STUDENTS’ ABSENTEEISM AND TRUANCY OF STUDENTS IN GOVERNMENT GENERAL SECONDARY SCHOOLS OF ARADA SUB-CITY.

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BY

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Declaration

I, declare that this research work entitled “Students’ Absenteeism and Truancy of Students in Government secondary Schools of Arada Sub-city”, is the outcome of my own effort and study and that all sources of materials used for the study have been duly acknowledged. I have produced it independently except for the guidance and suggestion of the research advisor. This study has not been submitted for any degree in this University or any other University. It is offered for the partial fulfillment of the degree of MA of Arts in School leadership.

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Students Absenteeism and Truancy of Students in Government Secondary  
Selected Schools of Arada Sub-city  

By  
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Approved by the board of examiners  

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Abstract

The main objective of the study was to assess the student’s absenteeism and truancy in Government general secondary schools in Arada sub city in Addis Ababa. Absenteeism and truancy are two of the major causes that are obstacles to the teaching learning process. A descriptive design was used to conduct the study. To achieve the objective, the study used a qualitative as well as quantitative research method (mixed methodology). Questionnaires, interviews and Focused Group Discussion tools were used to collect the data. Of the students that reside in the selected three schools, 200 students were selected at systematic random sampling and were provided with the questionnaires in the selected schools. And, to take part the focus group and personal interviews, from the above respondents a total of 70 people were selected using systematic random sampling method. The study used purposive sampling in selecting schools from the population to get sufficient information. The analysis of the data was conducted using mixed methods. The analysis of the first stage, filled questionnaires were analyzed by tallying and calculating the frequencies and for the second stage data was analyzed using Root Cause Analysis (RCA) techniques. And finally, comparison of quantitative and qualitative results was used. The results obtained in this research indicated that of the student respondents 85% were absent at least once and 65% were absent at least twice in the school year. The result also indicated that both students and adult respondents blame personal factors like lack of school value and school factors like unattractive school environment for the student’s absence. As a conclusion, this study has shown that the problem of absenteeism is quite prevalent in the selected schools education landscape. The study also has shown the majority of the causes for students absenteeism and truancy stem from personal causes of poor grades, lack of value towards education and the Friday mentality and the school causes of unattractive school environment, lack of proper school recreational areas and discouraging subjects. This study also suggested that majority of the causes could be followed back to their root causes that deeply lie on their personal causes and the attributable school causes. And the major recommendations of the study were to empower students first, Make the school an attractive place to learn with enough sources of recreation and to conduct additional studies with larger and comparative samples to improve knowledge on the subject matter.
CHAPTER ONE

1.1 Introduction

1.1.1 Background of the study

Absenteeism and truancy are two of the major causes that are a great detriment to the teaching learning process. And it’s no surprise that one major issue that schools are currently facing and seeing little or no improvement with is that how to effectively deal with student absenteeism and truancy. The problems, from their root, have a number of causes and the progressive follow up of the students attendance sheets, from multiple studies done, even suggests that the more the year progresses, the more likely a student is prone to subject to absenteeism and truancy (Teasley, 2004). Truancy, especially, is a multidimensional problem with far-reaching effects (Reid, 2005).

Reasons students do not attend school can be influenced by a number of factors ranging from a lack of community support and an unsupportive school environment or family to bad weather, transportation problems and poor health, lack of self-esteem, social skills and confidence, poor peer relations, lack of academic ability; special needs: lack of concentration and self-management skills, family factors such as low socioeconomic status, negative attitudes of the parents towards education, overbearing household tasks or School factors such as bullying, curriculum and poor teaching were the preponderant factors in a clear majority of cases (Reid, 2000). Especially here in government schools in Addis Ababa, the problem seems to be engrained.

When students are absent from school there are a wide range of short term educational consequences that they face. First and foremost, students miss out on assignments like home works. By missing out on assignments, they are more likely to underachieve or perform poorly in different school subjects. Students fail to do their homework even when they do attend school because their absences prohibited them from learning the lessons (Reid, 2005). The students even face serious academic difficulty and fall behind greatly in their school work (DeSocio et al., 2007). In the DeSocio et al. study, it was found that within the sample of students, “65% of students were failing six or more of their eight class periods” and their grade point averages range from 0.0 to 2.29, creating a mean of a .30 grade point average. “Non-attenders generally
fall behind their peers in academic achievement and the development of social competence” (Ford, 1996) which creates issues in having fewer friends and poor social skills (Reid, 2005). Absenteeism effects a student’s ability to pass to the next grade and the risk for students dropping out is extremely high (DeSocio et al., 2007).

In addition to the consequences of student absenteeism, there is also a range of factors which contribute to students not attending school. Cold weather and transportation problems are factors to student absenteeism that are often issues could contribute to a student not being able to leave their home, transportation issues such as the bus not coming to the home, or the car not starting; impact a student’s ability to get to school (Teasley, 2004). Health problems are identified as a major contributor to student absenteeism, whether it is the student’s health issues that are in consideration or family health issues, they prohibit students from attending school. Although students should not come to school when severely sick, often students do not attend school even if they have a small ailment although it would not prohibit the student from learning in the classroom (DeSocio et al., 2007). Other factors such as an unsupportive family environment or lack of community help contribute to absenteeism. Family factors such as “parentally condoned absence, not valuing education, domestic problems, inconsistent to inadequate parenting, and economic deprivation” (Reid, 2005) play a large role in absenteeism. Community attitudes and socio-economic factors put pressures on students which in turn do not encourage the attendance of school each day.

Ford and Sutphen (1996) suggest there are long-term consequences to student truancy such as joblessness and lowered income which have profound impacts on a student later in their life. Because of their behaviors, they are not prepared to enter the workforce and therefore will contribute to the unemployment population. In relation with the lack of preparation for adulthood, if one is jobless, one will suffer from having no income. If one was able to find a job, their lack of skills and truant behavior as a child would create hardships for them to find a good job, and therefore would have issues involving lowered income which in turn would create even more problems in supporting oneself or others (Ford and Sutphen, 1996). In addition to long-term consequences, there are legal consequences to student truancy. “Truancy is associated with sexual promiscuity, alcohol and drug use, delinquency, and dropping out of school” (Teasley, 2004). Truant individuals become involved with alcohol and drugs which lead to health issues
later in life and addiction. Along with the alcohol and drug use, these factors can contribute to sexual promiscuity at illegal ages and unprotected sexual activity for these truant individuals (DeSocio et al., 2007).

When it comes to the study area of the Arada sub city where the research is being conducted, the problem of absenteeism and truancy is so engrained that the school, Dej Belay, was forced to keep the students from going home in the mid-day for lunch. It was a necessary step as so as many of them don’t attend afternoon classes once allowed to go home. Even in the morning most of the students (80%) have at least once absent in their record. Even on those who attend, punctuality is still a problem. Many of them either attend few minutes close to entrance time of school or, in some, in 30 minutes after being late. Even in the typical normal days, number of absentees is and has been a headache for the school heads. As for the zero tolerance rule at times these schools follow, as the number of student’s absenteeism increases, student’s most likely regard the punishment as a bluff and not be guided by it.

The policy these schools follow points to the direction of strict probation to similar habits and follow up on students who are in the habit of absenteeism and truancy. The schools follow the students on the number of days they were absent and punish them accordingly. Starting from the initial follow-up to discussing with students to parents and finally probation and expulsion of frequent absentees is the path the policy follows. But to this day, the problem cannot be fully carved out. For that cause, this research will try to ascertain the causes for the absenteeism and truancy seen in three selected schools in Arada sub city in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, as well as the consequence of the problem seen from social, educational, individual perspectives.

1.1.2 Statement of the problem

The paucity of research on school practices to improve attendance and reduce absenteeism is striking because truancy is associated with several important indicators of student failure and poor adjustment to school. Studies of dropouts show that leaving school is merely the culminating act of a long withdrawal process from school (Finn, 1989; National Center for Education Statistics, 2003; Newmann, Wehlage, & Lamborn, 1992), forecast by absenteeism in the early grades (Alexander, Entwisle, & Horsey, 1997; Barrington & Hendricks, 1989; Kaplan, Peck, & Kaplan, 1995; Rumberger, 1987; Rumberger, Ghatak, Poulos, Ritter, & Dornbusch,
Other studies show that truancy is a strong predictor of alcohol, tobacco, and substance use in adolescents (Hallfors, Vevea, Iritani, Cho, Khatapoush, & Saxe, 2002). Research also indicates that students with better attendance score higher on achievement tests (Lamdin, 1996; Myers, 2000) and that schools with better rates of student attendance tend to have higher passing rates on standardized achievement tests (Ehrenberg, Ehrenberg, Rees, & Ehrenberg, 1991). Together, these studies provide convincing evidence that educators and researchers need to take seriously the issue of student absenteeism and ways to improve attendance.

Truancy and absenteeism are influenced by a variety of factors. The factors include the influence of peers, relations with teachers, the setup of the curriculum, family aspects and bullying (Reid, 2005). Truant individuals are influenced by their peers to not attend school and encourage peers to engage in activities outside of the school with them. Students that have poor or conflicting relationships with teachers will avoid school in order to avoid their teacher. Often the curriculum can be too easy or too challenging for individuals, in the latter it creates a Truancy and absenteeism highly correlate to problem behaviors such as academic failure, dropping out of school, and criminal behavior. So the most pertinent question then is: What is causing students to be truant and absent from school and what can be done to improve school attendance?

Regular attendance is an important factor in school success. Students who are chronic non-attenders receive fewer hours of instruction; they often leave education early and are more likely to become long term unemployed, homeless, caught in the poverty trap, dependent on welfare, and involved in the justice system (Epstein, J. L., & Sheldon, S. B. (2002). High rates of student absenteeism are believed to affect regular attenders as well, because teachers must accommodate non-attenders in the same class. It has been suggested that chronic absenteeism is not a cause of academic failure and departure from formal education, but rather one of many symptoms of alienation from school. Chronic absenteeism, truancy and academic failure may be evidence of a dysfunctional relationship between student and school, suggesting that schools need to be more student-centered and supportive of students with different needs. This argument is supported by research that highlights significant associations between student background factors, poor attendance, and early school leaving (Altenbaugh, et al. 1995; Bryk&Thum 1989; Fernandez &Velez 1989).
So as the problem continues to escalate, the damage it causes continues to increase as well. Interventions are there to halt the progression but even they are not without their pros and cons.

For student absenteeism and truancy, there are a number of interventions that have been implemented within the schools, families, and the community. Within the school setting, administrators have implemented interventions and incentive programs with hopes to promote student attachment to school (Ford & Sutphen, 1996). Peer tutoring has become an intervention in schools which older achieving students are trained to work with younger students who have attendance issues. “The dropout rate for students who participated in the program was one percent, whereas the comparison group rate was 12 percent” (Teasley, 2004). Teacher or administrative mentors is also an approach at intervening with students with attendance issues. Mentors provide students with opportunities for “prosocial identification.” They provide empathic support in helping to activate self-development, and they also promote experiences that contest students’ lowered academic ambitions (DeSocio et al., 2007). Students often look up to their mentors as a good role model and someone they aspire to be like. The mentor is able to overlook the student’s progress and see if there are any ways in which the student can be further helped in getting them to attend school. Mentoring has been seen to be particularly effective and works best when there is a relationship between the student and the mentor. Students feel more comfortable checking in with someone they know and can have some frame of reference to (Teasley, 2004). Within the mentoring program, students usually have a check-in and check-out type procedure. Before school starts, they would check-in with their mentor and at the end of the day they would check-out with their mentor, this provides an easy way for the mentor to know if the student is in school, and if the student stays at school the entire day. The mentor would also be able to check-in with the student regarding their school work and see how their day academically went as well (DeSocio et al., 2007).

Family interventions have also been implemented to link the family, student and school as one unit. Family-based interventions consist of home visits or telephone contact with parents encouraging parents to be more actively involved in getting their children to school. Family-based services help parents to set up fixed schedules for students to follow and help families to identify and deal with the problems that are surrounding their child’s low attendance (Ford & Sutphen, 1996).
Within family interventions, the schools are really encouraging a family-school collaboration. Within this collaboration the schools are looking for the families to support their decisions in regards to discipline for low attendance. The schools are looking for the families to work with them to figure out ways in which they can get these children to want to attend school regularly. Also within this group effort, schools are constantly in contact with the family regarding student’s attendance (Teasley, 2004).

Community and neighborhood interventions are also important to increasing student attendance. Community organizations and getting students involved outside of their home and within their community have shown to be effective in motivating students. After school community organizations are available to help students with their school work and to provide a healthy atmosphere for success. Weekend programs help students to set goals and provide Procedures to help students feel a consistency which will promote the consistency of attending school every day. Within the community there is leadership and community-based activities which give students a sense of pride and make them feel a sense of achievement for being a leader. Having a community around a student’s home that is supportive to their needs is essential, and a place near their home would most likely have the same socioeconomic and ethnic makeup which would not intimidate a student or make them feel out of place (Teasley, 2004).

A problem with family intervention is that the families simply cannot be located. It is a critical challenge to interventions because there is an inability to locate and connect with the families (DeSocio et al., 2007). Family members often give inaccurate information to where they live because they may have lost housing elsewhere and do not want their students to be kicked out of the school system for not having a permanent address. Many absences are linked to limited or inconsistent parental involvement in routines for school preparation, such as a lack of fixed bedtimes or homework times, no encouragement to get ready for school, or students are left on their own in the morning to get themselves to school (Ford &Sutphen, 1996). Problems with family interventions also arise when parents are not interested in their child’s progress at school and are unwilling to participate in interventions (Reid, 2005).
In this study, the scope is limited to three schools in the Arada sub-city schools of Dej Belay Zeleke, Bethel secondary school and Agazian secondary school. As well, the scope only focuses on the 9th and 10th grade students currently attending the schools. Also the analysis will focus on a qualitative data collected, mostly, and quantitative, is just to help improve the collection of qualitative data.

Currently, there lies a knowledge gap to the root causes problem of absenteeism and truancy in the study area. Though the effect of absenteeism and truancy in the school system are unfathomable, school’s measures to solve the problem are being faced with number of difficulties. One example, as mentioned early is Dej. Belay Zeleke’s banning of students from leaving for lunch in the mid-day because students are not coming back after they left. Even though there are strict punishments for missing class in those schools, students don’t abide by them. But as more researches like this are done, we will come steps closer to pinpointing to the major cause for their absenteeism and, with that, how to intervene to put a stop to it. Easily, “Knowing the cause is the first step to solution” says it all (Balfanz& Byrne, 2012; Gottfried, 2013)

This study tries to fill the gaps by trying to ascertain the causes for school absenteeism by identifying and analyzing key causes for student’s absenteeism in the study area. This will in-turn help the schools understand the problem causes and plan an appropriate intervention.

The researcher therefore tries to answer the following questions at the end of this study.

1. What are the major causes that make students absent in the study schools

2. What the students and other members of the school community consider the causes for the students absenteeism.

3. How those factors differ from students and other members of the school community.
Objectives of the Study

1.2.1 General Objectives

The general objective of the study is to assess the students absenteeism and truancy in Government general secondary schools in Arada sub city in Addis Ababa

1.2.2 Specific objectives

In order to achieve the general objective, the research has been tried to address the following specific objectives

1. To identify the root causes for absenteeism and truancy in the selected schools

2. To identify the difference in factors students identified from those identified by the adult community.

3. To determine the magnitude of absenteeism and truancy in the selected school communities?

1.3 Significances of the Study

School absenteeism and truancy are matters of great concern for parents, teachers and governments worldwide. The significance of this study are:-

1. As more studies are done, there will be better understanding of the cause and effects of the problem in the area. This study can better ascertain the specific causes for absenteeism and truancy seen in schools found in Arada sub city, in three specific schools.

2. The results could, potentially, be extrapolated to include similar schools in similar situations and induce further researches.

3. It could potentially allow ways to improve the school absenteeism and truancy problem by working together with students, parents and other associated school academic and non-academic personnel.
4. This study would also allow schools to check whether their current problems seen in the vicinity of their school community would apply to others and vice versa.

