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**SOCIOECONOMIC AND SCHOOL FACTORS IMPACTING ON  
CHILDREN'S ABSENTEEISM IN LOWER PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN  
MASABA SUB-COUNTY, KENYA**

**BY**

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**E55/OL/24433/2011**

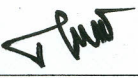
**EARLY CHILDHOOD STUDIES DEPARTMENT**

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THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF EDUCATION (EARLY CHILDHOOD  
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UNIVERSITY**

**NOVEMBER, 2014**

## DECLARATION

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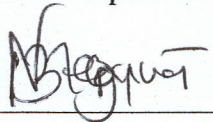
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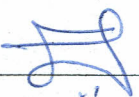
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## **DEDICATION**

This research project is dedicated to Matage Omega my late father and Bosibori

My mum whose desire for education has made me come this far.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

I would like to give thanks to the Almighty Father for giving me the strength to complete writing this project report. Special thanks to my supervisors Dr. Nyakwara Begi and Dr. Juliet Mugo for being there for me when I needed them most. I really appreciate your assistance, encouragement, and support during the entire proposal writing process.

## ABSTRACT

Educators have long emphasized the importance of class attendance. Only in the classroom many pupils benefit the spontaneous interactions between the pupils and teacher. Absenteeism means the children will not reap the maximum benefits that are entitled to them. The purpose of this study was to investigate the socioeconomic and school factors contributing to pupils' absenteeism from school in lower primary schools in Masaba Sub-county, Nyamira County Kenya. The study was guided by Maslow's theory of motivation. A descriptive survey design was employed where data was obtained from lower primary school teachers and lower primary school pupils. The study was conducted in Masaba Sub-County, Nyamira County. The target population was all standard three pupils and teachers in the District. Random sampling technique was used to select teachers, while purposive sampling was used to select pupils who participated in the study. The schools were numbered and then randomly selected 10% of the total number of primary schools in the sub-county. The sample of the study consisted of pupils in the sampled schools who are frequently absent from school. A questionnaire was used to collect data from the teachers. Interview schedule was used to collect data from pupils. Pilot study was done in two primary schools. Validity and reliability was tested and established during pilot study. Data was analysed in narration form and by aid of Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics involving frequencies, means and percentages was calculated. The results from data analysis were presented using tables and figures organised according to the objectives of the study and research questions. Pupils' were often absent from school on Monday, Tuesday, and Friday. The socio-economic factors which made pupils to be absent from school included: Parents ask pupils to be absent from school; helping in family business and lack of money for basic needs. The school factors which caused pupils to be absent from school include: Un-conducive school environment; poor relationship with peers and teachers. The strategies used in schools to reduce pupils' absenteeism from schools include: Implementing school rules, banning of unauthorized levies, and effective teaching.

## ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

DEO	:	District Education Officer
EFA	:	Education for All
FPE	:	Free Primary Education.
MDGs	:	Millennium Development Goals.
P1	:	Primary One.
SPSS	:	Statistical Packages for Social Sciences
TSC	:	Teachers Service Commission
UPE	:	Universal primary Education

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## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

#### 1.1 Background to the Study

The success of a school in carrying out its primary charge of educating and socializing pupils is contingent on pupils attending school regularly. In recognition of the importance of regular school attendance to quality education, attendance becomes a priority goal (At-Risk Youth in Crisis Handbook, 1993).

Educators emphasize the importance of class attendance. Only in the classroom many pupils hear the teacher's presentation, participate in class discussions, and enjoy the benefits of spontaneous interactions between the pupils and teacher. Today, regular school attendance is an important factor in school success (Rothman, 2001). Research has shown a direct correlation between school attendance and pupils' achievement (DeKalb, 1999). Poor attendance has also been linked to poor academic achievement (Ziegler, 1972). A comparative study on academic performance in Ghana found that absenteeism was one of the major factors contributing to low performance of primary school pupils in low achieving schools (Etsey, 2005).

Student absenteeism from school is a global issue. A study conducted in the USA revealed that more than 33% of 63,000 students missed at least 30 days of school. In New York City approximately 15% of 1 million students were absent daily from school without valid reasons (Fox and Levin, 1999). Similarly, Rothman (2001) found that lesson absence in two cities of Western USA were 15% for

larger and 10% for smaller districts. Further analysis of whole day absence revealed 4.4% for larger and 2.8% for smaller districts.

Sheppard (2005) also found that lesson absence was more common than whole-day absence among year 10 and 11 pupils in the United Kingdom and that absenteeism increased with an increase in secondary school years.

Kenya has provided Free Primary Education and increased resource allocation to enhance its delivery (Ministry of Education, 2009). The trend in school enrolment has been impressive since 2003, but with concerns as regards to retention, attendance and pupil achievement (Ministry of Education, 2009). Although the national data on enrolment shows the number of pupils attending school is increasing, there was need to carry out research on the socioeconomic and school factors causing pupils absenteeism from school.

Articles 20, 35, 42, and 43 of the new constitution of Kenya 2010; states that 'every person has the right to education'. The State will give priority to factoring in access to all individuals irrespective of circumstances. In addition, articles 53, 60 and 59 of the constitution have provisions on children's right to free and compulsory basic education, including quality services, and to access educational institutions and facilities. In pursuit of this, the government has designed a number of strategies which include collaboration with private sector, unilateral agencies as well as through a cost sharing policy with parents and communities in provision of school facilities (Rachel, 2011).

Studies done in Kenya have shown that there is a problem of student absenteeism. A study by Uwezo (2011) reveals that in many sub-counties in Kenya, Masaba sub-county included more than four out of ten children miss school daily. Muiru (2005) investigated the factors leading to children's absenteeism in public primary schools in Ruiru Division, Thika District and found that pupil absenteeism was a major problem in Ruiru Division's public primary schools. The major causes of absenteeism were illness, lack of interest and bad company.

Murungi (2010) investigated children's health needs and their influence on pre-school education enrolment. The results revealed that basic needs influenced children's attendance in school. Munyiri (2010) had found that school feeding program improved children's attendance and enrolment. The studies mainly focused on children's health needs and impact of feeding programme, while the current study focused on socioeconomic and school factors impacting on pupils' absenteeism from school.

Bironga (2002) investigated the factors responsible for students' absenteeism in secondary schools in Ruiru Division of Thika District and found out that the major causes of students' absenteeism were lack of school fees, and sickness.

Aluoch (2002) investigated the factors that contributed to student absenteeism in Nakuru East Division in Day Secondary Schools and found that student absenteeism was a problem affecting all the selected day secondary schools. The study had found that the major causes of student absenteeism were lack of school fees, sickness, and family problems. While the studies focused on student and

family factors causing student absenteeism from school, the current study had focused on socioeconomic and school factors contributing to pupils' absenteeism from school, hence the need for this study.

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

Pupils' school attendance is very important because it influences pupils' performance in school (Rothman, 2001, Dekalb, 1999 and Etsey, 2005). The Government of Kenya has provided Free Primary Education and increased resource allocation to ensure that every child is in school. The trend in school enrolment has been impressive since 2003, but with concerns as regards to retention, attendance and pupil achievement (Ministry of Education, 2009).

Basic education is free and compulsory for all Kenyan children (The Constitution of Kenya, 2010). This is meant to ensure that every child is in school. A parent who fails to take his/her child to school commits an offense and can be prosecuted (Basic Education Act, 2013). The question is, if primary education is free and compulsory, why will some pupils be absent from school? The studies conducted in primary schools did not focus on socioeconomic and school factors contributing to pupils' absenteeism but on pupil factors (Muiru, 2005), health needs (Murungi, 2010), and feeding programme (Munyiri, 2010).

