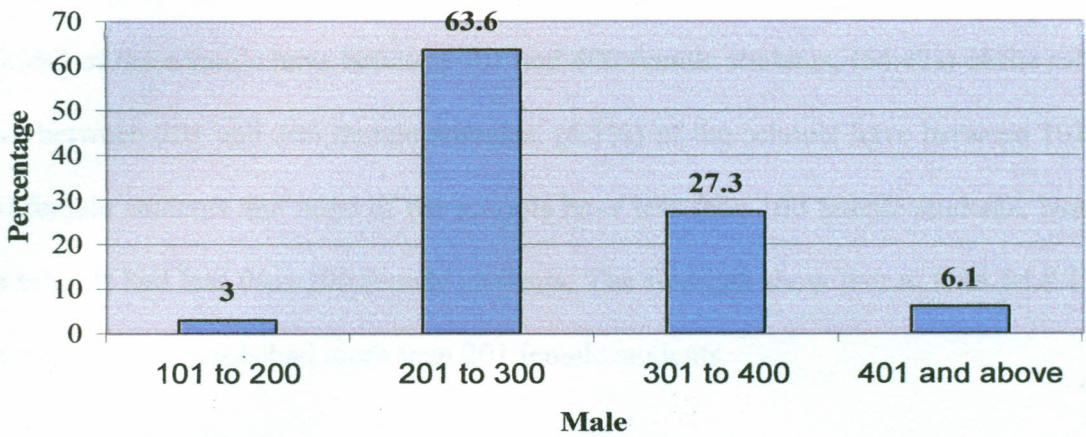


Figure 4.2: Number of male students

The findings in figure 4.2 above shows that majority of the schools (63.6%) have between 201 and 300 male students, (27.3%) of the schools have between 301 and 400 male students, (3%) of the schools have between 101 and 200 male students, (6.1%) of the respondent schools had 401 and above male students and none of the schools have less than 101 male students. None of the schools had less than 100 students. The findings show that at least 90.1% of the respondent schools had more than 201 male students.

4.2.2.2 Number of female students

The principals were asked to give the number of female students in their schools. The responses are summarized and presented in figure 4.3 below

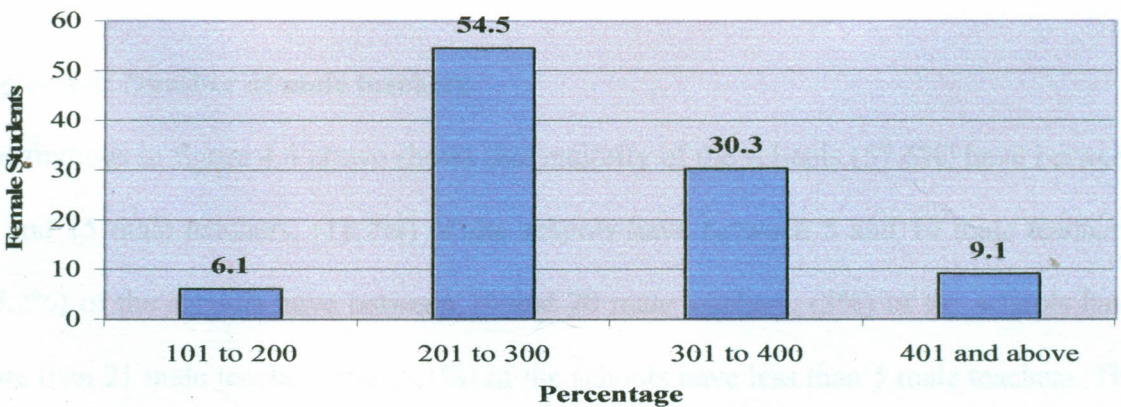


Figure 4.3: Number of female students

The findings in figure 4.3 above shows that (9.1%) have more than 401 female students, (30.3%) of the schools have between 301 and 400 female students, (54.4%) of the schools have between 201 and 300 female students, (6.1%) of the schools have between 101 and 200 female students and none of the schools have less than 100 female students. None of the schools had less than 100 female students. The findings show that at least 84.8.1% of the respondent schools had more than 201 female students.

4.2.3 Population of teachers

4.2.3.1 Number of male teachers

The school principals were asked to give the number of male teachers in their schools. The responses are summarized and presented in figure 4.4 below.

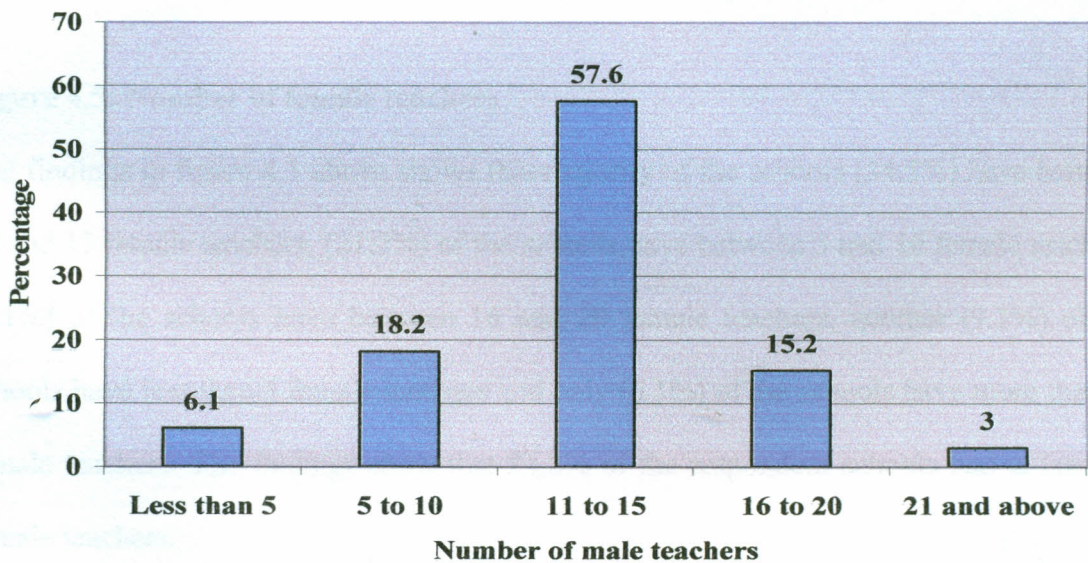


Figure 4.4: Number of male teachers

The findings in figure 4.4 above shows that majority of the schools (57.6%) have between 11 and 15 male teachers, (18.2%) of the schools have between 5 and 10 male teachers, (15.2%) of the schools have between 16 and 20 male teachers, (3%) of the schools have more than 21 male teachers and (6.1%) of the schools have less than 5 male teachers. The findings show that 75.7% of the respondent schools had at least 10 male teachers.

4.2.3.2 Number of female teachers

The school principals were asked to give the number of male teachers in their schools. The responses are summarized and presented in figure 4.5 below

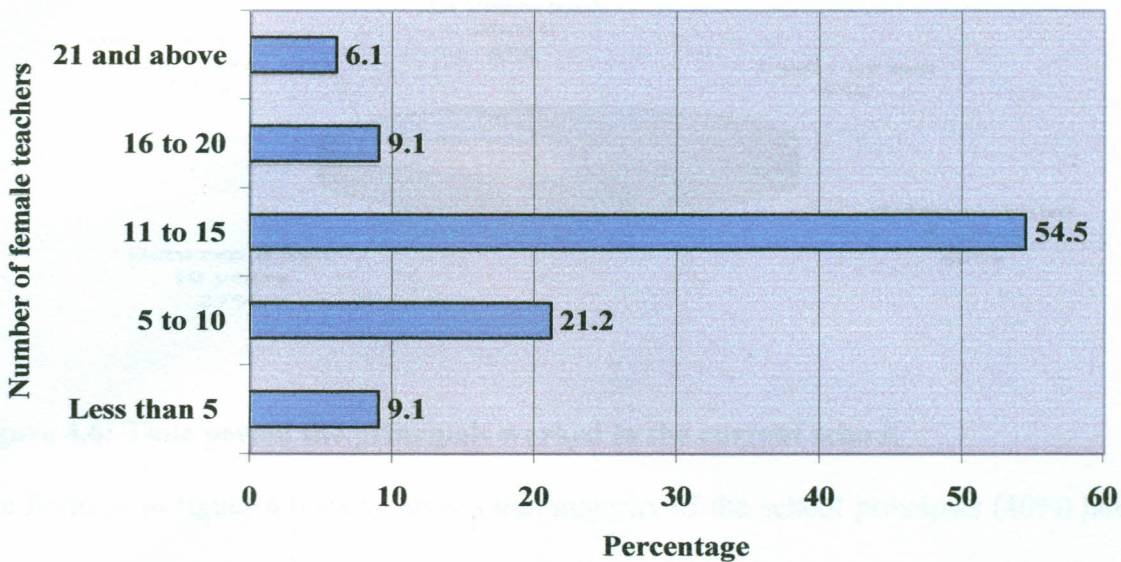


Figure 4.5: Number of female teachers

The findings in figure 4.5 above shows that majority of the schools (54.5%) have between 11 and 15 female teachers, (21.2%) of the schools have between 5 and 10 female teachers, (9.1%) of the schools have between 16 and 20 female teachers, another (9.1%) of the schools have less than 5 female teachers and only (6.1%) of the schools have more than 21 female teachers. The findings show that 84.8% of the respondent schools had at least 10 female teachers.

4.2.4 Time period the principals worked in the current school

The school principals were asked to give the period of working in their current schools; responses are summarized and presented in figure 4.6 below.

