

**UNIVERSITY FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES**

**TEACHER ABSENTEEISM: EFFECTS ON PUPILS' ACADEMIC  
PERFORMANCE IN BASIC SCHOOLS IN EAST GONJA DISTRICT**

**By**

**KUUSIEMEH ANDREWS**

**(UDS/MTD/0008/13)**

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**A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF EDUCATION, DEPARTMENT  
OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE  
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## DECLARATION

### STUDENT'S DECLARATION

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Student's Signature.....*Kuusiemeh Andrews*..... Date.....*19/07/16*.....

Name: Kuusiemeh Andrews (UDS/MTD/0008/13)

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Supervisor's Signature.....*Anthony Kudjo Donkor*..... Date.....*19/07/16*.....

Name: Dr. Anthony Kudjo Donkor

## ABSTRACT

Given the abysmal performance of pupils in schools of the East Gonja district which is said to be the outcome of teacher absenteeism and related factors, the study examined the effects of teacher absenteeism on the academic performance of pupils in the district. A total of 98 respondents comprising of head teachers, assistant head teachers and classroom or subject teachers in the basic schools of the district were interviewed using the structured questionnaire. The data was analysed using SPSS data analyses software. The study revealed that teacher absenteeism is really prevalent in the East Gonja district with the rural schools recording higher levels of absenteeism compared with the urban schools. The respondents also revealed that poor working condition is one of the major factors which influence teacher absenteeism. Other factors identified were the rural nature of a school's community, lack of accommodation, health challenges of teachers, teachers attending social functions, break down of motor bikes of teachers who stay far away from their schools, among others. Besides, results of the study showed that teacher absenteeism leads to a cut in instructional hours which results in inability to cover stipulated syllabus, eventually leading to poor performance of pupils in examinations. Other effects identified were pupils not taking subjects of absentee teachers seriously, and over burdening of non- absentee teachers, among others. Finally, the study revealed that improvement in working conditions of teachers was rated highest by the respondents as a measure to curb teacher absenteeism; followed by patriotism advocacy for teachers; organization of teacher related programs at inactive school times; whilst threat of pay cut of absentee teachers was rated as the least important measure to curb teacher absenteeism. Other measures identified in the study were strict and constant supervision of teachers, active involvement of PTA and SMC in monitoring and supervision of teachers, guidance and counselling for teachers, and special incentives for rural teachers.

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## DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to the glory of the almighty God



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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

<b>AP</b>	- Academic Performance
<b>BECE</b>	- Basic Education Certificate Examination.
<b>FCUBE</b>	- Free Compulsory Universal Basic Education
<b>JS</b>	-Job Satisfaction
<b>PTA</b>	- Parents Teachers Association
<b>QE</b>	- Quality Education
<b>SE</b>	- Standardize Examination
<b>SMC</b>	- School Management Committee
<b>SPSS</b>	- Statistical Package for Social Sciences
<b>TA</b>	- Teacher Absenteeism
<b>UNESCO</b>	- United Nations Education Scientific and Culture Organization.



## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION

#### 1.1 Background to the Study

Teachers are the fulcrum on which the entire educational system revolves. Expectations on the teaching profession are enormous as teachers have been entrusted with the arduous responsibility of educating the future leaders of Ghana. Government recognizing education as indispensable for social justice and participation has promised quality, affordability and access across the three levels of education such as basic, secondary and tertiary education. The dwindling trends in educational standards these days have painted a negative picture of the performance of teachers. This general perception has been confirmed by the education sector review (GES, Journal in January, 2014). Teachers' negative conducts effect good quality education delivery in the country. These include irregular attendance to work, absenteeism, inadequate use of contact hours, inadequate number of periods for staff especially teachers of senior high school who are teaching less than the minimum number of periods. These are just a few issues that affect quality education and performances and therefore need to be dealt with. We can hardly expect high quality education without good leadership on the part of the head teachers and active cooperation of teachers in school management.

Quality of learning in the classroom has to be ensured with the total involvement of teachers, administrative structure and interventions from all the stake holders. In order to provide quality education, an important requirement is that the teachers teach whatever



they are supposed to teach and students remain in class when teaching and learning is going on. If teachers are not present on all working days and no teaching takes place because of the absence of teachers, either the prescribed course of any given class will not be completed or will not be completed in a satisfactory manner. Thus, teachers' absence affects the quality of education.

The meaning of the term "quality education depends upon the perspective one hold or the conceptual frame work one uses to define what education is. According to a report by the United Nations Education Scientific and Culture Organization (UNESCO), Education throughout life is based upon four pillars, including learning to acknowledge that learners build their own knowledge daily combining indigenous and "external" elements; learning to focus on the practical application of what is learnt; learning to live together addresses the critical skills for a life free from discrimination, where all have equal opportunity to develop themselves, their families and their communities; and learning emphasizes the skills needed for individuals to develop the potentials.

This way of conceptualization of education provides an integrated and comprehensive view of learning and therefore according to the report constitutes quality of education. But the major problem towards achieving quality education is chronic absenteeism among teachers which affect the performance rate of pupils in external examination such as the basic education certificate examination (BECE). Academic performance or (academic achievement) is the outcome of education- the extent to which a student, teacher or institution achieve their educational goals.





For high performance to be achieved, teachers need to have job satisfaction to enable them to have focus on the job without distraction and besides be motivated to strive for greater achievements.

### **1.2 Statement of the Problem.**

An investigation by the Ghana education service (GES) in the East Gonja district shows a decline in the performance of schools at the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE). Several Junior High Schools in the district recorded between zero and five percent passes in the Basic Education Certificate Examination (BECE). For example the BECE performance of pupils in the district from 2012 to 2014 shows poor results. The percentages passes within the period under consideration were 22.5%, 8.7% and 23.48% respectively. The abysmal performance certainly closes the door to future academic advancement.

Averagely, teachers in Ghana miss 43 school days within an academic year through absenteeism. However, in the East Gonja district, teachers averagely miss 79 school days in an academic year (District statisticiann.d.). It is therefore important to determine teacher absenteeism and the effect on academic performance of pupil in the district.

It is often said that education is the key to development. This is because education is the means through which any nation can develop her human resource which is very crucial in the development process. Not only the nation but the individuals also have stake in education as it can catapult them to greater heights of employment of occupation thereby improving their lot as individuals and ensuring continuous development to their societies and to the nation at large. It is in the light of the importance of education that a greater



attention is paid to it. It is the reason why a big chunk of the national budget of countries including Ghana (over 35%) is devoted to education. Thus, if there is any reason to believe that the sort of education being provided is not yielding the expected results, it would be important for research to be conducted into relevant areas that affect quality education. One of these areas that are worth researching into is teacher absenteeism.

### **1.3 Research Questions of the Study**

In view of the issues raised above, the study sought to address the following research questions:

1. Do the levels of teacher absenteeism differ between rural and urban schools in the East Gonja district?
2. Which factors account for teacher absenteeism in schools of the district?
3. How does teacher absenteeism affect performance of pupils in schools of the district?
4. What measures should be put in place to control teacher absenteeism in the district?

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

The general objective of the study was to examine the effects of teacher absenteeism on academic performance of pupils in the basic schools of the East Gonja district.

Specifically, the objectives of the study include:

1. To compare the levels of teacher absenteeism between rural and urban schools in the East Gonja district.



2. To identify the factors accounting for teacher absenteeism in schools of the district.
3. To assess the effects of teacher absenteeism on pupils performance in school of the district.
4. To identify measures to control teacher absenteeism in the district.

### **1.5 Significance of the Study**

The research and its significance cannot be overemphasized. The research would benefit not only the community but the country at large. This is because it looked at the what, the how and the why of the problem which automatically will help to achieve quality education in general but also help to improve academic performance in basic schools in the district concerned in particular. The benefits of the research would therefore be that it will affect all stakeholders in education; parents, pupils, government, teachers, communities and the researcher,

The significance of the research to the pupils is that the suggested recommendations, when implemented would give pupils the opportunity to develop their potentials by performing well academically from the basic to the tertiary levels. Parent through the research would have been assured that their children will grow to become useful to the family, the community and the entire nation through quality education. Through quality education, the community will be assured of well-educated and responsible citizen who would serve the community in various capacities thus enhancing the human research base of the community. The research will contribute to the government's Free compulsory





universal Basic Education (FCUBE) as part of the millennium development goal by 2015.

The role of the teacher in this research is properly defined and his contributions to imparting knowledge and skills to pupils who are the future leader of the nation are enhanced. The researcher will benefit from the exposure to gathering, collecting, analysing and interpretation of results from data. Other researcher may use the knowledge acquire through this research to undertake research into myriad of problems that face the society.

In summary, this research would help all stakes holders and partners in the educational sector to ascertain the impact of “poor remuneration furthering education on distance learning” and “non-professional teachers in classrooms” on the attendance of teachers to school; help reduce the cost that absenteeism imposes on the state, parents; and set a base for future research in to absenteeism by all stakeholder and educational partners.

### **1.6 Limitation**

The topic is a national phenomenon but the extent of this research is limited to public basic schools in East Gonja District of northern region. The research will cover urban and rural schools in the district. Private schools of all level are excluded in this research.

### **1.7 Operational Definitions of the Terms**

- ✓ Quality Education – this refers to the student ability to acquire knowledge, skill competencies and relevant attitude to enable them cope with society needs.





- ✓ Teacher Absenteeism – it is a situation where a teacher regularly absents himself from school without good reason or permission from the outcome of education – the extent to which a student, teacher or person is mind affecting the job that the he or she currently does.
- ✓ Motivation is the notion of anticipation – it is the notion anticipation – looking forward to what will be achieved.
- ✓ Absenteeism – this is habitual pattern of absence from duty or obligation
- ✓ Job satisfaction – the state of mind that affects the work someone currently does.
- ✓ Academic performance (achievements) – is defined as the outcome of Education- the extent to which a student, teacher or an institutions has achieved their Educational goal.

### **1.8 Organization of the Work**

The work is organized in five chapters for the purpose of orderliness and clarity in presenting the issues.

Chapter one gives a general introduction to the study. It consist of the background study, problem statement research question, objectives and justification of the study, significance of the study, delimitation and scope of the study, abbreviation, acronyms and operational definitions of terms used in the work.

Chapter two consists mainly of literature review. In this theories and concepts that have to do with the study were critically examined from secondary sources (second hand sources) of information to include factors influencing absenteeism, effect and suggestions to the control of absenteeism. Chapter three consists of methodologies employed in



carrying out the research. The research designs include the various methods tools and techniques` used for data collection and analyses are outline in details. The fourth chapter contains the main research findings and discussion while the fifth chapter contains summary of findings, conclusion and recommendations.



## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.0 Introduction

This chapter contains review of relevant literature on the major themes of the study. Specifically, it contains some of the meanings of absenteeism as it is used in the existing literature; level of teacher absenteeism in Ghana and the reasons for that phenomenon in schools, effects of teacher absenteeism on academic performance of pupils, and the suggestions on how to eliminate teacher absenteeism in the basic schools.

#### 2.1 Absenteeism

There are many variations to the definition of absenteeism. For the purpose of this study, an overview of some of the definitions of absenteeism is presented as follows:

According to the South African Labour Guide, absenteeism is not just about not being at work but it also includes arriving late for work, leaving the workplace early, having extended tea or lunch breaks, attending to private business during working hours, not attending to assigned roles in respect of employment contract terms even though one is at the workplace, feigned illness, and other unexplained absences from the workstation or from the premises. The implications and repercussions of absenteeism therefore, become more pronounced if engagement in the act which takes the worker away from his duty or obligation becomes habitual but not accidental (Gyansu et al. 2014).