5. Allow schools to learn lessons, if any, to be learnt and improve the current status of their school system.

1.4 Delimitation of the study

This study is mainly focused in ascertaining the causes for the widespread absenteeism and truancy seen in the school. It will involve the student’s perspective as well as parent’s for the cause of the student’s absenteeism and truancy. This will also involve the perspective from other members of the school community, both academic and non-academic.

The study will also try to determine the effect of the issue of absenteeism and truancy in relation to different perspectives including the personal, emotional and psychological, social and economic aspects.

The result of the research is, therefore, limited to only to the selected Government general secondary schools in Arada sub city perspectives.

1.5 Limitations of the study

Some information required, to some students and parents, too personal to reveal. This goes the same for some school officials which find revealing some information a breach of confidentiality. So there may be a lapse in the flow of data so that a totally accurate information might not be received by the data collector.

So, this will potentially skew the data and give inaccurate information to the study. But, to avoid that, the researcher will always assure the respondents that the study will have no breach of confidentiality, and all the information will be anonymous. If they don’t comply, the respondents would be allowed to leave the study and in-turn be replaced by a similarly situated responder. As for the schools, the schools selected are the ones that were open to providing information and still be in the scope and other constraints, like resources, of the study. These managing methods would help in giving an accurate data.
1.6 Definition of Terms

**Absenteeism:** Absenteeism can be defined as persistent, habitual, and unexplained absence from school (Brooks, 1997, as cited in Bond, 2004).

“A period of time less than five unexcused missed school days within a 30 day period or less than 10 unexcused days within a 90 day period” (Coxe, 2000).

**Chronic student absenteeism** - Twenty-one or more absences for a student during the regular 180-day school year. (Epstein, J. L., & Sheldon, S. B. (2002). P. 32)


**High school** - Grades 9-12 (Epstein, J. L., & Sheldon, S. B. (2002). P. 27)

**Truancy:** Truancy is the absence of a student from school without the knowledge or permission of parents Cunningham (2005). The truant leaves home under the pretense of going to school but turns away and become involved in out-of-school activities. Truancy is unauthorized non-attendance. Bond (2004) included fractional truancy, which occurs when students arrive late or leave early, or spend entire days away from school.

1.7 Organization of the study

The study consists of five chapters. Chapter one consists of background of the study, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, delimitation and limitation of the study as well as definition of terms. Chapter two consists of review of related literature. The third and fourth chapters consist the methods of the study, procedure of the study, presentation and analysis of the data. Chapter five consists of summary, conclusion and recommendations.
Chapter Two

2. Review of Related literature

Researchers have formulated different evaluations of the factors that contribute to absenteeism and truancy among these pupils. Home, family, schools and the pupils themselves are issues that have been identified as the main reasons that have contributed, and have led pupils to become truants/absentees from their schools.

Specific literatures pertaining to cause, effect, and strategies to minimize with views from different authorities are mentioned below as related to specific factor.

2.1 Importance of Attendance

Government officials, teachers' groups, and individual parents all have voiced their concerns over the need to develop policies and practices to counteract the problems facing our nation's schools today such as the dropout rate, drug abuse, and declining education performance (Bernstein, 1990). Poor school attendance arouses strong feelings in teachers, parents, members of the educational support services, educational administrators, politicians, and pupils. These strong feelings are expressed in different and often contradictory ways, depending on the individual's own perspective (Galloway, 1985).

The school philosophy, in general, is one that stresses to teachers, pupils, and parents the importance of regular school attendance. This is because it is the belief that only through regular school attendance can students progress academically at a successful rate (Jett & Platt, 1979). Attendance is part of a pupil's cumulative record. It is important that good school attendance habits be established for later years when pupils seek employment (Jett & Platt, 1979). Jett and Platt conclude that attendance and its importance should be taught to students. Basic to that philosophy is the belief that poor student attendance and truancy are some of the first signs of decay of a school and school system. Therefore, it is incumbent upon educators to do all they can to promote good school attendance habits among their pupils.
Anyone who has skipped or had to repeat a grade, has been placed in or excluded from a special program, or has been denied academic credit because of absences knows the importance of local school policies. While scholarly attention has tended to focus on federal and state education policy, those who attend and work in schools realize that their lives can be affected greatly by policy made at the school and district level (Duke and Canady, 1991). Guba (1984) identifies eight distinct conceptions of policy. They include the following:

Policy is an assertion of intents or goals, Policy is the accumulated standing decisions of a governing body, by which it regulates, controls, promotes, services, and otherwise influences matters within its sphere of authority, Policy is guide to discretionary action, Policy is a strategy undertaken to solve or ameliorate a problem, Policy is sanctioned behavior, Policy is a norm of conduct characterized by consistency and regularity in some substantive action area, Policy is the output of the policy-making system, Policy is the effect of the policy-making and policy-implementing system as it is explained by the client, The researcher believes that each of the above conceptions by Guda has some value for the study of school district and school policy. Duke and Canady (1991) refer to school policy as any official action taken at the district or school level for the purpose of encouraging or requiring consistency and regularity. They further state that the definition implies intentionality on the part of those developing policy.

Pizzo (1983) refers to school policy as fitting into an ecology of public policies. In other words, where the operation of public schools is concerned, a range of policy sources can be identified. Pizzo further states that policies are derived from Congress, the Department of Education, the courts, state legislatures, intermediate agencies, school boards, and school-based personnel. To understand educational policy in the United States, it is necessary to understand each of these policymaking entities and the relationships among them.

Duke and Canady (1991) identify three reasons to study policy. First, many of the education policies likely to have a direct effect on the lives of students, parents, and teachers are local school policies. A state legislature may pass legislation concerning the allocation of resources for education, but the legislation does not become meaningful for clients, patrons, and employees until local policy decisions determine how the available resources will be utilized.
Second, schools serving similar groups of students can differ greatly in areas such as student achievement, attendance, dropped rate, teacher morale, and school climate. The third reason to study school policies according to Duke and Canady (1991) is the fact that the number of locally developed policies is likely to increase in the future. Interest in shared decision making, teacher empowerment, school-site management, and the restructuring of schools suggests that the locus of educational policymaking may be shifting.

Duke and Canady point out that ample justification exists for the systematic study of local school policy. Such study promises to shed light on school effectiveness, the process of school improvement, and local control of education. In addition, Duke and Canady state as interest in at-risk students grows, questions need to be raised regarding the extent to which local school policies enhance or impede these youngsters’ chances for success. So frequent and so complicated have problems related to student attendance become that many school systems consider them to be separate from other discipline problems. This fact may be explained, in part, by the relationship between school attendance and state aid to education and the link between attendance and a student’s constitutional right to an education. Attendance rules include those pertaining to unexcused absence from school and class, tardiness, and leaving school without permission. Since, by law, students must attend school up to the state-mandated school-leaving age, attendance-related issues for local policymakers do not concern rules so much as the consequences for absenteeism and attendance practices (Duke and Canady, 1991). In recent years, school policymakers concerned about the relationship between the time spent in school and student learning have begun to condone denying course credit and awarding failing grades for chronic absenteeism. The number of absences resulting in denial of credit or a failing grade usually ranges from 10 to 24 in a semester (Sedlak et al, 1986).

According to Eastwold (1989), the truant is likely to be a boy and to be in the eleventh or twelfth grade. The student is truant more often as the year progresses, and skips some classes more often than others. He says he skips because he dislikes the classes or considers them to be too boring to attend. However, he does not necessarily intend to drop out of school. This student may have a job, or may have been asked by parents to work at home or care for children.
Rood (1989) views absenteeism as a constant interruption of the learning process. The more absences a student accumulates, the less he or she can be expected to adequately participate in and understand classroom activities. Rood continues by stating that it is no secret that the skill levels of many high school students have declined while absenteeism continues to increase. He writes that on an average Monday, many urban high schools have an absence rate of more than 30 percent. It is common for many secondary students to miss 20 to 90 days of school in an academic year.

Rood (1989), Levanto (1975), and Hegner (1987) have identified the following characteristics of non-attenders:

- **Age** – absenteeism increases as a student progresses through high school.
- **Gender** – in the first three years of high school, girls will have higher rates of absenteeism than boys will.
- **School success** – students with higher grades and/or IQs have better attendance.
- **Program** – students in college preparatory programs are present more often than those in vocational, general, or business programs.
- **Family setting** – students from a one-parent family have poorer attendance rates than those from the more traditional family.
- **School involvement** – participants in a variety of co-curricular activities will generally be in attendance more often than will non-participants.

Eastwold (1989) indicates that some researchers believe that truancy problems can be blamed on ineffective school attendance policies. In some cases the costs in time and energy to enforce compulsory education statutes seem to outweigh the benefits. As a result schools will develop policies that devote the most energy to those students expected to have the best chance of success. Eastwold (1989) indicates that the burden of reducing truancy rates rests primarily with schools, and a message that can be drawn from the research is that schools can affect truancy rate
whenever they give high priority to effective attendance policies. Eastwold identified the most effective policies as those that have the following elements:

Expectations and outcomes are clear and well publicized Policies are followed consistently by everyone, Students are held responsible for their actions, Parents are involved.

If revision of the district/building attendance policy seems a necessary part of the solution, there is no dearth of literature dealing with the subject. School authorities generally utilize one of these types of policies: Policies that attempt to provide incentives for good attendance, policies that dispense punitive, administrative consequences, such as detentions or suspensions, Restrictive and punitive policies that penalize students academically by withholding credit or lowering grades when a number of predetermined absences is reached (Rood, 1989).

2.2 Educational motivation and Absenteeism

Previous research studies by De Leonibus (1978) suggest that student absenteeism and lack of motivation are intertwined. Educators have begun to investigate the theories of motivation in order to apply them to create policies in an attempt to reduce the problem of student absenteeism (De Leonibus, 1978).

Motivation is usually considered as being related to human needs, which in turn motivates behavior. The classical management view of motivation is based on the belief that people need money, so if the employer pays them well, they will be motivated to work hard. Conversely, those who are lazy are penalized by receiving a lower pay rate. The premise behind this theory is that a carrot (incentive of extra pay) and stick (penalty of lower pay) will motivate the worker to do the job well (Owens, 1987).

As further explained by Owens (1987), once the lowest order of needs on the hierarchy is met, a higher order need appears and the individual has a desire to satisfy that need. The hierarchy of needs as used in Maslow’s theory of motivation is as follows: basic physiological needs (food, water, shelter); security and safety; social affiliation; esteem; and self-actualization (Owens, 1987).
Ames (1990) views motivation as a process aimed at creating motivational thought patterns that contribute to self-regulating action. Students are motivated for different reasons. Motivation isn't synonymous with achievement, but a positive feeling of self-worth that is a strong motivational construct. Ames defines self-worth as an expectation or belief that one is capable of performing a specific task, organizing and carrying out required behaviors in a situation. Glasser (1990) in his work on what he deems to be the quality school has created what he refers to as the control theory. This theory is based on the belief that no one can make anyone do anything—it is the job of the manager (teacher) to make it easy for the workers (students) to see a strong connection between what they are asked to do and what they believe to be worth doing. Glasser makes an industrial analogy between school and the workplace, stating that school should be made relevant and interesting because bored workers won't produce high quality work. According to Glasser (1990), there are two different management styles; boss-management and lead-management.

Boss-management style is based on coercion and lead management on cooperative action. Effective teachers manage students without coercion. Coercion begets coercion, which turns the students into adversaries thus reducing the opportunity to motivate.

Glasser (1990) further explains his control theory by stating that all motivation comes from within oneself and not from outside. However, what happens outside has a lot to do with what one chooses to do, but the outside events don’t cause the behavior. All one gets from the outside is information.

Shanker (1990) adapted the principles of economics to the theories of student motivation. The free market theory (capitalism) and the theory of the planned or command economy (communism), according to Shanker, can be utilized in directing people toward action. Shanker further stated that school incentives are aligned incorrectly and teachers are not rewarded for improving student outcomes. The students have only one Incentive—a diploma. Shanker writes that incentives do work; they are a major motivator of the behavior of individuals and systems. School should be designed to use competition and teamwork to achieve established goals. Shanker writes just as in a free market system, this will result in a high level of production.
All of the motivational theories discussed showed the common elements of the importance of intrinsic sense of belonging and self-worth to motivation. Individuals need to feel a sense of achievement and are motivated by extrinsic acknowledgements of this achievement (Person, 1990).

2.3 Student Absenteeism theoretical categories

According to Woog (1992), three theoretical categories identify the causes or predictors of student attendance specifically are: those which identify the cause of the absenteeism with the student or his/her family characteristics, those which identify the student's social or economic environment as the causal factor, and those which examine the effect of various school characteristics as influential in the absentee rate of students.

The 1977 Educational Research Service report identifies age, IQ, achievement, religion, and cocurricular activities as associated with various rates of absenteeism. Older students, students living with one parent, students with lower IQ scores, students with lower grades, students who did not participate in school activities, and non-Jewish students all were noted to have higher absentee rates than did their counterparts. Galloway (1985) reports that frequently absent students have a fear of teachers or specific subjects. He also reports that the families of absent students were noted as scoring much higher on measurements of familial stress. Both of Gallaway's reports identified an unfavorable parental attitude toward school as a significant influence on the absence rate of their children.

Galloway's (1985) research showed excessive absentees as students whose families had experienced financial problems or whose parents experienced poor health. Galloway suggests that the poor economic condition of the family may generate a negative attitude toward school either because the family needs the student to work and contribute to the family income or because education is not perceived to be an avenue to increased economic status.

The largest factor in the average daily attendance of a school is generated from influences which occur independently of the school's organizational or attendance policy characteristics (Petzko 1990). Petzko's research concluded that student's absenteeism is related to familial or cultural
characteristics. School climate and organization characteristics of the school have also been suggested as predictive factors in student absenteeism (Woog 1992). The Education Research Services Report (1977) suggests that staff/student relationship, quality of instruction, curriculum standards, and attendance procedures may affect absenteeism. Duke and Meckel (1980) studied two California high schools and identified five organizational variables potentially related to student attendance. Duke and Meckel conclude that division of labor, micro-level decision making, rewards and sanctions, macro-level decision making, training, and selection play a large part in the cause of attendance problems at the two schools.

An investigation by Greene (1963) attempted to determine if a significant difference existed between students having favorable and unfavorable attendance records and whether absenteeism varied significantly between economically advantaged and disadvantaged school communities. A variety of assessment instruments were used to compare the top and bottom 10 percent of attendance in two economically distinct high schools. Greene found that in both schools favorable attenders earned consistently higher marks than unfavorable attenders. In the economically disadvantaged school, favorable attendance was associated reliably with high IQ scores, high socio-economic status, and parental opinion of the school. Greene concluded that absenteeism is a behavior which is individually symptomatic of an unfavorable adjustment between the learner and the educational and social environment in which he/she is functioning.

2.4 Description of Related Attendance Policies/Programs

The decisions that are made when attendance policies are formed and the administering of these policies sometimes makes the idea of compulsory attendance an expensive one (Woog, 1992). Woog further suggests that administrators are confronted frequently by differing philosophies of teachers as they try to enforce attendance policies in a consistent manner. Teachers who do not feel a need to state, review, and implement age-appropriate attendance expectations make the implementation and administration of an attendance policy difficult for administrators. Woog (1992) reports that students also will not comply with policies. Woog further reports that rewards and/or consequences used in the attendance policies can be adjusted and improved in an attempt to reduce school attendance problems.
Attendance policies address excused and unexcused absences and truancy. Numerous school district policies have a grade or course credit consequence for unexcused attendance. Academic sanctions deny the offender course credit or grade after a number of unexcused absences have been collected and deemed excessive.

Bredahl (1981) discusses the effects of a new attendance policy in a rural school of 540 students. Students earned a credit if they satisfactorily completed course requirements and if they had regular attendance. If students were absent for more than 15 days, they would not receive credit for the course. Bredahl (1981) reports that the absence rate was reduced by 30 percent. The results of the implementation showed a decrease in the failure rate and also an increase in the attendance rate. Suprina (1979) reported that there was a drastic decline in the amount of class cutting as a result of the implementation of an attendance policy that withdrew a student from a class after three unexcused absences.