A more recent study (Uwezo, 2011) has shown that many pupils in Kenya are not learning and that in many sub-counties in Kenya, Masaba sub-county included, more than four out of ten children miss school daily. This means that there are

still some factors which are causing pupils to be absent from school. This study thus focused on the socioeconomic and school factors which may be contributing to pupils' absenteeism from school in Masaba sub-county, Nyamira County.

### **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study was to investigate the socioeconomic and school factors causing pupils' to be absent from school in lower primary schools in Masaba sub-county, Nyamira County. The study also investigated the strategies schools have put in place to overcome pupils' absenteeism.

### **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

- (i) To establish pupils' absenteeism from school in Masaba sub-county of Nyamira County.
- (ii) To establish the socioeconomic factors which cause pupils to be absent from school in Masaba sub-county, Nyamira County.
- (iii) To investigate the school factors which cause pupils to be absent from school in Masaba sub-county, Nyamira County.
- (iv) To find out the strategies schools have put in place to overcome pupils' absenteeism.

### **1.5 Research Questions**

- (i) What is the frequency of pupils' absenteeism from school in Masaba Sub-county of Nyamira County?
- (ii) What are the socioeconomic factors which cause pupils to be absent from school?

(iv) What are the school factors which cause pupils to be absent from school?

(v) What are the strategies schools have put in place to overcome pupils' absenteeism?

## **1.6 Significance of the Study**

The study provide important information on the socioeconomic and school factors that influence pupils to be absent from school in lower primary schools. The findings of this study may be used by the Quality Assurance section in the Ministry of Education to develop appropriate policies to reduce pupil absenteeism. The Teachers Service Commission may use the findings of the study when developing policies to curb teacher absenteeism which might be contributing to pupil absenteeism. School management committees may use the findings of the study to come up with strategies to promote pupils' regular school attendance.

## **1.7 Delimitations and Limitations of the Study**

The delimitations and limitations of this study are discussed in the following paragraphs.

### **1.7.1 Delimitations of the Study**

The study was conducted in Masaba Sub-county of Nyamira County. The study focused on the socioeconomic and school factors contributing to pupils' absenteeism from school in lower primary school classes.

### **1.7.2 Limitations of the Study**

Due to lack of enough time to conduct the study in lower primary schools in the whole county, the results of this study may not be generalized to all schools in Nyamira County.

### **1.8 Assumptions of the Study**

The study assumes that:

- Different factors contribute to pupils' absenteeism from school in lower primary school classes.
- Pupils who attend school regularly perform better in school than those who do not.

### **1.9 Theoretical Framework**

This study was guided by Maslow's theory of motivation (Maslow, 1943).

#### **1.9.1. Maslow's Theory of Motivation**

The study was guided by Maslow's theory of motivation (Maslow, 1943). Maslow, states that human beings are motivated by a hierarchy of needs. The needs are physiological needs, safety needs, belongingness and love needs, esteem needs, and self-actualization needs.

The physiological needs include; food, health, rest, and water. According to Maslow, these needs are the most important needs. The needs must be satisfied in order to pursue the next level of needs.

This means that if a person or pupil is hungry and has no food, he/she will focus all his/her attention and energy in searching for food and becomes less concerned about other levels of needs like need for education and once he/she finds food, the other levels of needs arise. This means that children who are hungry will be absent from school in order to go to look for food or do some work to earn money to buy food. That is lack of food is a cause of absenteeism.

The second category of needs is safety needs which include security, protection and freedom. The needs arise after physiological needs have been satisfied. This means that children will need to go to school and start thinking of security if only they have something to eat.

The third category of needs is belongingness and love needs. Children need love from both parents and teachers hence the school environment should be child friendly to motivate attendance. The needs arise after safety needs have been met. They include the need to be loved, appreciated and accepted.

Fourth, is esteem needs which include, the need to want people to recognize one's abilities, value, competence, and need for good reputation. Lastly, self-actualization needs which is the need to live up to one's fullest and unique potential. It is becoming the best that one can become. According to Maslow, failure to satisfy one level of needs puts one into a deficit state and becomes continually concerned about the level of needs (Maslow, 1954).

## 1.9.2 Conceptual Framework

Pupils' school absenteeism and performance is influenced by various factors such as school and socioeconomic factors. The relationship between these variables is shown in Figure 1.1

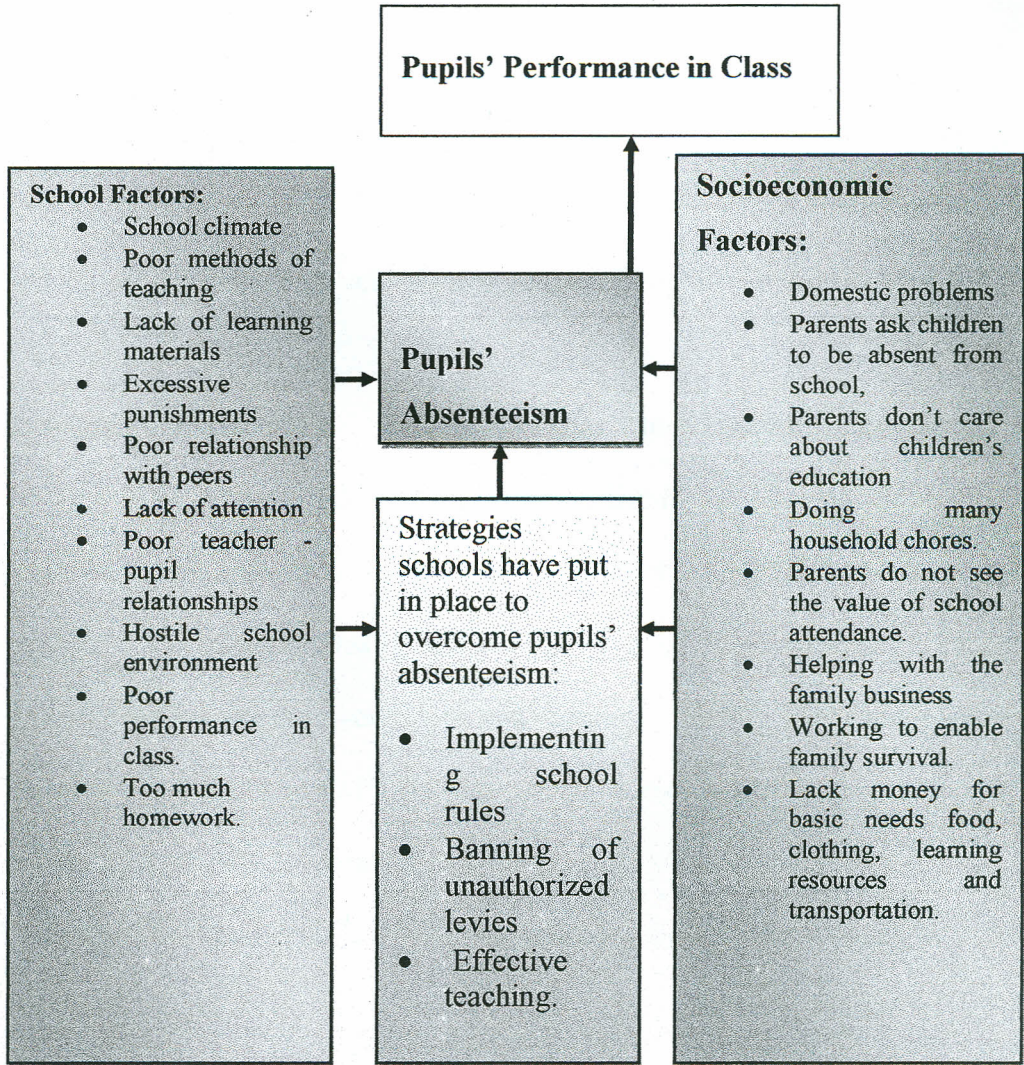


Figure 1.1 Factors Influencing Pupils' Absenteeism

### Key

- Non-study variables
- Study variables

The figure shows the variables which influence pupil's absenteeism from school. The factors include school factors, socioeconomic factors, and strategies schools have put in place to overcome pupils' absenteeism. Pupils' absenteeism in turn influences pupils' performance in class.