Similarly, Iannuzzi (2013) indicated that absenteeism has to do with indulging in acts that take the worker away from his duty, that are not authorized by the organizations or



employers. In his view, any acts that make employees to take time off from work for valid reasons like vacation and sickness, are expected and authorized by employers, which do not therefore constitute absenteeism. However if employees habitually stay away from work for invalid reasons, then they are indulging in absenteeism.

Similar to Iannuzzi's definition, Vanderweerd (2013) identified two forms of absenteeism which include:

- Innocent Absenteeism - which refers to employees who are absent from work for reasons beyond their control, such as injury, sickness among others. Such cases cannot be remedied by disciplinary measures.
- Culpable Absenteeism – refers to employees who absent themselves without authorization for reasons which are within their control.

In a more formal manner, Johnny (2007) also suggests two forms of absenteeism including:

- Planned Absenteeism – consisting of annual leaves, study leaves paternity and maternity leaves, etc.
- Unplanned Absenteeism – consisting of sick leaves, family responsibilities, absence without leave, among others.

### **2.1.1 Meaning of teacher absenteeism**

According to Gyansu et al. (2014) teacher absenteeism can be considered as the percentage of contractual days that permanent teachers were absent from the classroom due to their personal issues. In the definition, emphasis should be placed on two







important phrases, contractual days and permanent teachers. That is, a teacher's contractual days refer to those days when he/she is bound by law to be with his/her students either for teaching and learning or for co-curricular activities. It is for the sake of these contractual days that teachers are even paid salaries whenever schools are on holidays. On the average, Basic School Teachers in Ghana are bound to spend between 195-205 days yearly for their contractual responsibilities. Compared with their counterparts in other civil services who spend between 125-135 days as a rest day, teachers in Ghana have the advantage of about 30 days more for the rest (Gyansu et al. 2014). It is however strange to note that some teachers still attempt to spend part of the contractual days for their personal needs.

On the other hand, the mention of permanent teachers in the definition literally implies the presence of temporal /substitute teachers too. Since the expression "Permanent" and "Temporal teachers" do not readily apply in our parts of the world, we would be right in equating the two terms to trained professional teachers and non-professional teachers respectively. Trained professional teachers are preferred and often highlighted. Bennett (1997) says the use of substitute (non-professional) teachers is an unfortunate dilemma and practice, but a necessary practice in today's educational environment. Indeed the argument against substitute (non-professional) teachers is firmly supported by literature. Darling-Hammond (1995) and Michel (1995) says 'substitute teachers do not always measure up to the regular classroom teacher's routine and methods to stimulate students to learn'.

The literature review also points to another research that found substitute teachers (non-professional teachers) significantly less effective than regular classroom teachers

(Elliott&Manlove(1977). It suggests that there is a breakdown in organizational structure and that the absence of clear expectation such as performance feedback, leadership style, classroom management and disciplinary skills further weaken the effectiveness of substitute (non –professional) teachers (Donpolo, 2009). However, the issue of professional teachers being more effective than non-professional teachers in Ghana for the past decade is quite debatable considering the fact that most non-professional teachers are graduates from the universities and polytechnics, who exhibit a higher level of maturity and competence.

## **2.2 Level of teacher absenteeism in Ghana**

It is worth noting that teacher absenteeism is synonymous to loss of contact hours by teachers with their pupils or students. The phenomenon has been noted to be on the upsurge in Ghana, despite several attempts by successive governments to eradicate the menace. According to MoE (2010), there was a 20% lost in contact hours in public basic schools in 1993, with 14% of teachers being absent and 16% of head teachers being absent. Eleven years later, a similar study conducted by Karikari-Ababio (2004) indicated that in 2003, the southern sector of Ghana including the Greater Accra, Eastern, Central and Volta regions recorded a loss of 27% in contact hours, with 28% of teachers being absent and 15% of head teachers being absent. In the same study, the middle belt of the country including the BrongAhafo and the Ashanti regions lost 14% of contact hours with 16% and 22% teacher and head teacher absenteeism respectively.

Besides, Norton (1998) conducted a state-wide study concerning school administrators, and found that 71% of them reported teacher absenteeism as one of the leading problems facing them. The study reported substitute teaching as the third highest-ranked "serious"



problem facing school personnel directors and named teacher absenteeism as the number one ranked "general problem" encountered in their work. Not only are the monetary costs of teacher absenteeism escalating, but the difficulty of finding qualified substitute personnel is also a growing problem for many school districts (Basiru, 2013).

### **2.3 Reasons for teacher absenteeism**

According to Bullington (2002), many teachers do absent themselves from school due to illness. Sometimes some sick teachers are forced to go to school which can result in transmitting communicable diseases to their colleague teachers. This can eventually lead to even greater absenteeism and reduced productivity among other teachers who try to work while ill. Workforces often excuse absenteeism caused by medical reasons if the worker supplies a doctor's note or other form of documentation. There is however other absenteeism in which a teacher doesnot seek any excuse for not coming to school. School authorities and pupils do expect this teacher in school but they get to school to meet his/her absence. Others however, seek permission from these authorities for not coming to school (Basiru, 2013).

Another reason mostly given by teachers for being absent is distance from school and transportation challenges. Many teachers stay far from their schools; however a source of transportation to their schools is usually a problem. This sometimes prevents teachers from coming to school. They may also stay at places where they have to travel for a long distance before they go for their salaries all these do make them absent themselves (Luthans and Kreitner, 1985). Also, World Bank (2007) indicated that Ghanaian teachers often reported distance and the need to collect salaries from town as a reason for missing classes.





Teachers in rural areas most at times do not go to school because they are aware that no circuit supervisor will be able to easily get to the school since the place is far and the road is also not good. Based on this, the teachers choose not to go to school. Teachers equally give other excuses such as funeral, rain and not having money to fare him/herself (Lai and Chan, 2000).

Scott and McClellan (1990) indicate that the class level which one teaches and the level of qualification were two primary predictors of teacher absenteeism. Through their investigation, it was discovered that the higher the degree obtained by the teacher, the higher the number of days they were absent from the classroom. Similarly, non-professional teachers turn to miss school most, since they lack interest in the job (Blau, 1985). They turn to use the teaching profession as a stepping stone in life. Non-professional teachers will always say 'I chose to teach but if I get a better job I will leave'.

Corollary to Blau's argument, Nelson and Quick (2008) indicate that people who are dissatisfied with their jobs are more frequently absent from their work. They went on to say that the type of dissatisfaction that most often leads employees to miss work is dissatisfaction with the work itself. Other cases on which employees can absent themselves are dissatisfaction with their salaries and poor motivation.

Also, Mary et al. (2015) identified five broad categories of factors that influence teacher absenteeism as found in international research. The categories include issues about pay structure, management, working conditions, community conditions, and social and cultural responsibilities. They then identified some specific factors under each category





which cause teacher absenteeism. These categories and the specific factors are discussed in the following paragraphs.

### **2.3.1 Issues about pay structure**

Factors about pay structure, including how teachers are compensated, contracted, and organized in terms of professional level, can correspond to absenteeism. While teacher salary can be linked with absence rates, how salary affects absenteeism varies by country.

Four factors involving pay structure that relate to teacher absenteeism are:

**Salary and compensation:** Research on teacher absenteeism has identified a relationship between days away from school and salary or compensation. In Tanzania teachers identified low salary as the greatest barrier to meeting their priorities: the ability to care and provide for their children, to be able to live in a satisfactory home that offers security and emotional stability, and the money necessary to attain these goals (Tao, 2013). As a result, teachers in emergent nations commonly take on secondary employment to supplement their income. Stakeholders in Malawi reported that teacher absenteeism is a major problem for the region because teachers cannot afford to live on their teaching salary alone (Kadzamira, 2006). As stated by one Malawi Ministry of Education official, “Teacher absenteeism is high. Teachers go vending or get secondary employment. For example, few teachers go for marking exam papers nowadays. They say it’s better to do other jobs” (Kadzamira, 2006, p. 12). Teachers in Tanzania acknowledged that they had even left school during the teaching day to look for other work (Tao, 2013).

**Contractual status:** In Indonesia contract teachers are absent at significantly higher rates than noncontract teachers (Usman and Suryadarma, 2007). Basically, contract teachers



are non-civil service employees who are hired by local schools on fixed-term contracts and who often have less professional training than civil servant teachers and are paid less (Muralidharan and Sundararaman, 2013). The other problem that contract teachers face is that their prospects of acquiring permanent teaching positions are low (Usman & Suryadarma, 2007).

**Working relationship with the school:** The nature of teacher working relationships with the school in Papua and West Papua, Indonesia, was found to have a potential effect on teacher absenteeism. In private institutions, teachers with indirect working relationships with the school (that is, when the school contracts teachers through the government) had higher absence rates than teachers with direct working relationships (that is, when the school contracts teachers directly; UNICEF, 2012). Private and foundation schools with a high proportion of civil servant teachers (who have indirect working relationships with the school) had high absenteeism rates of 37%, while teachers recruited directly by the schools had the lowest absence rate of all teacher categories, possibly because they felt greater accountability to or investment in their institutions (UNICEF, 2012).

**Seniority and professional standing:** In emergent nations teacher professional levels (as in level of education) and age-related seniority contribute to high absence rates (Abadzi, 2009). In Indonesia highly educated teachers and headmasters exhibited higher absence rates than grade teachers (such as teachers who teach subjects other than physical education and religion). Better opportunities and availability of extra jobs outside of school for highly educated teachers were not found to be a significant factor in teacher absence rates. Headmasters were absent at higher rates than grade-level teachers because



of a lack of daily oversight by the District Education Office (Usman & Suryadarma, 2007).

### **2.3.2 Issues about management**

School type (public or private): In some emergent nations private schools have lower teacher absenteeism rates than public schools. In Lagos State, Nigeria, private schools had higher rates of teaching activity and lower teacher absenteeism than public schools (Tooley, Dixon, & Olaniyan, 2005). Contrary to the conventional notion that private schools serve the needs of small minorities from wealthy families, “a lower cost private sector has emerged to meet the demands of poor households,” delivering higher quality education than public and government schools do (Tooley et al., 2005, p. 125). This trend appears not only in Nigeria, but across Sub-Saharan Africa, including in Malawi and Uganda. While cautioning against the unconditional acceptance of this claim (as private schools also can exhibit considerable problems), Tooley et al. (2005) describe government school conditions such as overpopulated classrooms, high student poverty, and poor school planning as likely contributory factors to higher absence rates among public school teachers.

Additionally, in Lao People’s Democratic Republic teachers at private schools were much less likely to be absent than teachers at public schools (Benveniste et al., 2007). They indicated further that based on a series of surprise visits across a sample of 155 public and private schools (with the number of teachers visited per school, up to 20, dependent on school size), 4.4 percent of private school teachers were absent, while 7.4





percent of public school teachers were absent. This difference was statistically significant; however, no specific reasons were given to explain this finding.

**School governance (locally or centrally controlled):** In primary schools in India, “locally controlled schools had marginally higher absence rates than schools run by the state government” (Kremer et al., 2005).

**Enforcement of sanctions:** The enforcement of sanctions may vary within schools and lead to further absenteeism by teachers who do not experience the same consequences as other teachers (Kremer et al., 2005). The reasons for poor attendance in India can be related to the power or influence teachers carry at their schools, based on factors such as professional background, position, and personal characteristics. While the risk of being dismissed for excessive absenteeism is low in India overall, “the costs and benefits of attending school on a given day could vary depending on... teachers’ vulnerability to sanctions” (Kremer et al., 2005). Contracted and conventional teachers had similar absence rates, even though teachers who were hired under a contract were not paid as well as conventional teachers. The lack of relationship between pay and teacher absenteeism could be because “teachers feel little risk of being fired for absence” (Kremer et al., 2005). Only one head teacher out of 3,000 public schools had ever discharged a teacher due to excessive absenteeism. Teachers regarded their vulnerability to sanctions as being related to how and how often they were supervised, as well as to their “level of power” (Kremer et al., 2005). This power association is apparent in significantly higher absence rates for men, older teachers, head teachers, and teachers with more education and experience (Kremer et al., 2005).