Suprina (1979) discussed another policy which instituted a mandatory failing grade upon the seventh unexcused absence in a quarter. Suprina explained that parents were informed after the third, sixth, and seventh absences. Also a review board was established for appeal purposes. Suprina (1979) reports that the new policy implementation led to attendance being increased on an average of six additional school days per student, with failing students gaining an average of school days. In the fall of 1974 a West Chicago high school established attendance as a top priority in the school. Daily calls were made to parents on all absences. Disciplinary consequences were initiated towards any student who had an unverified absence. Incentives were established for good attendance, including use of a student lounge, an unscheduled class period, off-campus lunch, and early dismissal. Attendance was charted and weekly meetings were held with all personnel involved in the attendance procedures (DuFours, 1983). Attendance increased from 87 percent in 1974 to 97 percent in 1982. DuFours (1983) further reports that improvement in attendance appeared to improve climate, attitude, and achievement.

2.5 Perceptions/Attitudes of Attendance

The performance or effectiveness of parents is affected by varying family conditions, the changing structure, mobility of family and poor socio-economic circumstances. However, even
where two parents are present in the home, they may not be effective parents. The character of
the parents themselves, their family attitudes and attitudes towards their children, especially in
the exercise of parenting skills, and their attitude towards and involvement in school, especially
in support for the child, convey strong messages (Harte, 1995).

The parents' skills in the home and their attitudes towards the child in the school and towards
school in general are linked to attendance performance. Parents of students with low attendance
rates are often described as being only nominally interested in school, as rarely inquiring about
studies, as never budgeting home study time, as fearing school and as avoiding teacher-parent
interviews (Harte, 1995).

2.6 Student Attendance predictors

The causes are divided into Individual Predictors of Student Attendance, Parent and Family
Predictors of Student Attendance, School Predictors of Student Attendance and Community
Predictors of Student Attendance.

2.6.1 Individual Predictors of Student Attendance

Researchers have focused extensively on student-level predictors related to chronic absenteeism
and truancy. Predictors at the student-level relate to the student’s physical and mental health;
perceptions of school; as well as the availability of family and community resources. These
predictors offer the most direct link to student attendance whereas other predictors that will be
discussed are often mediated. Student predictors broadly include the student’s physical and
mental health as well as their perceptions of school.

2.6.1.1 Physical health

Issues related to the student’s physical and mental health appears directly related to student
attendance (Kearney, 2008). Chronic health conditions are among the most significant predictors
of student absenteeism.

Research suggests that health issues influence student attendance, as well. For example, obesity,
chronic illness, and chronic pain all appear to significantly predict higher levels of student
absenteeism (Palermo, 2000; Sato, et al., 2007). Geier and colleagues (2007) studied 1,069
fourth and sixth graders attending nine elementary schools in Philadelphia and found that students who had a higher than normal Body-Mass-Index (BMI) were more likely to miss school than students whose BMI was within normal range. They concluded that obesity was thus a significant predictor of student absenteeism after adjusting for the student’s age, race or ethnicity, and gender. Taras and Potts-Datema (2005) reviewed literature related to chronic health conditions in children and disclosed that the literature associates student attendance with diabetes, sickle cell anemia, epilepsy, among other chronic illnesses. This research builds on related work suggesting that other chronic conditions have also been attributed to increased student absenteeism, including migraines, abdominal pain, musculoskeletal pain, and juvenile rheumatoid arthritis (Chan, Piira, & Betters, 2005). Roth-Isigkeit and colleagues (2005) conducted a large-scale study of children who experienced chronic pain. They concluded that “30 to 40 percent of children and adolescents with pain reported moderate effects of their pain on school attendance” (p. 153). In addition, researchers have found that teen pregnancy (Kirby, 2002) and drug/alcohol use (Roebuck, French, & Dennis, 2004) are also significant predictors of student absenteeism.

2.6.1.2 Mental health conditions

Mental health conditions have also been attributed to student attendance. Researchers suggest that mental health conditions often manifest themselves in the form of school refusal or school avoidance behaviors (Egger, Costello, & Angold, 2003; King & Bernstein, 2001). Egger, Costello, and Angold (2003) examined the association between mental health conditions (e.g., anxiety, oppositional defiant disorder, etc.) and both school refusal and truancy. They found that school refusal was typically associated with depression and separation anxiety. Truancy tended to be associated with oppositional defiant disorder and conduct disorder. In children who exhibited a combination of school refusal and truancy, 88.2 percent of the 4,500 school aged children included in the study had a specific psychiatric disorder. A smaller study conducted by Kearney and Albano (2004), found that among 143 youths the most common psychiatric conditions associated with school refusal were separation anxiety disorder, generalized anxiety disorder, oppositional defiant disorder, and depression. The findings obtained by Kearney and Albano mirror those obtained in a smaller study conducted McShane, Walter, and Rey (2001). As Kearney (2008) noted, there is “remarkable consistency with respect to the type of diagnosis
most commonly seen in youths with problematic absenteeism, which essentially involves depression, anxiety, and disruptive behavior disorder” (p. 457).

While underlying mental health conditions contribute to school avoidance or refusal behaviors, Kearney (2008) suggested that these conditions are often overlooked. It may also be due to a lack of diagnosis for many psychiatric conditions believed to be influencers or causes of the avoidance behavior, including depression, separation anxiety, oppositional defiant disorder, conduct disorder, and substance abuse (King, Heyne, Tonge, Gullone, & Ollendick 2001; Kearney 2008). Certain other risk factors may also increase anxiety or school-refusal behavior, leading to absenteeism or truancy, such as homelessness and poverty, teenage pregnancy, school violence and victimization, school climate and connectedness, and parental involvement (Kearney 2008).

2.6.1.3 Personal attitudes

As mentioned previously, various factors constitute causes of absenteeism and truancy among pupils. Some of these factors are as a result of the pupil’s behavior, actions or inactions. These are pupil-created causes that can also contribute to truancy. A number of researchers have discussed pupil-related issues which result in absenteeism. Reid (2000, 2002), for instance, reported the characteristics of pupils who are most likely to have attendance related problems. “[They] tend to have fewer friends within their form groups; suffer less parental interest in academic school progress; receive fewer parental visits to schools (i.e. parents’ evening); have lower long term career aspirations; have higher levels of anxiety when in school and when undertaking school work; suffer from psychosomatic illness”.

2.6.1.4 Student perceptions of the school

Student perceptions of the school have also been associated with student attendance. Research strongly associates the student perceptions of the school culture and rigor of the academic program with student attendance (Balfanz, Herzog, & Mac Iver, 2007). Researchers find that students are less likely to attend school when they perceived their classes are boring or irrelevant; feel unsupported or disrespected by teachers and other school staff; feel uncomfortable or bullied by other students; or feel targeted for discipline and behavioral issues
The same research also noted that were less likely to attend school when they perceived that they had fallen behind on their school work or could not balance the competing demands of work and school (Wagstaff, et al., 2000). These factors broadly reflect the degree to which a student is engaged in their school experience. Decreased levels of student engagement have been associated with reduced attendance (Balfanz, Herzog, & Mac Iver, 2007).

2.6.2 Parent and Family Predictors of Student Attendance

Parent and family factors (i.e., whether the student resides in a single-parent household, family socioeconomic status, parental unemployment, homeownership, etc.) have also been shown to predict school attendance. Gottfried (2011) noted that it has traditionally been difficult for researchers to disassociate student and family characteristics in analyses that examine school attendance. Indeed, in his analysis of data obtained from Philadelphia, he discovered that past research may have underestimated the influence of parent and family predictors may have been under-estimated in previous research. Despite this assertion, existing research suggests that there are specific family-related factors that influence school attendance.

Taking a broader view, Reid (1999), provided a description of the characteristics of the family background of a child likely to have a school attendance problem; “one parent families; families with an above average number of children; families living in council owned housing; and families living in poor quality and/or old housing”. Additionally, Reid (2000) said; “links with truancy and non-attendance shows that families at the lower end of the social scale-the father and/or the mother are employed in unskilled (i.e. labouring, cleaning) or semi-skilled work”. Families where parents are unemployed or have irregular employment is the norm, as are families with a low income, families where there is maternal unemployment, inability to find work and families on income support. It is not only Reid who sees social-economic status as an important factor which could have a bearing on this issue. Other researchers, too, have reported the home background as an important factor (Whitney, 1994; Atkinson, 2000; Smith, 1999). In an earlier study, Tyerman (1968) argued that “home background and social circumstances were the prime reasons for truancy”. What the above literature suggests is that over the years, researchers have consistently found links between the social status of a child and school attendance.
2.6.2.1 Home environment

Another family factor which literature has reported is to do with trouble at home and the breakdown of relationships. Butler (2003) discussed some difficulties which children experience when their parents separate and divorce, including a potential impact upon attendance. It is quite understandable that children from broken homes could face various challenges/problems which in one way or another might affect school attendance.

Children, who are supported by protective services, including foster care, frequently miss more school than children who are not served by these programs. Conger and Rebeck (2001) analyzes records from 17,000 New York City children in foster care and disclosed that approximately three quarters of children placed in foster care attended school. Heilbrunn (2004) studied 30 truant students in Colorado and found that the students were frequently in the care of child protective services and had been removed from their homes. Heilbrunn (2004) also reported that informal tallies collected by the juvenile justice system revealed that truant students frequently experiences issues such as child neglect, abandonment, mental and physical health concerns, as well as previous placement in programs operated by health and human services.

2.6.2.2 Family socioeconomic status and place of residence

Research suggests that the family’s socioeconomic status wield a significant influence on the likelihood that students will attend school regularly (Crowder & South, 2003; Henry, 2007; Reid, 2005). Students who reside in urban neighborhoods are more likely to miss school and/or become chronically absent due to the myriad of factors that distract students from school (Balfanz&Letgers, 2004; Orfield&Kornhaber, 2001). Students who are homeless or reside in temporary housing are also more likely to miss school. Citing reports from the U.S. Department of Education, the National Coalition for the Homeless (2007) reported that while 87% of homeless youth are enrolled in school only 77% attend school regularly. The National Coalition for the Homeless (2007) report that children who are homeless are also more mobile than their peers making regular school attendance more difficult. They estimated that half of homeless youth change schools two or more times each academic year. Forty percent change schools at least one time. Thus, the child’s home status significantly predicts whether the child will attend regularly.
Students come from poverty which is linked to their lack of attendance at school. “Poor housing and ‘poor prenatal care’ led to higher incidence of illness among pupils from relatively poor families” (Zhang, 2003). Out of the 137 people in the study that were described as truant, thirty-three of the student’s homes were categorized as poor and seventy-four of the student’s homes were categorized as extremely poor (Zhang, 2003). Money becomes a large issue for families in poverty; there is no money for daily necessities such as food, clothing, supplies and transportation. Many of the homes are where “children are poorly clothed and tend to eat cheap, low-quality food” (Reid, 2005) In the study regarding truancy offenders in the juvenile justice system, “juveniles from lower income families were more likely to be referred because of truancy whereas those from higher income families were more likely to be referred due to other offenses” (Zhang, Katsiyannis, Barrett, & Willson, 2007). Because these families are barely making ends meet, education is not the top priority for them, and parents are therefore neglectful to their child’s best interest in education.

Socioeconomic status changes within a family can also be a variable which intervenes in increasing student attendance (Lloyd-Nesling, n.d.). Changes in parental employment can contribute to an increase in income and therefore help to pay for schooling needs. In addition to schooling needs, payment for daily necessities can be met such as meals, utilities, clothing, and transportation factors. Daycare issues are no longer a problem. There would be money to pay someone to watch the children while the parents are at work. Students would no longer have to stay at home and watch their siblings rather than attending school (Lloyd-Nesling, n.d).

Students that contribute to their family’s income or have tasks within the home often come before school attendance. Students identified that household labor affected school attendance and children had to miss school for that reason (Postiglione, Jiao, & Gyatso, 2006). Also, the task of caring for siblings within the home prohibits students from attending school. “Significantly more boys than girls were attending school suggest the possibility that the girls were needed to care for their siblings and to help with the day-to-day maintenance of their families” (Timberlake & Sabatino, 1994). In relation to student’s taking care of their siblings, this becomes the case when parents are unable to afford daycare for their younger children.
2.6.2.3 Composition and involvement of the family

Past research has suggested that family characteristics such as the number of parents in household and parental practices all influence student attendance, as well. For example, students from single-parent families are more likely to miss school than students from two-parent families (Finlay, 2006). Parents who are actively involved in their child’s school experience and monitor their child’s participation in school – these behaviors include talking with their child about school, checking homework, and participating in school-based parent organizations. Sixty-four percent of students who responded to the 2009 High School Survey of Student Engagement indicated that they attended school because of their parent or guardian (Yazzi-Mintz, 2009). However, it bears noting that the existing research also suggests that parental “over-involvement” can be detrimental to student attendance (Corville-Smith, Ryan, Adams, & Dalicandro, 1998). Corville-Smith and her colleagues (1998) found that students who perceive their parents as controlling were less likely to attend school than those who perceived their parents as supportive.

2.6.2.4 Placement in protective services

Children who are supported by protective services, including foster care, frequently miss more school than children who are not served by these programs. Conger and Rebeck (2001) analyzes records from 17,000 New York City children in foster care and disclosed that approximately three-quarters of children placed in foster care attended school. Heilbrunn (2004) studied 30 truant students in Colorado and found that the students were frequently in the care of child protective services and had been removed from their homes. Heilbrunn (2004) also reported that informal tallies collected by the juvenile justice system revealed that truant students frequently experiences issues such as child neglect, abandonment, mental and physical health concerns, as well as previous placement in programs operated by health and human services.

2.6.2.5 Family or Guardian attitude towards school

For some families, a student’s attendance at school is not nearly as important as a child’s physical health. A child’s early physical health and development set the stage for their health later in life. Parents of children who have attendance problems believe that health related
appointments precede school attendance. “Parents felt it was more acceptable to use school time for doctor’s appointments than for dentists’ appointments” (Reid, 2005). The parents of students with attendance problems also believe that keeping their children away from school for family holidays, health related appointments along with any illness, come before school attendance (Reid, 2005). Schools are constantly being effected by germs and viruses which impact students overall health and well-being. Seventy percent of the days of absence from school were accounted for by medical and non-medical reasons such as, respiratory infections, abdominal pain, headache, medical examinations, helping at home, family events, and excursions (Bendel, Halfon, Ever-Hadani, 1976).

Within households, parents do not see education and learning as a priority within their family values. Students who have parents that attended universities have lower absenteeism rates and are less likely to intend to leave school early. The term ‘parental education unknown’ and ‘social class unknown’ have similar negative effects which indicate lower performance and commitment to school among students (Smyth, 1999). “Significantly more Hispanic than white or African-American children were attending school, suggests that their mothers particularly valued schooling opportunities for their children and that the availability of bilingual educational support services may have facilitated their school attendance” (Timberlake & Sabatino, 1994).

Being part of a family is more important, and families staying together through hardships such as homelessness are essential. Timberlake & Sabatino (1994) suggest older children who do not attend school were experiencing homelessness more often and for longer periods of time than those who attended school. School and other educational services may not be available, acceptable, or accessible to homeless families (Timberlake & Sabatino, 1994).

### 2.6.3 School Predictors of Student Attendance

Researchers have also evaluated whether school-level factors influence student attendance. Research suggests that a variety of school-level factors influence student attendance. The factors relate to the culture and climate of the school; the condition of the school facility, particularly the school’s ventilation system; as well as the rigor and relevance of the school’s instructional program (Barnham, 2004; Lauchlan, 2003; Schendell, et al., 2004; Simons, Hwang, Fitzgerald, Kielb, & Lin, 2010). These factors shape student perceptions of the school environment and thus
shape the desirability they feel to attend school. Moreover, the physical condition of the school impacts student health and thus influences whether the child feels well enough to attend school.