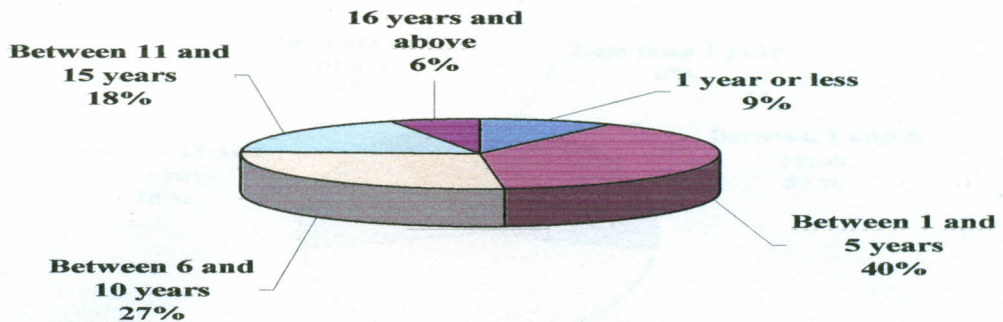


Figure 4.6: Time period the principals worked in the current school

The findings in figure 4.6 above shows that majority of the school principals (40%) have worked in their current schools for a period of between 1 and 5 years, (27%) of the principals have worked in their current schools for a period of between 6 and 10 years, (18%) of the principals have worked in their current schools for a period of between 11 and 15 years, (9%) of the principals have worked in their current schools for less than 1 year and (6%) of the principals have worked in their current schools for more than 16 years. The findings show that at least 51% of the principals had worked in their current schools for a period exceeding 5 years, which is long enough to enable them articulate issues pertaining to the objectives of the study.

4.2.5 Length of time in the current position

The school principals were asked to indicate the length of time that they have been in their current positions; responses are summarized and presented in figure 4.7 below

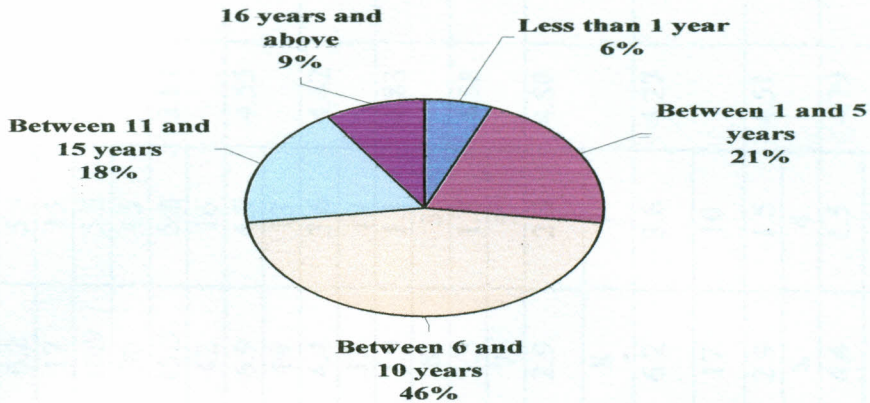


Figure 4.7: Length of time in the current position

The findings in figure 4.7 above show that majority of the school principals (46%) have been in their current position for a period of between 6 and 10 years, (21%) of the principals have been in their current position for a period of between 1 and 5 years, (18% of the principals have been in their current position for a period of between 11 and 15 years, (9%) of the principals have been in their current positions for more than 16 years and (6%) of the principals have been in their current position for less than 1 year. The findings show that at least 73% of the principals had worked as principal for a period exceeding 5 years and were thus expected to provide objective responses to the study.

4.3 Causes and approaches used in the management of truancy in secondary schools in Nyamira North district

4.3.1 The causes of truancy in secondary schools in Nyamira North district

In order to assess the possible factors causing truancy in secondary schools, respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agree/disagree to each of the listed factors, responses are summarized and presented in tables 4.1 and 4.2 below.

Table 4.1: School Related Factors Causing Truancy in Nyamira North District

School related factors causing truancy		Strongly agree	Agree	Somehow agree	Somehow disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean	Standard deviation
Anxiety and fear	Percentage	38.2	29.1	13.5	7.6	6.2	5.5	4.69	1.471
	Frequency	105	80	37	21	17	15		
Poor social skills	Percentage	15.3	24.4	24.7	19.3	10.9	5.5	3.97	1.408
	Frequency	42	67	68	53	30	15		
Low self-esteem	Percentage	16.7	16.0	26.2	20.0	15.3	5.8	3.81	1.462
	Frequency	46	44	72	55	42	16		
Anti-social behavior	Percentage	29.1	33.5	17.5	8.4	6.9	4.7	4.55	1.409
	Frequency	80	92	48	23	19	13		
Scholastic failure	Percentage	24.0	23.6	34.2	10.2	4.4	3.6	4.42	1.277
	Frequency	66	65	94	28	12	10		
Learning problems	Percentage	34.2	31.3	22.9	7.6	2.9	1.1	4.83	1.135
	Frequency	94	86	63	21	8	3		
Cognitive style	Percentage	24.4	29.1	32.7	9.5	2.5	1.8	4.58	1.138
	Frequency	67	80	90	26	7	5		
Poor habits arising from initially legitimate reasons	Percentage	34.5	30.2	24.4	5.5	2.9	2.5	4.80	1.201
	Frequency	95	83	67	15	8	7		
Dilapidated school building and poor facilities	Percentage	17.8	26.5	34.2	11.6	6.2	3.6	4.27	1.265
	Frequency	49	73	94	32	17	10		
School Size	Percentage	22.9	27.6	32.4	12.7	2.9	1.5	4.51	1.147
	Frequency	63	76	89	35	8	4		
Movement between classes during lesson changes	Percentage	36.0	27.6	23.3	7.3	4.4	1.5	4.79	1.213
	Frequency	99	76	64	20	12	4		

Continued

School related factors causing truancy		Strongly agree	Agree	Somehow agree	Somehow disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean	Standard deviation
Classroom management	Percentage	22.5	32.0	28.7	8.7	5.1	2.9	4.49	1.239
	Frequency	62	88	79	24	14	8		
Bullying	Percentage	6.5	6.2	9.1	20.7	21.8	35.6	2.48	1.520
	Frequency	18	17	25	57	60	98		
Education-learner relationship	Percentage	23.3	28.4	32.4	8.4	4.0	3.6	4.48	1.251
	Frequency	64	78	89	23	11	10		
Teaching or in instructional approach	Percentage	22.9	27.6	32.7	9.1	4.4	3.3	4.46	1.244
	Frequency	63	76	90	25	12	9		

Anxiety and fear

With respect to anxiety and fear, (29.1 %) of the respondents “agreed”, (38.2 %) of the respondents “strongly agreed”, (13.5%) of the respondents “somehow agreed” (6.2 %) of the respondents “disagreed”, (7.6%) of the respondents “somehow disagreed” and another (5.5%) of the respondents “strongly disagreed”. The findings show that (80.8%) of the respondents indicated that anxiety and fear caused truancy in their schools. The findings are consistent with those of Nel (1975) who found that truants tend to be more anxious, and experience more stress related to frustration than non truants. It appears that this study is consistent with research finding where High School Personality Questions (HSPQ) test results revealed that truants are more sensitive and emotionally less stable than non-truants (Malan, 1972).

Poor social skills

With respect to poor social skills, (24.4%) of the respondents “agreed”, (15.3%) of the respondents “strongly agreed”, (24.7%) of the respondents “somehow agreed”, (10.9%) of the respondents “disagreed”, (19.3%) of the respondents “somehow disagreed” and (5.5%) of the respondents “strongly disagreed”. The findings show that (64.4%) of the respondents indicated that poor social skills caused truancy in their schools. Lewis (1995) found that boredom, isolation and lack of friends may be factors that pull a learner off school. It appears that an inability to cope with the demands of making friends triggers a strong impulse to escape from the anxiety-provoking situation, thus leading to truancy. This means that some learners respond to a socially challenging or emotionally threatening situation at school by playing truant.

Low self-esteem

With respect to low self-esteem, (16.7%) of the respondents “strongly agreed”, (16.0%) of the respondents “agreed”, (26.2%) of the respondents “somehow agreed”, (15.3%) of the respondents “disagreed”, (20.0%) of the respondents “somehow disagreed” and (5.8%) of the respondents “strongly disagreed”. The findings show that (58.9%) of the respondents indicated that low self-esteem caused truancy in their schools. The findings are consistent with those by Reids (2002) who found that certain personality traits, including lower levels of self esteem, make some learners more prone to absenteeism than their peers. However, research conducted by Sommer and Nigel (1991) failed to show a link between truancy and low self-esteem and to some extent confirmed results obtained earlier in South Africa, where truants studied by Malan (1972) tended to be more assertive and dominant than the study population.

Anti-social behavior

With respect to anti-social behavior, majority of the respondents (33.5%) “agreed”, (29.1%) of the respondents “strongly agreed”, (17.5%) of the respondents “somehow agreed”, (6.9%) of the respondents “disagreed”, (8.4%) of the respondents “somehow disagreed” and another (4.7%) of the respondents “strongly disagreed”. The findings show that (80.1%) of the respondents indicated that anti-social behavior caused truancy in their schools. Reynolds, Jones, Leger and Murgatroyd (1980) define anti-social behavior as “a diagnostic label used to describe children and adolescents who display a persistent and repetitive pattern of antisocial behaviors that violate the right of others”. Antisocial behaviors that an individual with conduct disorder displays include defying authorities, lying, fighting, cruelty to animals and people, as well as truant

behavior. Therefore, a well-behaved learner can easily make friends and suffer little isolation, and is more likely to cope with the stresses of schooling.

Scholastic failure

With respect to scholastic failure, (23.6%) of the respondents “agreed”, (24.0%) of the respondents “strongly agreed”, (34.2%) majority of the respondents “somehow agreed”, (3.6%) of the respondents “disagreed”, (10.2%) of the respondents “somehow disagreed” and only (3.6%) of the respondents “strongly disagreed”. The findings show that (81.8%) of the respondents indicated that scholastic failure caused truancy in their schools. Gray and Jesson (1990) state that, in England, secondary-school learners who admitted that they have once engaged in serious levels of truancy were likely to report low levels of exam performance. A study conducted earlier in South Africa, about 30.7% of truants failed the final Grade 8 examination, compared to 11% of the population (Malan, 1972). A study conducted in some secondary schools in South Africa reveals that more truants than learners who are not truants failed three times or more (Mashine, 1997). That is, learners who play truant are more likely to have repeated a certain grade at school. This study suggests that truants are mostly learners who are likely to fail their exams and be retained in a grade. Van Petegem (1994) asserts that poor school results often precede obstinate truancy even though Research evidence suggests that there is no direct relationship between intelligence and truancy.