### **1.10 Operational Definition of Terms**

**School Factors** – Refers to the factors which are related to the school like; poor methods of teaching, excessive punishments, lack of attention, poor teacher-pupil relationships, hostile school environment, poor performance in class and too much homework.

**Socioeconomic Factors** – Refers to factors which are related to the pupils family socioeconomic conditions like Unsupportive family environment, domestic problems, parents ask children to be absent from school, parents don't care about children's education, parents do not see the value of school attendance, helping with the family business, working to enable family survival, long distance to and from school, lack of money for basic needs, and transportation.

**Lower primary** - Standard one to three.

**Pupil absenteeism** – Pupils not being present in school during learning hours.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the review of related literature. It focuses on pupils' absenteeism, parents' socioeconomic factors which cause pupils' absenteeism from school, school factors which cause pupils' absenteeism from school, strategies to overcome pupils' absenteeism from school, and summary of literature reviewed.

#### 2.2 Pupils' Absenteeism

Pupil absenteeism is a period of time when a pupil does not attend school (Teasley, 2004). Bond (2004) defines pupil absenteeism as persistent, habitual, and unexplained absence from school. Bond also notes that chronic absenteeism occurs when a student is absent from school without reason for 20 percent or more of school time. In fact, pupils who do not attend school will generally fall behind their classmates in their academic success (Ford & Sutphen, 1996). The pupils also have fewer opportunities to learn the materials that will help them to succeed (Epstein & Sheldon, 2002). According to Bennett (2010), pupil absenteeism is a serious issue in public schools. He further argues that concerted efforts have to be expended aiming at engaging pupils and promoting active learning.

In USA, Plank (2009) found that in one cohort that tracked first grade for seven years, 22 percent of students missed two-ninths, or 40 days, of at least one year,

and an additional 25 percent missed more than one-ninth but less than two-ninths, of the year which translated to between 21 and 40 days. Thus, nearly half of the students in the cohort missed a month or more of school at least once during their elementary and initial middle grade years. In a sixth-grade cohort in Florida and a first-grade cohort in Baltimore, Plank (2009), revealed that at least in some locales, over the elementary and middle grades school years, it is possible for nearly half of all students to experience at least one year of chronic absenteeism, and close to a fifth of students, at least at one point, to miss two or more months of school years.

Various studies have found a very strong statistical relationship between pupils' absenteeism and academic performance. Specifically, learning processes are interrupted when pupils miss lessons regularly and that most absentees have low attainment levels as compared to regular attendees (Berg and Louw, 2006). A study by Gitonga (1997) on absenteeism and its effects on academic achievement amongst marginalized urban standard seven primary school pupils in Nairobi established that absenteeism of pupils from school affects their academic achievement when scholastic aptitude is statistically controlled. Pupils who were persistently absent from school underachieved and this led to school dropout. The study did not investigate the causes of school absenteeism which was to be investigated in this study. In addition Mueni's (1984) study on factors that contribute to pupil absenteeism in central division of Machakos district found that Pupil absenteeism is a problem worrying the family, the school and the

community. This study was to find out the factors which cause pupils' absenteeism from school.

A comparative study on academic performance in Ghana found that absenteeism was one of the major factors contributing to low performance of primary school pupils in low achieving schools (Etsey, 2005). According to Enomoto (1997), students who missed class on a given date were significantly more likely to respond incorrectly to questions relating to material covered that day than students who were present.

Econorthwest (2011) revealed that in Oregon USA, chronic absence in one early grade was linked with lower test scores throughout elementary school; but being chronically absent in both kindergarten and first grade was linked to the lowest scores. According to Applied Survey Research (2011) on Attendance in Early Elementary Grades and Third Grade Outcomes in San Mateo and Santa Clara counties in California, found that students who arrived at school academically ready to learn but were then chronically absent in kindergarten and first grade scored 60 points below good attendees on third grade reading tests and close to 100 points below on Mathematics tests. This study was to investigate pupils' absenteeism from school in lower primary schools in Masaba sub-county.

Helaine (2011) who did a study to investigate the relationship between school mean attendance and performance on the 2007- 08 grade four mathematics assessment found that as school mean attendance increased from 88 to 99 percent, the predicted grade four mean score increased from 640 to 720. Helaine further

reveals that the relationship between school attendance and performance on the grades three and four attendances (below 92.04 percent) achieved the lowest mean score and the highest attendance (above 95.490 percent) achieved the highest mean score. Hence, performance improved systematically with increases in attendance; as the attendance increased, so did the mean scaled score on each assessment.

A methodologically advanced study using data from New York City by Musser (2011) suggests that in schools with high chronic absence, the achievement of all students, not just those who are absent, is affected. The study also found that there was a predicted effect on fourth-grade English achievement for a student moving from chronic absence to average attendance.

Barge (2011), suggests that missing even a week to two weeks can have a significant negative impact on achievement. Research further reveals that high rates of student absenteeism also affect regular attendees (Rothman, 2001). This is true in situations where teachers provide remedial classes to absentees in the same class with regular attendees in order to help absentees catch up on lessons missed. However, Malcolm and Thorpe (1996) found that studies for regular attendees were not affected by mixing with poor attendees. This study was to find out the factors which cause pupils' absenteeism from school in Masaba sub-county.

Awuor (2012) did a study on the effects of economic activities on pupils' academic performance at Kenya Certificate of Primary Education in Lari Division, Kiambu County Kenya. The study found that academic performance of

pupils in Lari Division was adversely affected by contextual factors such as inadequate support by parents, attitude of parents towards schooling, initiation practices for boys before completing primary education and religious affiliation of parents. Pupils in the Division also participated in child labour and domestic related chores which contributed to poor academic performance. The study further revealed that truancy, absenteeism and indiscipline also contributed to poor academic performance among pupils. Lack of enough resources and leadership also contributed to poor academic performance.

Nduta (2001) did a study on the influence of child labour on academic achievement in primary schools in Suba and Homabay Districts in Kenya. The study revealed that boys not involved in child labour had significantly higher academic achievement mean scores than girls not involved. The study also revealed that boys involved in child labour activities had significantly higher academic mean score than girls. It was also noted that child labour affected pupils' achievement negatively.

### **2.3 Socioeconomic Factors Which Cause Pupils' Absenteeism from School**

Social factors such as an unsupportive family environment, lack of community help, not valuing education, domestic problems and inadequate parenting contribute to pupils' absenteeism (Reid, 2005). Economic factors also put pressure on parents and pupils which in turn do not encourage the attendance of school each day.

In an action research on student absenteeism from School by Lorenmurcia (2012). The top reasons of student absenteeism were that parents ask children to be absent from class, parents quarrelled them, parents do not care about students studies and they were given many household chores. Chang and Romero (2008) found that pupils choose not to attend school because their parents or guardian do not see the value of school attendance. They further explain that choosing not to attend school on a regular basis begins early in a child's formal education when some parents do not yet see the importance of their children being in school every day.