It appears that school factors are the most common cause which contribute to absenteeism, irrespective of the pupil’s family and other related backgrounds. As has been shown in a numbers of research studies, school factors were considered to be the predominant factor from pupils/parents’ points of views. Malcolm (2003) observed that school factors represented the largest group of reasons given for missing school, “problems with lessons; problems with teachers; not wanting to get into trouble; being bullied; peer pressure and social isolation”. Malcolm concluded that parents believed that school-related factors were the cause of pupils’ poor attendance. Additionally, Reid (1985) reported that school-based factors such as bullying, curriculum and poor teaching were the preponderant factors in a clear majority of cases. Reid (1999) again indicated that a higher proportion of truants and persistent absentees than the normal school–age population tended to manifest certain attitude towards their schools. Additionally, Reid (2003), geographical, economic and stages of schoolings are all important factors in relation to the school-linked causes of absenteeism.

Malcolm (2003) identified parents’ and pupils’ stress school-related factors as being the main causes. Malcolm further noted that many persistent truants reported that they were bored with school. In addition, they were more easily able to play truant when taught by supply teachers. A further study by Kinder & Wilkin (1998) explored the views of parents of truanting children. The parents blamed school-based factors such as peer pressure, bullying, boredom with school, relationships with teachers and lack of school discipline for their children absences. Kinder & Wilkin (1998) went further in saying that parents believe their children misbehave and play truant because they are bored and that the National Curriculum is failing to address their needs.

2.6.3.1 School culture, climate, and safety

The culture and climate of the school, particularly as it relates to teacher-student relationships and more broadly to issues of student safety, has been associated with student absenteeism. The likelihood that a student will not attend school increases when students feel unsafe or threatened by the school community. Stewart (2008), drawing upon National Educational Longitudinal Survey (NELS) data, disclosed that student outcomes were related to the student’s sense of
belongingness or connection to the community. Similarly, Rumberger and Palardy (2005) reported that students who perceived that their school was unsafe had higher rates of attribution. In particular, students who experience bullying and victimization by peers or their teachers tend to miss more school than peers who do not experience these conditions (Glew, Fan, Katon, Rivara, & Kernic, 2005). Dinkes, Kemp, and Baum (2009) reported that seven percent of students age 12 to 18 who participated in the 2007 National Crime Victimization Survey reported that they “avoided school activities or one or more places in school because they thought someone might attack or harm them” (p. 56). The same survey revealed that “approximately five percent of students ages 12-18 reported that they were afraid of attack or harm at school, compared with three percent of students who reported that they were afraid of attack or harm away from school” (p. 54). The prevalence of fear and avoidance among students appeared greatest among middle school students and high school freshman and sophomores (Dinkes, et al., 2009). These are also the grade levels which research suggests are most likely to predict student absenteeism, truancy, and high school dropout (Balfanz & Byrne, 2012; Gottfried, 2013).

If, however, cooperation between teachers and pupils is lacking then that will have a negative impact on pupils’ attendance. Smyth (1999) discovered that pupils who report more positive interaction with teachers tend to do better in exams and are less likely to be absent or show a tendency to drop out.

Bullying appears to be a significant predictor of student absenteeism and, at the high school level, a significant predictor for students who ultimately drop out of school. Recent research indicates that bullying (including adversarial relationships with education professionals) is now widely recognized as a significant factor in student academic performance and student attendance as manifest through school avoidance behaviors (Kearney, 2008; Roberts, Zang, Truman, & Snyder, 2012; Swearer, Espelage, Vaillancourt, & Hymel, 2010).

2.6.3.2 Nature of the academic program

The academic program also influences whether students attend school. There is a growing body of research that suggests that school culture influences student learning, engagement, and achievement (Cohen, McCabe, Michelli, & Pickeral, 2009). Researchers note that disengagement can lead to a significant increase in ‘deviant behavior’ – including truancy (Appleton,
Klem and Connell (2004) noted that “Students who perceive teachers as creating a caring, well-structured learning environment in which expectations are high, clear, and fair are more likely to report engagement in school” (p. 270). Higher-levels of student engagement reduce the risk of students missing school or dropping out of school (Appleton, et al., 2008). This perception can be achieved through lower student-to-teacher ratios (Catalano, Oesterle, Fleming, & Hawkins, 2004) as well as other school-based programs (i.e., Check and Connect) that increase student-teacher contact through mentoring (Sinclair, Christenson, Lehr, & Anderson, 2003).

2.6.3.3 Condition of the school facility

Researchers have also associated the conditions of the school facility, particularly the school’s ventilation system, with student attendance. Poor ventilation systems introduce students – particularly those with respiratory health challenges including asthma – to conditions that promote chronic illness (Shendell, et al., 2004). In one study that examined indoor CO2 concentrations in traditional and portable classrooms, Shendell and colleagues (2004) disclosed that student attendance in portable classrooms was 2 percent lower than students who attended class in traditional classroom settings. More broadly, Branham (2004) analyzed data for 226 schools in the Houston Independent School District using a Tobit analysis, he determined that students were less likely to attend schools that were in need of structural repairs, used temporary structures (i.e., portables), and had understaffed janitorial services (presumably impacting the cleanliness of the school facility). Studies using similar data have not been conducted nor have the results of Branham’s (2004) analysis been replicated in other settings.

2.6.4 Community Predictors of Student Attendance

Community characteristics and resources can also influence student attendance; however, these factors have received less attention in the literature. Conceptual discussions provide hypotheses that community-based characteristics potentially mitigate the benefits of school-based reforms and academic interventions that could contribute to improved student attendance (Berliner, 2006). While not directly associated with student attendance, these conditions might influence whether students attend school. Recent empirical analysis suggests that neighborhood attributes shed light on student attendance patterns. Gottfried (2013) suggests that poverty, family
structure, homeownership status, and race all influence student attendance. Drawing on data obtained from the Philadelphia School District, Gottfried (2013) found that “neighbor measures of poverty, family, [home] ownership, and race do significantly predict changes in student absences” (p. 19). Further, his analysis revealed that neighborhood poverty and student attendance were related to one another. Students in neighborhoods with higher socioeconomic status attend school more regularly (consistently) than students who reside in neighborhoods with lower socioeconomic status. Gottfried also found that these neighborhood factors had greater power to predict student absences when focused exclusive on unexcused absences. This matches previous research that suggest that families who reside in lower socioeconomic status community are less likely to attend school (Chapman, 2003; Crowder & South, 2003; Henry, 2007; Reid, 2005). Further, students who reside in urban neighborhoods are more likely to miss school and/or become chronically absent (Balfanz&Letgers, 2004; Orfield&Kornhaber, 2001).

2.7 Truancy predictors and outcomes

Truancy, commonly defined as a student’s unlawful absence from school without parental knowledge or consent, has been identified as a serious social issue in need of increased attention for many years (Bazemore et al., 2004; Bell et al., 1994; Henry & Huizinga, 2007a; Milliken, 2007; Zhang et al., 2007). With many educational school districts reporting rather staggering truancy rates, truancy has been broadly characterized as a nationwide problem with serious individual- and family-level consequences as well societal adverse impacts (Cimmarusti et al., 1984; Ensminger&Slusarcick, 1992; Hersov& Berg, 1980; Rumberger, 1987). Short and long term impacts of truancy for the truant student, for the schools and school districts losing students, and for the community within which truancy occurs have been identified. Considerable research has been done on the topic, examining such things as the characteristics of the typical truant, school-based predictors of truancy, and community-based correlates of truancy. Such research has informed our understanding of the link between truancy and delinquency, and has helped shape most traditional responses to the truancy problem. However, many limitations to traditional truancy response measures have been identified, and various innovative policies and practices have been proposed and implemented in the effort to reduce truancy and school dropout rates across the country.
In addition to the proposal and implementation of some innovative policies and practices, culturally competent programmatic strategies have been developed to respond to the problem of truancy taking place among the rapidly growing racial and ethnic minority K-12 student population across the country (Bailey & Dziko, 2008; Contreras & Striktikus, 2008; Hune et al., 2008; The People, 2008; Takeuchi & Hune, 2008). It has been widely noted that a substantial proportion of this growing racial and ethnic minority student population in our nation’s schools faces complex challenges attributable to disproportionate exposure to adverse childhood experiences that require a sophisticated response in order for this subpopulation of school-aged youth to experience positive educational outcomes and achieve academic success. Educational researchers examining this growing student population have utilized the developing research on primary and secondary education in general, and truancy behavior specifically, to recommend and implement culturally competent programmatic strategies in the effort to promote greater educational success among racial and ethnic minority K-12 students (Bailey & Dziko, 2008; Contreras & Striktikus, 2008; Hune et al., 2008; The People, 2008; Takeuchi & Hune, 2008).

2.8 Characteristics of the Truant Student

Empirical research on the topic of truancy has documented numerous characteristics associated with truant students. While some characteristics have been identified that have been unique to a particular research study and to a particular subpopulation of students, generalized patterns of association have been reported related to the gender, the age, the socioeconomic status and the race and ethnicity of students (Eastwood, 1989).

Gender. Empirical studies uniformly report higher truancy rates for males than females, but females are twice as likely as males to be absent with parental consent. Female truants are said to demonstrate lower anti-social behavior than truant males, while truant males tend to perceive the school experience more negatively than truant females, a factor thought to contribute to the higher rates of male truancy observed in virtually every extant study available for review (Bell et al., 1994; Cairns et al., 1989; Caldas, 1993; Eastwood, 1989; Ensminger & Slusarcick, 1992; Farrington, 1980; Galloway, 1982; Sommer, 1985a).
Age. Empirical studies examining truancy characteristics based on age reveal that as student age increases, there is a concurrent increase in student school avoidance behavior, with the upper grades in high school exhibiting the highest rates of truancy for both males and females (Bell et al., 1994; Cairns et al., 1989; Caldas, 1993; Eastwood, 1989; Ensminger & Slusarcick, 1992; Farrington, 1980; Galloway, 1982; Sommer, 1985a).

Socio-economic status. Examining truancy characteristics based on socio-economic status reveals that truant students tend to come from economically disadvantaged home situations. It is well established as well that single-parent households are another important family setting variable of consequence (Eastwood, 1989; Tittle & Meier, 1990).

Race. Racial and ethnic minority students have higher reported truancy rates than white students in virtually every study published. It is undetermined, however, whether this phenomenon is the result of higher levels of surveillance of racial and ethnic minorities by educational and juvenile justice systems, or a consequence of the fact that a higher proportion of racial and ethnic minorities come from economically disadvantaged environments (Bell et al., 1994; Cairns et al., 1989; Caldas, 1993; Eastwood, 1989; Ensminger & Slusarcick, 1992; Farrington, 1980; Galloway, 1982; Sampson & Wilson, 1994; Sommer, 1985a; Svec, 1986; Welsch et al., 1999). In the analysis of the problem of differential truancy rates of African American, Latino, Pacific Islander and Native American as compared to whites in Washington, the authors of studies (authorized and funded by the Washington State Legislature) identify the problem of inadequate cultural competence among school staff as an important contributing factor to the long-observed differential rates of truancy and dropouts in the state (Bailey & Dziko, 2008; Hune & Takeuchi, 2008; Takeuchi and Hune, 2008; Contreras & Stritikus, 2008; and The People, 2008).

Based in part upon the evidence of the predictive value of the characteristics noted above, many researchers studying truancy postulate that truancy risk factors for any particular area can be identified through appropriate research, and the empirical findings from such research would allow school administrators and teaching staff to anticipate which students are most likely to exhibit truancy-behaviors. Armed with such knowledge, dutiful educators could take appropriate, targeted intervention steps and provide focused prevention services (Bell et al., 1994; Cairns et
2.9 Predictors of Truancy Behavior

The utility of identifying empirically-based predictors of truancy behavior derives from the likelihood that truancy behaviors do not begin the first day a student is absent from class, but rather that such school avoidance behavior tends to develop early on in a chronically truant student’s school career (Pasternak, 1986). Students who are defined as chronically truant late in their academic tenure often exhibit recognizable characteristics early on, starting as early as primary school. Predictors of truancy can be detected through student observation within or outside of the school setting, through observing or having knowledge of a student’s family life, or having familiarity of the community within which the student resides or attends school (see Table 1). Being knowledgeable of predictors of truancy behavior allows school administrators and teaching staff to identify at-risk students early for truancy prevention and behavioral intervention. Such early prevention and intervention efforts are essential to prevent poor school attendance from leading to poor school performance, as well prevent the adoption of more severe poor attendance behaviors that can be difficult to alter, possibly resulting in early school withdrawal (Pasternak, 1986).

2.10 Correlates and Causes of Truancy

Hypothesized correlates of truancy behavior are typically grouped into four separate categories with respect to student-specific variables, school-specific factors, family-specific setting characteristics, and community-specific influences (Alexander et al., 1997; Astone&McLanahan, 1994; Baker, 2001a, 2001b; Bell et al., 1994; Bimler& Kirkland, 2001; Corville-Smith et al., 1998; Epstein & Sheldon, 2002; Ford &Sutphen, 1996; Galloway, 1980, 1982, 1985; Henderson &Mapp, 2002; Henry, 2007; Henry & Huizinga, 2007a; Jenkins, 1995; Kearney, 2008; Little & Thompson, 1983; MacDonald & Marsh, 2004; Oman et al, 2002; Reid, 2005; Teasley, 2004; Wandersman& Nation, 1998). Consequently, in addressing truancy behavior interventions and prevention programs were directed principally towards one or another of these areas. Since the 1980s, the longstanding view that the truancy problem lies within one single domain (i.e., the schools) has been broadly challenged, and new assertions have been made in many forums that
such simplistic thinking places severe constraints on understanding the complex way in which truancy behaviors develop, ultimately impeding the ability of either schools or juvenile justice systems to address the problem of school avoidance effectively (George, 2011).

It is now widely understood that the truancy problem is most typically multi-dimensional in nature, with many possible contributing factors coming into play (Barth, 1984; Dekalb, 1999; George, 2011). Correlates of truancy are now known to be numerous and diverse, and truancy is now broadly believed to seldom result from the effects of one single factor alone (Pasternak, 1986; Rumberger, 1987). Truancy exists within a context of inter-action effects, including interactions between the traits of the student, the experienced school setting, the family support structure, and the broader community setting (e.g., presence of gangs, access to drugs, availability of sports and recreational programs, extent of police focus upon youth delinquency and crime, etc.) -- with each relationship being influenced by the others (Cimmarusti et al., 1984; Caldas, 1993; Cooper, 1984; Dekalb, 1999; Levine, 1984).

Currently, the four familiar categories of truancy correlates are identified as particularly salient; those factors include a range of student, school, family, and community-level factors (Baker, 2001a, 2001b; Bos et al., 1990; Brown, 1983; Cairns et al., 1989; Caldas, 1993; Harding, 1996). Each of these factors are reciprocal in nature, with considerable overlap obtaining between and among variables, with a combination of factors (an “interactive syndrome” in medical parlance) best explaining the occurrence of truancy (Bell et al., 1994; McClusky et al., 2004; see Table 2).

2.11 Outcomes of Truancy

Existing research indicates that truancy poses significant short and long term challenges for the school-avoiding student, and likewise poses difficult problems for the truant student’s school, family, and community (Bazemore et al., 2004; Dekalb, 1999; George, 2011; Henry, 2007; Robins & Ratcliff, 1978; Smink&Heilbrunn, 2005; Teasley, 2004; Zhang et al., 2007). The truant behavior often serves as an indicator of deeper problems (Baker, 2001a, 2001b; Corville-Smith, 1995). Today, individuals working with truant students tend to embrace (either directly or indirectly) the idea that truancy has far-reaching implications with severe consequences for both childhood and adult outcomes, as well as for society as a whole (Bazemore et al., 2004; Garry,
Individual-specific outcomes. Individual-specific consequences of truancy are both immediate and long-term. The most obvious immediate result of truancy is educational, with chronically truant students reported to suffer serious to severe academic deficits (Baker et al., 2001a, 2001b; Bell et al., 1994; Bonikowske, 1987; Bridgeland et al., 2006; Caldas, 1993; Garry, 1996; Lamdin, 1996; Loeber & Farrington, 2000; Kandel et al., 1984; Reid, 1984; Sheldon, 2007; Sheldon & Epstein, 2004; Teasley, 2004; Wehlage & Rutter, 1986). Such educational failure most often culminates in poor future employment outcomes, with chronically truant students experiencing employment-related difficulties such as lower status occupations, less stable career patterns, higher unemployment rates, and low earnings as adults (Baker, 2001a, 2001b; Bell et al., 1994; Colorado Foundation for Families, 2002; Elizondo et al., 2003; Ensminger & Slusarcick, 1992; Farrington, 1980; Farrington, 1986; Garry, 1996; Hallfors et al., 2002; Hibbett et al., 1990; Rumberger, 1987; Sum et al., 2003). Chronically truant students also experience future relational difficulties, including those formed in early parenthood; they tend to produce a greater number of dependents, engage in early marriage, and experience more frequent marital breakdown as adults (Baker, 2001a, 2001b; Bell et al., 1994; Corville-Smith, 1995; Garry, 1996; Hibbett & Fogelman, 1990; Kandel et al., 1984; Robins & Ratcliff, 1980; Sum et al., 2003).