Learning problems

With respect to cognitive style, (31.3%) of the respondents “agreed”, (34.2%) of the respondents “strongly agreed”, (22.9%) of the respondents “somehow agreed”, (2.9%) of the respondents “disagreed”, (7.6%) of the respondents “somehow disagreed” and only (1.1%) of the

respondents “strongly disagreed”. The findings show that (88.4%) the respondents indicated that learning problems caused truancy in their schools. According to Le Ritchie (1988), a lack of academic success creates a sense of frustration and a constant fear of failure. It appears that learners who experience difficulty with schoolwork often play truant in an attempt to evade frustration. An inability to cope with academic expectations and demands can contribute to truancy in secondary schools. Truancy appears to be a response to frustration and anxiety associated with difficult lessons. In many instances, lesson difficulty contributes more to post-registration truancy than blanket truancy (Kilpatrick, 1998). Truancy is linked to a lower level of academic self-concept, since these learners tend to perceive themselves as having less ability than their peers (Reid, 1999).

Cognitive style

With respect to cognitive style, (29.1%) of the respondents “agreed”, (24.4%) of the respondents “strongly agreed”, (32.7%) of the respondents “somehow agreed”, (2.5%) of the respondents “disagreed”, (9.5%) of the respondents “somehow disagreed” and only (1.8%) of the respondents “strongly disagreed”. The findings show that (86.2%) of the respondents indicated that cognitive style caused truancy in their schools. It is not enough to assume that learners have difficulty with schoolwork and play truant as a result, without investigating how they learn and process information. There are two basic dimensions of cognitive style, namely the Wholistic-Analytical style, which indicates an individual’s preference for processing information either as a whole or in parts, and the verbal-Imagery style, which shows a tendency to represent information during thinking either verbally or in mental images (Rayner and Riding, 1996). Rayner and Riding (1996) conducted research on learners who have a condition that is known as school

refusal. Learners who have such condition refuse to attend school but stay at home when not in school, complain about headaches, stomach pains or nausea and show signs of anxiety and depression (Egger, Costello and Angold, 2003). In addition, such children tend to be compliant and well behaved, and, unlike truants, they stay at home with the parents' knowledge. Some children tend to display characteristics of both school refusal and truancy (Egger *et al.*, 2003).

Poor habits arising from initially legitimate reasons

With respect to poor habits arising from initially legitimate reasons, (30.2%) of the respondents "agreed", (34.5%) of the respondents "strongly agreed", (24.4%) of the respondents somehow agreed", (2.9%) of the respondents "disagreed", (5.5%) of the respondents "somehow disagreed" and (2.5%) of the respondents "strongly disagreed". The findings show that (89.1%) of the respondents indicated that poor habits arising from initially legitimate reasons caused truancy in their schools.

Dilapidated school building and poor facilities

With respect to dilapidated school building and poor facilities, (17.8%) of the respondents "strongly agreed", (34.2%) of the respondents "somehow agreed", (26.5%) of the respondents "agreed", (6.1%) of the respondents "disagreed", (11.6%) of the respondents "somehow disagreed" and (3.6%) of the respondents "strongly disagreed". The findings show that (78.5%) of the respondents indicated that dilapidated school building and poor facilities caused truancy in their schools. In an attempt to find ways of combating truancy, Reid (1999) looked at evidence of research into effective schools and found that, among other factors, school buildings that are clean and well cared for are likely to make learners feel welcome. Attractive school buildings and a good atmosphere seem to create a sense of pride and belonging in learners. Reid states that

an unattractive school environment, which is characterized by poor toilet facilities, a lack of proper ventilation and heating dilapidated buildings is unlikely to encourage school attendance.

School size

With respect to school size, (27.6%) of the respondents “agreed”, (22.9%) of the respondents “strongly agreed”, (32.4%) of the respondents “somehow agreed”, (2.9%) of the respondents “disagreed”, (12.7%) of the respondents “somehow disagreed” and (1.5%) of the respondents “strongly disagreed”. The findings show that (82.9%) of the respondents indicated that school size caused truancy in their schools. According to Cohen and Ryan (1998), school size tends to affect the rate of truancy negatively, in that data collected from Tasmania (Australia) show that larger schools have higher rates of absenteeism. Further, a study of 175 rural schools in the USA shows that larger schools tend to have high rates of truancy and misbehavior. School size is likely to affect the school by making it difficult to control disruptive behavior, particularly when there are more learners than the educators can manage.

Movement between classes during lesson changes

With respect to movement between classes during lesson changes, (27.6%) of the respondents “agreed”, (36.0%) of the respondents “strongly agreed”, (23.3%) of the respondents “somehow agreed”, (4.4%) of the respondents “disagreed”, (7.3%) of the respondents “somehow disagreed” and (1.5%) of the respondents “strongly disagreed”. The findings show that (86.9%) of the respondents indicated that movement between classes during lesson changes caused truancy in their schools. According to Hallman and Roaf (1995), walking long distances between the different classrooms during lesson changes may provide opportunities for skipping lessons.

Classroom management

With respect to classroom management, (32.0%) of the respondents “agreed”, (22.5%) of the respondents “strongly agreed”, (5.1%) of the respondents “disagreed”, (28.7%) of the respondents “somehow agreed”, (8.7%) of the respondents “somehow disagreed” and (2.9%) of the respondents “strongly disagreed”. The findings show that (83.2%) of the respondents indicated that classroom management caused truancy in their schools. Administrative inefficiency in terms of registration and poor classroom management can contribute to lesson skipping (Lewis, 1995; Reynolds *et. al*, 1980). Classroom management requires a great deal of dedication and commitment from both the learners and the educator.

Bullying

With respect to bullying, (21.8%) of the respondents “disagreed”, (35.6%) majority of the respondents “strongly disagreed”, (20.7%) of the respondents “somehow disagreed”, (6.2%) of the respondents “agreed”, (9.1%) of the respondents “somehow agreed” and (6.5%) “Strongly agreed”. The findings show that (21.8%) of the respondents indicated that bullying caused truancy in their schools. Sexual bullying is said to occur between male and female or can be male-to-male, but also female-to-female, for example, ridiculing a girl whose breasts jiggle when she runs (Fried and Fried, 2003).

Educator-learner relationship

With respect to educator-learner relationship, (28.4%) of the respondents “agreed”, (23.3 %) of the respondents “strongly agreed”, other (32.4 %) of the respondents “somehow agreed”, (4.0%) of the respondents “disagreed”, while (3.6%) of the respondents “strongly disagreed”, and (8.4%) of the respondents “somehow disagreed”. The findings show that (84.1%) of the

respondents indicated that educator-learner relationship caused truancy in their school. Black (1996) observed that “negative attitudes displayed by some educators may drive certain pupils to school non-attendance. What this author reveal is that both blanket and post-registration truancy occur because some learners avoid certain teachers. When learners show a tendency of disliking a lesson, it might be that particular educator responds negatively to those learners. This leads to poor relationships between the two parties. This poor educator-learner relationship can also occur as a result of what is regarded as intentionally disinviting practice. According to Mashiane (1997), an educator functions at the level of intentionally dis-iniviting when he or she goes out of his or her way to send messages that destroy a learner. Learners may find such educators and subsequently the school, repulsive and may become truants. Another practice that contributes to truancy is shouting at learners in class (Black, 1996) and in some instances the negative remarks may even appear in the learner’s books.

Teaching or instructional approach

With respect to teaching or instructional approach, (4.4%) of the respondents “disagreed”, (27.6%) of the respondents “agreed”, (22.9%) of the respondents “strongly agreed”, (32.7%) of the respondents “somehow agreed”, (9.1%) of the respondents “somehow disagreed” and only (3.3%) of the respondents “strongly disagreed”. The findings show that (83.2%) of the respondents indicated that teaching or instructional approach caused truancy in their schools. The educator’s attitude towards his or her work could either be negative or positive, is contagious and often affects the learners (Donald, Lazarus and Lolwa, 1997). Enthusiastic educators may be perceived to have positive attitude towards their work and are more likely to be keen to vary their instructional approaches.

Table 4.2: Home Related Factors Causing Truancy in Nyamira North District

Home Related factors causing truancy		Strongly agree	Agree	Somehow agree	Somehow disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Mean	Standard deviation
Socio-economic status of parents	Percentage	21.1	58.2	0.4	12.0	4.7	3.6	4.68	1.267
	Frequency	58	160	1	33	13	10		
Marital status	Percentage	33.1	29.1	20.4	7.6	5.5	4.4	4.64	1.380
	Frequency	91	80	56	21	15	12		
Poor involvement and supervision	Percentage	19.6	29.8	24.0	14.2	8.7	3.6	4.27	1.356
	Frequency	54	82	66	39	24	10		
Peer influence	Percentage	40.4	31.3	17.8	7.3	2.2	1.1	4.97	1.117
	Frequency	111	86	49	20	6	3		
Violence and drug use	Percentage	29.8	29.5	27.6	7.3	2.5	3.3	4.67	1.231
	Frequency	82	81	76	20	7	9		
N = 275									

Socio-economic status of parents

With respect to social economic status of parents, (58.2 %) of the respondents “agreed”, (21.1%) of the respondents “strongly agreed”, (0.4%) of the respondents “somehow agreed”, (4.7%) of the respondents “disagreed”, (12.0%) of the respondents “somehow disagreed” and (3.6%) of the respondents “strongly disagreed”. The findings show that (79.7 %) of the respondents indicated that socio-economic status of parents caused truancy in their schools. Research conducted in South Africa shows that some family circumstances are factors that contribute to higher rates of truancy (Malan, 1972). It was recently found that truants tend to come from larger families where parents have a lower level of education and pursue lower socio-economic occupations (Fox, 2000). The research findings cited above are constituent with some of the studies conducted abroad. Overseas researchers indicate that truants predominantly come from poor families living in overcrowded houses and economically deprived families (Le Ritche, 1998; Reid, 1999; Tyreman, 1958).