**Community accountability:** Involving a community in setting teacher expectations may impact teacher absenteeism. In Honduras absence rates and community accountability are related (World Bank, 2008, as cited in Abadzi, 2009). Absence rates decreased when local community members were involved in setting teacher salaries. According to a 2008 World Bank project, “community-managed schools” were open more days per year than other schools (Abadzi, 2009). Community-managed schools are run by committees that comprise family and community members who decide on matters of enrollment, curriculum, finances, and other aspects of running a school. However, more rigorous research is needed into why these community-ran schools were more successful (Abadzi, 2009). Conversely, in Indonesian public primary schools community involvement appeared to be an ineffective way to increase teacher attendance (Usman and Suryadarma, 2007).

### 2.3.3 Issues about working conditions

The nature of working conditions at a school, such as the culture of the school, its physical condition, and responsibilities or expectations assigned to teachers, can influence absence rates. Five factors involving working conditions that relate to teacher absenteeism are:

**School culture:** Poor attendance by some teachers may have a ripple effect on others at their school. At one Ghana school district absenteeism affected the motivation of fellow teachers, who were left to take on additional planning and instruction (Obeng-Denteh et al., 2011).



**Exhaustion, stress, and burnout:**Teacher stress and the number of days spent away from school have also been found to be correlated. Teachers who attributed their absenteeism to stress (measured according to self-reported perceptions of low personal accomplishment, emotional exhaustion, and depersonalization or detachment from students) were more likely to depart the teaching profession altogether (PREL & Research and Development Cadre, 1998). In Cyprus teachers' personality traits and job stressors were found to lead to burnout (a combination of emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and lack of a sense of personal accomplishment), which may influence absence rates. One of the most prevalent factors related to job burnout was dealing with students' behavioral problems and time management issues (Kokkinos, 2007).

**School facilities and infrastructure:**In six countries including Bangladesh, Ecuador, India, Indonesia, Peru, and Uganda—primary schools and health facilities with poorer infrastructure (based on an index that included “the availability of a toilet..., covered classrooms, non-dirt floors, electricity and a school library”) had higher absenteeism rates (Chaudhury et al., 2006). In India teachers were less likely to be absent at schools that were inspected regularly (Kremer et al., 2005). This was also the case in Indonesia, where teachers at schools with inadequate facilities (such as lack of electricity or working toilets) were more likely than teachers at schools with adequate conditions to be absent (Usman and Suryadarma, 2007).

**Classroom structure (multigrade or single grade):**Structuring a school to include multigrade classrooms can result in higher teacher absence rates. Across several Indian states and in Indonesia teachers were more likely to be absent in schools where multigrade teaching took place (Usman and Suryadarma, 2007). Teachers may

experience more stress in a multigrade setting, though no clear reasons for this finding have been identified (Usman and Suryadarma, 2007).

**Professional development or other duties:** The need to attend workshops or meetings was a frequent reason for teacher absenteeism in the Pacific Region, which may suggest difficulty in planning for professional development opportunities or for teachers to fulfill other professional duties (PREL and Research and Development Cadre, 1998; Uehara, 1999).

#### **2.3.4 Issue about community conditions**

Socioeconomic, health, and environmental conditions have all been cited as overall reasons for high teacher absence rates. The location of schools and communities in relation to health care facilities and other basic necessities, such as clean water, affect a teacher's ability to show up and teach (Tao, 2013; Kadzamira, 2006). These issues are especially apparent in rural areas (Kadzamira, 2006). Four factors involving community conditions are related to teacher absenteeism:

**School location (urban or rural, proximity to paved roads, remoteness):** In Papua and West Papua, Indonesia, school location is a significant factor in absence rates among administrators and teachers. Geographically, principals from urban schools had the highest attendance rates (67 %), followed by principals from the easy-to-access lowland district schools (59%); principals from the highland district schools had the lowest of 33%(UNICEF, 2012).





A school's proximity to paved roads can also impact absenteeism. Teachers in India were less likely to be absent when their school was located closer to a paved road (Kremer et al., 2005), though in Indonesia the presence of paved roads near schools had no significant impact on teacher absence rates (Usman and Suryadarma, 2007). While living close to paved roads may make it easier for teachers to reach school, it also makes leaving school in the middle of the day easier and affordable (Usman and Suryadarma, 2007).

In Nigeria teachers in urban schools had slightly lower absentee rates than teachers in rural schools, which were attributed to more regular school supervision and higher visibility of inspectors in urban locations (Adelabu, 2005). In India teacher absenteeism was higher in the rural, less developed regions than in the most developed areas. Schools were sometimes staffed by a single teacher, and they closed completely when that teacher did not come to work, which may have discouraged students and families and thereby increased student absenteeism (Chaudhury et al., 2006; Rogers and Vegas, 2009).

Across multiple countries small schools (especially those in rural settings in emergent nations) are mostly at risk for high teacher absence. Reasons for this phenomenon include that small schools in remote communities struggle to attract qualified and dedicated teachers; that rural schools tend to have poorer infrastructure, which deters attendance; and that traveling away from remote areas (for example, to visit a doctor or attend in-service training) requires long journeys and more missed days of school (UNICEF, 2012; Harris van Keuren, 2009; Mulkeen, 2005).





**Proximity to school:** A teacher's commuting distance to school may have positive or negative effects on absenteeism rates. In Bangladesh, Ecuador, India, Indonesia, Peru, and Uganda teachers local to the school community tended to be absent less often than those who commuted from outside the community (Alcázar et al., 2006; Chaudhury et al., 2006). Similarly, teachers in Papua and West Papua, Indonesia, who lived in the same district as their schools had an average absence rate of 19 percent, compared with 25 percent for teachers who lived farther out in a sub district (UNICEF, 2012).

However, another study in Indonesia yielded contradictory results, showing no statistically significant differences in absenteeism between locally born teachers who chose their schools and who live near their schools and teachers born outside of the community who lived a commuting distance away (Usman and Suryadarma, 2007). A study in India that looked more broadly at teachers' relationships or ties to the community concluded that belonging to the local community may not impact absenteeism in either direction. Local teachers had absence rates similar to those of teachers from other communities, controlling for other variables (such as gender, age, college degree, and school infrastructure; Kremer et al., 2005).

**Environmental and health conditions:** Environmental factors such as hurricanes and other aggressive weather patterns, which can lead to flooding and infrastructure damage in low-lying islands and atolls, contribute to teacher absenteeism in the Pacific Region (PREL & Research and Development Cadre, 1998). A lack of basic means to be healthy and safe can also impact teacher absenteeism. In Tanzania lack of access to food, clean water, sanitation, and access to a hospital has been a reason for teacher absence. Teachers agreed that hunger constrained their capacity to teach, as did poor water resulting from



inadequate infrastructure (substandard water tanks and latrines), which leads to sickness and disease (Tao, 2013).

**Socioeconomic conditions:** In India “relative teacher salaries are higher in poorer states, yet poorer states have higher absence rates” (Kremer et al., 2005). No reasons are offered to explain this finding. In Bangladesh, Ecuador, India, Indonesia, Peru, and Uganda teachers in low per capita income areas were absent more often on average than teachers in other areas (Alcázar et al., 2006; Chaudhury et al., 2006).

**Social and cultural responsibilities:** Risk factors for teacher absenteeism may also be related to unique social and cultural contexts. In the Pacific Region this can include Polynesian and Micronesian traditional values, cultural events, and family and village social roles. Two factors involving social and cultural responsibilities that relate to teacher absenteeism are:

**Illness, funeral attendance, and care of family members:** In Malawi illness was cited as a reason for frequent absences (Kadzamira, 2006). This finding was supported by previous research by Kadzamira in an HIV/AIDS study, which found that teachers most often cited “personal sickness, funeral attendance and attending to sick family members” as reasons for absence (cited in Kadzamira, 2006).

**Social and cultural norms, including expectations for female teachers:** Specific social and cultural expectations and traditions in the Pacific Region may also relate to high absenteeism. For example, traditional feasts and funerals can feature as an important part of village life, and attendance obligations can override professional ones. An individual teacher’s status among family and village relationships may also determine whether



teacher absenteeism is overlooked within a public school system (PREL & Research and Development Cadre, 1998). Gendered patterns of absenteeism can also be understood as an indication of broader societal expectations of women. In Bangladesh, Ecuador, India, Indonesia, Peru, Tanzania, and Uganda female workers tend to be absent more often because their professional responsibilities as teachers are sometimes at odds with the domestic and caregiver duties they are expected to perform in the home (Tao, 2013; Alcázar et al. 2006; Chaudhury et al., 2006).

In Tanzania lack of motivation, stemming from reduced professional advancement opportunities for women was identified as a significant reason for teacher absenteeism. According to teachers interviewed, women are constrained by patriarchal divisions of labour and expectations to be primary caregivers and housekeepers. Actual opportunities for advancement do not reflect school policies, which state that women and men have equal opportunities for advancement. Domestic obligations often mean that female teachers have less time to study for certification exams and are therefore more likely to perform poorly. The loss of time, effort, and money to take advancement courses and exams may lead to reluctant attitudes, disillusionment, or distraction and thus a higher likelihood of absenteeism (Tao, 2013).

#### **2.4 Effects of Teacher Absenteeism on Academic Performance**

In the words of the Association for the Development of Education in Africa, “teacher absenteeism is a growing problem and one of the key challenges facing the pursuit of quality education in schools in Africa. A teacher in the classroom is an important but insufficient prerequisite for improving learning achievement. However, absenteeism significantly prejudices the learning outcomes of the children in the classroom,





demoralizes school organizational culture and represents a significant waste of financial public and private resources”.

Miller et al. (2008) also state that the effect of teacher absenteeism on teaching processes is one of the important variables that may explain the difference between the success levels of students. These show the enormity of damage that teacher absenteeism has on the school system. For the purposes of this study however, relevant literature is presented on the effects that teacher absenteeism has on learning outcomes of the children in the classroom.

According EARC (2003), teacher absenteeism is particularly costly to the poor, since they cannot afford private tutors to cover the curriculum and pass high-stakes examinations. Thus, it has been related to lower student test scores in primary schools. One study showed that a 5% increase in the absenteeism rate of teachers who stayed with the same class for two years reduced student gains by 4-8% during the year; the size and precision of these estimates was the same for both math and English (Das et al. 2005). In an Indonesian study, higher teacher absenteeism was related to lower fourth-grade student achievement on math (but not dictation) after controlling for household characteristics, teacher quality, and school conditions (Lewis and Lockheed 2006). Absenteeism among teachers also encourages similar behaviour among students, notably in countries such as Mali and Somalia (EARC, 2003).

Also, Bruno (2002) indicates that students in a classroom eventually lose the desire to learn when the regular teacher is frequently absent. This is consistent with the finding by Jacobson (1989) that teacher absenteeism and poor attitude might impede students'





academic growth. The author hypothesized that the relationship developed between students and teachers indeed influenced students' performance. Thus, when linked to the quality of instructional time, the frequent absence of a classroom teacher would weaken the student-teacher bond and cause student absences. Students who were frequently absent from school, when asked why they chose not to go to school, responded in the following manner. "If my teacher does not come to school, why should I?" (Jacobson, 1989). Similarly, Ehrenberg et al. (1991) stated that students' motivation to attend school may be reduced by higher teacher absentee rates which further leads to higher student absentee rates.