Poor health status is also documented as a negative adult outcome of early chronic truancy. Such individuals are said to be more likely to suffer from poor mental health, from substance abuse issues, as well as pose increased personal injury risk (Baker, 2001a, 2001b; Bazemore et al., 2004; Bell et al., 1994; Corville-Smith, 1995; Garry, 1996; Hibbett & Fogelman, 1990; Rumberger, 1987). Finally, engagement in deviant and anti-social activities has been reported as an immediate result of early truancy behavior, with long term effects believed to include adult criminal activity (Baker, 2001a, 2001b; Barth, 1984; Bazemore et al., 2004; Bell et al., 1994; Corville-Smith, 1995; Farrington, 1980; Garry, 1996; Robins & Ratcliff, 1980).
School-specific outcomes. Truancy has a direct impact on educational institutions, with school-specific consequences of truancy behavior being largely revenue-based (Barth, 1984; Bell et al., 1994; Corville-Smith, 1995; Personal and Career Development Services, California State Department of Education, 1983). The most serious consequence of truancy for school districts is lost revenue; school funding is typically allocated based on daily attendance rates (Bell et al., 1994; Personal and Career Development Services, California State Department of Education, 1983). With less revenue, school districts have a reduced capacity to meet the educational needs of their students through educational services and programs, a situation that impacts all enrolled students regardless of their attendance behavior (Bell et al., 1994).

In addition to the revenue-based consequences of truancy, school administrators, teachers and staff also report that truancy behavior often results in major disruptions to the educational process (Barth, 1984; Corville-Smith, 1995). Whether these disruptions are caused by having to devote considerable amounts of time and effort to locating truant students and contacting parents/guardians, or from helping truant students to catch up or keep up with their school work, such disruptions are reported to be not only financially costly, but also burdensome in terms of the loss of educational progress toward learning goals and objectives (Barth, 1984; Corville-Smith, 1995).

Family-specific outcomes. Truancy behavior generally impacts family life quite negatively. This impact can take the form of family conflict with educational or social services providers, or stress among family members resulting from lost work or a lack of supervision for the truant student when not in school (Barth, 1984).

Community-specific outcomes. For communities, the effects of truancy can be economic, political, and social in nature (Personal and Career Development Services, California State Department of Education, 1983). Long-term outcomes of truancy for communities that are commonly cited include forgone income and tax revenues that can support government services, communities with members who place increased demands on the community’s social services programs, communities with an increase in crime rates, and members of the community who have reduced levels of political participation, reduced intergenerational mobility, and poor levels
of health (Barth, 1984; Bazemore et al., 2004; Catterall, 1987; Garry, 1996; Rumberger, 1987; Personal and Career Development Services, California State Department of Education, 1983).

2.12 The School Leaders’ Role in Addressing Student Absenteeism

Throughout history, school leaders have often responded to student attendance and truancy issues by blaming students (Epstein & Sheldon, 2002; Hartnett, 2007). Schools have blamed students rather than seeking to understand their individual needs and those factors which may be driving their absenteeism. Consequently, one researcher suggested there is a need “to intervene in the causes of absenteeism beyond normative and reactive practices that end up generating more absenteeism” (García-Gracia, 2008, p. 276). Further, the researcher suggested schools identify and address any internal risk factors within the school which may lead to student absenteeism. This means schools must be willing and prepared to respond to any internal risk factors and to make change, as deemed necessary, in the best interest of students.

Researchers have suggested school leaders take a more supportive approach to addressing student absenteeism (Epstein & Sheldon, 2002). This would require school leaders to embrace the complex task of exploring their role in promoting student absence by evaluating their current attendance practices and policies (García-Gracia, 2008; Hartnett, 2007; Wilkins, 2008). Essentially, in studying their role, school leaders would need to identify and take ownership of their actions related to student attendance, whether positive or negative. School leaders would need to recognize and respond to the positives and negatives related to their actions with the intent of improving the system.

Multiple researchers suggested school leaders take a comprehensive approach to addressing student absenteeism alongside students, parents, educators, and community members (Dube&Orpinas, 2009; Eaton et al., 2008; Epstein & Sheldon, 2002; García-Gracia, 2008). Researchers have suggested school leaders work hand-in-hand with those most greatly impacted by student absenteeism. In particular the students and families impacted by student absenteeism.
Hartnett (2007) suggested school leaders get personal with other stakeholders to change the culture of non-attendance (p. 40). One study in particular pointed to the “benefits of going outside the school, of involving others, of understanding more fully the whole experience of the child” (Cullingford & Morrison, 1999, p. 257). The authors suggested there is a need to understand individuals – students and their parents. In doing so, this involves establishing, building, and maintaining relationships. Taking a comprehensive approach would require school leaders to look beyond the walls of the school by establishing and committing to a strong two way communication system with students and their families (Epstein & Sheldon, 2002).

More than one study suggested school leaders must take into account student voice when addressing attendance problems (Hartnett, 2007; Reid, 2008a). This means school leaders must actively engage in reflective conversation with students to gain an understanding of their perspectives related to student absenteeism. As they build this understanding, school leaders must be prepared to work with students to improve student attendance. “Making affective change means getting down to the personal, relationship level and addressing the cultural beliefs and practices” (Hartnett, 2007, p. 40) with students.

Giving voice to students would likely assist in further connecting them to their learning and to the school, in turn improving their attendance. Reid (2008a) suggested student voice is one of ten key variables to improving student behavior and attendance despite the fact some schools are reluctant to seek student input. By accessing student voice, school leaders will be able to better understand the perceptions, language, and thought processes of students regarding their attendance and school practices and policies (Hartnett, 2007, p.40). By involving students in the process of addressing student absenteeism, school leaders have the potential to achieve more effective results.

2.13 Implications of Student Absenteeism

Simply stated, “children who are excessively absent from school are at risk for various negative health and social problems” (Dube & Orpinas, 2009, p. 87). Similarly, “students who are absent from school for any reason, whether with or without permission, are more likely to engage in health risk behaviors than students who have no absences” (Eaton et al., 2008, p. 226). Such problems have included drug and alcohol use, risky sexual behavior, teenage pregnancy, suicide
attempt, and violent acts (Dube & Orpinas, 2009; Eaton et al., 2008; Henry, 2007; Kearney, 2008). Researchers have described all of these problems as presenting, in and of themselves, with potential challenges related to non-attendance in schools and beyond.

Additionally, research has suggested a high level of absenteeism places students at risk for permanent dropout from school (Attwood & Croll, 2006; Dube & Orpinas, 2009). Permanent dropout from school closes the door to a multitude of academic and social opportunities that cannot be replicated in other settings. Permanent dropout from school can lead to more significant problems later in adulthood, including unemployment, economic deprivation, marital difficulties, and in some cases incarceration (Dube & Orpinas, 2009; Epstein & Sheldon, 2002; Henry, 2007; Kearney, 2008; Wilkins, 2008). Overtime, unemployment and economic deprivation, if not resolved, can lead to transiency, poverty, and homelessness. These factors can cause a great deal of stress on all individuals within a family, resulting in a family’s inability to stay together. In extreme cases, permanent dropout from school can lead to behaviors resulting in incarceration.
CHAPTER THREE

3. Research Design and Methodology

This chapter deals with the methods of study source of data population and sampling procedures, instruments of data collection and their justification and methods of data analysis.

3.1 Research Design and Method

This study used a qualitative as well as quantitative research method (mixed methodology). A qualitative research design was chosen to discover and better understand the students’ points of view in regard to truancy. Qualitative research was defined by Denzin and Lincoln (2003, p. 46) as “the use of a set procedures that are simultaneously open-ended and rigorous and that do justice to the complexity of the social setting under study.” Maxwell (2005) described qualitative research as an ongoing process of going back and forth reviewing different components and assessing for goals, theories, questions, and methods. On the other hand, quantitative research is usually based on measurable quantities of how much or how many. It stems from logical empiricism, usually from a positivism philosophy, using large random representative samples, and statistical methods (Cowan, 2007; Merriam, 1998). In contrast, qualitative research helps to understand and explain the meaning of a social reality in its natural setting (Merriam, 1998). So, quantitative approach was adopted in order to allow the researcher to gather more precise and quantifiable information on the causes of absenteeism.

The research followed a mixed research methodology. Mixed research is a general type of research (it’s one of the three paradigms) in which quantitative and qualitative methods, techniques, or other paradigm characteristics are mixed in one overall study.

This study follows a mixed model research as the use of questionnaires for survey is employed for stage one and then used to structure interviews of the second stage.

The mixed model research was chosen for the broad purposes of breadth and depth of understanding and corroboration of the cause and extent of absenteeism. By using mixed methods, the researcher will be able to see the problem from different angles and with the help of
different data sources and methods, the researcher will be able to produce a more comprehensive result.

This qualitative case study did not test a theory or conduct an experiment, but instead gained understanding of the participants’ experiences from their perspectives. Merriam (1998) described this as an emic approach, in other words, understanding reality from the participant’s own perspective as a key characteristic distinctive in qualitative research.

Specifically, document analysis and in-depth interviews were mainly employed. Individual interviews carried out with students and selected members of the school community. To get different views and responses, the researcher also informed to participants who have different backgrounds. The study also utilized focus group interviews to ascertain the opinion of different members of the community regarding the root causes of student absenteeism and truancy within community. Questionnaires were also implemented to further elaborate and further improve the study course.

3.2 Sources of Data

As a population study, sources in the study included both primary and secondary sources:

1. The primary sources include

   - Parents/ Community
   - Pupils
   - Teachers
   - Directors, PTA’s
   - Sub-city/ Woreda and education personnel

2. The secondary sources include Documents such as:-

   - School attendance sheets
   - School curriculum
- Student’s Grade sheets

- Other related written documents

3.3 Populations and Sampling Procedures

The study was conducted in three selected schools by purposive sampling system among government secondary schools located in Arada sub city in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: Dej. Belay Zeleke Secondary school, Bethelhem Secondary school, Agazian No. 3 Secondary School. The schools consist of: Agazian No. 3, 618 students in both 9th and 10th grade (Females – 335) with 48 teachers, Bethlehem, 1115 students in both 9th and 10th grade (Females – 683) with 64 teachers, Dej Belay 805 students in both 9th and 10th grade (Females- 444) with 46 teachers. The school community is a large sample space to be taken as whole. So instead, for the questionnaires, including every category of participant from the study included a total of 250 people. Among the above number of students 200 students were selected at random and were provided with the questionnaires. In accordance with the views of Dillman (2000) and Hill et al. (2003), who reported that a sample size of 100 and above is sufficient to present good concise research findings and also, provide good representation of the population or organization or any subject investigated. To take part the focus group and personal interviews, from the above respondents a total of 70 people were taken using random sampling method.

The study followed a cross-sectional study design to understand the status of the extent of absenteeism and truancy in the selected study group. The cross-sectional research is a research approach in which the researchers investigate the state of affairs in a population at a certain point in time (Bethlehem, 1999). Instead of using a census or a complete enumeration to get information in the target population, in practice, the researchers collect data on only a small part of the population to get information about the sampled elements of the population as a whole. Very often, the elements in the sample survey are selected at random to make inference about the population as a whole.
The schools are selected in the vicinity as they are mostly composed of high-school students (students who are more prone to be absent or truant) have frequent absentees and they readily give their information to publicize to a research.

The student selection involved a stratified sampling to allow every group will have a representative within the study. The students to be selected were mostly include frequent absentees and truants that are 9th and 10th grade students. The researcher explored each student’s academic cumulative file to gather historical information about the student’s academically, primarily focusing on when the student started to develop attendance issues, what the causes were, and whether services were offered. Then, the researcher interviewed students with higher rates of absents to gain additional understanding of the student’s perceptions and the construction of his or her reality.

As for the teachers and other academic personnel, a stratified sampling was also implemented to allow each group of individuals have a representative within the study. Teachers from each subject in each school were interviewed to assess the nature of the problem in his/her class as well as from a general perspective and the solution to the problem. For the academic personnel, based on consent, at least included the academic committee members from each school. Furthermore, for those located outside the academic committee, one up to two per position, based on availability and type of position, per school were chosen for interview.

3.5 Tools

3.5.1 Questionnaires

Questionnaire is one of the tools which used to collect data and the questions are self-constructed. The questionnaire employs the typical form of fixed-response alternative questions that require the respondent to select from a predetermined set of answers to every question. According to Malhotra and Birks (2003, pp. 224), this survey approach is the most common method of primary data collection in marketing research and the advantages are simple administration and data consistency.

The questionnaire employs the Likert scaling technique. It is a widely used rating scale which requires the respondents to indicate a degree of agreement or disagreement with each of a series
of statements or questions (Albaum, 1997). This rating scale is easy to construct and administer and respondents readily understand how to use the scale (Malhotra and Birks, 2003, pp. 305). In the questionnaires, there are 5 choices where answers could be given that give an attitude and response for that question.

The questionnaire has two sections: section A and section B. Section A contains questions about demography (School name, Grade Level, sex, Number of classes missed), And Section B contains questions about the causes of absenteeism and truancy by dividing them to 5 causes of absence (Recreational, Familial, School, Peer and personal causes) and each topic division having 4 to 14 question items below it. Since the study focused on factors which caused for students absentism and which cause affects most and which affects least, it is better to use rating scale. The questions are a total of 48 and the answers are “agree completely”, “agree”, “No opinion”, “don’t agree” and “don’t agree at all”. The questionnaire is constructed in both Amharic and English. Open ended questions were left out as interviews will be provided to ascertain the opinions freely. To develop the items in the questionnaire, the review of related literature was used to get understands, characteristics and patterns of student absenteeism and truancy. The items are reviewed and improved based on the findings of the pilot study. The key items include reasons for absenteeism viewed from family, school and personal and recreational sides. In the questionnaire, it will hold key items like addiction cause for absenteeism, personal problems, boredom, family work-load, attitude towards school community and the school as a whole, peer pressure and bullying.

Pilot test was conducted using 30 questionnaires to identify and eliminate potential problems associated with question content, wording and format. Based on the feedback received from pretest participants, few changes were made on the questionnaire before it was administered to the sample.

3.5.2 Interviews and focus group discussions

In seeking a very complete response, interviews and focus groups are most likely to provide the Depth of information that might be useful. Focus groups and interviews are also the best methods to resolve seemingly conflicting information, because the researcher has the direct opportunity to ask about the apparent conflict.
When interested in determining the relative emphasis on an issue, that is, how strongly someone holds an opinion; both questionnaire and interviews permit the researcher to ask for emphasis. The researcher might directly ask someone how strongly they feel, or might ask them to prioritize issues or assign weights to different issues.

Similar to the questionnaires the interview was conducted not only for parents, teachers and directors but also PTA’s and Sub-city/ Woreda and education personnel will include key items like the main reason for students’ absenteeism and truancy, its possible solution and from where the solution should come but unlike the questionnaires, it’s more elaborate and will allow us to find other causes that don’t fit the common pattern. The medium of the interview was Amharic and English.

3.6 Data Collection Procedure

For the initial phase of collecting data, a simple random sampling was used and the questionnaires were administered to the students. 60 questionnaires were given to each grades of the three selected secondary having a total of 360 questionnaires. The questionnaires were given randomly to the students found in that grade level of that school and subsequently collected.

In addition to the above procedure, using the semi structured interview questions, based on their school absence, the top absenteeism from each grade and each school were selected and interviewed and their opinions collected to be analyzed.