Marital status of parents

With respect to marital status of parents, majority of the respondents (29.1%) of the respondents “agreed”, (33.1%) of the respondents “strongly agreed”, (20.4%) of the respondents “somehow agreed”, (5.5%) of the respondents “disagreed”, (7.6%) of the respondents “somehow disagreed” and (4.4%) of the respondents “strongly disagreed”. The findings show that (82.6 %) of the respondents indicated that marital status of parents caused truancy in their schools. A family variable that has been found to contribute to truancy is unstable family relationships, which include, divorce, parental separation and marital conflicts (Hallom and Roaf, 1995). When the

relationship between parents breaks down, there is a likelihood that children will live with one parent or in an extended family structure.

Poor involvement and supervision

With respect to poor involvement and supervision, majority of the respondents (29.8%) “Agreed”, (19.6%) of the respondents “strongly agreed”, (24.0%) of the respondents “somehow agreed”, (8.7%) of the respondents “disagreed”, (14.2%) of the respondents “somehow disagreed” and (3.6%) of the respondents “strongly disagreed”. The findings show that (73.4 %) of the respondents indicated that poor involvement and supervision caused truancy in their schools. Parental involvement is an intentional act whereby a parent makes an effort to relate and interact with the child. Parental involvement include monitoring and helping with homework, attending school conferences and functions and providing as supportive learning environment (Crawage, 1992). When parents experience problems in their own lives that are related to intimate relationships and other external factors, they tend to focus less on their children. This can eventually lead to less involvement or a total lack of interest in the children, and subsequent problem behavior. Lack of parental interest, support or involvement in the learner’s education is also associated with truancy (Cohen and Ryan, 1998) and many truants receive little or no parental support and encouragement (Reid, 1999). Nhlaop (1997) found that parents of truants are less interested in their children’s schoolwork and encourage competency in children to a lesser extent.

Peer influence

With respect to peer influence, (31.3%) of the respondents “agreed”, (40.4%) of the respondents “strongly agreed”, (17.8%) of the respondents “somehow agreed”, (2.2%) of the respondents

“disagreed”, (7.3%) of the respondents “somehow disagreed” and (1.1%) of the respondents “strongly disagreed”. The findings show that (89.5 %) of the respondents indicated that peer influence caused truancy in their schools. Learners who play truant attend school only to be with friends and tend to hang around less with their peers who like school (Khoza, 1997). What is cited here is suggestive of the apparent consensus among some researchers that some learners begin to play truant purely to please friends. Such learners might be those with a personality that makes them vulnerable to the pressure of peers.

Violence and drug use

With respect to violence and drug use, majority of the respondents (29.5 %) “agreed”, (29.8%) of the respondents “strongly agreed”, (27.6%) of the respondents “somehow agreed”, (2.5%) of the respondents “disagreed” (7.3%) of the respondents “somehow disagreed”, and (3.3%) of the respondents “strongly disagree”. The findings show that (86.9 %) of the respondents indicated that violence and drug abuse caused truancy in their schools. Maithela (1992) found that truancy levels tend to increase when some learners engage in violence, carry weapons and make other learners fear school. Truancy encourages the formation of gangs and can also result from fear of bullies who are gangsters. Therefore, truancy may have an indirect link with violence. Truants are more likely to be involved in alcohol, tobacco and other drug use; they tend to bond with drug-using peers; and often use drugs while bunking class (Hallfors *et al.*, 2002). The presence of violence, crime and negative peer culture in neighborhoods can cause emotional stress, which makes parenting tasks more difficult.

4.3.2 Approaches used in the management of truancy in secondary schools

In order to assess the approaches used in the management and reduction of truancy, respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they have utilized each of the listed approaches. The findings indicate that when students experience learning problems it is necessary to provide support that will help to maximize their chances for academic success, thereby reducing the opportunities for playing truant. The findings also show that the approaches used in the management of truancy in schools may be categorized into the following: personal traits, school aspects, community aspects and others. The study findings are in support of the following revelations from the literature review with respect to the approaches used in the management of truancy.

The responses from the respondents are summarized and presented in tables 4.3, 4.4, 4.5 and 4.6 below.

Table 4.3: Personal traits approaches used in the management of truancy in secondary schools in Nyamira North District

Personal traits used in the management of truancy		Not at all	Neutral	To some extent (3)	Much	Very much	Mean	Standard deviation
Tutoring and Mentor systems	Percentage	28.7	32.0	22.5	13.1	3.6	3.69	1.128
	Frequency	79	88	62	36	10		
Counseling and Therapy	Percentage	32.4	28.7	21.1	10.5	7.3	3.68	1.231
	Frequency	89	79	58	29	20		
N = 275								

Tutoring and Mentor systems

With respect to tutoring and mentor systems, majority of the respondents, (32.0 %) indicated “much”, (28.7 %) indicated “very much”, (22.5 %) indicated “to some extent”, (13.1 %)

indicated “neutral” and (3.6%) indicated “not at all”. Findings show that 83.2% of the respondents indicated that their respective schools used tutoring and mentor systems in the management of truancy. Cohen and Ryan (1998) maintain that learners should be provided with counseling and additional tutoring services as a means of reducing truancy. Academic support can be offered to groups or individual learners. Tutoring is particularly important, since some truants in the study by Malan (1972) indicated that they no assistance and had little time to do their homework at home.

Counseling and Therapy

With respect to counseling and therapy, (28.7 %) of the respondents indicated “much”, (32.4 %) of the respondents indicated “very much”, (21.1%) of the respondents indicated “to some extent”, (10.5 %) of the respondents indicated “neutral” and (7.3%) of the respondents indicated “not at all”. Findings show that 82.2% of the respondents indicated that their respective schools used counseling and therapy in the management of truancy. Truanting learners who show signs of having emotional problems relating to poor social skills receive individual and or group therapy (Davis, 1999). According to Maclodowie (1999), attendance increased by 7% in two schools in Kent when the Education Welfare Officer’s intervention measures included counseling lessons.

Table 4.4: School aspects approaches used in the management of truancy in Nyamira North District

School aspects used in the management of truancy		Not at all	Neutral	To some extent	Much	Very much	Mean	Standard deviation
Using reinforcement and reward systems	Percentage	38.9	32.0	20.7	6.9	1.5	4.00	1.004
	Frequency	107	88	57	19	4		
Using a variety of instructional approaches	Percentage	31.6	34.5	22.2	7.6	4.0	3.82	1.085
	Frequency	87	95	61	21	11		
Effective monitoring, registration and recording of attendance	Percentage	38.2	31.6	21.5	5.5	33	3.96	1.054
	Frequency	105	87	59	15	9		
Welcome back to school	Percentage	39.3	30.2	17.5	8.4	4.7	3.91	1.151
	Frequency	108	83	48	23	13		
Student welfare	Percentage	28.4	32.4	24.7	10.5	4.0	3.71	1.109
	Frequency	78	89	68	29	11		
N = 275								

Using reinforcement and reward systems

With respect to using reinforcement and reward systems, (32.0 %) of the respondents indicated “much”, (38.9 %) of the respondents indicated “very much”, (20.7 %) of the respondents indicated “to some extent”, (6.9 %) of the respondents indicated “neutral” and (1.5 %) of the respondents indicated “not at all”. Findings show that 91.6% of the respondents indicated that their respective schools used reinforcement and reward systems in the management of truancy. Like all other human beings, learners who play truant likely to improve or change their behavior if they are rewarded for desirable behavior. Macldowie (1999) found that developing and dispensing incentives for regular attendance were more effective than applying sanctions to truant.

Using a variety of instructional approaches

With respect to using a variety of instructional approaches, majority of the respondents (34.5 %) indicated “much”, (31.6%) of the respondents indicated “very much”, (22.2%) of the respondents indicated “to some extent”, (7.6 %) of the respondents indicated “neutral” and (4.0%) of the respondents indicated “not at all”. Findings show that 88.3% of the respondents indicated that their respective schools used a variety of instructional approaches in the management of truancy. Instructional approaches that promote active exploration challenge learners to think about their own learning while using other media, such as music, movement and art, to enable them to optimize their own cognitive development and to take active control of their own lives (Donald *et al.*, 1997). It is a healthy learning and teaching environment of this kind that truants need. Cooperative learning activities can also promote the acquisition of social skills, which may be lacking in most learners who tend to play truant.

Effective monitoring, registration and recording of attendance

With respect to effective monitoring, registration and recording of attendance, (31.6 %) of the respondents indicated “much”, (38.2 %) of the respondents indicated “very much”, (21.5 %) indicated “to some extent”, (5.5 %) of the respondents indicated “neutral” and (3.3%) of the respondents indicated “not at all”. Findings show that 91.3% of the respondents indicated that their respective schools used effective monitoring, registration and recording of attendance in the management of truancy. Research emphasizes the need for effective recording and monitoring as one of the starting points (Lewis, 1995; Reid, 20029). Some researchers propose the use of a computerized or electronic registration system as a tool for monitoring truancy levels (Maclodowie, 1999; Reid, 1999). Computerized registration is said to help identify particular groups of truants, the lessons that are being missed or possible causes of truancy (Social Exclusion Unit, 1998). Learners are less likely to play truant when they know that attendance is being closely monitored.

Welcome back to school

With respect to welcoming learners to school, (30.2 %) of the respondents indicated “much”, (39.3%) of the respondents indicated “very much”, (17.5 %) of the respondents indicated “to some extent”, (8.4 %) of the respondents indicated “neutral” and (4.7 %) of the respondents indicated “not at all”. Findings show that 87% of the respondents indicated that their respective schools used welcome back to school in the management of truancy. It is also important to ensure that learners feel welcome back to school after a period of absence in order to prevent further absence. According to Maclodowie (1999), the attendance patterns of eight learners

improved when one of the strategies included being welcomed back and when their teacher helped them to catch up with the work.

