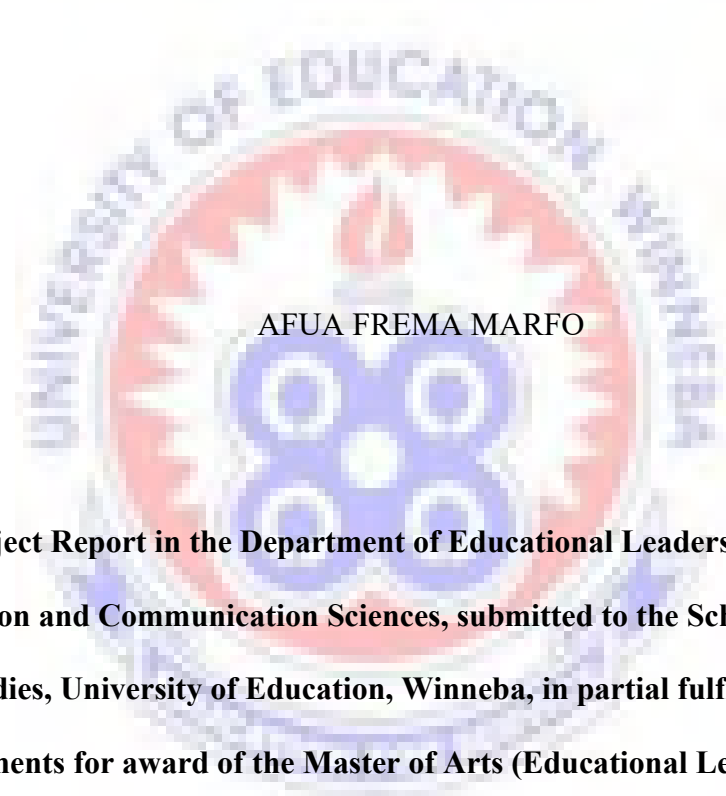UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

THE EFFECTS OF STUDENT ABSENTEEISM AND TRUANCY ON STUDENT

ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN SELECTED JHS SCHOOLS IN THE

OFORIKROM SUB-METROPOLIS

AFUA FREMA MARFO

A Project Report in the Department of Educational Leadership, Faculty of

Education and Communication Sciences, submitted to the School of Graduate

Studies, University of Education, Winneba, in partial fulfilment of the

requirements for award of the Master of Arts (Educational Leadership) degree

DECEMBER, 2018

DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, AFUA FREMA MARFO, declare that this project report, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and acknowledged, is entirely my own original research work, and it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree in this university or elsewhere.

SIGNATURE: ……………………………………………

DATE: ……………..……………………………………….

SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work was supervised in accordance with the guidelines for supervision of project report as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.
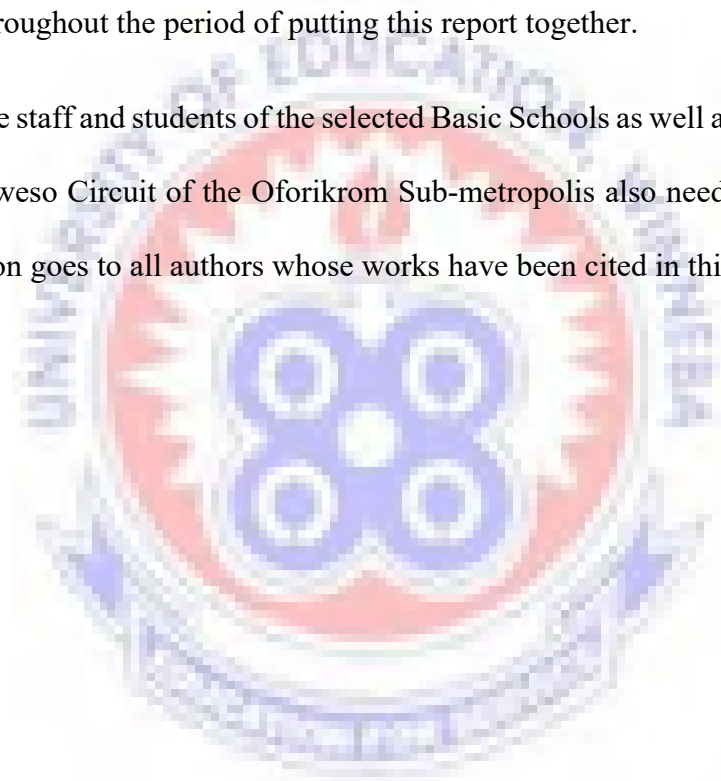
SUPERVISOR'S NAME: DR. STEPHEN BAFFOUR ADJEI

SIGNATURE: …………………………………………

DATE: …………………………………………….