3.6.1 Data Collection from Adult Group (parents, teachers and woreda experts)

Focus group interviews were carried out in which the researcher led the group discussion from each school community in a discussion on the causes of absenteeism. This technique allowed for data to be collected from a mixed group of persons (teachers, principals, community members, etc.) with different views of the causes of absenteeism. This approach allowed the researcher not only to learn about the range of views but also allowed participants to explain the reasoning behind their views.
Focus group interviews were organized in each of the three selected schools. The members of focus group participants within each school did not exceed 12 participants. In order to simplify the recruitment process, the focus group discussions took place on the grounds of the schools, which were easily accessible by the relevant community members. Therefore, location of participants near their homes or workplace was very critical in the research design.

3.6.2 Data Collection from Students

All three selected schools were participated in students’ focus group interviews. The aim of these interviews was to ascertain students’ views on the factors influencing student absenteeism.

Purposive sampling was used to select the students who would participate in the interviews; the students were identified by the schools’ administration as having very low attendance rates. The students who participated in the focus groups ranged between the ages of 14 and 18. Most of these students were in Grades 10 but around 30% were of grade 9. Each focus group had 8 to 10 students participating in the interviews.

3.6.3 Developing Interview Schedules

The research assistants carried out interviews using semi-structured interview schedules that were developed to ascertain participants’ views on the major causes of student absenteeism at the secondary level. Once the questionnaires were collected, the data was used to identify the thought to be “key causes” for student’s absenteeism and truancy in this setting. Though an interview schedule was used as a guide in the focus group interviews, the researcher asked additional probing questions to elicit additional information in the case of incomplete or vague answers. There were two sets of interview schedules: one for adults and one for students. The interviews are presented in the language the participants used during the focus group sessions, that is, Amharic.

3.7 Data Analysis Techniques

A mixed methods approach was used to analyze the focus group data. The study was divided into stages in which the first stage involves analyzing the filled questionnaires of the students to identify the major root causes of absenteeism and truancy in this particular setting. The first stage analysis will involve tallying the data and ranking them based on their frequency their so as to
identify the major causes and to construct a semi structured questioning method for the second stage of the data collection and analysis which involves student interviews and focus group discussions to have a better understanding of the causes. Then once the stage 2 data is collected, the data will be analyzed using Root Cause Analysis (RCA) techniques. The concurrent strategy of quantifying qualitative data was utilized in analyzing the data. Therefore, selected statistical techniques were used to analyze and identify the root causes of student absenteeism at the primary educational level. The quantification of qualitative data enabled the comparison of quantitative and qualitative results.

Root cause is the —deepest underlying cause or causes, of positive or negative symptoms within any process that, if dissolved, would result in the elimination, or substantial reduction, of the symptom (Preuss, 2003, p. 3). RCA is a problem-solving process that seeks to locate the ultimate cause or 80/20 rule, known as the Pareto Principle, behind students’ absenteeism at the primary level. The 80/20 rule means that in nearly all cases, a few (20%) are vital and many (80%) are trivial (The Pareto Principle, 2008). The Pareto Diagram will be used to determine which characteristics are the major contributors in a process. The diagram will be constructed by ranking the data according to frequency of occurrence and plotting the bars in descending order.

The data analysis procedure was carried out as follows:

1. All the factors identified in the focus groups were listed.

2. A frequency of occurrence table for each factor was developed.

3. The Pareto Principle was applied to identify the vital causes of absenteeism.

4. Content analysis of the responses from focus group interviews and questionnaires resulted in the identification of four key factors.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

The verbal consent of individuals will be sought before any interview took place. In regard to the pupil participants, their parents’ permission as well as their own will be secured beforehand. The participants’ right to withdraw from the interview at any time, and their confidentiality will be mentioned before the actual interviews are carried out.
CHAPTER FOUR

Data analysis and Interpretation

4.1 Respondents information

The students selected for the interview were identified by the schools’ administration were having very low attendance rates. The number of respondents in their age ranged between the ages of 14 and 18. Most of these students were in Grades 10 but around 30 % were of grade 9. Each focus group had 8 to 10 students participating in the interviews. Purposive sampling was used in the selection of participants associated with the schools’ administration and work environment (principals, chairman, and teachers), while convenience sampling was used for selecting the parents who were members of the school community. Of the 3 adult focus groups, it consisted of at-least two teachers ( On Dej Belay 4 teachers and on Bethel 3 teachers), two higher official like vice director and a principal and the rest were parents or other community members. A total of 360 questionnaires were provided and a total of 290 usable questionnaires were collected. Table 1 provides descriptive statistics of the respondents.

School Profiles:

The schools: Agazian No. 3, is located around merkato, GojamBerenda. And servers the educational needs of the nearby areas especially those residing around Merkato area. It has 618 students in both 9th and 10th grade (Females – 335) with 48 teachers. The school is one of the government funded schools and the students come mostly from middle and low income families and because the students come from an area where trade active area, students usually try to avoid school to either sell goods with their family because of either financial constraint or lack of value placed by the parents towards the education and spending time on selling goods; and the depth of their absenteeism correlates to this fact

Bethlehem, 1115 students in both 9th and 10th grade (Females – 683) with 64 teachers. This school is located around the center of the city of Addis around piassa 3rd police station and the students come from mainly yeka, arada, as well as GulleleKefleketema. This school is also funded by the government and follows the government educational policy regarding the school
management system and in addition, the students enrolled there are known to be frequently absent.

Dej Belay Zeleke, 805 students in both 9th and 10th grade (Females- 444) with 46 teachers. The school is located around sadist kilo around 70 dereja and the students come from the areas of Gullele, Yeka and aradakifle Ketema. This school is also government funded and follows the government educational policy regarding the school management system. The school, compared to the others, has a better rate of attendance because of the lack of distractions (like pool houses and bars and other addictive places) around the school area but a problem of attendance is seen in general.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1: General information of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Variables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grade</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the Table indicated above, the profile of the respondents was more or less diverse with a majority of (60.3 %) male and the remaining (39.65%) female. The grade level was also evenly distributed with a (50%) both in grade 9 and grade 10 students. Regarding schools, it was also evenly distributed with (31%) at Agazian (34.5%) at both Bethel and Dej Belay.
4.2 Extent of absenteeism and truancy

On this item, most of the respondents (65%) reported that they had missed at least 2 classes in the school year and (85 %) at least once. On a follow up item that sought to establish the degree of absenteeism the statistics were recorded in Table 2.

Table 2. Number of days the respondents were absent in the school year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of absent per day</th>
<th>Number of students from 9th and 10th grade</th>
<th>Number of students absent from Bethlehem School</th>
<th>Number of students absent from Agazian School</th>
<th>Number of students absent from Dej Belay Zeleke School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Once</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twice</td>
<td>155</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thrice</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four times</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Five times</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Six times</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seven times</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than seven times</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The Table shows the frequency of students absenteeism based on the number of days that the students were absent. On the Table, we can see that, comparatively students absent in the schools is very high in number especially Agazian school. From this table it became abundantly clear that the problem of student absenteeism was a critical issue at the schools in which the study was conducted. This, in some way could be a major reason why students’ general performance and thought rate is very low.
4.3 Analysis of student questionnaire responses

One of the specific objectives for this study is finding the major cause for absenteeism and truancy.

Various statements on the reasons why students absented themselves from classes were presented to respondents in order for them to indicate the extent to which they agreed or disagreed with them.

Table 3: Responses for Recreational causes for school absence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Causes for school absence</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>disagree</th>
<th>agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Recreational Causes for school absence</td>
<td>41.21</td>
<td>26.98</td>
<td>10.09</td>
<td>11.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I would instead spend my time recreating in my house than going to school</td>
<td>56.90</td>
<td>25.17</td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td>9.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Entertaining myself the whole day gets rid of my boredom and stress</td>
<td>23.45</td>
<td>24.14</td>
<td>17.93</td>
<td>17.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Going to my recreation place instead of school is more enjoyable for me</td>
<td>46.55</td>
<td>28.97</td>
<td>7.59</td>
<td>11.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>There are enticing recreational centers or items that keep from going to school.</td>
<td>37.93</td>
<td>29.66</td>
<td>11.03</td>
<td>9.31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Recreational causes for school absenteeism took one of the lowest percentages for the reasons for school absence along with familial causes. It took a total of 21.9 %, and of the recreational causes, the use of recreation to get rid of boredom or stress took the highest percentage with 35.97%. And spending time home for recreation took the lowest with 13.1%.
Table 4: Responses for Familial causes for school absence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>II</th>
<th>Familial Causes from school absence</th>
<th>52.43</th>
<th>24.40</th>
<th>8.03</th>
<th>8.81</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>My family is not home to know whether I go to school or not</td>
<td>54.48</td>
<td>25.86</td>
<td>6.90</td>
<td>5.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>There is quarrelling at home that stresses me</td>
<td>52.41</td>
<td>25.52</td>
<td>7.24</td>
<td>5.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>My family doesn’t want me to go to school</td>
<td>58.97</td>
<td>26.55</td>
<td>4.48</td>
<td>4.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>My family doesn’t care whether I go to school or don’t</td>
<td>58.62</td>
<td>24.48</td>
<td>7.93</td>
<td>6.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>My family care for another sibling or person in the house more than me</td>
<td>45.86</td>
<td>26.55</td>
<td>6.21</td>
<td>11.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>My family separation or divorce doesn’t encourage me to go to school</td>
<td>50.34</td>
<td>22.07</td>
<td>10.34</td>
<td>10.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Work load in the house forces me to stay at home</td>
<td>50.69</td>
<td>25.17</td>
<td>8.28</td>
<td>6.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>My family would rather have me work than go to school</td>
<td>55.52</td>
<td>25.86</td>
<td>5.86</td>
<td>9.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>I am a source of income for my family so that I can’t always attend school</td>
<td>54.83</td>
<td>23.45</td>
<td>6.90</td>
<td>15.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>I don’t have aid from home on my school work</td>
<td>43.25</td>
<td>22.49</td>
<td>11.07</td>
<td>12.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>I have no financial support from home which prevents me from properly attending school</td>
<td>51.72</td>
<td>20.34</td>
<td>13.10</td>
<td>9.66</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The familial causes took one of the lowest percentages for student’s absenteeism with a total percentage of 16.84%. The highest of the causes, not getting aid for the school work took the highest percentage with 23.14%. Whilst family not wanting to go to school took the lowest with 4.62%.

Table 5: Responses for Community causes for school absence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>III</th>
<th>Community Causes of absenteeism</th>
<th>46.29</th>
<th>24.74</th>
<th>12.33</th>
<th>10.17</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>There are people who threaten or bully me on my way to school</td>
<td>55.17</td>
<td>21.38</td>
<td>6.90</td>
<td>8.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>There are not a lot of people who don’t go to school who have influence on me not to go to school</td>
<td>45.17</td>
<td>26.55</td>
<td>11.72</td>
<td>11.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>There are abundant recreational areas in my community</td>
<td>35.52</td>
<td>27.93</td>
<td>18.28</td>
<td>7.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>My community attitude towards attending school is negative</td>
<td>49.31</td>
<td>23.10</td>
<td>12.41</td>
<td>13.79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Community causes also placed less gravity with a percentage of 22.5%. The highest was 26.2%, Negative attitude of community towards education. And the lowest cause being bullying on the way to school with 15.18%.
### Table 6: Responses for School causes for school absence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IV</th>
<th>School causes for absenteeism</th>
<th>35.02</th>
<th>26.45</th>
<th>17.93</th>
<th>17.24</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>The table and chair are not comfortable which are not incentive for attending</td>
<td>45.52</td>
<td>23.45</td>
<td>10.69</td>
<td>21.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>The classroom is not welcoming to attend</td>
<td>43.10</td>
<td>20.69</td>
<td>13.79</td>
<td>15.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>There are students who disturb me that keep from attending regularly</td>
<td>24.83</td>
<td>27.59</td>
<td>19.31</td>
<td>15.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>There are not enough teaching materials in school which in not welcoming to attend</td>
<td>37.24</td>
<td>25.52</td>
<td>15.17</td>
<td>13.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>I have a quarrel with my teacher or teachers that prevents from attending regularly</td>
<td>37.24</td>
<td>25.17</td>
<td>11.38</td>
<td>18.62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>The teaching style of my teachers is not welcoming</td>
<td>33.79</td>
<td>24.48</td>
<td>21.38</td>
<td>21.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>The school’s rules for following up absentees is not that strict</td>
<td>27.59</td>
<td>27.59</td>
<td>20.00</td>
<td>30.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>The school’s rules for punishing absentees is not that strict</td>
<td>22.41</td>
<td>23.10</td>
<td>24.14</td>
<td>21.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>The school’s recreational areas does not enjoy me that much</td>
<td>19.66</td>
<td>15.52</td>
<td>25.45</td>
<td>21.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>The school’s environment is not a welcoming place</td>
<td>26.55</td>
<td>23.45</td>
<td>20.00</td>
<td>18.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>The school does not have enough teaching materials</td>
<td>28.97</td>
<td>24.48</td>
<td>14.48</td>
<td>13.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>Being absent from school is common in the school setup</td>
<td>22.76</td>
<td>23.79</td>
<td>23.79</td>
<td>10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>There are people who bully me inside school</td>
<td>42.76</td>
<td>28.62</td>
<td>8.28</td>
<td>18.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>I don’t feel like to going to school on Fridays</td>
<td>29.66</td>
<td>27.93</td>
<td>20.69</td>
<td>21.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>There are people who discriminate or stress me inside school</td>
<td>48.28</td>
<td>28.97</td>
<td>4.48</td>
<td>7.59</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

School causes for absenteeism was one of the highest causes for absenteeism 31.03%. With 46.48% Taking lack of enjoyment of school recreational areas and the lowest taking Students discriminated and stress students inside school with 12.07%.
Table 7: Responses for School pupil causes for school absence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>School pupils factors</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
<td>Students laugh when I answer questions</td>
<td>48.08</td>
<td>22.30</td>
<td>6.27</td>
<td>12.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>My friends call me to enjoy myself in school hours</td>
<td>56.90</td>
<td>23.79</td>
<td>5.17</td>
<td>13.45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>People laugh and ridicule me when I go to school</td>
<td>53.45</td>
<td>21.38</td>
<td>8.97</td>
<td>24.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>It is below my friends to attend school which lessens my attitude toward attending school</td>
<td>48.28</td>
<td>23.10</td>
<td>6.90</td>
<td>14.14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

School pupil factors were also not high on the percentage with 16.14%. The highest was being ridiculed and laughed at when they go to school with 33.45% and lowest being 18.34% in student laughing when they answer questions.

Table 8: Responses for Personal causes for school absence

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Personal causes for absenteeism</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>I go to school just because someone else forces me</td>
<td>51.03</td>
<td>21.38</td>
<td>8.97</td>
<td>19.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>I don’t like my school results which have a negative influence on me</td>
<td>26.21</td>
<td>22.41</td>
<td>18.28</td>
<td>21.38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>I don’t care about my school work</td>
<td>55.52</td>
<td>18.62</td>
<td>7.24</td>
<td>23.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>There are some subjects I don’t like that discourage me from attending</td>
<td>26.90</td>
<td>23.45</td>
<td>21.03</td>
<td>11.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>I don’t like reading and that discourages me from attending</td>
<td>38.62</td>
<td>24.83</td>
<td>10.69</td>
<td>17.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44</td>
<td>I don’t like attending on teachers who are strict or have a negative attitude</td>
<td>40.34</td>
<td>21.72</td>
<td>11.72</td>
<td>15.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>I don’t wake up early to go to school</td>
<td>38.97</td>
<td>21.38</td>
<td>14.83</td>
<td>23.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46</td>
<td>I have an illness that prevents me from attending school at one time or another</td>
<td>51.03</td>
<td>20.00</td>
<td>12.07</td>
<td>11.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>I like to stay home even when I have a small illness</td>
<td>47.42</td>
<td>21.65</td>
<td>8.25</td>
<td>17.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48</td>
<td>I have personal stress that prevents me from going</td>
<td>45.86</td>
<td>22.41</td>
<td>8.62</td>
<td>15.17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The personal causes were also one of the highest with 33.89%. The highest was 37.93% in not waking up early to go to school and not liking reading not to go to school with 27.18%.
The above Table shows that lack of enjoyment of the schools recreational areas takes the highest percentage with 66.59 %, followed by lack of strict rule the school has on punishing absentees (54.46%), the negative influence the school results have on students (52.68 %), discouraging subjects that have a negative influence on students attendance (51.72 %), the Friday mentality (not wanting to go on Fridays (51.37 %), and lack of appeal to the school’s environment were among the top reasons for students absenteeism and truancy.