Balfanz, and Byrnes, (2012), found that family obligations are also reasons why some students cannot go to school. In high-poverty environments, young girls sometimes provide emergency day care for younger siblings or are responsible for getting younger children to school. Children moreover, are sometimes pulled into helping with the family business or working to enable family or personal survival. In other cases, they are compelled or lured into illegal activities. Such a situation makes pupils to miss going to school.

This study was establish the socioeconomic factors which make pupils to be absent from school.

A study by Omega (2012), on the influence of child labour on pupil's performance at the Kenya Certificate of Primary Education in Hamisi District found that many pupils who were involved in domestic chores, commercial child labour and those from poor household had poor academic performance because of being absent from school. The study also revealed that majority of the pupils

involved in the commercial child labour, had their academic performance affected. This study investigated the socioeconomic factors which impact on pupils' absenteeism and performance.

A study by Muthoni (2008) on factors affecting quality education in public day secondary schools in Thika and Ruiru Divisions established that the main cause of poor academic performance in these schools were due to poor socio-economic background of the students and families and this was shown by the low rate of school fees payment and chronic absenteeism among the students from school. Other social factors included students' home environs that consisted of distances that the students cover from their homes to their respective schools, the work that they do after school and the problems they face while studying at home. This study investigated the socioeconomic factors which impact on pupils' absenteeism from school.

According to Reid (2005), money becomes an important issue for families in poverty and when there is no money for daily necessities such as food, clothing, supplies and transportation, he argues that lower income families are unlikely to make ends meet, education may not be a top priority for them, and parents therefore are neglectful to their child's best interest in education.

A study by Balfanz, and Byrnes (2012), on chronic absenteeism in USA found that there was a strong correlation between poverty and chronic absenteeism. In Maryland in 2011, chronic absentee rates for students eligible for the federal free and reduced-price lunch program were 10.9 percent in elementary schools, 15.8

percent in middle schools, and 30.8 percent in high schools. In addition, chronic absentee rates were three times higher among economically disadvantaged students in middle and high schools and at least twice as high in elementary schools. Chronic absentee were also found from economically disadvantaged students in Oregon, across all grade levels. In Nebraska, two-thirds of chronically absent students were economically disadvantaged and in Georgia it was 70 percent. In high poverty areas, significant numbers of pupils were missing amounts of school time that are staggering: On the order of six months to over a year, over a five year period. It was also found that the students who lived in poverty attend school less frequently than those who do not. This study investigated the influence of socioeconomic factors on pupils' absenteeism from school.

Mwambaji (2012) investigated the influence of social cultural and social economic factors on primary school pupils discipline in Kitui District. The study revealed that the type of child activity which influenced pupils discipline was tapping of palm wine. The study also found that absenteeism was the most discipline problem experienced in primary schools.

#### **2.4 School Factors Which Cause Pupils' Absenteeism from School**

School climate and organization characteristics of the school suggest predictive factors in pupil absenteeism (Woog, 1992). Gitonga (1997) who did a study in Nairobi found that certain school based factors like teacher-pupil conflicts, poor methods of teaching, lack of learning materials, excessive punishments and

excessive homework contributed to pupils' absenteeism from school. Kamande (2011) study on Hygiene and Sanitation Education and the Factors influencing School Absenteeism among Pupils in Kibera Slum indicated that school environmental factors had a significant relationship with absenteeism of pupils. She further reveals that poor conditions of latrines and pupil toilet ratio in schools were lower than the government's recommendations.

In Australia, Victoria (2004) revealed that school factors influencing absenteeism include boredom with schoolwork; being bullied, threatened, or involved in fights; inadequate school support and welfare; unsatisfactory relations between students and their teachers; and an irrelevant or restrictive curriculum. Reid (2005), report that school related factors like poor relationship with peers or teachers, lack of attention and indifferent school culture tended to inhibit regular pupil attendance. Reid further reveals that poor teaching and poor teacher pupil relationships promoted loss of pupils' interest in schooling and erode student motivation towards education.

Romer (1993) found that absenteeism was lower in classes with high quality of instruction and vice versa. Monk and Ibrahim (1984) indicated that excessive absenteeism occurs where the subject teacher is weak or a class is unruly rendering the students not to learn. Further, Cullingford (1999) found that student absenteeism was also associated with hostile school culture that is characterized by competition, rank orders, and assessment targets. He further reports that such a situation embarrasses pupils who fail because pupils mock each other about poor

performance in class. He concluded that student absenteeism could be understood better by taking interest in pupil experiences within the school setting.

Helaine (2011) found that teacher credentials, experience, and education have small, but highly significant correlations with school attendance. Schools with the highest percentages of teachers who lacked appropriate certification or who had fewer than three years' experience tended to have the lowest attendance rates. Schools with the highest percentage of teachers with 30 credit hours beyond the master's degree tended to have higher attendance. This means that variations in teacher qualifications and experience are likely to play a role in perpetuating differences in attendance and performance. This study was to determine whether school conditions influence pupils' regular attendance.

A study by Loraine and Austin (2010), on factors influencing pupils' absenteeism in primary schools in Jamaica found that on Friday, school was either boring or teachers gave too much schoolwork. Many pupils complained that they were given too much work on a Fridays and that Friday was a day of play. Due to this six out of 10 pupils indicated that they were absent regularly on a Friday. Some pupils reported that their parents or guardians refused to send them to school on Friday because they did not perceive the activities as valuable. This study was to find out whether there are some specific days when pupils are absent from school. In Central Province Munyiri (2010) did a study on the impact of school feeding program on performance of pre-school children in Kikuyu District had found that school feeding program improved children's attendance and enrolment.

## **2.5 Strategies to Overcome Pupils Absenteeism**

Several strategies can be used to overcome or reduce cases of pupil absenteeism. Glasser (1990) suggests that teachers and other adults should make it easy for pupils to see a strong connection between what they are asked to do and what they believe to be worth doing. Schools should also be made relevant and interesting because bored pupils won't produce high quality work and will not be attracted with such environment. Effective teachers manage students without coercion and this motivates learners.

Reid (2003) and Sheppard (2005) suggested that improving pupil's motivation through appropriate revision of the school curriculum and teaching strategies is the best approach to reduce absenteeism among students. They advocate that the curriculum should be delivered by knowledgeable and experienced teachers and the curriculum should be engaging, interesting and relevant to pupils needs. This study was to investigate the strategies schools have put in place to overcome pupils absenteeism from school in Masaba sub-county, Nyamira County.

Malcolm et al (2003) conducted a study on pupils' absenteeism from schools in England. The study focused on the causes and effects of school absenteeism and strategies used to promote good attendance. Some of the strategies used to improve attendance were: Discouraging schools to authorize absence; working with parents, raising awareness with the general public, visiting pupils who were absent, rewarding good attendance, and taking roll call. This study was to

investigate the strategies schools in Masaba sub-county are using to overcome pupils' school absenteeism.

## **2.6. Summary of Literature Review**

An important aspect of pupils' access to education is the amount of time actually spent in the classroom. When students are absent from school, arrive late, or miss class, they are reducing their opportunities to learn. Furthermore, when students disrupt classes by being late or frequently absent, they interfere with other pupils' opportunities to learn.

The literature reviewed has shown that several factors influence pupil's absenteeism and it influences learners' academic performance in primary and secondary schools. Therefore, there was need to explore the socioeconomic and school factors impacting on pupils' absenteeism in class in early childhood education in Masaba sub-county, Nyamira County.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the methodology to be used in this study. The topics covered include research design, variables, and location of the study, target population, sampling techniques, sample size, pilot study, research instruments, validity, reliability, data collection techniques, data analysis, logistical and ethical considerations.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

The study employed a descriptive design. Babbie and Mouton (2001) define the descriptive survey as “The method of research that simply looks with intense accuracy at the phenomena of the moment and then describes precisely what the researcher sees”. This design is appropriate in this study because the researcher was investigate socioeconomic and school factors impacting on pupils’ absenteeism from school in lower primary schools in Masaba sub-county, Nyamira County, Kenya.