Moreover, Mary et al. (2015) reported that international studies point to the relationship of teacher absenteeism to student learning. For instance, they indicated that 25% of teachers at rural primary schools in India were absent on any given school day. The loss of instructional time resulting from these absences corresponded to low school-wide student proficiency levels, which ranged from 40% to 50% in grade-level literacy and numeracy (Narayan and Mooij, 2010). In Indonesia an increase of 10 percentage points in the average teacher absence rate was associated with a .09 standard deviation decrease in grade 4 mathematics scores (Suryadarma et al., 2006; Rogers and Vegas, 2009). An analysis of the relationship between student mean test scores and teacher absence rates in Ghana's Ashanti region district schools showed that teacher absenteeism is inversely related to student performance. When teacher absence rates increased, student mean scores declined (Obeng- Denteh et al., 2011). The economic costs associated with managing the loss of instructional time in cases such as these are high and produce additional burdens on already strained school systems (Mary et al. 2015).



In primary schools in Zambia, student learning gains were correlated with teacher absence, and absences resulted in a surprisingly large effect: each additional 5% increase in teacher absence reduced learning for the typical student by 4–8% by the end of the school year (Rogers and Vegas, 2009). In rural Rajasthan, India, students' learning increased significantly when they were taught by teachers with higher attendance (Rogers and Vegas, 2009).

However, national data from the United States Bureau of Labor Statistics (1996) demonstrated that urban teachers did not regard teacher absenteeism as a major problem. The data from this study revealed that only 1.6% of all teachers believed that their absences from the classroom presented a serious barrier to student achievement. In a Nation at Risk (1983), the achievement scores of American students were compared with the scores of students from other industrialized nations. The authors found that the achievement scores of American students were related to the quality and quantity of instructional time. Time lost by students because of the absence of the regular classroom teacher was a significant problem that slowed or halted academic and emotional growth (Darling-Hammond, 1995).

According to Chaudhury et al. (2004b) however, the relationship between teacher absenteeism and student performance is not always clear. They also asserted that some studies find either a weak effect or no effect between teacher absence and student attendance and test scores. A study of primary schools in Pakistan by Reimers (1993) revealed a 10% absenteeism rate but no correlation between teacher absence and achievement levels.



Another study in the Northwest Frontier Province of Pakistan by King et al. (1999) showed that higher rates of teacher absenteeism increase student promotion rates for a given level of test scores but reduce student continuation rates. The explanation is that assessments of pupils' progress by absent teachers are less accurate, but students may not know enough material to continue, even if promoted. However, many studies rely on self-reports and are descriptive. The effect of teacher absenteeism on student achievement needs to be clarified with studies that have robust experimental designs.

NCTQ (2014) also reported that there is a significant negative impact on student achievement in classrooms where the teacher is absent for ten days. Yet in the average classroom in their study, teachers exceeded this level of absence, often for perfectly legitimate reasons and even in pursuit of becoming a more effective instructor. They also indicated that given the time and attention spent on school programs, new curriculum and strategies to strengthen teacher quality, the most basic, solvable and cost effective reasons why schools may fail to make educational progress may be overlooked. Thus, parents and guardians owe it to their children to have the most effective policies and practices to make sure that teachers are present when the roll is called.

## **2.5 Measures to Curb Teacher Absenteeism**

Teacher absenteeism has been demonstrated to have a significant negative impact on the academic achievements of pupils and/or students which may be reason why most schools in Ghana especially in the rural areas record higher levels of failure in the BECE. However, it is said that a problem identified is a problem half-solved. As a result, some





suggestions on how to eradicate teacher absenteeism as contained in existing literature are presented in the following paragraphs.

The District Management Council (2004) in USA has discovered that monetary incentives aid in resolving absenteeism. The Council has a program that awards teachers by contributions to a retirement accounts for good attendance and award teachers by contributions to an accounts for better attendance. Approximately \$284,000 per year is saved and reallocated to other district resources.

Moreover Dallas ISD involved its business community in helping them to increase teacher attendance. The district holds parties for teachers with perfect attendance where various prizes are given away, including brand new cars. As a result Dallas ISD doubled its number of teachers with perfect attendance (Basiru, 2013). Similarly, Jacobson (1988) believes that a pay incentive plan helps to decrease teacher absenteeism. That is, the teachers would remain at school to obtain a pay incentive. Also, Scott and Markham (1991) believe that recognition motivates teachers to stay at school and that pay incentives can be used if they are well designed. Worrall and Cooper (1999) further stated that if the modern school is to be driven to a position of superiority and acquire world class bench marks, teachers must be well motivated to achieve regular work attendance.

Scott et al. (1987) believe that a good attendance policy also includes a progressive discipline. Teachers under this guidance must receive increasing levels of punishment for more severe or repeated violations of the organization's policy. The goal is to shape the teacher's behaviour and to give the information they need to understand the consequences





of their actions. The policy needs to be procedural and must be ingrained throughout the academic year to staff members.

According to Basiru (2013), another possible solution to the menace is for the GES to adopt a common transportation system, like buses to pick up teachers along the route and to make sure they arrive at school on time. He however, mentioned that the limitation of this transportation service is that it may not cover all major routes that lead to the schools. The few routes covered are determined by the concentration of teachers living along those routes. Thus, such a transportation service needs to be carefully managed. For instance, it could be contracted out to other firms for effective management.

Scott et al. (1987) again indicated that monitoring is necessary due to at least four reasons:

- To ensure that junior teachers' input to a school's productive output is not undermined,
- Managing late arrivals by way of extra pay for arriving earlier than normal time is also a form of motivation for teachers
- Monitoring late arrival is a means of knowing the amount of main hours wasted as a result of late arrival and this can be translated into loss in output for the purpose of a school's financial projections, and
- Managing late arrival by way of extra pay instead of threats to sack people helps to ensure that junior teachers work in harmony with their superiors and this creates a corporate accord between teachers and superiors, which is a necessary ingredient for performance.



The World Bank (2007) reported that existing measures in Ghana include salary deduction of the hours absent, regular and effective monitoring by head teachers and circuit supervisors, district disciplinary committee in the enforcement of teachers' code of conduct. However, these sanctions tend not to be used in Ghana or elsewhere. The reasons in each country are unclear, but the political power of teacher unions often ensures impunity for all but the most serious violations.

Also principals and teachers in Brazil suggested that absenteeism would be reduced through: salary increases (over 70% of teachers), sanctions or punishment of absent or late teachers, assigning teachers to schools near their homes and help for new teachers. Principals thought that better communication with district offices (60%) might help (World Bank, 2007).



## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.0 Introduction

This chapter contains the study area for the study, the research design- sample and sampling technique(s) used data collection instruments, and the analytical frame work. The study area is captured under the methodology because it gives an overview of the setting within which primary data is collected.

#### 3.1 Study Area

East Gonja District is located at the South-eastern section of the Northern Region of Ghana, with Salaga as the district capital. The district lies within Lat.  $8^{\circ}\text{N}$  &  $9.29^{\circ}\text{N}$  and, Longitude  $0.29^{\circ}\text{E}$  and  $1.26^{\circ}\text{W}$ . It shares boundaries with Yendi and Tamale districts to the North, Central Gonja District to the West, Nanumba-North, Nanumba-South and Kpandai Districts to the East, and the Volta and BrongAhafo Regions to the South. The total land area of the district is 10,787 sq kilometres, occupying about 15.3% of the landmass of the Northern Region. The district comes first in terms of land area (size) among the districts of the Northern Region (Republic of Ghana, 2013).

The 2010 Population and Housing Census put the population of the East Gonja District at 135,450, of which 69,721 are males and 65,729 are females. The district's share of the total population of the Northern Region is 5.46%. The total population of the Northern Region stood at 2,479,461 (as at 2010). The district's population growth rate is 2.1% (1984-2000), lower than both the regional and national averages of 2.9% and 2.5%





respectively (GSS, 2010). This relatively low population growth rate could be explained by increased outmigration from the district combined with modest success of population control and education measures of the Ministry of Health and other Development Partners. This lower population growth rate in East Gonja district is an asset to be maintained and reinforced through conscious policy, promotional and educational measures.

The district has 167 Primary, 40 Junior Secondary, 1 Health Assistants Training School, and 2 Senior High Schools both located in Salaga. Amongst the many problems affecting the educational sector of the East Gonja district are poor enrolments particularly that of the girl-child, poor educational infrastructure, long average distance from school due to the sparse nature of Communities, inadequate Teachers, declining performance levels at both BECE and WASSCE exams and high teacher attrition, absenteeism and lateness (Republic of Ghana 2013).

### **3.2 Research Design**

Given that the objectives and aim of the study are both qualitative and quantitative in nature; primary data under a cross-sectional survey were collected. As a complement however, secondary data from books, reports and journals about the topic were also used.

### **3.3 Population and Sample Size**

The survey targeted all basic school teachers of the East Gonja district, including head teachers, assistant head teacher, subject teachers as well as classroom teachers. For issues of convenience and feasibility however, 98 respondents from 20 basic schools in the district were drawn. The probability sampling technique was used to ensure, as much as





possible, that the sample represents the population with all sample units having equal chances of being chosen. Basically, the 20 schools were selected from a pool of 207 basic schools in the district using the simple random sampling technique, where a sampling frame of all basic schools was designed and the respondent schools selected randomly. The 98 respondents were also selected using the simple random technique. The number of respondent selected from a school was subjected to the number of teachers in the school. On the average, 5 respondents were selected from each of the 20 schools. Table 3.1 below presents the distribution of respondents based on the selected schools:



**Table 3.1: Distribution of respondents in terms of schools**

Name of School	Number of respondents
Ansariya JHS	6
Ansariya Primary	5
Bau D/A JHS	5
Bau D/A Primary	3
BinjaiPresby JHS	4
Good Shepherd R/C Primary	3
GrunshieZongo D/A Primary	5
Islamic JHS	7
Islamic Primary	5
Kakoshi D/A Primary	4
Kalande JHS	5
Kpembe D/A JHS	5
Kpembe D/A Prim.	7
Litinkpa JHS	5
Mepeasem Primary School	4
Sakafatu Primary	5
Salaga Islamic JHS	4
Salaga Presbyterian J.H.S	7
Salaga Presbyterian Primary	4
YagbowuraTimu Girls	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>98</b>

Source: Author's construct, 2015



### **3.4 Data Collection Instruments**

A structured questionnaire was used as the major instrument to solicit information directly from the respondents. The structured questionnaire consisted of both open-ended and closed-ended questions. The open-ended questions gave the respondents the chance to express themselves, whereas the closed-ended questions gives the respondents pre-coded responses of which a respondent selects the option she/he agrees to and/or to specify if otherwise.

The questionnaire was designed by giving attention to the conventional format of a standard questionnaire. The questionnaire is chosen because it offers an efficient means of collecting statistically quantifiable data. Besides, it gives attention to the ethics of research and makes data collection process as bias-free as possible (Sarantakos, 1997).

### **3.5 Data Analysis**

To a larger extent, the study employed qualitative method of research given the nature of the aim and objectives. As a result, descriptive statistics are used largely in the analysis and presentation of the data, from which inferences are made about the variables under consideration. However, the chi-square statistic is generated and interpreted when necessary to indicate whether or not some significant differences exist between some responses and/or characteristics of the respondents. Basically, percentages, graphs, charts and cross tabulations are used to present the data for clear understanding and correct interpretation of the results. These analyses are done using the SPSS version 20.





## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.1 Introduction

The empirical findings of the study are contained in this chapter. Specifically, it deals with the socio-economic characteristics of the sampled basic level teachers, rate of teacher absenteeism in the selected schools and factors that influence teacher absenteeism, the effects of teacher absenteeism on the academic performance of pupils, and the suggested solutions to curb teacher absenteeism in the study area and Ghana at large.