And based on causes, school causes take the highest percentage with 35.17 %, followed by personal cause for absenteeism (33.89 %).

4.3 Analysis of Interviews

The following key causal factors have been identified from interviews: parental factors, school factors, student factors, and community factors. Responses from the focus group interviews with the students were categorized using one of these factors. Each key causal factor was broken down into subsidiary factors. The causal factors and relevant subsidiary factors in that emerged from the data are as outlined below: Parental factors: financial constraints, parent’s negligence towards student’s attendance, parents’ lack of control of their children and poor attitude on the value of education. Student factors: poor value towards education, student indiscipline, Non-critical activities on Fridays at the schools, and poor grades Community factors: poor attitude towards education and poor transportation. School factors: unattractive school environment, lack of recreational area in school, lack of strict punishment for absentees, discouraging subjects.

The Pareto Principle states that most effects, often 80%, stem from 20% of causes. A healthy approach to Root Cause Analysis, therefore, is to attack these 20% issues, often labelled as —the vital few. The main purpose of the Pareto chart is to display this skewed distribution graphically. The chart (see Figure 1) shows the causes of a problem sorted by their degree of seriousness, expressed as a frequency of occurrence. The X axis represents the causes and the Y axis to the left represents frequency of occurrence of these causes, while the Y axis to the right gives the Pareto principle, which is the cumulative percentage.
The Pareto chart separates the vital few from the useful many (see Figure 1); 18 causes of student absenteeism (table 9) cover 81% of the total frequency of occurrence of the 53 causes of student absenteeism. The 10 top causes of absenteeism out of the 18 vital few were selected for presentation in Table 10 (from figure 1).

**Table 9: Interviewees identified causes of absenteeism- useful 18 causes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Causes of absenteeism</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of strict school rule</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little or no value placed on education</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“Friday mentality” that students don’t have to go to school on Fridays</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor students grades</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial constraints (high unemployment rate): influence ability to find bus fare and lunch money</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of parental control</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of proper recreational areas in school</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer pressure</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unattractive school environment</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students have to stay home and take care of siblings</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of community value towards education</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of aid in school work</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harassment and bullying</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of welcoming teaching ability of teachers</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common culture of being absent in school</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not waking up early</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quarrel with teachers</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncomfortable tables and chairs</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Based on the focus group interviews, interviewees at approximately all 3 schools (75%) complained that the lack of strict school rule caused students to forgo their education and become frequent absentees and truants. The schools habit of sending off students with warnings has made students more daring to break the school’s rules. This accompanied by the student’s lack of value for their education makes the issue a far reaching problem.

Table 10: Ten Top Causes of Absenteeism & Decoding X–Axis in Figure 1 Codes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ten Top Causes of Absenteeism &amp; Decoding X–Axis in Figures 1 Codes</th>
<th>Causes of Absenteeism</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Lack of strict school rule</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Little or no value placed on education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>“Friday mentality” that students don’t have to go to school on Fridays</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Poor students grades</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Financial constraints (high unemployment rate): influence ability to find bus fare and lunch money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Lack of parental control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Lack of proper recreational areas in school</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Peer pressure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Unattractive school environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Students have to stay home and take care of siblings</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The idea of not placing education as top priority. This is clearly supported in the data as there was recurring evidence of parents keeping their children home on Thursdays and Fridays as well as student’s attitude that reflect that of their parents. The lack of value for education is further compounded by the young age of some parents in the community or the ones that follow old traditions.
Student absenteeism needs to be recognized as a symptom of something that is affecting a student's life. When a school is developing strategies for eliminating absenteeism and improving attendance it is very important to have a detailed understanding of the different causal factors affecting absenteeism in the school. The following key causal factors have been identified: parental factors, school factors, student factors, and community factors.

All 65 responses from the adults’ interviews were categorized using one of these factors. There are at least five subsidiary factors for each key causal factor.

4.4 Main Factors identified based on interviews and questionnaires

4.4.1 Parental factors

Parental factors are those issues that impact on student absenteeism which are within the control of the parents. Also, society holds the parents responsible for providing sufficient finances, discipline, and education for their children. According to the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child (1959),—the best interests of the child shall be the guiding principle of those responsible for his education and guidance; that responsibility lies in the first place with his parents (Principle 7). Parents who lack financial resources cannot provide for their children’s basic educational needs. The recurring theme in the interviews with children was the lack of financial resources on the part of parents/guardians.

Some recurrent indicators of financial constraints were: lack of money for transportation, lack of money for lunch. The responses indicated that lack of money caused them to miss school as they cannot afford other modes of transportation other than the bus.

One interview revealed that for those students who live outside walking distance have great trouble in punctually attending school. Other interviewees mentioned that the cost ranges from 1.35 to 8 birr which is a great amount of money for a low income family.

Based on student’s questionnaires and student interviews, it was evident that the issue of money was not on the top of their list but still was mentioned as a factor for poor attendance rate. The number one issue on this topic comes from those who are in need of transportation for commuting from school to home. Those students mention that they needed 2.5 birr to 8 birr for a
round trip. “The busses fill up so fast and so early and I cannot afford to go with a taxi” And those asked if walking was an option “I can walk to school if I wake up early but the problem lies on returning home after being tired on a whole day of school” But the benefit here, student’s say “the schools go easy on us when they realize the reason for our absenteeism is financial causes, at least in the first few cases”

On the other hand, Adult interviewees, especially parents put financial cause as a cause to be dealt with. Most of them have a point of view that “even when we give them money, they end up wasting it on some game or any other wasteful habit because they don’t care if they have enough money to go to school.... All the more reason to be absent” From this we can deduce that even though financial constraints hinder some students from attending regularly, some don’t have the interest to put their money towards ways that benefits them in their school work.

But on the other face of things, there were several instances when parents lacked control over their children’s behavior, to the extent that a student from Dej Belay confessed that watching TV on Thursdays resulted in him being absent from school on a Friday because he was too tired to get up. Another student from Bethel indicated a similar problem of oversleeping in the morning as the reason for being absent from school the following day.

The lack of control of their children is a subset to the fact that, for some, it is stemmed on their poor attitude towards education. Based on the responses, it was apparent that those whose parents have poor attitude towards education, their children also became frequent absentees and truants.

**4.4.2 Student factors**

Student factors are incidents within the students’ control. For example, truancy is the decision of the child to stay from school without parental knowledge or consent. Illness is also a student factor since it is mainly the student who complains of being sick.

Several students admitted to truancy. These students refer to truancy as —SkullingSchool; they are sent to school by their parents or guardians but they do not attend, they detour on their way to school. The students gave the following reasons for —skilling school:
Table 11: School factors for absenteeism mentioned by students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason for absence</th>
<th>frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discouraged of poor grades</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t like school</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friday is not a school day</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Go to accompany a friend outside school</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play money football</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note that discouragement by poor grades has the highest percentage among the student factors. It was mentioned that these students have discouragement by their low achievements and have an increasing rate of absenteeism based on the fact that they don’t have encouragement from their grade to go on.

From the student and adult interviews, it was apparent that students low grades gives them a tendency to be absent from school and school work. It also made them to question the value of education as their grades diminished to the lower end. Several students responded that their grades don’t seem to improve and that made them hate school as a whole and caused them to be absent more frequently than the other half of the group.

On both the interviews of the adult groups and the students even in the questionnaires, mention that poor grades have quite a negative connotation to the value of school. Almost all of the data sources suggest that students whose grades, does not improve tend to lose morale and their attitude towards school.

Even though, most students on the poor grades don’t strive to improve their grades, but they mention that having a bad grade like that makes them give up on the whole idea of attending school regularly.

On the questionnaires, poor student grades on student’s absenteeism just merely placed third with 52.62%. And on the interviews, it was repeatedly mentioned that students, especially those with poor grades, along with their peers tend to be more prone to missing school days or even miss classes on those subjects. And once that happens, it’s a slippery slide that gets exponentially
hard as time goes on. This effect was better elaborated by the adult groups as “once the student goes down that road of missing class because of his/her grades, they tend to fall behind on school work which puts them further down on their grades which in turn causes them to miss more classes.

A Literature also suggests that a relationship exists between attendance and student achievement (Applegate, 2003; Gamble, 2004; Zamudio, 2004). Ziegler (1972) attempted to define student attendance and investigated the importance of student attendance and its relationship to student achievement. He concluded that student attendance is related to student achievement in reading and math. In this study a relationship was found between student attendance and math. Redick and Nicoll (1990) concluded in their study that students who attend school regularly have higher grades than those students with high absences, which support earlier research. This implies that there is a cyclic nature to student’s absenteeism and grades. This means that having poor grades could be a cause for absenteeism and absenteeism could be a cause for poor grades.

From the responses, the poor grades could be attributed to lack of motivation, poor learning environment, dislike of school, having no aspirations, poor family educational background, inadequate learning materials, age and large classes. According to Lotz&Lee, (1999); students’ negative self-image and low self-esteem are reasons for non-attendance which supports the findings. But all in all, the student results of their subjects tend to be one of the major cause for students absenteeism and truancy.

On the other hand the distaste to education altogether makes students to miss school work and become frequent absentees and truants. On several occasions students mention that they generally have poor attitude towards their education. The students felt an aversion to even the school compound and made reason not to be in school. Other students returned home or went somewhere else after reaching the school area. One student responded that, he sometimes felt he had a better place to be and left after reaching the school area.

Lack of interest in education was also ranked fifth on questionnaires and one of the top reasons (2nd) on the adult interviews and fourth on the student interviews. The respondents urged that students with unexcused absenteeism have no interest in being at school since their parents also do support.
In an interview with an official from one of the schools, he explains that; “There are families who do not value education and they enjoy staying with their children together at home regardless of their behavior. Some parents don’t ask their children why they are absent from school even if they have attended in the month or what upcoming events are at the school. They just don’t want to be involved in the scenarios of having to deal with their child’s education. And taking this advantage, the student becomes a frequent absentee.” In a similar interview at Bethel, another Female teacher that; “The problem is not only to the clan/family but it is hereditary, some students even turn back from school even after reaching the school area. And they just don’t even turn back by themselves but take at least one of their peers along with them.” Contributing to the same debate, the director from the Dej Belay Zeleke added that parents do not focus on long term vision but they tell their children that, “My role is to give you education, other things it is up to you.” That is why even the learners are not focused because they do not know why they are at school. For instance, some parents find the solution of dealing with the stubborn child as taking him/her to school; and as a result the child will be at school with no goal but thinking of the holidays. This finding is in agreement with that of Balfanz& Byrnes, (2012) which states that, students choose not to attend, either because they or their parents or guardian do not see the value in school.

Most adult group interviews implied the same as the afore mentioned factors but they also contributed the lack of interest to not only personal and family attitudes but also the availability of replacements that cause distractions to the education. One parent stated “As long as that God forsaken TV is there and he has a few recreational areas, my child doesn’t want even want to hear the word school.” And though, yes, lack of interest towards education could stem from several factors but the point still remains that it’s still a major cause for student’s absenteeism.

The other culprit in the personal factors was the Friday mentality culprit. Many students as well as many parents feel and say that Friday is not a school day and don’t see the value of going on Fridays. Students reported that they found Friday school either boring or teachers gave too much schoolwork. Students from Bethel complained that they were given too much work on a Friday. Students from all 3 schools complained that Friday was a day of play. In two of the focus groups, 6 out of 10 students indicated that they were absent regularly on a Friday (12 out of a total of 20
students). One student from Dej Belay Zeleke explained that his aunt refused to send him to Friday school because she did not perceive the activities as valuable.

The Friday reason for staying at home or not going to school is a trait that is seen in many school communities. Students crave for an additional day filled with recreation other than their weekends.

One student for Agazian responded that “Not lot goes on Fridays, and teachers usually use the day to give homework for the weekends not for actual teaching” Implying that students don’t feel obliged to attend classes on Fridays. Even parents show the same trait in that the students show. One student from Bethel gave the comment “My aunt makes me stay home because not a lot happens on Fridays and she has no extra money to send me to school on Fridays” This implies that even parents and other adults don’t see the value of attending classes on Fridays as the other days.

4.4.3 Community factors

Community factors are resources that are the responsibility of the local government to make accessible to every member living within a community and on the other face of things, these are factors which have influence for the communities’ members; such factors are outside of the control of the parent, child, and school. These lack of transportation and poor attitude towards the value of education.

Several of the students who participated in the focus groups lived within walking distance of the schools. In two schools mixed transportation modes were also dominant for students; but for those who does not have the luxury of taking other modes of transportation becomes a difficult subject.

Many students mention that there are not enough busses for them to freely commute. As other Ethiopian citizens the burden of transportation hits students too. Waiting in line for busses and standing in a tightly filled bus as they cannot afford other modes of transportation is a common complaint for many students. “It’s a challenge” says one student “It makes me don’t want to go when I remember that I have to go in those kind of situations”
But for most of the interviewees, the community’s attitude towards education has a great influence on the attendance of students. One student from Belay Zeleke mentions: “after a couple of times, staying with my friends who hang out outside school becomes enticing”

4.4.4 School factors

Lack of reactional areas within the school was the number one cause the students place with regard to their absenteeism and truancy. Most students have the idea that the school does not have enough of a compound to be a good enough recreational area for all of the students. One student responded, “Sometimes, yes, I miss classes when I want to go to play soccer because there isn’t a big field to do it in the school compound. I just don’t seem to say no when my friends call me and ask me if I wanted to play soccer with them.”

Even the parent interviewees mention that the lack of recreational areas have a negative influence on the students attendance by mentioning that “yes, I would consider missing class if I had to stay the whole day sitting even during breaks”

On the questionnaires, lack of proper recreational areas was put as the number one cause for student’s absenteeism and truancy. And though it was number seven cause for absenteeism in the face of adult interviewees, it was still number one cause in the face of the student interviewees.

Base on the students responses, the school’s small sized fields compared to the number of students has made it so as students cannot enjoy themselves during break hours. One student form Dej Belay Zeleke commented “The school compound is barely enough for 9th graders let alone 10th, the field can only play two teams against each other and the rest of us end up sitting and talking the whole break.” Another student responded that “even for sitting and talking, there aren’t enough shades outside to allow us to have conversations outside. Most of the time, we stay inside the classrooms the whole day”

The adult interviewees also blame the lack of proper recreational areas as the cause for students absenteeism but to a lesser extent to the students perspectives. The adults responded that “even though the lack of recreational areas plays a role here, the main culprit lies on the fact that students don’t want to learn” Even so, the fact that the school compound causes them to be
hateful of school and causes them to be absent, in one way or another, it should be dealt with. Otherwise, the aversion could cause them more absentees.

The other mentioned factor is that the schools lack of a strict disciplinary measure casues the students to become frequent absentees. An opinion by a student from Bethel seems to be the attitude that most students feel when they are absent from class. “I know I will be called into the unit leader’s office but since for most student it’s just warnings and conversations with you and maybe your parents till you are an extreme offender; other than that you can get away with small school missing offences”

The adult interviewees also mention the school’s loose punishment trends have made students to disregard school guidelines and become absentees. And most of them mention that since punishment ‘does not stick’, they can get away with small offences.

More than 60 % of the interviewees agree that a strict school punishment could hinder the rate of absenteeism and truancy that is seen in schools. Even in the filled questionnaires, it was evident that it attributed to the second cause for students absenteeism and truancy.

“Though some of this could be attributed to the student’s indiscipline but it should not be a difficult task for a school to enforce its rules regarding the subject” was a typical response among the adult interviewees. Even the student interviewees mention that “because the school’s punishments are rare compared to the warnings, I could get away with few missed days in the list.”