Student welfare

With respect to student welfare, (32.4 %) of the respondents indicated “much”, (28.4 %) of the respondents indicated “very much”, (24.7 %) of the respondents indicated “to some extent”, (10.5 %) of the respondents indicated “neutral” and (4.0 %) of the respondents indicated “not at all”. Findings show that 85.5% of the respondents indicated that their respective schools used student welfare in the management of truancy. It is only the administrative issues that are important in reducing truancy. The welfare or wellbeing of a student is also important. The need to look at student wellbeing is echoed by Donald et al. (1997), when stating that schools should work towards promoting whole and healthy development in both students and environment. In other words, problems must be “cured” and prevented, and schools must strive towards developing supportive environments. Lewis (1995) also suggests that pastoral systems and additional tutoring for learners who are identified as having poor literacy skills can reduce aspects of the school that tend to use them out of school. Reid (1999) suggests that the introduction of homework clubs and homework policies can help learners to develop their learning skills and lead to improved academic performance.

Table 4.5: Community aspects approaches used in the management of truancy in Nyamira North District

Community aspects used in the management of truancy		Not at all	Neutral	To some extent	Much	Very much	Mean	Std. Dev.
Life-skills education	Percentage	26.9	27.6	28.7	10.9	5.8	3.59	1.163
	Frequency	74	76	79	30	16		
In-service training	Percentage	26.5	24.4	29.8	13.1	6.2	3.52	1.191
	Frequency	73	67	82	36	17		
Acting fast on learner basis	Percentage	33.5	30.9	25.1	6.9	3.6	3.84	1.080
	Frequency	92	85	69	19	10		
Ordinances	Percentage	28.0	31.3	29.8	6.2	4.7	3.72	1.084
	Frequency	77	86	82	17	13		
Availability of Truancy officers	Percentage	35.6	29.5	26.9	6.5	1.5	3.91	1.007
	Frequency	98	81	74	18	4		
N = 275								

Life-skills education

With respect to life-skills education, majority of the respondents, (27.6 %) indicated “much”, (26.9 %) indicated “very much”, (28.7 %) of the respondents indicated “to some extent”, (10.9 %) of the respondents indicated “neutral” and (5.8 %) of the respondents indicated “not at all”. Findings show that 83.2% of the respondents indicated that their respective schools used life-skills education in the management of truancy. According to Donald *et al.* (1997), life skills empower individuals to “engage and cope successfully with life and its challenges’ and promote psychological competence. That is, schools must build the resiliency of their learners through life-skills education and thereby reduce the effect of vulnerability towards truancy in “at-risk” learners. Reid (199) and Lewis (1995) assert that personal and social education programmes should not only help learners with skills that enable them to cope effectively with school and the world of work, but should also include truancy as a theme in their content. Reid (1999) maintains

that truancy as a topic should be included or related to themes of the PSE (Personal and Social Education) programmes such as discipline, disruptive behavior, bullying and codes of practice.

In-service training

With respect to in-service training, majority of the respondents (24.4 %) of the respondents indicated “much”, (26.5 %) of the respondents indicated “very much”, (29.8 %) of the respondents indicated “to some extent”, (13.1 %) of the respondents indicated “neutral” and (6.2 %) of the respondents indicated “not at all”. Findings show that 80.7% of the respondents indicated that their respective schools used in-service training in the management of truancy. The teacher In-service Project’s intervention at Modderdam High School is a typical example of school organization development that helped to decrease the level of truancy in South Africa (De Jong, 2000). The author identifies nine major areas of improvement in the school, which include, amongst others, security, physical conditions, relationships between staff and learners, relationship between learners relationships between school and parents, management and governance, quality of teaching and a sense of identity and community.

Acting fast on learning absence

With respect to acting fast on learning absence, majority of the respondents (30.9 %) indicated “much”, (33.5 %) of the respondents indicated “very much”, (25.1 %) of the respondents indicated “to some extent”, (6.9 %) of the respondents indicated “neutral” and (3.6%) of the respondents indicated “not at all”. Findings show that 89.5% of the respondents indicated that their respective schools used acting fast on learning absence in the management of truancy. In some instances, truancy reduction efforts focus is on early detection and includes efforts such as Stay in School Program, which targets students in middle school or what is known as the truant

during the freshman year (US Department of Education, 1996). Another notable feature of these programmes is that support in the form of counseling for the youth and parenting skills training, and, in some instances, short-term family counseling, are also provided.

Ordinances

With respect to ordinances, (31.3%) of the respondents indicated “much”, (28.0 %) of the respondents indicated “very much”, (29.8 %) of the respondents indicated “to some extent”, (6.2%) of the respondents indicated “neutral” and (4.7 %) of the respondents indicated “not at all”. Findings show that 89.1% of the respondents indicated that their respective schools used ordinances in the management of truancy. According to Pappas (1996), some cities have enacted daytime loitering ordinances and ant-truancy laws. Truants are referred to the juvenile traffic court and may have their driver’s licenses delayed, suspended or revoked. The police officer is authorized to take the truants’ right hand fingerprints where satisfactory evidence of identity is lacking and in this way to deny them the driving privilege. The loitering ordinance not only improved attendance rates in the whole school district by 2.2% in one year, but also helped to reduce the high school dropout rate by 57%. In addition, a school is expected to send a list of truants to the police agencies for cross-referencing and contacting the youth and their families, and in return the police supply the schools with a copy of the loitering/truancy warning notices.

Availability of Truancy Officers

With respect to attending or Truancy Officers, (29.5 %) of the respondents indicated “much”, (35.6 %) of the respondents indicated “very much”, (26.9 %) of the respondents indicated “to some extent”, (6.5 %) of the respondents indicated “neutral” and (1.5 %) of the respondents indicated “not at all”. Findings show that 92% of the respondents indicated that their respective

schools used attending or truancy officers in the management of truancy. The full-time services of attendance officers help schools to reduce truancy. According to MacLdowie (1999), the appointment of officers had an immediate and lasting effect on attendance in Kent schools. It must be emphasized that the effect was particularly felt when the officers picked up truants on their first day of absence. Gerrard, Burhans and Fair (2003) also maintain that assigning a truancy to serious cases of truants and their and their families does increase attendance rates.

Table 4.6: Other effective approaches used in the management of manage truancy in Nyamira North District

Other effective approaches used in the management of manage truancy		Not at all	Neutral	To some extent	Much	Very much	Mean	Std. Dev
Systemic renewal	Percentage	29.5	32.0	28.7	6.2	3.6	3.77	1.053
	Frequency	81	88	79	17	10		
School-community collaboration	Percentage	30.5	34.9	23.6	6.5	4.4	3.81	1.079
	Frequency	84	96	65	18	12		
Safe learning environments	Percentage	33.8	37.1	22.2	4.0	2.9	3.95	0.991
	Frequency	93	102	61	11	8		
Family engagement	Percentage	30.2	35.6	24.0	6.2	4.0	3.82	1.058
	Frequency	83	98	66	17	11		
Early childhood education	Percentage	37.1	36.0	19.6	4.4	2.9	4.00	1.004
	Frequency	102	99	54	12	8		
After-school opportunities	Percentage	31.6	38.9	18.5	7.6	3.3	3.88	1.045
	Frequency	87	107	51	21	9		
Early literacy development	Percentage	38.2	33.8	20.0	5.5	2.5	4.00	1.016
	Frequency	105	93	55	15	7		
Mentoring/tutoring	Percentage	34.9	31.6	24.4	5.8	3.3	3.89	1.055
	Frequency	96	87	67	16	9		
Alternative schooling	Percentage	18.9	21.5	33.8	14.9	10.9	3.23	1.229
	Frequency	52	59	93	41	30		
Individualized instruction	Percentage	31.3	33.1	28.4	4.4	2.9	3.85	1.008
	Frequency	86	91	78	12	8		
Career and technical education	Percentage	26.9	28.0	30.9	10.9	3.3	3.64	1.089
	Frequency	74	77	85	30	9		

Other effective approaches used in the management of manage truancy		Not at all	Neutral	To some extent	Much	Very much	Mean	Std. Dev
Personalized learning	Percentage	38.9	30.2	16.4	11.6	2.9	3.91	1.129
	Frequency	107	83	45	32	8		
Smaller schools or learning communities within schools	Percentage	27.6	32.7	26.2	9.8	3.6	3.71	1.085
	Frequency	76	90	72	27	10		
N = 275								

Systemic renewal

With respect to systemic renewal (32.0 %) of the respondents indicated “much”, (29.5 %) of the respondents indicated “very much”, (28.7 %) of the respondents indicated “to some extent”, (6.2 %) of the respondents indicated “neutral” and (3.6 %) of the respondents indicated “not at all”.

Findings show that 90.2% of the respondents indicated that their respective schools used systemic renewal in the management of truancy.

School -community collaboration

With respect to school- community collaboration, majority of respondents (34.9 %) indicated “much”, (30.5 %) of the respondents indicated “very much”, (23.6 %) of the respondents indicated “to some extent”, (6.5 %) of the respondents indicated “neutral” and another (4.4%) of the respondents indicated “not at all”. Findings show that 89% of the respondents indicated that their respective schools used school -community collaboration in the management of truancy.

Safe learning environments

With respect to safe learning environments, (37.1 %) of the respondents indicated “much”, (33.8 %) of the respondents indicated “very much”, (22.2%) of the respondents indicated “to some

extent”, (4.0%) of the respondents indicated “neutral” and (2.9%) of the respondents indicated “not at all”. Findings show that 93.1% of the respondents indicated that their respective schools used safe learning environments in the management of truancy.

Family engagement

With respect to family engagement, (35.6 %) of the respondents indicated “much”, (30.2 %) of the respondents indicated “very much”, (24.0%) of the respondents indicated “to some extent”, (6.2%) of the respondents indicated “neutral” and only (4.0%) of the respondents indicated “not at all”. Findings show that 89.8% of the respondents indicated that their respective schools used family engagement in the management of truancy.