#### 4.2 Socio-Economic Characteristics of the Sampled Basic Level Teachers

This section contains characteristics such as the gender, age, educational qualification, marital status among others that relate directly to a specific respondent.

##### 4.2.1 Gender of the respondents

Figure 4.1 presents the gender distribution of the respondents in terms of the status of the community in which the selected schools are found. It indicates that 89.9% of the respondents in the rural schools were males, 10.1% were females with all the respondents in the urban schools being males. From Figure 4.1, 99.9% of the respondents in the pooled sample were males indicating that the respondents were predominantly males.



**Table 4.1: Age distribution of respondents**

Age category	Rural		Urban		Over all	
	Frequenc y	Percentag e	Frequenc y	Percentag e	Frequenc y	Percentag e
25 – 29	22	31.9	12	41.4	34	34.7
30 – 34	15	21.7	7	24.1	22	22.4
35 – 39	11	15.9	3	10.3	14	14.3
40 – 44	11	15.9	4	13.8	15	15.3
45 – 49	3	4.3	0	0.0	3	3.1
50 – 54	0	0.0	3	10.3	3	3.1
55 – 59	7	10.1	0	0.0	7	7.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>69</b>		<b>29</b>		<b>98</b>	<b>100.0</b>
<b>Mean</b>	35.9		33.2		35.1	
<b>Minimum</b>	25		25		25	
<b>Maximum</b>	59		51		59	
<b>T statistic</b>	<b>1.37*</b>					

Source: Field data, 2015

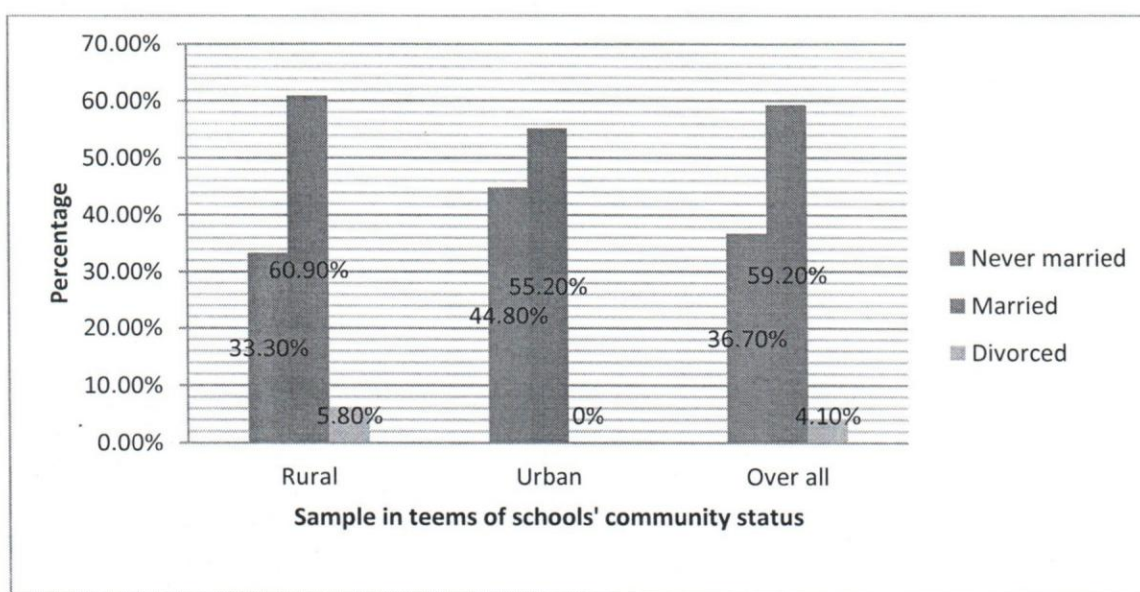
#### 4.2.3 Marital status of respondents

Figure 4.2 shows the marital status of the sampled teachers. It indicates that 59.2% of all the respondents were married; 36.7% indicated that they had never married; and 4.1% were divorced. Also, the figure indicates that 60.9% of respondents in the rural schools were married, 33.3% had never married while 5.8% were divorced. For the respondents



in the urban schools, 55.2% of the previous section indicates that the average age of the respondents was over 30 years. That is, on the average, 30% were married and 44.8% had never married. The findings conform to those of the older respondents are supposed to be married if other factors are held constant. Thus, on the average, the sampled teachers were responsible and should understand and appreciate the irresponsibility associated with absenteeism for no valid reason.

**Figure 4.2 distribution of respondents' marital status**



Source: Field data, 2015

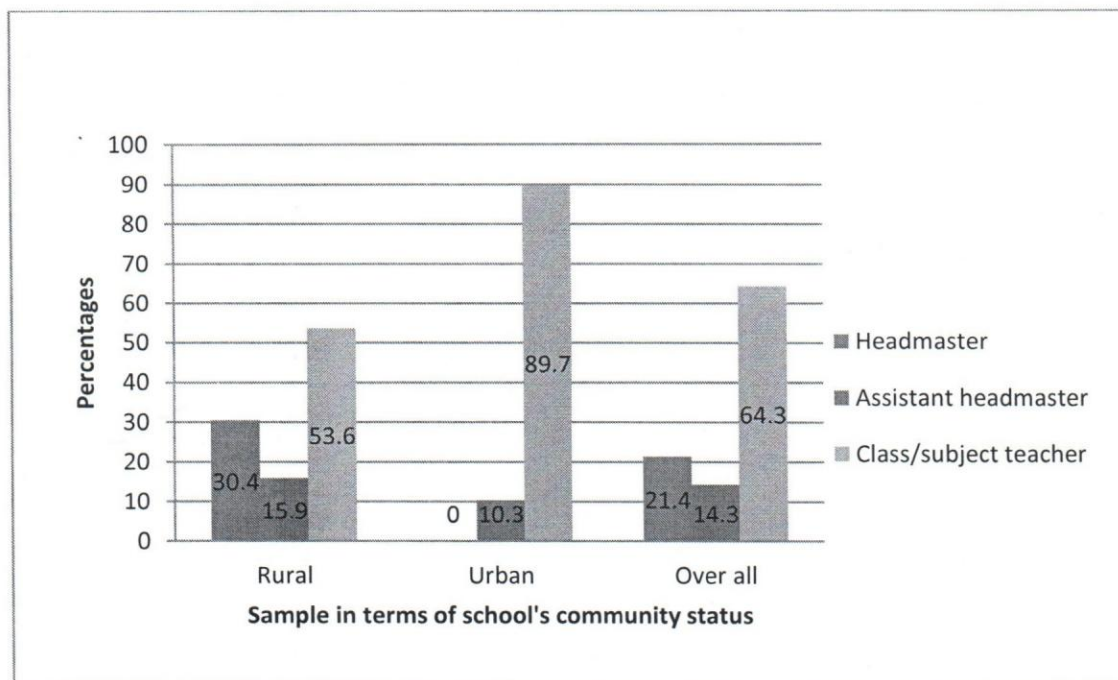
#### 4.2.4 Position of respondents in school

Figure 4.3 represents the position occupied by the respondents in their various schools. The figure indicates that majority of the respondents (64.3%) were class or subject teachers, followed by 21.4% being head teachers, with the least (14.3%) being assistant head teachers. The pooled distribution is similar to those of the rural and urban samples. This is realistic because an average of 5 teachers was selected from each school, out of



which at least 3 should be class or subject teachers are mostly those who indulge in absenteeism should be in good position to tell the story as it occurs.

**Figure 4.3: distribution of respondents' positions in school**



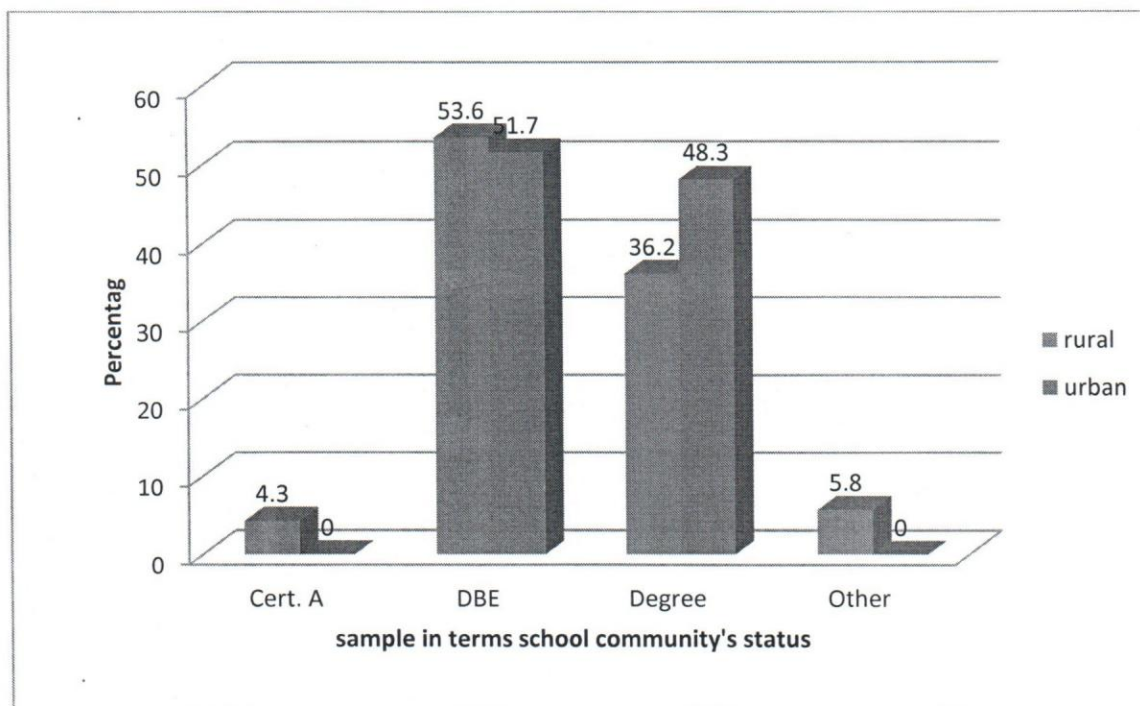
Source: Field data, 2015

#### 4.2.5 Educational qualification of respondent

Figure 4.3 presents the levels of education acquired by the respondents. It indicates that majority of the respondents had Diploma in Basic Education as the highest educational certificate. That is, 53.6% and 51.7% of the rural and urban teachers respectively had DBE, with 36.2% and 48.3% of the rural and urban teachers respectively, had Degree. Thus as far as, the GES is concerned, the respondents had a considerably higher educational qualification. Scott and McClellan (1990), however, indicate that the class level which one teaches and the level of qualification were two primary predictors of

teacher absenteeism. That is, the higher the degree obtained by the teacher, the higher the number of days they are likely to be absent from the classroom.

**Figure: 4.4: distribution of respondents' education qualification**



Source: Field data, 2015

#### 4.2.6 Years at current post

The number of years that a respondent had been teaching in his or her current school is presented in Table 4.2 below. It indicates that majority of the respondents (about 70%) had been working in their current schools for less than five years. The minimum years a respondent had been in his or her current schools was 1, with the maximum being 8 years. The mean years of teachers stay in his or her current school was 3.43 for the pooled, 2.48 and 3.83 for the urban and rural respectively.



The difference in the means for the rural and urban teachers was found significant at the 1% level. This means that the rural teachers had been in their current schools for significantly more years than the urban teachers. The longer years of stay in current schools by rural teachers may be due to the rural schools inability to attract new teachers since most teachers are reluctant to be transferred or posted to the rural areas considering the unavailability of social amenities in the rural areas. However, the generally lower number of years of stay by the teachers in their current schools may be attributable to the policy that any teacher who stayed in a particular school for up to five years is due for transfer.