What could be evidenced from this is that the schools rules, though they have clear guidelines and laws and how to manage student’s absenteeism and truancy, the problem lies when it comes to enforcing them. One school official for Bethel mentioned that, “We try to enforce them but because of the sheer number, we end up warning the most or on extreme cases, have a conversation with the parents. But that doesn’t seem to hinder the rate” And sometimes school officials forgo the law because of exhaustion or the attitude they see on the students about their education.

On the case of Dej Belay Zeleke, which used to allow students go home to eat lunch has now probated students from leaving and told to bring their lunches with them. The school has
attendance sheets that keeps record on both in the days and in the afternoons but the rate of absence got so high that the school had to take the measure of disallowing students form going home for their lunches. The schools officials also mention that this also had a subtle effect on student’s absenteeism as students started to increase their morning absence even though previously they were only absent in the afternoons.
CHAPTER FIVE

5.1 Summary, Conclusions and recommendations

5.1.1 Summary

This study aimed to investigate the root causes for student’s absenteeism and truancy in selected schools and the prevalence of the situation within the study group.

The study was conducted in 3 schools located in Arada sub city in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: Dej. Belay Zeleke Secondary school, Bethelhem Secondary school, Agazian No. 3 Secondary School. The schools consist of: Agazian No. 3, 618 students in both 9th and 10th grade (Females – 335) with 48 teachers, Bethleh, 1115 students in both 9th and 10th grade (Females – 683) with 64 teachers, Dej Belay 805 students in both 9th and 10th grade (Females- 444) with 46 teachers.

The study followed a cross-sectional study design to understand the status of the extent of absenteeism and truancy in the selected study group and followed a mixed research methodology. Questionnaires, Interviews and Focus Group Discussion were used in the study.

Students who participated in the focus groups ranged between the ages of 14 and 18. Most of these students were in Grades 10 but around 30 % were of grade 9. Each focus group had 8 to 10 students participating in the interviews. For adult interviews and focus group discussions, purposive sampling was used in the selection of participants associated with the schools’ administration and work environment (principals, chairman, and teachers), while convenience sampling was used for selecting the parents who were members of the school community. Of the 3 adult focus groups, it consisted of at-least two teachers (On Dej Belay 4 teachers and on Bethel 3 teachers), two higher officials like vice director and a principal and the rest were parents or other community members. A total of 360 questionnaires were provided to students and a total of 290 usable questionnaires were collected.

Most of the respondents (65%) reported that they had missed at least 2 classes in the school year and (85 %) at least once (Table 1) indicating the extent of absenteeism found in the selected schools.
Lack of enjoyment of the schools recreational areas takes the highest percentage with 66.59 %, followed by lack of strict rule the school has on punishing absentees (54.46%), the negative influence the school results have on students (52.68 %), discouraging subjects that have a negative influence on students attendance (51.72 %), the Friday mentality (not wanting to go on Fridays (51.37 %), and lack of appeal to the school’s environment were among the top reasons for students absenteeism and truancy.

The student interviews and focus group discussions revealed similar results. These are:- lack of enjoyable school areas, discouraging school subjects, the Friday mentality and lack of appeal of the school environment were the top 4 causes identified by the respondents.

From the identified 18 vital causes, the top ten causes were attributed to Lack of strict school rule, no value placed on education by students and/or parents, Friday mentality, poor student grades, financial constraints, lack of parental control, Lack of proper recreational areas in the school, peer pressure, unattractive school environment and students staying home to take care of siblings took the top ten causes.

In comparison, the data collected from parents, teachers & woreda experts and student respondents, some differences were identified. On the adult data, it implied that lack of strict school rule was placed first but on the student’s data, lack of enjoyment on school recreational areas was thought to be the major cause. But, even though their rating differed, both groups (adult and students) identified similar causes for absenteeism. And both groups placed much focus on student factors like lack of value towards education and school factors like lack of enjoyable school areas and lack of strict school rule.

5.1.2 Conclusions

This study has shown that the problem of absenteeism is quite prevalent in the selected schools education landscape. From the 290 questionnaires, the “155” number of absentees that has at least have been absent twice is a large percentage that comes to an astounding 53.4 %. Even those who have offended three and four times comes to a percentage of 22.4% (65) and 13.7% (40) which is an implication on how the problem of students absenteeism and truancy is engrained in the society. Whether this trend is attributable to one cause or the other, the problem
is still a problem to be dealt with that has, from this and other studies, major effects on the student's academic prowess, social behavior and their life altogether.

The study also has shown the majority of the causes for students absenteeism and truancy stem from personal causes of poor grades, lack of value towards education and the Friday mentality and the school causes of unattractive school environment, lack of proper school recreational areas and discouraging subjects. Some educators view absenteeism as a problem between the school and its students. And this study also suggested that majority of the causes could be followed back to their root causes that deeply lie on their personal causes and the attributable school causes. But this is in no way to imply that they are the only two factors: family financial constraint is still a burden on a number of students and parents poor attitude towards education and school still takes a toll on their children. Even the community factors of unavailability of transportation, poor community attitude towards education, abundance of recreational areas and peer pressure are still factors to be dealt with when it comes to managing the problem.

In general, absenteeism is a very serious issues that should be mitigated the schools, students, parents and others.

5.1.3 Recommendations

1. Empower students first.

   Based on the responses, the emphasis interviewees place on the cause of having poor attitude towards education and disappointing grades for the root cause for their absenteeism is something that is worth to be seen closely. This is because for there is to be a change, change must come from oneself. And to just improve the environment without improving self is just an endeavor that is not worth undertaking.

2. Make the school an attractive place to learn with enough sources of recreation.

   On this study, lack of recreational areas and the unattractive school environment was put as a major cause for student’s absenteeism and truancy based on student’s responses. So for that cause, expanding the school compound, if possible, or providing them with enough sources or recreation is an approach that is worth to be considered. And as for the
attractiveness of the school, cosmetic improvements like new and better paint job on school walls can go a long way.

3. Future studies need larger and comparative samples to improve knowledge.

The research suggests that there is in dire need of expanding researches on the extent and effective management of the problems. Though the problems need a cooperative handling to manage them, the personal causes and the school factors, namely the poor grades, Friday mentality, the lack of interest and poor attitude towards education and the school factors like lack of proper recreational areas and attractive school environment could be started to be managed between mainly the school and the students. And for that to happen these type of studies should be undertaken to identify and properly manage the problem.

4. There must be discussion with parents about the financial problems of the students

This is a difficult matter to handle as there is not a lot the school does by itself to improve that but from the school perspective, student offers to transfer to a school location near their residence could greatly improve some students could greatly improve their life as well as schools attendance rates. But other than that, a government involvement is required as, especially availability of transportation, needs to be provisioned to include not only office workers but also students too.

5. Frequent and positive communications with parents should be the priority set activity about the class attendance of the students

The importance of consistent, two-way communication between schools and families for improving the most serious attendance problems. Research has shown that just about all families want their children to succeed in school even though they might not have cared for the actual process on how it happens (Laraeu, 2000; Mapp, 2003). Many parents need help, however, in understanding how to guide their children in school, starting with helping students attend school regularly. All parents need to be kept informed of their children’s attendance and academic progress. Communications between teachers and parents, therefore, are essential for the kinds of collaborative work that will help get students to school. The finding that the use of activities to celebrate good attendance is
associated with improved attendance outcomes is consistent with previous research. Epstein and Sheldon (2002), too, found that the use of activities celebrating good attendance helped improved levels of student attendance from one year to the next. In the present study, chronic absenteeism decreased over time when schools publicly praised students for having strong attendance habits. The consistency of this finding provides strong evidence of the need for schools to encourage student attendance, and not wait until attendance is a serious problem to collaborate with families or community members on this issue.
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Appendix 1

ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND BEHAVIORAL STUDIES DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT
(translated paper)

Questionnaires for pupils

The purpose of this questionnaire is to assess the causes of frequent absenteeism and truancy in selected schools in Arada Sub-city in Addis Ababa and propose possible recommendation.

Honest and forward answers would be greatly beneficial to the study.

And I would like to thank you in advance for your cooperation while requesting you to give your personal opinion to this questionnaire.

Instructions

A. I would like to request you to give concise and clear answers to the questions provided in this questionnaire

B. For the reasons considered causes for student’s absenteeism and truancy, please put in –

I completely don’t agree, I don’t agree, I don’t understand, I agree or I agree completely in the spaces provided after the sentences by putting a mark in the appropriate boxes.

1. I don’t agree at all
2. I don’t agree
3. I don’t understand
4. I agree
5. I agree completely

Please put in general information in the spaces provided below

School Name _____________________________________________________________

Grade level ______________________________________________________________

Number of missed school days ___________

Sex – Male □

Female □
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Recreational Causes for school absence</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I would instead spend my time recreating in my house than going to school</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Spending entertaining myself the whole day gets rid of my boredom and stress</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Going to my recreation place instead of school is more enjoyable for me</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>There are enticing recreational centers or items that keep from going to school.</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Familial Causes from school absence</strong></td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>My family is not home to know whether I go to school or not</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>There is quarrelling at home that stresses me</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>My family doesn’t want me to go to school</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>My family doesn’t care whether I go to school or don’t</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>My family care for another sibling or person in the house more than me</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>My family separation or divorce doesn’t encourage me to go to school</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Work load in the house forces me to stay at home</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>My family would rather have me work than go to school</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>I am a source of income for my family so that I can’t always attend school</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>I don’t have aid from home on my school work</td>
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<td>15</td>
<td>I have no financial support from home which prevents me from properly attending school</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Community Causes of absenteeism</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>There are people who threaten or bully me on my way to school</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>There are not a lot of people who don’t go to school who have influence on me not to go to school</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>There are abundant recreational areas in my community</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>My community attitude towards attending school is negative</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>School causes for absenteeism</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>The table and chair are not comfortable which are not incentive for attending</td>
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<td>21</td>
<td>The classroom is not welcoming to attend</td>
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<td>22</td>
<td>There are students who disturb me that keep from</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>attending regularly</td>
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<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>There are not enough teaching materials in school which in not welcoming to attend</td>
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<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>I have a quarrel with my teacher or teachers that prevents from attending regularly</td>
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<td>25</td>
<td>The teaching style of my teachers is not welcoming</td>
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<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>The school’s rules for following up absentees is not that strict</td>
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<td>27</td>
<td>The school’s rules for punishing absentees is not that strict</td>
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<td>28</td>
<td>The school’s recreational areas does not enjoy me that much</td>
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<td>29</td>
<td>The school’s environment is not a welcoming place</td>
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<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>The school does not have enough teaching materials</td>
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<td>31</td>
<td>Being absent from school is common in the school setup</td>
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<tr>
<td>32</td>
<td>There are people who bully me inside school</td>
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<tr>
<td>33</td>
<td>I don’t feel like to going to school on Fridays</td>
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<td>34</td>
<td>There are people who discriminate or stress me inside school</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>School pupils factors</strong></td>
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<td>35</td>
<td>Students laugh when I answer questions</td>
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<tr>
<td>36</td>
<td>My friends call me to enjoy myself in school hours</td>
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<tr>
<td>37</td>
<td>People laugh and ridicule me when I go to school</td>
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<tr>
<td>38</td>
<td>It is below my friends to attend school which lessens my attitude toward attending school</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>Personal causes for absenteeism</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>I go to school just because someone else forces me</td>
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<tr>
<td>40</td>
<td>I don’t like my school results which have a negative influence on me</td>
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<td>41</td>
<td>I don’t care about my school work</td>
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<td>42</td>
<td>There are some subjects I don’t like that discourage me from attending</td>
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<td>43</td>
<td>I don’t like reading and that discourages me from attending</td>
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<td>44</td>
<td>I don’t like attending on teachers who are strict or have a negative attitude</td>
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<td>45</td>
<td>I don’t wake up early to go to school</td>
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<td>46</td>
<td>I have an illness that prevents me from attending school at one time or another</td>
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<tr>
<td>47</td>
<td>I like to stay home even when I have a small illness</td>
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<td>48</td>
<td>I have personal stress that prevents me from going</td>
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የማህበራዊሳይንስፈኩልት
የት/ትአስተዳደርት/ትክፍል
በሁለተኛዎች
የሚሞላ
መጠይቅ
ውትሮከት/ቤትመቅረትአስመልክቶምክንያቶችንበመለየትየመፍትሄሳብ
ለማቅረብነው፡፡የተማሪዎች
ግልጽናትክክለኛሀሳብመስጠትጥናቱጥሩውጤትእንዲኖረውከፍተኛአስተዋጽኦአለው፡፡ስለዚህአንቺ
/አንንተበዚህሃሳብላይየበኩልህን
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/ጪእየጠየኩበቅድሚያለትብብርህ
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| 4. | ከ/ል/ስ/ማሟቋች/ጭ/ማ/ተ/ሆፋ/ማጋ/ተ/ሆፋ/ማጋ  |
| 5. | ከ/ል/ስ/ማሟቋች/ጭ/ማ/ተ/ሆፋ/ማጋ/ተ/ሆፋ/ማጋ  |
| 6. | ከ/ል/ስ/ማሟቋች/ጭ/ማ/ተ/ሆፋ/ማጋ  |
| 7. | ከ/ል/ስ/ማሟቋች/ጭ/ማ/ተ/ሆፋ/ማጋ/ተ/ሆፋ/ማጋ  |
| 8. | ከ/ል/ስ/ማሟቋች/ጭ/ማ/ተ/ሆፋ/ማጋ/ተ/ሆፋ/ማጋ  |
| 9. | ከ/ል/ስ/ማሟቋች/ጭ/ማ/ተ/ሆፋ/ማጋ/ተ/ሆፋ/ማጋ  |
| 10. | ከ/ል/ስ/ማሟቋች/ጭ/ማ/ተ/ሆፋ/ማጋ/ተ/ሆፋ/ማጋ  |
| 11. | ከ/ል/ስ/ማሟቋች/ጭ/ማ/ተ/ሆፋ/ማጋ/ተ/ሆፋ/ማጋ  |
| 12. | ከ/ል/ስ/ማሟቋች/ጭ/ማ/ተ/ሆፋ/ማጋ/ተ/ሆፋ/ማጋ  |
| 13. | ከ/ል/ስ/ማሟቋች/ጭ/ማ/ተ/ሆፋ/ማጋ/ተ/ሆፋ/ማጋ  |
| 14. | ከ/ል/ስ/ማሟቋች/ጭ/ማ/ተ/ሆፋ/ማጋ/ተ/ሆፋ/ማጋ  |
| 15. | ከ/ል/ስ/ማሟቋች/ጭ/ማ/ተ/ሆፋ/ማጋ/ተ/ሆፋ/ማጋ  |
| 16. | ከ/ል/ስ/ማሟቋች/ጭ/ማ/ተ/ሆፋ/ማጋ/ተ/ሆፋ/ማጋ  |
| 17. | ከ/ል/ስ/ማሟቋች/ጭ/ማ/ተ/ሆፋ/ማጋ/ተ/ሆፋ/ማጋ  |
| 18. | ከ/ል/ስ/ማሟቋች/ጭ/ማ/ተ/ሆፋ/ማጋ/ተ/ሆፋ/ማጋ  |
| 19. | ከ/ል/ስ/ማሟቋች/ጭ/ማ/ተ/ሆፋ/ማጋ/ተ/ሆፋ/ማጋ  |
| 20. | ከ/ል/ስ/ማሟቋች/ጭ/ማ/ተ/ሆፋ/ማጋ/ተ/ሆፋ/ማጋ  |
| 21. | ከ/ል/ስ/ማሟቋች/ጭ/ማ/ተ/ሆፋ/ማጋ/ተ/ሆፋ/ማጋ  |
| 22. | ከ/ል/ስ/ማሟቋች/ጭ/ማ/ተ/ሆፋ/ማጋ/ተ/ሆፋ/ማጋ  |
| 23. | ከ/ል/ስ/ማሟቋች/ጭ/ማ/ተ/ሆፋ/ማጋ/ተ/ሆፋ/ማጋ  |
Adult and students semi structured interviews questions

1. Where and why are students continually absent from school?

2. What are the major factors which contribute to student absenteeism and why?

3. What are the school factors which may have impacted on student absenteeism?

4. What are the community factors which may have impacted on student absenteeism?

5. What are the family factors which may have impacted on student absenteeism?

6. What are the students’ factors which may have impacted on student absenteeism?