Early childhood education

With respect to early childhood education, majority of the respondents (36.0 %) indicated “much”, (37.1%) of the respondents indicated “very much”, (19.6%) of the respondents indicated “to some extent”, (4.4%) of the respondents indicated “to some extent”, (2.9%) of the respondents indicated “not at all”. Findings show that 92.7% of the respondents indicated that their respective schools used early childhood education of truancy.

After-school opportunities

With respect to after-school opportunities, (38.9 %) of the respondents indicated “much”, (31.6%) of the respondents indicated “very much”, (18.5%) of the respondents indicated “to some extent”, (7.6%) of the respondents indicated “neutral” and (3.3%) of the respondents indicated “not at all”. Findings show that 89% of the respondents indicated that their respective schools used after-school opportunities in the management of truancy.

Early literacy development

With respect to early literacy development, (33.8 %) of the respondents indicated “much”, (38.2 %) of the respondents indicated “very much”, (20.0%) of the respondents indicated “to some extent”, another (5.5%) of the respondents indicated “neutral” and (2.5%) of the respondents indicated “not at all”. Findings show that 92% of the respondents indicated that their respective schools used early literacy development in the management of truancy.

Mentoring/tutoring

With respect to mentoring, majority of the respondents (31.6 %) indicated “much”, (34.9 %) of the respondents indicated “very much”, (24.4%) of the respondents indicated “to some extent”, (5.8%) of the respondents indicated “neutral” and (3.3%) of the respondents indicated “not at all”. Findings show that 90.9% of the respondents indicated that their respective schools used mentoring/tutoring in the management of truancy.

Alternative schooling

With respect to alternative schooling, majority of the respondents (21.5 %) indicated “much”, (18.9%) of the respondents indicated “very much”, (33.8%) of the respondents indicated “to some extent”, (14.9%) of the respondents indicated “neutral” and (10.9%) of the respondents indicated “not at all”. Findings show that 74.2% of the respondents indicated that their respective schools used alternative schooling in the management of truancy.

Individualized instruction

With respect to individualized instruction, (33.1 %) of the respondents indicated “much”, (31.3 %) of the respondents indicated “very much”, (28.4%) of the respondents indicated “to some extent”, (4.4%) of the respondents indicated “neutral” and (2.9%) of the respondents indicated

“not at all”. Findings show that 92.8% of the respondents indicated that their respective schools used individualized instruction in the management of truancy.

Career and technical education

With respect to career and technical education, (28.0 %) of the respondents indicated “much”, (26.9 %) of the respondents indicated “very much”, (30.9%) of the respondents indicated “to some extent”, (10.9%) of the respondents indicated “neutral” and only (3.3%) of the respondents indicated “not at all”. Findings show that 85.8% of the respondents indicated that their respective schools used career and technical education in the management of truancy.

Personalized learning

With respect to personalized learning, (30.2 %) of the respondents indicated “much”, (38.9 %) of the respondents indicated “very much”, (16.4%) of the respondents indicated “to some extent”, (11.6%) of the respondents indicated “neutral” and (2.9%) of the respondents indicated “not at all”. Findings show that 85.5% of the respondents indicated that their respective schools used personalized learning in the management of truancy.

Learning communities within schools

With respect to learning communities within schools, majority of the respondents (32.7%) indicated “much”, (27.6%) of the respondents indicated “very much”, (26.2%) of the respondents indicated “to some extent”, (9.8%) of the respondents indicated “neutral” and (3.6%) of the respondents indicated “not at all”. Findings show that 86.5% of the respondents indicated that their respective schools used learning communities within schools in the management of truancy.

CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents conclusions drawn from the research findings and the recommendations for practice and for further studies.

5.2 Summary

The study sought to investigate the school and home related causes and approaches used in the management of truancy in Nyamira North district in Kenya. The study was guided by the following specific objectives: to establish the school and home related causes of truancy in secondary schools in Nyamira North district; and to determine the approaches used in the management of truancy in secondary schools in Nyamira North district. Literature review was undertaken in order to eliminate duplication of what has been done and provide a bridge and clear understanding of existing knowledge base in the problem area. The literature review is based on authoritative, recent, and original sources such as journals, books, thesis and academic projects.

A descriptive survey was used to undertake the study. A census of the secondary schools in Nyamira North District was. A semi-structured questionnaire was used to collect primary data from the Principals of secondary schools in Nyamira North District. Content analysis was employed for data pertaining to the profile of the respondents while data pertaining to the objectives of the study was analyzed by employing descriptive statistics. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used in data entry and analysis.

Findings of the study indicate that the following are the key school factors causing truancy in Nyamira North district: poor habits arising from initially legitimate reasons, as reported by 89.1% of the respondents; learning problems, as reported by 88.4% of the respondents; movement between classes during lesson changes, as indicated by 86.9% of the respondents; cognitive Style, as indicated by 86.2% of the respondents; educator-learner relationship, as indicated by 84.1% of the respondents; classroom management, as indicated by 83.2% of the respondents; teaching or instructional approach, as indicated by 83.2% of the respondents; school size, as indicated by 82.9% of the respondents; scholastic failure, as indicated by 81.8% of the respondents; anxiety and fear, as reported by 80.8% of the respondents; anti-social behavior, as indicated by 80.1% of the respondents; and dilapidated school building and poor facilities, as indicated by 78.5% of the respondents. The findings also show that bullying was not considered a key factor causing truancy in the secondary schools in Nyamira district, as indicated by only 21.8% of the respondents who agreed.

The key home factors causing truancy in Nyamira North district include: peer influence, as reported by 89.5% of the respondents; violence and drug use, as reported by 86.9% of the respondents; marital status of parents, as reported by 82.6% of the respondents; socio-economic status of parents, as reported by 79.7% of the respondents; and poor involvement and supervision, as reported by 73.4% of the respondents.

Findings of the study also show that the main approaches used in the management of truancy in secondary schools in Nyamira North district include the following: safe learning environments, as reported by 93.1% of the respondents; Individualized Instruction (92.8) , as reported by 82.2% of the respondents; early childhood education, as reported by 92.7% of the respondents;

availability of truancy officers, as reported by 92% of the respondents; early literacy development, as reported by 92% of the respondents; using reinforcement and reward systems, as reported by 91.6% of the respondents; effective monitoring, registration and recording of attendance, as reported by 91.3% of the respondents; mentoring/tutoring, as reported by 90.9% of the respondents; systemic renewal, as reported by 90.2% of the respondents; family engagement, as reported by 89.8% of the respondents; acting fast on learning absence, as reported by 89.5% of the respondents; ordinances, as reported by 89.1% of the respondents; school - community collaboration, as reported by 89% of the respondents; after- school opportunities, as reported by 89% of the respondents; using a variety of instructional approaches, as reported by 88.3% of the respondents; welcome back to school, as reported by 87.0% of the respondents; learning communities within schools, as reported by 86.5% of the respondents; career and technical education, as reported by 85.8% of the respondents; student welfare, as reported by 85.5% of the respondents; personalized learning, as reported by 85.5% of the respondents; life-skills education, as reported by 83.2% of the respondents; tutoring and mentor systems, as reported by 83.2% of the respondents; counseling and therapy, as reported by 82.2% of the respondents; in-service training, as reported by 80.7% of the respondents; and alternative schooling, as reported by 74.2% of the respondents.

5.3 Conclusions

The study findings indicate that high rates of truancy are problems that affect many schools in many countries. Students who habitually miss school exhibit loss of learning and instruction, and have been identified as at-risk for dropping out of school altogether. School systems suffer also when students are absent by loss of instructional time that often must be repeated for the absentee student, which in turn leads to loss of instructional time for other students.

Several causes for truancy have been identified, with statistics to support the theory of school refusal behavior (SRB), which may manifest in many ways, including truancy. Other identified causes for truancy include lack of parental involvement and supervision, lack of interesting and challenging curriculum for students, a desire for hedonistic activities with peers, negative self-image and self-esteem, and participation in co-operative work experiences for older students.

The findings indicate that when students experience learning problems it is necessary to provide support that will help to maximize their chances for academic success, thereby reducing the opportunities for playing truant. The approaches used in the management of truancy in schools may be categorized into the following: personal traits, school aspects, community aspects and others.

5.4 Recommendations

5.4.1 Recommendations for policy and practice

Based on findings of the study, it is expected that the stakeholders, who include the management of schools and parents will gain a better understanding of the causes and effective approaches that may be used in the management of truancy in order to improve performance of students. In view of the findings, the following recommendations are made:

Students with stronger attachments are less likely to truant and violate school policies because they are actively engaged. The truants who do not feel attached to persons or entities within the school may not be engaged in opportunities that build social bonds; thereby, they do not embrace the schools' values and norms, and have less of a stake in the school. In view of the finding that a lack of opportunities for connection and social bonding to school is purportedly linked to students' disengagement and chronic truancy, there is need for the management of schools to accord the students opportunities for connection and social bonding.

There is need for the management of schools to emphasize students' commitment in schools. Commitment describes the investment made in conventional activities such as peer relationships and school activities. When students invest time, energy, and personal resources into school, they are less likely to abandon it. Therefore, school students who feel committed and invested in school, via academics, extracurricular activities, leadership opportunities, and relationships with a good teacher, friend, or peer group may be less likely to disengage from school and truant.

The managements of schools should endeavor to involve students in as many school activities as possible, including day-to-day management of the schools. Involvement speaks directly to what individuals find themselves doing to keep busy and deterred from delinquent activities. The more they are invested and engaged in pro-social, structured activities (studying habits), like school, leadership in a club or sports team, the less likely they are to engage in deviant activities, like truancing because they are busy. However, when they cannot find or are not involved in conventional activities that bring them joy in the school, they are more likely to invest in unconventional activities.

Belief and values are often not formally written but serve as the moral conscience of the society that determines right from wrong. This element speaks to the degree to which students have belief in the value of school and feel that the school's rules and societal values are fair. Moral education is seen as having a direct effect on students' decisions to truant. Many of these values are taught in the home and are often emphasized in the school. The societal belief in the value of education is a key factor in choosing (or not choosing) to be truant. Many students that are truant do not yet believe that without an education they are bound to failure or limited opportunities.