**Table 4.2: Distribution of respondent years of stay at current post**

Number of years	Rural		Urban		Over all	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
1 – 2	16	23.2	19	65.5	35	35.7
3 – 4	32	46.4	4	13.8	36	36.7
5 – 6	10	14.5	6	20.7	16	16.3
7 – 8	11	15.9	0	0.0	11	11.2
<b>Total</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Mean	3.83		2.48		3.43	
Minimum	1.5		1			
Maximum	8		6			
	3.28***					

Source: Field data, 2015





#### 4.2.7 Experience of respondents in teaching

Table 4.3 shows the distribution of respondents' experience in the teaching profession. From the table, 46.9% of all the respondents had experience of 0 to 5 years in teaching; 17.3% had 6 to 10 years of experience and 35.7% had more than 10 years of experience in teaching. This indicates that on the average, a teacher had 8.9 years of experience in teaching. Table 4.3 also indicates that the respondents in the rural schools had mean years of experience being 8.93 whilst those of the urban schools had 8.83 mean years of experience in teaching. The difference in the mean years between those two categories was found not to be statistically significant.

**Table 4.3: Distribution of respondents' years of experience in teaching**

Number of years	Rural		Urban		Over all	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
0 - 5	33	47.8	13	44.8	46	46.9
6 - 10	8	11.6	9	31.0	17	17.3
Above 10	28	40.6	7	24.1	35	35.7
<b>Total</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Mean	8.93		8.83		8.88	
Minimum	2		1		1	
Maximum	30		22		30	
T statistic	0.07					

Source: Field data, 2015



#### 4.2.8 Teacher population of the sampled schools

Table 4.4 shows the distribution of the number of teachers in the sampled schools. It indicates that 64.3% of the schools had 6 to 10 teachers with only 6.1% having at most 5 teachers. The mean numbers of teachers in a school for the rural, urban and the pooled sample were 9.7, 11.7 and 10.7 respectively. This indicates that the urban schools, which had lesser representation in this study, had more teachers than the rural schools. Besides, the mean difference of number of teachers between the rural and urban schools was found to be statistically significant at the 5% level.

**Table 4.4 Distribution of number of teacher in the schools of respondents**

Number of teacher	Rural		Urban		Over all	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
0 - 5	6	8.7	0	0.0	6	6.1
6 - 10	44	63.8	19	65.5	63	64.3
11 - 15	4	5.8	0	0.0	4	4.1
15 - 20	15	21.7	10	34.5	25	25.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Mean	9.7		11.7		10.7	
Minimum	5		8		5	
Maximum	18		18		18	
T statistic	2.09**					

Source: Field data, 2015



#### 4.3.1 Frequency of teacher absenteeism in respondents' school

It has been argued in literature that teachers of rural schools do absent themselves more than those of the urban schools. Table 4.5 presents the distribution of respondents' responses on whether or not teacher absenteeism is frequent in their respective schools. From the table, 30.4% of the teachers in the rural schools indicated that there is frequent teacher absenteeism in their schools, whilst 20.7% of the respondents in the urban schools indicated that teacher absenteeism is not frequent in their schools. This confirms the arguments made in literature. Specifically, it conforms to the findings by Adelabu, (2005) that in Nigeria teachers in urban schools had slightly lower absentee rates than teachers in rural schools, which he attributed to more regular school supervision and higher visibility of inspectors in urban locations. From table 4.5 however, the chi-square statistic of 0.971 indicates that there is no significance difference between the community status of a respondent's school and his response to the question of whether or not teacher absenteeism is frequent in his school.

**Table 4.5: Frequent teacher absenteeism in the rural and urban schools.**

School's community status	Do teacher frequently absent themselves in your school?					$\chi^2$
	Yes		No		Total	$\chi^2 = 0.971$ Df = 1 Sig. (p = 0.32)
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%		
Rural	21	30.4	48	69.6	69	
Urban	6	20.7	23	79.3	29	
Total	27		71		98	

Source: Field data, 2015





#### 4.3.2 Average level of teacher absenteeism in school

Table 4.6 shows the distribution of average levels of teacher absenteeism in the sampled schools across the rural and urban communities. The table indicates that 47.8% of the respondents in the rural schools indicated that their schools experience teacher absenteeism of 1 to 3 days in a week against 65.5% of the urban school teachers indicating that their schools experience teacher absenteeism of 1 to 3 days in a week. Besides, for every month the average absentee teacher was likely to be absent for 2 weeks indicated by 52.2% of the respondents in the rural schools and 34.5% in the urban schools. Again the findings justify the fact in literature that rural school teachers absent themselves more than their urban counterparts. Moreover, the probability associated with the chi-square statistic is less than 0.1 which implies that there is a significant difference between the rate of absenteeism and community status (rural or urban) of a particular school.

**Table 4.6: Distribution of average level of teacher absenteeism in sampled schools**

School's communit y status	Average period of absenteeism				$\chi^2$
	1 to 3 days in week		1 to 2 weeks in a month		$\chi^2 = 2.57$ Df = 1 Sig. (p = 0.083)
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	
	Total				
Rural	33	47.8	36	52.2	69
Urban	19	65.5	10	34.5	29
Total	52		46		98

Source: Field data, 2015



#### **4.3.3 Proximity of teachers to their school and the likelihood of them to be absent**

In literature, several factors influence absenteeism one of which is nearness of the worker to the work place. That is, if a worker stays closer to his work place, chances are that his rate of absenteeism will be lesser compared to someone who stays far away from the work place. Similarly, the setting in which the work place is located (whether rural or urban) can influence the rates of absenteeism of the workers. Table 4.7 presents the rating of absenteeism by teachers in rural and urban schools with respect to proximity of the school to where the teachers stay.

On the average, the respondents rated the phenomenon as having very low effect on absenteeism (that 34.7% and 20.4% for the rural and urban teachers respectively). The finding, however contradicts the findings of Alcázar et al., (2006) and Chaudhury et al. (2006) who reported that in Bangladesh, Ecuador, India, Indonesia, Peru, and Uganda teachers who are locals to the school community tended to be absent less often than those who commuted from outside the community. similarly, the finding contradicts that of UNICEF (2012) which revealed that teachers in Papua and West Papua, Indonesia, who lived in the same district as their schools had an average absence rate of 19%, compared with 25% for teachers who lived farther out in a sub-district.



**Table 4.7: School's community status and the absenteeism rate of teachers from far away**

School's community status	Teachers who stay far from the school are mostly absent											
	Very high		High		Average		Low		Very low		Total	
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%
Rural	0	0	7	7.1	9	9.2	19	19.4	34	34.7	69	70.4
Urban	3	3.1	0	0.0	0	0.0	6	6.1	20	20.4	29	29.6
Total	3	3.1	7	7.1	9	9.2	25	25.5	54	55.1	98	100.0

Source: Field data, 2015

#### 4.3.4 Categories of people who may exhibit higher level of teacher absenteeism

Table 4.8 presents the ratings of three categories of people who are likely to be agents of teacher absenteeism. From the table, the mean rank for “female teachers are mostly absent” is the lowest which implies that out of the three groups the respondents felt that there is a higher likelihood of a female teacher to be an absentee, followed by younger teachers, whilst non- professional teachers are rated as having lesser chance of being absentees. The finding agrees with that of Malungo (2010) who found female teachers as being more absentees for reasons such as post and antenatal visits, taking care of the sick, elderly and children at home, as well as laziness.





**Table 4.8 Rating of categories of people who may be agents of teacher absenteeism**

Variable	Rates										Mean
	Very high		High		Average		Low		Very low		
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	
Female teachers are mostly absent	0		8		17		21		49		4.17
Young teachers mostly absent themselves	0		14		10		15		59		4.21
Non-professional teachers mostly absent themselves	4		3		7		7		77		4.53

Source: Field data, 2015

#### 4.3.5 Levels of agreement on possible reasons for teacher absenteeism

Table 4.9 presents the levels of agreement by respondents about some variables which can lead to higher teacher absenteeism. From the table, 46% and 46.9% of the teacher responded that they strongly agree and agree respectively that lack of accommodation is a determinant of teacher absenteeism; 44% and 44.9% strongly agreed and agreed respectively that poor working condition is a determinant of teacher absenteeism; and 42% and 42.9% strongly agreed and agreed that school in rural community is a determinant of teacher absenteeism. However, the means for the various variables indicate that poor working condition is the greatest reason for teacher absenteeism, followed by school in rural community, lack of accommodation, health challenges of teachers, teachers attending social functions; with no professionalism on the part of teachers being the lowest determinant of teacher absenteeism. The findings agree with



those of Malungo (2010) who found poor conditions of service and lack of accommodation as the major reason for teacher absenteeism.

**Table 4.9: variables that may cause teacher absenteeism**

Variable	Rates										Mean
	Strongly agree		Agree		Uncertain		Disagree		Strongly disagree		
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	
School in a rural community	42	42.9	27	27.6	3	3.1	15	15.3	11	11.2	2.24
Poor working condition	44	44.9	24	24.5	0	0	26	26.5	4	4.1	2.20
Teachers attend social functions	23	23.5	32	32.7	15	15.3	16	16.3	12	12.2	2.61
Lack of accommodation in school	46	46.9	16	16.3	4	4.1	19	19.4	13	13.3	2.36
Health challenges of teachers	25	25.5	32	32.7	10	10.2	22	22.4	9	9.2	2.57
No professionalism on the part of teachers	0	0.0	15	15.3	7	7.1	31	31.6	45	45.9	4.08

Source: Field data, 2015



#### **4.3.6 Status of school's community and the means with which teachers go to school**

From table 4.10, none of the respondents in the rural schools indicated that teachers of their schools go to school walking, 21.7% indicated that teachers of their schools use bicycle and 79.7% indicated that their schools' teachers use motor bike. For the urban areas, 5.1% of the respondents indicated that their schools' teachers walk to school, 10.3% said they use bicycle and 75.9% said they use motor bike. Thus, majority of the teachers in the selected schools use motor bike as a means of transport to go to school, especially those in the rural schools. This can be one of the reasons why the rural school teachers are more likely to be absent from school since the motor bike can break down or the teacher may not have money to buy fuel to go to school. It also implies that the rural teachers can be involuntarily absent, but they can also give false excuses relating to the motor bike and similar issues to stay away from school. Besides, the probability of 0.004 associated with the chi-square statistic is far less than 0.01 which implies that there is a significant difference between the status of a school's community (rural or urban) and the means of transport with which the school's teachers go to school. That is, if the means with which a rural teacher goes to school is significantly different from the means with which an urban goes to school.





**Table 4.10: The means with which teachers in the selected schools go to school**

School's communit y status	Means by which teachers go to school							$\chi^2$
	Walking		Bicycle		Motor bike		Total	$\chi^2 = 10.98$
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	Df = 2
Rural	0	0.0	15	21.7	54	79.7	69	Sig. (p = 0.004)
Urban	4	5.1	3	10.3	22	75.9	29	
Total	4		18		76		98	

Source: Field data, 2015

#### 4.3.7 Distance from district capital to respondents' school

A related factor to means of transport used by teachers to go school is the distance from the school to the likely place of abode for the teacher. Table 4.11 presents the distribution of the distance from the schools of respondents to the district capital. From the table, 86.5% of the respondents in the urban schools indicated that their schools are at most 5km whilst 76.8% of those in the rural schools indicated that their schools are at 5km from the district capital. Also, 8.6% of respondents in the rural schools indicated their schools are at least 16km from the district capital. The challenges posed by the means of transport are similar to those of staying far place from one's school. Thus, the farther the teachers place of abode to the school, the more likelihood of the teacher to be absent from school, voluntarily or involuntarily. Besides, difference between mean distances given by the rural schools and those of the urban schools is statistically significant at the 1% level.