#### **3.3 Variables**

The variables are described in the following sub-sections:

### **3.3.1 Dependent Variable**

The dependent variable in this study was pupils' absenteeism from school which was identified using class attendance registers and number of days pupils attended school.

### **3.3.2 Independent variables**

The independent variables in this study were the factors contributing to pupils' absenteeism from school. The factors are:

#### **a) Social economic factors**

They include: Unsupportive family environment, domestic problems, parents ask children to be absent from school, parents do not care about children's education, parents do not understand the value of school attendance, helping with the family business, working to enable family survival, long distance to and from school, and lack of money for basic needs.

#### **b) School Factors**

The factors include: Teacher-pupil conflicts, poor methods of teaching, lack of learning materials, excessive punishments, poor relationship with peers, lack of attention, poor teacher-pupil relationships, hostile school environment, poor performance in class, and too much homework.

### **3.4 Location of the Study**

The study was conducted in Masaba sub-county, Nyamira County. Masaba sub-county is one of the four sub-counties in Nyamira County. The area was selected for the study due to its high population with socioeconomic challenges.

Commission on Revenue Allocation (2010) statistics indicates that Masaba sub-county has a poverty index of 48.6 percent which is ranked number 22 in Kenya, an indication that many people in the sub-county are poor. The sub-county has also been performing poorly in national examination results in KCPE and KCSE which influenced the selection of the location. Uwezo report (2011) also indicates that there is a problem of pupils' absenteeism from schools in this county.

### **3.5 Target Population**

The population of the study was pupils in public lower primary schools in Masaba sub-county. According to the records from the District Education Office in Masaba sub-county, there are 71 public primary schools. The target population was all standard three pupils and their teachers in Masaba sub-county.

Uwezo report of 2011 revealed that in Masaba sub-county standard three pupils was the most affected by pupil absenteeism. The reason of conducting the study in public primary schools is that parents do not pay tuition fees.

### **3.6 Sampling Techniques and Sample Size**

They are described in the following sections:

#### **3.6.1 Sampling Techniques**

Masaba sub-county was purposively selected because there is a problem of pupil's absenteeism from school in the sub-county (Uwezo, 2011). Class three has also been selected using purposive sampling because the class is the most affected

by pupil absenteeism. Random sampling was used to select the schools to participate in the study from which pupils having very low school attendance rates were identified from the class registers.

The researcher was first compile a list of public schools in Masaba sub-county. The schools were numbered and then randomly select 10 % of the primary schools. Babbie (1992) suggests that for a small population the researcher would sample about 10-30% of the population. All the pupils with low attendance rates in the schools will be involved in the study.

### **3.6.2 Sample Size**

The sample of the study will consist of all standard three pupils affected with school absenteeism in the 10% of the primary schools sampled for the study. Simple random sampling was used to sample one class if the streams are more than one.

The pupils were identified using class attendance registers. The teachers of the pupils were also being part of the sample.

**Table 3.1: Sampling Frame**

<b>Zone</b>	<b>No. Of Primary Schools</b>	<b>Sample of Primary Schools (10%)</b>	<b>Sample of Teachers</b>
Girango zone	17	2	2
Bocharia Zone	21	2	2
Gesima Zone	17	2	2
Mochenwa Zone	16	2	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>8</b>

Table 3.1 above shows that eight primary schools were sampled and eight standard three teachers in the sampled schools were used as respondents. The teachers were used to identify the pupils who are frequently absent from school.

### **3.7 Research Instruments**

Two research instruments were used to collect data. These include questionnaires for teachers and interview schedule for pupils with low attendant rates. Questionnaires are usually used to collect data from a diverse and large group of people. They can be used for sensitive topics which users may feel uncomfortable speaking to an interviewer about and have no opportunity for interviewer bias since they are in paper.

#### **3.7.1 Questionnaire for Teachers**

The researcher had used a questionnaire for class three teachers to collect data. Sections A of the instrument was collect background information; section B was used to collect information on socioeconomic factors contributing to pupils'

absenteeism ; while section C was to collect data on school factors contributing to pupils' absenteeism.

### **3.7.2 Interview Schedule for pupils**

An interview schedule for pupil was used to collect data concerning the factors that influence pupils to be absent from school. Part A of the instrument seek the pupils' background information, Part B was used to collect information on pupils absenteeism from school.

## **3.8 Pilot Study**

The research instruments were pre-tested in two primary schools. The primary schools involved in the pilot study were not part of the sample of the study. The instruments were piloted to test the appropriateness of the items in order to enhance the validity and reliability of the instrument. The pilot study also enables the researcher to familiarize himself with administration of the instruments.

### **3.8.1 Validity**

The validity of the research instrument was ensured by using content validity. Content validity was achieved by ensuring that test items cover all objectives and variables of the study. Content validity is the ability of the instrument to measure the traits it was designed for.

### **3.8.2 Reliability**

The reliability of the instruments was tested using test-retest method. The researcher had tested the reliability of the instruments during the piloting stage.

The instrument was administered twice with an interval of two weeks and the results were compared. The reliability coefficient was calculated using Spearman Correlation coefficient. The reliability coefficient was 0.8.

### **3.9 Data Collection Techniques**

The researcher had collect data using a questionnaire and interview schedule.

#### **Step I: Administration of Questionnaire**

Questionnaires were administered to the teachers in the sampled schools. The researcher had collected the filled Questionnaire from the teachers the same day.

#### **Step II: Interview Pupils with Low School Attendance**

The researcher had interviewed the pupils to identify the factors which cause pupils to be absent from school. The pupils were interviewed when they were not having lessons.

### **3.10 Data Analysis**

Qualitative and quantitative methods were used to analyse data. The data collected using questionnaire and interview schedules were organised and coded into significant patterns and themes for analysis. The quantitative data will be entered into a computer and then analysed using SPSS computer software to calculate frequencies, means and percentages. Results were then presented using tables and figures according to research objectives and questions.

### **3.11 Logistical and Ethical Considerations**

The researcher had obtained introductory letter from Graduate School and Ministry of Education, Science and Technology before proceeding to the study

site. Permission was also obtained by the researcher from Masaba District Education Officer before going to the schools to collect data. At the beginning of data collection session, all the respondents were briefed on the purpose of the study. All the information collected during the study was kept confidential and was not be made available to anyone who was not directly involved in the study. The researcher had also obtained consent from the teachers and parents of the pupils before interviewing them.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

#### 4.1. Introduction

This chapter presents research findings and discussions which have been presented according to the objectives of the study and research questions. The objectives of the study were:

- To establish pupils' absenteeism from school in Masaba sub-county of Nyamira County.
- To establish the social economic factors which cause pupils to be absent from school in Masaba sub-county, Nyamira County.
- To investigate the school factors which cause pupils to be absent from school in Masaba sub-county, Nyamira County.
- To find out the strategies schools have put in place to overcome pupils' absenteeism.

#### 4.2. Demographic Information

The demographic characteristics of the respondents were obtained by the researcher and the results have been presented in the following subsections:

##### 4.2.1 Professional Training

The teachers' level of professional training was determined and the results are presented in Table 4.1 below.

**Table 4.1: Highest level of professional Training**

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	P1 Certificate	4	50
	BED	2	25
	ATS 1	2	25
	Total	8	100.0

Table 4.1 indicates that the majority of the respondents (50%) were P1 certificate holders.