5.4.2 Recommendations for further research

The findings of this study, it is hoped, will contribute to the existing body of knowledge and form basis for future researches. The following areas of further research are thus suggested: Whereas the current study focused on the responses from the principals with respect to the causes and the approaches used in the management of truancy, future studies should focus on responses from the students and parents; and further studies should also focus on the challenges faced in implementation of the approaches used in the management of truancy and possible interventions that could be used employed to enhance the effectiveness of the approaches.

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APPENDIX I: QUESTIONNAIRE (SCHOOL PRINCIPALS)

This questionnaire has been designed to collect information from Head Teachers of public secondary schools in Nyamira North or their appointed agents and is meant for academic purposes only. The questionnaire is divided into two sections. Section I seeks to capture the profile of respondents while section II will capture issues pertaining to the area of study. Please complete each section as instructed. Do not write your name or any other form of identification on the questionnaire. All the information in this questionnaire was treated in confidence.

SECTION I: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. For how long has your school been in existence? (Tick as appropriate)
 - a. Less than 1 year []
 - b. 1 to 5 years []
 - c. 6 to 10 years []
 - d. 11 to 15 Years []
 - e. 16 years and above []

2. Please indicate the number of students in your school as per gender distribution (Tick as appropriate)
 - 2.1 Male
 - a. Less than 100 []
 - b. 101 to 200 []
 - c. 201 to 300 []
 - d. 301 to 400 []
 - e. 401 and above []

 - 2.2 Female
 - a. Less than 100 []
 - b. 101 to 200 []
 - c. 201 to 300 []
 - d. 301 to 400 []
 - e. 401 and above []

3. Please indicate the number of teachers in your school as per gender distribution (Tick as appropriate)
 - 3.1 Male
 - a. Less than 5 []
 - b. 5 to 10 []
 - c. 11 to 15 []
 - d. 16 to 20 []
 - e. 21 and above []

3.2 Female

- a. Less than 5 []
- b. 5 to 10 []
- c. 11 to 15 []
- d. 16 to 20 []
- e. 21 and above []

4. For how long have you worked in your current school (Pleas tick as appropriate)?

- (a) Less than 1 year []
- (b) Between 1 and 5 years []
- (c) Between 6 and 10 years []
- (d) Between 11 and 15 years []
- (e) 16 years and above []

5. For how long have you been in your current position(Pleas tick as appropriate)?

- (a) Less than 1 year []
- (b) Between 1 and 5 years []
- (c) Between 6 and 10 years []
- (d) Between 11 and 15 years []
- (e) 16 years and above []

**SECTION II: THE CAUSES OF TRUANCY AND APPROACHES USED IN THE
MANAGEMENT OF TRUANCY IN NYAMIRA NORTH**

6. Causes of truancy in secondary schools in Nyamira North District

Listed below are some of the possible factors causing truancy in secondary schools. Please indicate the extent to which you agree/disagree that each of the factors has caused truancy in your school. (Please tick as appropriate)

6.1 Individual factors causing truancy in secondary schools in Nyamira North District	Strongly agree (6)	Agree (5)	Somehow agree (4)	Somehow disagree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly disagree (1)
6.1.1 Anxiety and fear - truancy can be regarded as response that a learner adopts in an effort to avoid a potentially anxiety-provoking situation or event						
6.1.2 Poor social skills - asserts that boredom, isolation and lack of friends may be pull factors that pull a learner off school						
6.1.3 Low self-esteem - certain personality traits, including lower levels of self esteem, make some learners more prone to absenteeism than their peers						
6.1.4 Anti-social behavior - Antisocial behaviors that an individual with conduct disorder displays include defying authorities, lying, fighting, cruelty to animals and people, as well as truant behavior						
6.1.5 Scholastic failure - truants are mostly learners who are likely to fail their exams and be retained in a grade						
6.1.6 Learning problems - a lack of academic success creates a sense of frustration and a constant fear of failure. Learners who experience difficulty with schoolwork often play truant in an attempt to evade frustration						
6.1.7 Cognitive style - a consistent and typical manner in which an individual organizes and processes information. Learners who have such condition refuse to attend school but stay at home when not in school, complain about headaches, stomach pains or nausea and show signs of anxiety and depression						

<p>6.1.8 Poor habits arising from initially legitimate reasons - In some instances, a learner stays away from school as a result of poor health or need to look after a sick family member. However, such absence may lead to the generation of a pattern of non-attendance that is unacceptable, particularly if it is unauthorized.</p>						
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<p>6.2 Infrastructural factors causing truancy in secondary schools in Nyamira</p>	<p>Strongly agree (6)</p>	<p>Agree (5)</p>	<p>Somehow agree (4)</p>	<p>Somehow disagree (3)</p>	<p>Disagree (2)</p>	<p>Strongly disagree (1)</p>
<p>6.2.1 Dilapidated school building and poor facilities - unattractive school environment, which is characterized by poor toilet facilities, a lack of proper ventilation and heating dilapidated buildings is unlikely to encourage school attendance.</p>						
<p>6.2.2 School Size - School size is likely to affect the school by making it difficult to control disruptive behavior, particularly when there are more learners than the educators can manage</p>						
<p>6.2.3 Movement between classes during lesson changes - walking long distances between the different classrooms during lesson changes may provide opportunities for skipping lessons.</p>						
<p>6.2.4 Classroom management - Administrative inefficiency in terms of registration and poor classroom management can contribute to lesson skipping. Classes may be composed of learners with different personalities and characteristics, including those who are difficult to control and therefore likely to corrupt or disrupt others</p>						
<p>6.2.5 Bullying - bullies engage in academic misconducts that include cheating and skipping school, while victims have higher rates of absenteeism. Learners who are both victims and bullies are most likely to play truant</p>						
<p>6.2.6 Educator-learner relationship - in instances where learners feel humiliated, the school environment might be perceived to be hostile. A hostile school</p>						

environment, therefore, produces flight responses in the form of truancy in some learners. When learners show a tendency of disliking a lesson, it might be that particular educator responds negatively to those learners. This leads to poor relationships between the two parties.						
6.2.7 Teaching or in structural approach - An enthusiastic educator instills enthusiasm and motivation in learners. On the other hand, a demoralized educator who shows little interest in his or her work discourages learners.						

6.3 Family and community factors causing truancy in secondary schools in Nyamira	Strongly agree (6)	Agree (5)	Somehow agree (4)	Somehow disagree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly disagree (1)
6.3.1 Socio-economic status of parents - truants tend to come from larger families where parents have a lower level of education and pursue lower socio-economic occupations						
6.3.2 Marital status of parents - unstable family relationships, which include, divorce, parental separation and marital conflicts. When the relationship between parents breaks down, there is a likelihood that children will live with one parent or in an extended family structure						
6.3.3 Poor involvement and supervision - When parents experience problems in their own lives that are related to intimate relationships and other external factors, they tend to focus less on their children. This can eventually lead to less involvement or a total lack of interest in the children, and subsequent problem behavior. Lack of parental interest, support or involvement in the learner's education is also associated with truancy						
6.3.4 Peer influence - the friends of truants attend school less regularly than those of learners who are not truants. Learners who play truant attend school only to be with friends and tend to hang around less with their peers who like school						

<p>6.3.5 Violence and drug use - truancy levels tend to increased when some learners engage in violence, carry weapons and make other learners fear school. Truancy encourages the formation of gangs and can also result from fear of bullies who are gangsters. Therefore, truancy may have an indirect link with violence. Truants are more likely to be involved in alcohol, tobacco and other drug use; they tend to bond with drug-using peers; and often use drugs while bunking class</p>						
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7. The approaches used in the management of truancy in secondary schools in Nyamira North District

Listed below are some of the approaches used in the management and re4duction of truancy. With respect to your school, please indicate the extent to which you have utilized each of the listed approaches in the management and reduction of truancy (Please tick as appropriate)

The approaches used in the management of truancy	Very much (5)	Much (4)	To some extent (3)	Neutral (2)	Not all (1)
7.1 Personal Traits					
7.1.1 Tutoring and Mentor systems - Provision of counseling and additional tutoring services as a means of reducing truancy					
7.1.2 Counseling and Therapy – A learning environment that provides support for emotional and social needs of learners					
7.2 School aspects					
7.2.1 Using reinforcement and reward systems – Learners who play fruant are rewarded for desirable behavior to entice them to change					
7.2.2 Using a variety of instructional approaches - Instructional approaches that promote active exploration challenge learners to think about their own learning while using other media, such as music, movement and art, to enable them to optimize their own cognitive development and to take active control of their own lives					
7.2.3 Effective monitoring, registration and recording of attendance – For instance the use of a computerized or electronic registration system as a tool for monitoring truancy levels					
7.2.4 Welcome back to school - It is also important to ensure that learners feel welcome back to school after a period of absence in order to prevent further absence					
7.2.5 Student welfare - Schools should work towards promoting whole and healthy development in both students and environment. Problems must be “cured” and prevented, and schools must strive towards developing supportive environments.					