**Table 4.11: Distribution of the distance from the respondents' school to the district capital**

Distance(km)	Rural		Urban		Over all	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
0-5	53	76.8	25	86.2	78	79.6
6-10	10	14.5	4	13.8	14	14
11-15	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0
16-120	6	8.7	0	0.0	6	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>69</b>		<b>29</b>		<b>98</b>	<b>98</b>
Mean	4.2		1.8		3.5	3.5
T statistic	2.34***					

Source: Field data, 2015

#### 4.3.8.1 Giving reason for being absent by absentee teacher

Table 4.12 shows the results on whether or not absentee teachers in the selected schools give reasons for being absent from school. Majority of the respondents especially those in the rural schools (89.9%) indicated that the teachers do give reasons for being absent from school. Also, 86.2% of the urban teachers responded in the affirmative. However, the chi-square statistic of 0.27 indicates that there was no significant difference between the status of a school's community (rural or urban) and the likelihood that a teacher from that school will give a reason for being absent. That is, whether rural school teacher or urban, he or she may or may not give any reason for being absent from school.



**Table 4.12 Distribution of whether or not absentee teachers give reasons for being absent**

School's communit y status	Do absentee teachers give reason					$\chi^2$
	Yes		No		Total	$\chi^2 = 0.27$ Df = 1 Sig. (p = 0.60)
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%		
Rural	62	89.9	7	10.1	69	
Urban	25	86.2	4	17.2	29	
Total	87		11		98	

Source: Field data, 2015

#### 4.3.8.2 Reasons normally given by teachers for being absent

For those respondents who indicated that teachers of their schools give reasons for being absent from school, the reasons normally given are presented in table 4.13. From the table, about 28% of the respondents indicated that the absentee teachers give reasons such as ill health and travelling; 24.5% indicated that they give reasons such as attending funerals, prayers and other social functions. Other reasons that are given by the teachers for being absent include motor bike break down, no money to buy fuel, no money to go to schools because he or she has not received his or her allowance or has not been mechanized upon completion (for new teachers), water shortage, going to write semester exams, among others. These findings also conform to those of Malungo (2010) who indicated respondents in his study reported water shortage and further studies as some of the reasons why some teachers absent themselves from their duties.





**Table 4.13: distribution of reasons mostly given by absentee teachers**

Reasons	School's community status				Over all	
	Rural		Urban			
	Freq	%	Freq	%	Freq	%
attending funerals and prayers	13	18.8	11	37.9	24	24.5
Ill-health and travelling	20	29.0	8	27.6	28	28.6
No response	10	14.5	6	20.7	16	16.3
motor bike break down and no money to buy fuel	14	20.3	4	13.8	18	18.4
No money, because he has not received his allowance upon completion	5	7.2	0	0.0	5	5.1
Water shortage	7	10.1	0	0.0	7	7.1
Total	69		29		98	100.0

Source: Field data, 2015

#### 4.4.1 Responses on whether or not absenteeism affects pupils' performance

Table 4.14 presents the responses given by respondents on whether or not teacher absenteeism negatively influences pupils' performance. It is indicated in the table that majority of the respondents indicated that indeed teacher absenteeism negatively influences pupils' performance, with all (100%) the rural schools' teachers against 89.7% of the urban teachers agreeing to the statement. the chi-square statistic of 7.36 indicates that there is a significant difference between a school's community status the likelihood of the teachers perceiving absenteeism to have negative influence on pupils' performance. Specifically, the rural teachers are more probable to perceive teacher absenteeism to have negative influence on pupils' performance.



Urban school teacher, he or she may or may not give any reason for being absent from school.

**Table 4.14: distribution of responses on whether or not teacher absenteeism affects pupils' performance**

School's community status	Does absenteeism affect pupils' performance					$\chi^2$
	Yes		No		Total	$\chi^2 = 7.36$
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%		Df = 1
Rural	69	100.0	0	0.0	69	Sig. (p = 0.007)
Urban	26	89.7	3	10.3	29	
Total	95		3		98	

Source: Field data, 2015

#### 4.4.2 Effects of absenteeism on pupils' performance

Table 4.15 contains the specific effects that respondents felt that teacher absenteeism has on pupils' performance. Key among the effects as far as this study is concerned is that instructional hours are cut which results in inability to cover stipulated syllabus, eventually leading to under performance of students in examination. Other effects given are fewer exercises; pupils not taking subjects of absentee teachers serious; among others all of which result in under performance of pupils as well as not being able to proceed on the educational ladder. The respondents also indicated that higher rates and frequency of teacher absenteeism put higher burdens on other teachers, which conforms to the findings of Obeng-Denteh et al. (2011) who reported that at one Ghana school district,



absenteeism affected the motivation of fellow teachers, who were left to take on additional planning and instructional duties.

**Table 4.15: Some effects of teacher absenteeism on pupils' performance**

Effect	School's community status			
	Rural		Urban	
	Frequency	Percentage	Frequency	Percentage
fewer exercises	8	11.6	0	0
Higher burden on other teachers	8	11.6	0	0
Instructional hours are cut, Syllabus are not covered,	33	47.8	11	37.9
No response	16	23.2	15	51.7
The pupils do not take the subject of the absentee teacher serious	4	5.8		
Pupils are unable to proceed to the next level of education			3	10.3
Total	69	100	29	100

Source: Field data, 2015

#### 4.4.3 Pupils' performance in some key subjects for the past 2014/2015 academic year

Table 4.16 indicates that 42.9% and 24.5% of the respondents rated the performance of their schools' pupils in English language as average and very low respectively; 38.8% and 24.5% rated pupils' performance in Mathematics as average and low respectively; 31.6% and 28.6% rated their pupils' performance in Social studies as average and low respectively; 46.9% and 28.6% rated their pupils performance in Integrated science as





average and low respectively; 25.5% and 40.8% rated pupils performance in ICT as average and low respectively; with 57.1% and 28.6% rating pupils performance in all subjects as average and low respectively. However, the mean performance ratings in the listed subject areas indicate that pupils' performance in social studies was ranked highest, followed by mathematics, integrated science, ICT, with performance in English language being ranked lowest.

**Table 4.16: Rating of pupils' performance in some key subjects in the selected schools**

Subject	Performance rating										Mean
	Very high		High		Average		Low		Very low		
	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	Freq.	%	
English language	4	4.1	11	11.2	42	42.9	17	17.3	24	24.5	3.47
Mathematics	4	4.1	19	19.4	38	38.8	24	24.5	13	13.3	3.23
Social Studies	7	7.1	29	29.6	31	31.6	28	28.6	3	3.1	2.91
Int. Science	4	4.1	11	11.2	46	46.9	28	28.6	9	9.2	3.28
ICT	4	4.1	18	18.4	25	25.5	40	40.8	11	11.2	3.38
all subjects	0	0.0	11	11.2	56	57.1	28	28.6	3	3.1	3.23

Source: Field data, 2015



#### 4.5.1 Possible measures to curb teacher absenteeism

Table 4.17 presents the ratings of some measures to reduce if not eliminate teacher absenteeism in schools of the East Gonja district in particular and Ghana at large. Considering the mean ratings for the listed variables by the respondents, improvement in working conditions of teachers had least mean which implies that it is rated highest; followed by patriotism advocacy for teachers; organization of teacher related programs at inactive school times; with threat of pay cut of absentee teachers being rated as the least important measure to curb teacher absenteeism.

**Table 4.17: Rating of suggested measures to curb teacher absenteeism**

Measures	Performance rating										Me an
	Very high		High		Average		Low		Very low		
	Fre q.	%	Fre q.	%	Fre q.	%	Fre q.	%	Fre q.	%	
Improve working condition of teachers	52	53 .1	25	25 .5	6	6. 1	8	8. 2	3	3. 1	1.7 8
Threat of pay cut	15	15 .3	23	23 .5	32	32 .7	7	7. 1	17	17 .3	2.8 7
Advocate patriotism	34	34 .7	30	30 .6	9	9. 2	18	18 .4	3	3. 1	2.2 1
Organize programs at inactive school times	10	10 .2	27	27 .6	34	34 .7	20	20 .4	3	3. 1	2.7 8

Source: Field data, 2015



#### 4.5.2 Other measures suggested by respondent to mitigate teacher absenteeism

Table 4.18 presents some suggested measures by respondents to fight against teacher absenteeism. From the table, most of the teachers in both rural and urban schools suggested that salaries and conditions of service of teachers must be improved; motivation of regular and punctual teachers; and provision of accommodation and incentive packages for teachers. Other suggestions include strict and constant supervision of teachers; reduction of salaries of teachers who absent themselves frequently; active involvement of PTA and SMC in monitoring and supervision of teachers; guidance and counselling for teachers; special incentives for rural teachers, among others.

Table: 4.18: Additional measures suggested by respondents to curb teacher absenteeism

Suggested solutions to curb teacher absenteeism	Community status			
	Rural		Urban	
	Freq	Percent	Freq	Percent
Accommodation for teachers, and active involvement of PTA and SMC in monitoring and supervision of teachers	3	4.3	0	0.0
Accommodation for teachers, and motor bike maintenance allowance for teachers	4	5.8	0	0.0
Accommodation for teachers, incentive packages for teachers and award to teachers for good work done	14	20.3	3	10.3
demotion of absentee teachers	4	5.8	0	0.0
special motivation for rural teachers, provision of accommodation for teachers, and provision of water	7	10.1	0	0.0





Motivation to regular and punctual teachers	4	5.8		0.0
No response	11	15.9	18	62.1
Strict and constant supervision of teachers and reduction of salaries of teachers who absent themselves	15	21.7	1	3.4
Through validation head teachers to stop salaries of absentee teachers who absent themselves for 5 days. Head teachers should be empowered, in terms of administrative authorities. District directors should not always interfere	4	5.8	0	0.0
unless of health issues, frequent absentee teachers should lose their entire salaries	3	4.3	0	0.0
Supervision as well as guidance and counselling of teachers should be encouraged			3	10.3
salaries and conditions of teacher must be improved, Motivation to regular and punctual teachers	0	0.0	4	13.8
Total	69	100	29	100

Source: Field data, 2015



## CHAPTER FIVE

### 5.0 FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Introduction

The main objective of the research is to bring to bear the causes of teacher absenteeism within the basic schools in the East Gonja district. This chapter therefore presents the synopsis of findings. Conclusions based on the research objectives and research questions shall also be drawn. The questions are about the main causes of teacher absenteeism, the extent to which ill-health, long distances, social gathering, economic and political factors contribute to teacher absenteeism in the named district. Attention shall also be focused on existing capacity building measures that could be taken to, at least, minimize the problem if not eradicate completely. Recommendations are made based on conclusions drawn.

#### 5.2. Major findings

##### 5.2.1 Health challenges

The research revealed ill-health of teachers as one of the causes of teacher absenteeism in the East Gonja district. It was established that 29% and 27.6% of teachers in the rural and urban areas respectively, absent themselves from school as a result of ill-health. It also came to light that sick teachers who manage to go to school end up transmitting the disease to their colleagues and some of the pupils they teach. This situation leads to the increase rate of absenteeism among teachers and a reduction in productivity.



### **5.2.2 Long distance**

Long distance is another factor that was revealed by the research as contributing to teacher absenteeism in the district. It was established that 86.5% of teachers in the urban areas and 76.8% of teachers in the rural areas live a distance of five (5) kilometres or more from schools where they teach. Consequently, those who do not have any means of transport and therefore go to school on foot, either go to school very late or absent themselves from school for two(2) or three(3) days in the week as they become tired from the long distance walk. It was also revealed that the 20.3% and 13. 8% of teachers living in the rural and urban areas respectively who had their own means of transport such as motor bikes and bicycles are no better as they also absent themselves from school from time to time either due to breakdown of their vehicles or lack of money to buy fuel.