A further 25% of the respondents were ATS 1 holders and lastly 25% were Bachelor of Education degree holders. This implies that teachers in lower primary schools in Masaba sub-county have varying levels of professional qualifications. A study done by Helaine (2011) in New York city had established that teacher credentials, and education have small, but highly significant correlations with school attendance. Schools with the highest percentages of teachers who lacked appropriate certification tended to have the lowest attendance rates.

#### **4.2.2. Teaching Experience**

Teaching experience was also established and the results have been presented in Table 4.2.

**Table 4.2 Teachers' Teaching Experience**

Year	Frequency	Percent
Less than a year	0	0
1-3 years	0	0
4-6 years	0	0
7 and above	8	100.0

The results show that all the teachers had teaching experience of seven or more years. This implies that the respondents had the required skills and knowledge in the schools studied. This would assist in proper curriculum implementation and offer strategies for averting pupil absenteeism in primary schools. In fact a study by Helaine (2011) found that teachers who had fewer than three years' experience tended to have the lowest attendance rates. This indicates that teachers' experience was a factor which impacted either positively or negatively on pupils' school regular attendance.

#### 4.2.3 Gender

The gender of the teachers was also established and the results are presented in

Table 4.3.

**Table 4.3: Gender of teachers**

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Male	4	50.0
	Female	4	50.0
	Total	8	100.0

The result shows that equal number of male and female teachers was involved in the study. This implies that both sexes were adequately represented in the study. On the contrary, while conducting research in Kakuzi and Ruiru divisions of Thika sub-county, Karanja (2009) had found a significant difference between the number of male and female teachers sampled for the study that is 84% of the respondent were females while 16% were males.

### 4.3. Pupils' Absenteeism from School

To establish pupils' absenteeism from school in Masaba sub-county, pupils who used to be absent from school were asked the number of times they were absent from school per week. Table 4.4 presents the results.

**Table 4.4: Number Of Times Of Pupils Were Absent From School Per Week**

	Frequency	Percent
Valid Once	4	22.2
Twice	9	50.0
Thrice	4	22.2
Four time	1	5.6
Total	18	100.0

Table 4.4 shows that most of the pupils who were absent from school were absent twice in a week. From this figure it is abundantly clear that the problem of pupil absenteeism was a critical issue in lower primary schools in Masaba sub-county. This, in some way could be a major reason why pupils' academic performance was poor performance in lower primary classes in Masaba Sub-County. A study done in Meru County by Nkanatha, in the year 2013 had found that 75% of the students were absent from school for more than three days per term which translates to more than a day per month. The absence, Nkanatha argues that this leaves a gap in the learning process which ultimately leads to poor performance.

The pupils were further asked the days of the week they were often absent from school and the results are presented in Table 4.5.

**Table 4.5: Days of Week Pupils Were Often Absent**

		Responses	
		No.	Percentage
Days of the week always absent	Monday	8	25.8
	Tuesday	8	25.8
	Wednesday	2	6.5
	Thursday	5	16.1
	Friday	8	25.8
Total		31	100.0

Table 4.5 shows that most of the pupils were often absent from school on Monday, Tuesday, and on Friday. A study by Loraine and Austin (2010), on factors influencing pupils' absenteeism in primary schools in Jamaica had found out that most of the children were absent on Fridays. The study further revealed that six out of ten pupils indicated that they were absent regularly on Fridays. Many of the pupils complained that they were given too much work on Friday and which was a day of play. The pupils were further asked the reasons why they were absent from school and the common reasons were: Help carry goods to the market; help parents in selling the goods during market days; care for siblings when the parents have gone to the market; picking tea; help in doing house chores; sickness; lack of uniform; lack of school levies; to attend funeral; and fear of being punished in school.

#### 4.4 Socioeconomic Factors and Pupils' Absenteeism

In the second objective the researcher was to establish socioeconomic factors which cause pupils to be absent from school in Masaba sub-county, Nyamira County.

##### 4.4.1. Parents Ask Children To Be Absent From School

Whether parents asked pupils to be absent was investigated and the results are presented in Table 4.6.

**Table 4.6: Parents Ask Children To Be Absent from School**

	Frequency	Percent
Valid Yes	8	100.0

Table 4.6 shows that all teachers had reported that parents ask pupils to be absent from school. The reasons why they ask their children to be absent from school included: To take care of the younger siblings; to be sent to their relatives; and to assist parents in doing house chores.

The first responsibility of the education of the children lies with parents and the wider community in which the family lives. The United Nations Declaration of Education as a Human Right gives protection to the parents' right to choose the type of education their children will receive (MOE 196). Research results have also proved that there is close correlation between the meaning of education to parent and children's learning achievement. That is if education is regarded as valuable in the family, there is a bigger possibility that children will have high

learning achievement (Lionto, 1992). Parent live with children, if they can guide and monitor their children's school attendance together with teachers, pupils absenteeism shall significantly reduce.

#### 4.4.2. Parents Do Not Understand the Value of School Attendance

Teachers were asked whether failure of parents to understand the value of school attendance contributed to pupils' absenteeism from school and the results are presented in Table 4.7.

**Table 4.7: Failure Of Parents To Understand The Value Of School Attendance**

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Yes	5	62.5
	No	3	37.5
	Total	8	100.0

The results show that the majority of teachers agreed that lack of parents understanding of the value of school attendance was contributing to pupils' absenteeism from school due to: Illiteracy; ignorance; and low level of education. Similarly a study on causes and effects of absence from school in seven local education authorities in Scotland by Heather, Valerie, Julia and Susan (2013) had found that a higher magnitude of the sampled parents when asked about what parents think about school attendances had said that they only valued attendance

because of its contribution to getting certificates. This therefore meant that they did not really understand the importance of pupil attendance in school.

#### 4.4.3. Helping in family business

Teachers were also asked whether helping in the family business was contributing to pupils' absenteeism from school. The results are presented in Table 4.6 below.

**Table 4.8: Helping In Family Business**

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Yes	5	62.5
	No	3	37.5
	Total	8	100.0

The results show that the majority of the teachers had agreed that helping in family business was a factor which was contributing to pupils' absenteeism from school. Some of the reasons to help their parents to raise enough funds; to assist parents to sell goods during market days; to take care of the younger siblings when parents are busy in family business activities; and to assist parents in doing house chores. Heather, Valerie, Julia, and Susan (2013) found that 18% of the parents' view of when children should be when children are needed to help at home.

#### 4.4.4: Long Distance from School

Teachers were further asked whether distance from home to school was causing pupils to be absent from school. Table 4.8 presents the results.

**Table 4.9: Long Distance from School**

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	6	75
No	2	25
Total	8	100.0

Table 4.9 shows that the majority of the teachers had agreed that long distance from school was one of the factors which were contributing to pupils' absenteeism from school. This is because when pupils were late they could avoid going late to school; tired of travelling to school and prefer to rest. The study that was conducted in the University of Zambia, Shooba (2013) had also found out that the major causes of pupils' absenteeism from grade 7 composite examination were physical factors such as long distance to schools especially in rain seasons where roads were impassable due to floods. This implies that if the schools were closer, cases of pupil absenteeism could be reduced. Long distance from school exposed children to harsh and dangerous conditions which in turn influence pupils' absenteeism.

#### 4.4.5. Lack of Money for Basic Needs

Whether lack of money contributed to pupils' absenteeism from school was investigated and the results are presented in Table 4.10.