Continued

The approaches used in the management and reduction of truancy	Very much (5)	Much (4)	To some extent (3)	Neutral (2)	Not at all (1)
7.3 Community Aspects					
7.3.1 Life-skills education - life skills empower individuals to “engage and cope successfully with life and its challenges’ and promote psychological competence					
7.3.2 In-service training - facilitating development of people and the organization as a whole for the purpose of optimizing human fulfillment and increasing organizational capacity					
7.3.3 Acting fast on learner absence - the school targets students with three unexcused absences instead of waiting for the problem to get worse					
7.3.4 Ordinances - a school is expected to send a list of truants to the police agencies for cross-referencing and contacting the youth and their families, and in return the police supply the schools with a copy of the loitering/truancy warning notices					
7.3.5 Attending or Truancy Officers - The full-time services of attendance officers help schools to reduce truancy					
7.4 Other Effective Approaches to Truancy Reduction					
7.4.1 Systemic renewal					
7.4.2 School-community collaboration					
7.4.3 Safe learning environments					
7.4.4 Family engagement					
7.4.5 Early childhood education					
7.4.6 After-school opportunities					
7.4.7 Early literacy development					
7.4.8 Mentoring/tutoring					
7.4.9 Alternative schooling					
7.4.10 Individualized instruction					
7.4.11 Career and technical education					
7.4.12 Personalized learning					
7.4.13 Smaller schools or learning communities within schools (such as learning academies focused on particular topics, house plans, or magnet schools)					

END

APPENDIX II: QUESTIONNAIRE (STUDENTS)

This questionnaire has been designed to collect information from selected students of public secondary schools in Nyamira North and is meant for academic purposes only. The questionnaire is divided into two sections. Please complete each section as instructed. Do not write your name or any other form of identification on the questionnaire. All the information in this questionnaire was treated in confidence.

THE CAUSES OF TRUANCY AND APPROACHES USED IN THE MANAGEMENT OF TRUANCY IN NYAMIRA NORTH

1. Causes of truancy in secondary schools in Nyamira North District

Listed below are some of the possible factors causing truancy in secondary schools. Please indicate the extent to which you agree/disagree that each of the factors has caused truancy in your school. (Please tick as appropriate)

1.1 Individual factors causing truancy in secondary schools in Nyamira North District	Strongly agree (6)	Agree (5)	Somehow agree (4)	Somehow disagree (3)	Disagree (2)	Strongly disagree (1)
<i>1.1.1 Anxiety and fear</i> - truancy can be regarded as response that a learner adopts in an effort to avoid a potentially anxiety-provoking situation or event						
<i>1.1.2 Poor social skills</i> - asserts that boredom, isolation and lack of friends may be pull factors that pull a learner off school						
<i>1.1.3 Low self-esteem</i> - certain personality traits, including lower levels of self esteem, make some learners more prone to absenteeism than their peers						
<i>1.1.4 Anti-social behavior</i> - Antisocial behaviors that an individual with conduct disorder displays include defying authorities, lying, fighting, cruelty to animals and people, as well as truant behavior						
<i>1.1.5 Scholastic failure</i> - truants are mostly learners who are likely to fail their exams and be retained in a grade						
<i>1.1.6 Learning problems</i> - a lack of academic success creates a sense of frustration and a constant fear of failure. Learners who experience difficulty with schoolwork often play truant in an attempt to evade frustration						

<p>1.1.7 Cognitive style - a consistent and typical manner in which an individual organizes and processes information. Learners who have such condition refuse to attend school but stay at home when not in school, complain about headaches, stomach pains or nausea and show signs of anxiety and depression</p>					
<p>1.1.8 Poor habits arising from initially legitimate reasons - In some instances, a learner stays away from school as a result of poor health or need to look after a sick family member. However, such absence may lead to the generation of a pattern of non-attendance that is unacceptable, particularly if it is unauthorized.</p>					

<p>1.2 Infrastructural factors causing truancy in secondary schools in Nyamira</p>	<p>Strongly agree (6)</p>	<p>Agree (5)</p>	<p>Somehow agree (4)</p>	<p>Somehow disagree (3)</p>	<p>Disagree (2)</p>	<p>Strongly disagree (1)</p>
<p>1.2.1 Dilapidated school building and poor facilities - unattractive school environment, which is characterized by poor toilet facilities, a lack of proper ventilation and heating dilapidated buildings is unlikely to encourage school attendance.</p>						
<p>1.2.2 School Size - School size is likely to affect the school by making it difficult to control disruptive behavior, particularly when there are more learners than the educators can manage</p>						
<p>1.2.3 Movement between classes during lesson changes - walking long distances between the different classrooms during lesson changes may provide opportunities for skipping lessons.</p>						
<p>1.2.4 Classroom management - Administrative inefficiency in terms of registration and poor classroom management can contribute to lesson skipping. Classes may be composed of learners with different personalities and characteristics, including those who are difficult to control and therefore likely to corrupt or disrupt others</p>						

<p>1.2.5 Bullying - bullies engage in academic misconducts that include cheating and skipping school, while victims have higher rates of absenteeism. Learners who are both victims and bullies are most likely to play truant</p>						
<p>1.2.6 Educator-learner relationship - in instances where learners feel humiliated, the school environment might be perceived to be hostile. A hostile school environment, therefore, produces flight responses in the form of truancy in some learners. When learners show a tendency of disliking a lesson, it might be that particular educator responds negatively to those learners. This leads to poor relationships between the two parties.</p>						
<p>1.2.7 Teaching or in structural approach - An enthusiastic educator instills enthusiasm and motivation in learners. On the other hand, a demoralized educator who shows little interest in his or her work discourages learners.</p>						

<p>1.3 Family and community factors causing truancy in secondary schools in Nyamira</p>	<p>Strongly agree (6)</p>	<p>Agree (5)</p>	<p>Somehow agree (4)</p>	<p>Somehow disagree (3)</p>	<p>Disagree (2)</p>	<p>Strongly disagree (1)</p>
<p>1.3.1 Socio-economic status of parents - truants tend to come from larger families where parents have a lower level of education and pursue lower socio-economic occupations</p>						
<p>1.3.2 Marital status of parents - unstable family relationships, which include, divorce, parental separation and marital conflicts. When the relationship between parents breaks down, there is a likelihood that children will live with one parent or in an extended family structure</p>						
<p>1.3.3 Poor involvement and supervision - When parents experience problems in their own lives that are related to intimate relationships and other external factors, they tend to</p>						

focus less on their children. This can eventually lead to less involvement or a total lack of interest in the children, and subsequent problem behavior. Lack of parental interest, support or involvement in the learner's education is also associated with truancy

1.3.4 Peer influence - the friends of truants attend school less regularly than those of learners who are not truants. Learners who play truant attend school only to be with friends and tend to hang around less with their peers who like school

1.3.5 Violence and drug use - truancy levels tend to increased when some learners engage in violence, carry weapons and make other learners fear school. Truancy encourages the formation of gangs and can also result from fear of bullies who are gangsters. Therefore, truancy may have an indirect link with violence. Truants are more likely to be involved in alcohol, tobacco and other drug use; they tend to bond with drug-using peers; and often use drugs while bunking class

2. The approaches used in the management of truancy in secondary schools in Nyamira North District

Listed below are some of the approaches used in the management and reduction of truancy. With respect to your school, please indicate the extent to which you have utilized each of the listed approaches in the management and reduction of truancy (Please tick as appropriate)

The approaches used in the management of truancy	Very much (5)	Much (4)	To some extent (3)	Neutral (2)	Not at all (1)
2.1 Personal Traits					
2.1.1 Tutoring and Mentor systems - Provision of counseling and additional tutoring services as a means of reducing truancy					
2.1.2 Counseling and Therapy – A learning environment that provides support for emotional and social needs of learners					
2.2 School aspects					
2.2.1 Using reinforcement and reward systems – Learners who play truant are rewarded for desirable behavior to entice them to change					
2.2.2 Using a variety of instructional approaches - Instructional approaches that promote active exploration challenge learners to think about their own learning while using other media, such as music, movement and art, to enable them to optimize their own cognitive development and to take active control of their own lives					
2.2.3 Effective monitoring, registration and recording of attendance – For instance the use of a computerized or electronic registration system as a tool for monitoring truancy levels					
2.2.4 Welcome back to school - It is also important to ensure that learners feel welcome back to school after a period of absence in order to prevent further absence					
2.2.5 Student welfare - Schools should work towards promoting whole and healthy development in both students and environment. Problems must be “cured” and prevented, and schools must strive towards developing supportive environments.					

Continued

The approaches used in the management and reduction of truancy	Very much (5)	Much (4)	To some extent (3)	Neutral (2)	Not at all (1)
2.3 Community Aspects					
2.3.1 Life-skills education - life skills empower individuals to “engage and cope successfully with life and its challenges’ and promote psychological competence					
2.3.2 In-service training - facilitating development of people and the organization as a whole for the purpose of optimizing human fulfillment and increasing organizational capacity					
2.3.3 Acting fast on learner absence - the school targets students with three unexcused absences instead of waiting for the problem to get worse					
2.3.4 Ordinances - a school is expected to send a list of truants to the police agencies for cross-referencing and contacting the youth and their families, and in return the police supply the schools with a copy of the loitering/truancy warning notices					
2.3.5 Availability of Truancy Officers - The full-time services of attendance officers help schools to reduce truancy					
2.4 Other Effective Approaches to Truancy Reduction					
2.4.1 Systemic renewal					
2.4.2 School-community collaboration					
2.4.3 Safe learning environments					
2.4.4 Family engagement					
2.4.5 Early childhood education					
2.4.6 After-school opportunities					
2.4.7 Early literacy development					
2.4.8 Mentoring/tutoring					
2.4.9 Alternative schooling					
2.4.10 Individualized instruction					
2.4.11 Career and technical education					
2.4.12 Personalized learning					
2.4.13 Smaller schools or learning communities within schools (such as learning academies focused on particular topics, house plans, or magnet schools)					

END

APPENDIX III: LIST OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN NYAMIRA NORTH

DISTRICT

1. Nyagokiani
2. Nyamauro
3. Nyamwanchani
4. Nyamiranga
5. Kiabonyoru
6. Omonayo
7. Kerema
8. Nyakwerema
9. Egentubi
10. Nyangoge
11. Enkinda
12. Kenyoro
13. Endiba
14. Maagonga
15. Biego
16. Gekendo
17. Ikonga
18. Ikonge
19. Kea
20. Kebabe girls
21. Kenguso
22. Nyairanga
23. Eronge D.E.B
24. Nyamusi
25. Matongo
26. Matongo Lutheran
27. Riomego
28. Gekonge
29. Ikamu
30. Gisage
31. St. Kaisser Nyamonge
32. Mochenwa D.E.B
33. Nyambiri
34. Ntana
35. Misambi
36. Nyekenimo

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