### **5.2.3 Funerals and Friday prayers**

The research also brought out social gathering such as funerals and Friday prayers as another major cause of teacher absenteeism in the district under consideration. According to the research, 18.8% of teachers living in the rural areas and 37.9% of those in it urban areas of the district absent themselves from school because they either attend funerals or go to the Mosque, especially on Fridays, to pray. This practice, indeed, has a negative effect on teaching and learning in the district: considering the fact that district is a Muslim dominated one.





#### **5.2.4 Inadequate water supply**

The research also revealed lack of water in the East Gonja district as one of the causes of teacher absenteeism in the district. It came to light that 10.1% of teachers leaving in the, rural areas and 7.1% of those living in the urban areas of the district fail to go to school either because they have no water to wash their clothing or to bath. The situation becomes worse during the dry season when there is little or no rain fall in the district. The few contact hours lost as a result of the teachers' absence, go a long way to adversely affect output in the school.

#### **5.2.5 Delay in mechanizing teachers' salary**

During the research it was discovered that another factor that was responsible for teacher absenteeism in schools within the community is government's inability to promptly mechanize newly trained teachers' salary. According to the research, 72% of teachers living in the rural areas of the district who were still on allowance attributed their failure to sometimes attend school to either because they have to visit the education office in order to fill forms for their salary or inadequate resources for their upkeep since they leave on allowance.

#### **5.2.6 Poor conditions of service**

A poor condition of service is one factor that is also responsible for teacher absenteeism in schools in the area. It was established that teachers receive low salary which made it difficult for them to care and provide for their children, to be able to live in a satisfactory home that offers security and emotional stability, the money necessary to attain these



goals (Tao, 2013). As a result, teachers take on secondary jobs or employment to supplement their income.

#### **5.4.7 Lack of Accommodation**

The research also revealed lack of accommodation for teachers, as another major contributory factor to teacher absenteeism. Teachers who are posted to areas where there are no ready accommodation for them fail to stay at post until a place is found for them. The absence from post negatively affects teaching and learning.

#### **5.2.8 Further studies**

During the research it came to light that teachers' desire to upgrade their status in the teaching service is one factor that contributes to teacher absenteeism in schools in the district. Many teachers go on study leave and in many cases create a vacuum if there are no immediate replacements. Other teachers also opt for either the sandwich course or the distance course. In the case of the teachers pursuing distances courses, they. Remain at post while pursuing their courses but take time off to write their semester exams when the time is due. Those pursuing sandwich courses leave the school for some weeks to attend lectures and prepare for examinations. This practice also affects teaching and learning negatively.

### **5.3 Conclusion**

The study concludes that teacher absenteeism is prevalent in the basic schools in the East Gonja district of the Northern Region. Teacher absenteeism is more prevalent in the rural



Schools than the urban schools. This accounts for the poor performance of pupils in examinations, particularly the BECE. The study also concludes that health challenges, teachers attending social functions, lack or inadequate accommodation facilities in communities, long distances, poor conditions of service, teachers going for further Studies, inadequate water supply and delay in mechanizing salaries of newly trained teachers are the factors that account for teacher absenteeism in the East Gonja district.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

The study identified some key factors accounting for teacher absenteeism, its effects on the academic performance of pupils in the East Gonja district. Blame may be laid at the doorsteps of teachers, communities, school authorities, NGOs and the government who are expected to work as a team to reduce teacher absenteeism in the basic schools of the district in particular and in Ghana as a whole. Recommendations were given based on each finding.

##### **5.4.1 Health challenges**

Health challenges of teachers are identified as one factor that is responsible for teacher absenteeism in the district in question. The researcher recommends the establishment of health facilities in the rural areas in particular to promote quality health care for all inhabitants, including the teacher. Stakeholders such as NGOs and philanthropists could assist in the provision of safe drinking water, toilet facilities and put in place other sanitary measures to improve the health of the people.





#### **5.4.2 Long distances**

According to the research, the long distances that some teachers cover to and from their places of work, contribute in no small way to teacher absenteeism in the district. By way of minimizing the problem, government is urged to provide means of transport such as bicycles and motor bikes for teachers in the rural areas. Public means of transport such as buses could also be made available at designated points to convey teachers to and from schools. Apart from the fact that these logistics could help address the problem of teacher absenteeism, it could also serve as a source of motivation to teachers who will give off their best to promote effective teaching and learning.

#### **5.4.3 Funerals and Friday prayers**

Social gatherings such as funerals and Friday worships by Muslims, according to the research, greatly accounts for teacher absenteeism in the district under consideration. As a way of checking this, the researcher recommends the intensification of supervision by circuit supervisors in schools within the district, especially on Fridays when a good number of teachers within the district use Friday worship or attendance to funerals as an excuse to stay away from school. If a teacher or two are punished for attending Friday prayers at the expense of their work, others will refrain from the bad practice and this will surely improve upon the teaching and learning process within the schools in the district.

#### **5.4.4 Inadequate water supply**

The research revealed inadequate water supply in the study area as being a contributing factor to teacher absenteeism. It is evident, therefore, that a solution to this problem



Would greatly improve the current situation where 10.1% of teachers in the rural areas and 7.1% of those in urban areas fail to attend school as a result of water shortage. In the light of this, the researcher humbly appeals to the government, NGOs, philanthropists and all other stakeholders to assist in the provision of portable drinking water and also to drill bore holes especially in the rural areas of the district to ensure constant water supply in the communities.

#### **5.4.5 Delay in mechanizing teachers' salaries**

The delay in mechanizing teachers' salaries on completion of courses compels affected teachers to visit the district education office frequently to complete forms in anticipation of receiving their salaries. The researcher recommends that salaries of teachers upon completion of college should be mechanized, at most three months after completion of courses. Scheduled officers who sometimes delay the submission of inputs to the headquarters must be severely sanctioned. District directors whose teachers often leave school to the office to work on their salaries should also be punished.

#### **5.4.6 Poor conditions of service**

The research brought to light inter-alia that some teachers absent themselves from school in order to take up some part time jobs elsewhere. This, according to the research, is to enable them supplement their monthly income which is too meagre to satisfy their needs. To reduce this problem, the researcher recommends that the government should take immediate steps to improve upon the current conditions of service of all personnel in the GES. They should be made to match with those of their counterparts in other services such as the Ghana Health service. If this is done, it would improve upon teachers' income which would in turn, prevent them from engaging in secondary jobs that are likely to



conflict with their responsibilities. The sale of means of transport and cooking utensils on hire purchase basis among others, to especially teachers in the rural areas would go a long way to boost the morale of the teacher. This incentive would attract more teachers to the teaching profession who will work with joy and help to improve upon teaching and learning in most schools if not all.

#### **5.4.7 Lack of Accommodation**

The research also revealed lack of accommodation for teachers, especially in the rural areas as a contributory factor to teacher absenteeism in some schools in the district. By way of minimizing the problem, it is recommended that stakeholders such as the government, NGOs who are into education, parent-teacher associations, school management committees among others should as a matter of urgency provide accommodation in the schools within the district. This will address the problem of the accommodation shortage and therefore improve upon teachers' attendance to school.

#### **5.4.8 Further studies**

In order to reduce the problem of teacher absenteeism as a result of teachers leaving the classroom for further studies, the researcher suggests to government to encourage teachers who want to further their education to do so through the on-line programmes. When this happens, the time which would have been spent by the teachers concerned to write semester exams or attend lectures elsewhere would be drastically reduced. The time saved by the teachers would be used to improve upon teaching and learning in the schools.





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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1: Questionnaire for the collection of primary data

This study is being undertaken to assess teacher absenteeism and its effects on academic performance in basic schools of the East Gonja district in the Northern region of Ghana. The information provided will assist the researchers to recommend the formulation and review of policies and programs that will ensure that teacher absenteeism is curbed and academic performance is improved in the district in particular and Ghana at large. This is due to the crucial roles that education plays in a developing economy like the Ghanaian economy. The information needed will be treated with utmost confidentiality and used strictly for the purpose of this academic research.

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Community.....

Date.....

School.....

#### A. Personal information

1. Sex of respondent (1) Male (2) Female
2. Age of respondent .....
3. marital status of respondent (1) Never married (2) Married (3) Divorced (4) Separated (5) Widowed
4. Religion of respondent (1) Christian (2) Moslem (3) Traditional (4) Other (Specify.....)
5. Educational qualification (1) SSS/SHS certificate (2) Certificate A (3) DBE (4) HND (5) Degree 6) Masters 7) Other (Specify.....)



6. Respondent's position in the school (1) Headmaster (2) Assistant headmaster (3) Class room/subject teacher
7. For how long have you been in this school?.....years
8. How many years of experience do you have as a teacher?.....

### B. Level of absenteeism and reasons for absenteeism

9. How many teachers are in your school?.....
10. Specify the number of male.....and female.....teachers
11. How would you rate the following issues with respect to the teachers of your school?

Item	Response				
	VH	H	A	L	VL
Most teachers in the school do absent themselves					
Teacher absenteeism is very frequent in this school					
Teachers from afar mostly absent themselves					
Female teachers do absent themselves from school than male teachers					
Relatively younger teachers do absent themselves from school than older teachers					
Non-professional teachers do absent themselves more than professional teachers					

VH=Very high, H=High, A=Average, L= Low and VL=Very Low



12. How frequent does the most absentee teacher absent himself from school? (1) 1-3 days in a week (2) 1- 2 weeks in a month (3) A whole month in a term
13. To what extent do you agree with the following statements about your school?

Item	Response				
	SA	A	U	D	SD
The community is a rural community					
working condition in the service is very poor					
It is difficult to attract and retain teachers in the school					
Teachers do attend cultural or religious activities such as going mosque, naming ceremonies etc					
Lack of accommodation for teachers within the school's community					
Health challenges of teachers					
Lack of professionalism on the part of teachers					

SA=Strongly Agree, A=Agree, U=Uncertain, D=Disagree, and SD=Strongly Disagree

14. What is the major means of transport used by your teachers to come to school? (1) Walking (2) bicycle (3) Motor bike (4) Private car (5) Public transport
15. What is the distance from your school to the district capital?.....km





16. Do the absentee teachers give reasons to the headmaster for being absent? (1) Yes  
(2) No

17. If yes, what are some of reasons mostly given? .....

.....  
.....  
.....

**C. Effects of absenteeism on student's academic performance**

18. Does the absenteeism affect students' performance in your school? (1) Yes (2) No

19. How will you rate the performance of your pupils in the BECE or end of year examinations for the past three years with respect to the following subjects?

Subject	Response				
	VH	H	A	L	VL
English Language					
Mathematics					
Integrated Science					
Social Studies					
ICT					
Ghanaian Language					
All subjects					

VH=Very high, H=High, A=Average, L= Low and VL=Very Low



20. In what other ways does teacher absenteeism affect academic performance of the pupils of your school?
- .....

**D. Suggestions on how to curb absenteeism**

21. How will rate the following as the possible solutions to curb teacher absenteeism in schools?

Item	Response				
	VH	H	A	L	VL
Improved working condition					
Threat of pay cut					
Encouraged to have concern for national development					
Planned teacher absenteeism should be reduced by ensuring that programs should be conducted on occasions when schools are not active.					

VH=Very high, H=High, A=Average, L= Low and VL=Very Low

22. Please provide (if any) other solutions to curb teacher absenteeism.
- .....
- .....

**THANKS FOR YOUR PATIENCE**