**Table 4.10: Lack Of Money for Basic Needs Contributes To Pupils' Absenteeism**

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	8	100.0

The results shows that all teachers agreed that lack of money for basic needs such as food, clothing, learning resources and transport was contributing to pupils' absenteeism from school. Due to lack of money for basic needs, the children were involved in drug trafficking, poverty, and go to look for money to buy basic needs. The findings of this study are in agreement with those from a study conducted by Reid (2005), who had found that money was an issue for families in poverty and when there was no money for daily necessities such as food, clothing, supplies and transportation, lower income families were unlikely to make ends meet, education may not be a top priority for them and parents therefore are neglectful to their children's best interest in education. This scenario contributed to low attendance of school amongst children from poor background.

#### 4.4.6. Domestic Problems

Whether domestic problems was contributing to pupils' absenteeism from school was also investigated and the results are presented in Table 4.11.

**Table 4.11: Domestic Problems Contributes To Pupils' Absenteeism**

	Frequency	percent
Yes	8	100
No	0	0
Total	8	100

The results show that all teachers had agreed that domestic problems were contributing to pupils' absenteeism from school. Some of the reasons were: Domestic problems make pupils to run away from school in case of fights, they lead to lack of provision of basic needs, lead to separation of parents, drug abuse, and lead to single parenthood.

The teachers were also asked to state the other social factors contributing to pupils' absenteeism from school. The factors include: Lack of basic needs, irresponsible parents, sickness of parents, poverty, parents illiteracy, lack of family planning, HIV/AIDS, parents staying away from their children. This state of affairs is consistent with the study carried out by Suhid, Raham, and Kamal (2012) on factors causing student absenteeism according to peers who found that the second most important factor contributing to absenteeism among students is the family quarrels at home.

#### 4.5. School Factors Which Cause Pupils' Absenteeism from School

The researcher had investigated the school factors which caused pupils to be absent from school and the results are presented in the following subsections.

##### 4.5.1. Environment and Climate in Our School Contributing To Pupils' Absenteeism from School

Teachers were asked whether the environment in their schools contributed to pupils' absenteeism and the results are presented in Table 4.12.

**Table 4.12: Environment and Climate in Our School Contribute To Pupils' Absenteeism from School**

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	6	75
No	2	25
Total	8	100.0

Table 4.12 shows that the majority of teachers reported that the school environment contributed to pupils' absenteeism from school. This is due to lack of adequate classrooms, high teacher/pupil ratio, lack of adequate teaching-learning materials, confrontation with teachers and pupils, poor relationship between teachers and pupils, and teacher harshness which eroded pupil interest in schooling. The results are consistent with a study on factors causing student absenteeism from school conducted by Asmawati, Abdul, and Norliana (2012) who had found that unpleasant school environment made students reject and not

to go to school. Kamande (2011) who studied hygiene and sanitation education and the factors influencing school absenteeism among pupils in Kibera slums in Kenya had found that school environmental factors had a significant relationship with absenteeism of pupils. A study by Elinor, Syni-An, Edward, Christine, and Shao (2010) on school building condition survey of Upstate New York schools had found that there was relationships between student absenteeism and unfavourable school building conditions. Schools in lower socioeconomic districts and schools attended by younger pupils had showed the strongest relationships between poor building conditions and absenteeism. Humidity, poor ventilation, vermin and structural problems were also found to be the most school related conditions affecting attendance of pupils.

#### **4.5.3. Lack of Learning Materials**

Lack of learning materials was also investigated to determine whether it contributed to pupils' absenteeism from school. Table 4.13 presents the results.

**Table 4.13: Lack of Learning Materials Is Contributing To Pupil's**

#### **Absenteeism**

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	4	50.0
No	4	50.0
Total	8	100.0

The results show that 50% of the teachers reported that lack of teaching materials contributed to pupils' absenteeism. Gitonga (1997) who did a study in Nairobi on absenteeism and its effects on academic achievement among marginalized urban children found that lack of learning materials contributed to pupils' absenteeism from school.

#### 4.5.4. Relationship with Peers and Teachers

Whether the relationship with peers and teachers influenced pupils' absenteeism from school was determined and the results are presented in Table 4.14.

**Table 4.14: Poor Relationship with Peers or Teacher as Contributing To Pupils' Absenteeism From School**

	Frequency	Percent
Yes	6	75
No	2	25
Total	8	100.0

The results show that the majority of the teachers agreed that poor relationship with peers or teachers was contributing to pupils' absenteeism from school. Asmawati et al (2012) found that teacher factors and relations have the least influence on student absenteeism. But, they argue that when teaching and learning is boring, hostile and not so effective it enhances pupil absenteeism. Study further reveals that peer relations also influenced students absenting themselves from school.

#### 4.5.5. Poor Performance in Class

The influence of poor performance on pupils' absenteeism from school was investigated. The results are presented in Table 4.15.

**Table 4.15: Poor Performance in Class is contributing to Pupils'**

#### **Absenteeism from School**

		Frequency	Percent
Valid	Yes	4	50.0
	No	4	50.0
	<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>100.0</b>

The results reveal that 50% of the teachers reported that poor performance contribute to pupils' absenteeism from school. This finding is similar to a study by Cullingford (1999) on the relationship between delinquency and non-attendance at school who had found that student absenteeism was associated with hostile school culture that is characterized by competition, rank orders, and assessment targets. Heather et al (2013) in their study reported that most teachers thought that the major effect of absence from school was upon pupils' academic underachievement. Due to the academic competition, children who performed lowly were eventually frustrated and demotivated to attend school.

#### **4.6. Strategies Schools Put in Place to Overcome Pupils' Absenteeism**

Teachers were asked to state the strategies schools have put in place to overcome pupils' absenteeism from school. The strategies include: Establishment of children's government policy, implementing school rules, banning of unauthorized levies, effective teaching, parent teacher meeting to enable parents to understand the importance of school attendance, creating community awareness, guidance and counselling, provision of feeding programmes in schools, de-worming, rewarding best attendance, promoting parental involvement in children's education, creating conducive school environment and promoting strong parent teacher relationship. All these brought a warm and conducive environment for children to regularly attend school. Children enjoyed learning in a friendly school environment which discouraged pupils' absenteeism.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1. Introduction

In this chapter summary of findings of the study are presented together with conclusion made from the findings and recommendations of the study. The chapter also has suggestions for further studies.

#### 5.2. Summary of the Findings of the Study

The key findings of the study are:

Regarding days pupils' absenteeism from school; pupils' were often absent from school on Monday, Tuesday, and on Friday and most of the pupils who were absent from school were absent twice from school per week.

The socio-economic factors which caused pupils to be absent from school included:

- Parents ask pupils to be absent from school, lack of parents understanding of the value of school attendance due to illiteracy and low level of education.
- Helping in family business contributed to pupils' absenteeism from school. Pupils were absent from school to help their parents to raise enough funds; to assist parents to sell goods during market days; to take care of the younger siblings when parents are busy in family business activities; and to assist parents in doing house chores.

- Lack of money for basic needs such as food, clothing, learning resources and transport caused pupils to be absent from school.
  - Domestic problems make pupils to run away from home in case of fights; they lead to lack of provision of basic needs, lead to separation of parents, drug abuse, and lead to single parenthood.
  - Lack of basic needs, irresponsible parents, sickness of parents, poverty, parents illiteracy, lack of family planning, HIV/AIDS, parents staying away from their children also make pupils to be absent from school.

The school factors which caused pupils to be absent from school included:

- Un-conducive school environment which included lack of adequate classrooms, high teacher ratio, lack of adequate teaching-learning materials, confrontation, poor relationship between teachers and pupils, and teacher harshness which eroded pupil interest in schooling.
- Poor performance contributed to pupils' absenteeism from school.

Strategies used in schools to reduce pupils' absenteeism from schools include: Implementing school rules, banning of unauthorized levies, effective teaching; parent teacher meeting to enable parents to understand the importance of school attendance, creating community awareness, guidance and counselling, provision of feeding programmes in schools.

### **5.3. Conclusion**

Pupils were absent from school due to socio-economic and school factors. The school factors which caused pupils to be absent from school were: Parents ask pupils to be absent from school, lack of parents understanding of the value of school attendance due to illiteracy and low level of education, helping in family business, long distance to and from school, lack of money for basic needs such as food, clothing, learning resources and transport and domestic problems make pupils to run away from school due to lack of basic needs.

School factors which caused pupils to be absent from school included: Unconducive school environment due to lack of adequate classrooms, high teacher/pupil ratio, lack of adequate teaching-learning materials and poor performance. Strategies schools have put in place to overcome pupils' absenteeism from school are: implementing school rules, banning of unauthorized levies, effective teaching, parent teacher meeting to enable parents to understand the importance of school attendance, creating community awareness, guidance and counselling, provision of feeding programmes in schools.

### **5.4 . Recommendations**

- i. Parents should ensure that their children attend school every day. The findings had revealed that pupils were often absent from school on Monday, Tuesday, and on Friday and most of the pupils who were absent from school were absent twice from school per week.

- ii. Parents should also attend parent-teacher meetings to understand why children should attend school daily. The results of the study had shown that parents ask pupils to be absent from school due to lack of understanding of the value of school attendance and low level of education.
- iii. Parents should stop involving their children during school days. The findings of the study had shown that pupils were absent from school to help in family business and to assist parents to sell goods during market days, to take care of the younger siblings when parents are busy in family business activities and to assist parents in doing house chores.
- iv. Parents should provide their children with basic needs. Lack of money for basic needs such as food, clothing, learning resources and transport caused pupils to be absent from school.
- v. Parents should ensure that there are no domestic problems that make pupils to run away from home in case of fights, they lead to lack of provision of basic needs, lead to separation of parents, drug abuse, and lead to single parenthood.
- vi. School management should provide conducive school environment. Unconducive school environment contributed to pupils' absenteeism from school. This is due to lack of adequate classrooms, high teacher/pupil ratio, lack of adequate teaching-learning materials, confrontation, poor relationship between teachers and pupils and teacher harshness which eroded pupil interest in schooling.

- vii. School management should ensure that there is good relationship between teachers and pupils. Poor relationship with peers or teachers was contributing to pupils' absenteeism from school. Poor performance contributes to pupils' absenteeism from school.
- viii. Government should abolish school levies. Children were absent from school due school rules which many parents could not afford.

### **5.5 . Recommendations for Further Research.**

The researcher recommends the following areas for further research:

- i. An evaluation of pre-school attendance and its relationship with School Readiness.
- ii. Effects of School Attendance on Early Cognitive Development amongst pre-schoolers.
- iii. Family and Community Partnerships in improving pupil attendance in School.
- iv. A thorough follow-up of children school attendance should be done starting from the pre-school and continuing through primary school should be initiated.
- v. Similar research study could be carried out using different methodologies and in other sub-counties to establish social economic and school factors impacting on absenteeism of pupils.

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## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX I

#### QUESTIONNAIRE FOR LOWER PRIMARY SCHOOL TEACHERS

The purpose of this questionnaire is to explore the causes of pupil absenteeism. No information will be used for any purpose other than research. Please tick or write answers in the spaces provided. Answer all questions

##### Section A: Background Information

1. What is the name of your school? \_\_\_\_\_
2. What is your highest level of professional training?  
(a) Un-Trained ( )            (b) P1- Certificate ( )  
(c) Diploma in Edu. ( )    (d) BED ( )
3. How long have you been teaching?  
(a) Less than a year [ ]  
(b) 1-3years [ ]  
(c) 4-6years [ ]  
(c) 7 and above [ ]
4. What is your gender? (a) Male ( ) (b) Female ( )

##### Section B: Socioeconomic Factors Contributing To Pupils' Absenteeism

1. Parents who ask children to be absent from school is contributing to pupils' absenteeism in our school Yes/No.

If yes, write two reasons why?

(i)-----

(ii)-----

2. Failure of parents to understand the value of school attendance is contributing to pupils' absenteeism in our school. Yes/No.

If yes, write two reasons why?

(i)-----

(ii)-----

3. Helping with the family business is contributing to pupils' absenteeism in our school. Yes/No.

If yes, write two reasons why?

(i)-----

(ii)-----

4. Long distance to and from school is contributing to pupils' absenteeism in our school Yes/No.

If yes, write two reasons why?

(i)-----

(ii)-----

5. Lack of money for basic needs like food, clothing, learning resources and transportation is contributing to pupils' absenteeism in our school. Yes/No.

If yes, write two reasons why?

(i)-----

(ii)-----

6. Domestic problems are contributing to pupils' absenteeism in our school. Yes/No.

If yes, write two reasons why?

(i)-----

(ii)-----

7. Which are the other socioeconomic factors which are contributing to pupils' absenteeism in your school?

(i)-----

(ii)-----

(iii)-----

(iv)-----

### Section C: School Factors Contributing To Pupils' Absenteeism

1. Environment climate in our school is contributing to pupils' absenteeism Yes/No.

If yes, write two reasons why?

(i)-----

(ii)-----

2. Teacher-pupil conflicts are contributing to pupils' absenteeism in our school  
Yes/No.

If yes, write two reasons why?

(i)-----

(ii)-----

3. Lack of learning materials is contributing to pupils' absenteeism in our school  
Yes/No.

If yes, write two reasons why?

(i)-----

(ii)-----

4. Poor relationship with peers or teachers is contributing to pupils' absenteeism  
in our school Yes/No.

If yes, write two reasons why?

(i)-----

(ii)-----

5. Poor teacher - pupil relationships is contributing to pupils' absenteeism in our  
school Yes/No.

If yes, write two reasons why?

(i)-----

(ii)-----

6. Poor performance in class is contributing to pupils' absenteeism in our school  
Yes/No.

If yes, write two reasons why?

(i)-----

(ii)-----

7. Which are the other school factors which are contributing to pupils'  
absenteeism in your school?

(i)-----

- (ii)-----
- (iii)-----
- (iv)-----

**Section D: Strategies to Overcome Pupils Absenteeism**

13. Which strategies have been put in place in your school to overcome pupils' absenteeism from school?

- (i) \_\_\_\_\_
- (ii) \_\_\_\_\_
- (iii) \_\_\_\_\_
- (iv) \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX II

### PUPILS INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

#### Part A: Pupils Background Information

1. Name of pupil \_\_\_\_\_
2. Name of school \_\_\_\_\_
3. Gender of pupil \_\_\_\_\_
4. Age of pupil \_\_\_\_\_

#### Part B: Pupils' Absenteeism

6. How often are you absent from school in a week? Once, twice, thrice, four times, five times.

Which are the reasons?

- (i) \_\_\_\_\_
- (ii) \_\_\_\_\_
- (iii) \_\_\_\_\_
- (iv) \_\_\_\_\_

7. Which day of the week are you often absent from school?

Monday ( ) Tuesday ( ) Wednesday ( ) Thursday ( ) Friday ( )

Which are the reasons?

- (i) \_\_\_\_\_
- (ii) \_\_\_\_\_

8. Where do you go when you miss school?

- (i) \_\_\_\_\_
- (ii) \_\_\_\_\_

9. What do you do when you are absent from school?

- (i) \_\_\_\_\_
- (ii) \_\_\_\_\_
- (iii) \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX III

### PUPILS ABSENTEEISM FROM SCHOOL

#### Part A: Background Information

1. Name of school \_\_\_\_\_

Pupil	Number of pupils who are Absent from school per week				
	Once	Twice	Thrice	Four times	Five times