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

DEDICATION

To my father, the late Mr. Kofi Kwakye Marfo.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

BECE   Basic Education Certificate Examination

GES   Ghana Education Service

JHS   Junior High School

MoE   Ministry of Education

OECD   Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

TLMs   Teaching and Learning Materials

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the effects of student absenteeism and truancy on academic performance in three selected JHS schools in the Oforikrom Sub-Metropolis. The study adopted the mixed research approach to gather and analyse relevant data; which involved both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The total number of respondents were fifty (50) students who exhibit absenteeism and truancy behaviours, two (2) head teachers and five (5) teachers from the Aprade, Weweso and Anwomaso Basic Schools. All respondents were purposively sampled based on their knowledge on the phenomenon studied. The study found that about fifteen (15) factors resulted in the absenteeism and truancy behaviours of students. The highest factor was the attitude of teachers (poor engagement in learning in classroom). Other included illness, ignorance, family problems, economic hardships, poor head teacher-student relationship, poor attitude towards absence, negative school atmosphere, adaptation to school, and individual reasons, among others. The study also found that the academic performance of such students was low. The study further showed a decreasing performance of students who exhibit absenteeism and truancy with an average grade of 30 for the 2017/2018 academic year. Chi-square test to establish whether there is an association between absenteeism and truancy behaviours of students and academic showed a statistically significant association between academic performance of students and absenteeism and truancy behaviours with a computed Chi-square statistic value of 4.437 with (Asymp.) and p-value of 0.035. Based on the findings, the study recommended the need for effective cooperation between family of victims and schools to address such behaviours. Also, the study suggested that elective courses should be varied depending on the interests and needs of students and suitable environments for these courses should be prepared at schools.

CHAPTER ONE

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.0 Background to the Study

The future development of any nation is dependent on the young ones who constitute the potential human resources needed for the continuity of the society (Ali et al., 2014). To achieve sustainable development of a society, the young population must not only be preserved but also disciplined. School indiscipline and growth in social vices have been over time an issue of concern for educators, policy makers and public opinion in general. This is due to the outbreak of aggressiveness among peers and violence within teacher-student relationship as well as vandalism. These have resulted in perpetual existence of problem of drop out, deviant behaviours, examination malpractice, lateness and poor academic performance among students.

Absenteeism and truancy are argued to be among the most commonly practiced social vice among school children. Reducing truancy and absenteeism among students may constitute alternative avenues for policy makers as it would focus on students who would largely benefit from being in the classroom (Aucejo and Romano, 2016; Romero and Lee, 2007). Evidence suggest that there is significant opportunity for improving the attendance and consequently, academic performance of students. For instance, Balfanz and Byrnes (2012) indicate that between 5 and 7.5 million students nearly miss a month of school. As such, truancy and absences are pervasive problems present at all school levels, particularly, the basic schools. Chang and Romero (2008) further argue that at least 10% of kindergartners and first graders miss approximately 10% or more of the school year in the US. The impact of these practices (absenteeism and truancy) according to several researchers (see Romero and Lee, 2007; Connolly and Olson, 2012; Attendance Works and Healthy Schools Campaign, 2015) can have long-term

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effects; where chronic truancy and absenteeism constitute early predictor of dropping out of school. Harris (2014) further argue that absenteeism and truancy are costly for budgets of schools and district, where in California, absenteeism and truancy cost public schools about $3.5 billion in state funding based on daily attendance between 2010/11 and 2012/13.

Concerning their displays, Freire and Amado (2009) indicate that the major situations of absenteeism and truancy are reflected in what they point out as the first level of indiscipline; which are those incidents of disruptive nature whose disturbance affects the good functioning or environment of the classroom. Yaroson (2004) further argues that these behaviours in school permeate all the facets of life. As such, call for discipline to address absenteeism and truancy among students in school is argued to have two main objectives which ensures the safety of staff and students, and to create a conducive learning environment (Gaustard, 2005; Ali, 2009; Omonijo and Nnedum, 2012; Nwosu, 2009). Therefore, absenteeism and truancy as social vices such as hooliganism, truancy and theft, displayed by students defeat the goals of education. Idu and Ojedapo (2011) further argue that if absenteeism and truancy are allowed in schools, they could hatch a monster that will be difficult to exterminate. The problem of these behaviours affects all schools irrespective of type and gender, although the degree and magnitude vary among schools.

It is common among scholars that students with greater attendance than their colleague classmates perform better on standardised achievement tests and also schools with relatively higher rates of periodic absenteeism and truancy tend to have students who perform better on tests than schools with lower attendance rates (Caldas, 1993; Cabus and Witte, 2015). A study by Sheldon (2007) however found otherwise, where he argued that performance in schools does not show a strong correlation with

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attendance. These present a challenge in estimating the effects of truancy and absenteeism on student performance; although more able and motivated students are both more likely to attend school and to perform well in their courses and on standardized tests. This is however inconclusive. Therefore, without adequate controls for personal characteristics, part of any estimated effects of absences will reflect a downward ability bias due to endogenous selection. The study therefore sought to assess the perception of students and teachers on the effect of absenteeism or truancy on student performance in selected basic schools in the Oforikrom Sub-Metropolis.

1.1 Problem Statement

Regoli (2012) argue that it is rare to find a school or an institution void of social vices, specifically, absenteeism and truancy. This depicts that they are present in all educational centers - primary, secondary and tertiary. The major causes among students in Africa are noted to be several. Peer pressure is the major cause of children involvement in general vices such as absenteeism and truancy (Omonijo and Nnedum, 2012; Anho, 2011). Students spend more time with their friends in school or at home. Due to their weak nature and tender age, they are easily influenced by peers (Owusu-Boateng et al., 2015; Stanley, 2005). Another factor is negligence by the parents or a broken home. Most children that engage themselves in such behaviours are from broken homes (Swearer and Espelage, 2011; Bender, 2010). Lack of parental care, supervision and attention can make a child engage in such behaviours. Children from the permissive and uninvolved parenting styles therefore fall mostly into these traps.

Absenteeism and truancy are noted to be among the major antisocial discipline problems among secondary school students (Oluremi, 2013). The concept and acts of general indiscipline have received a lot of attention by researchers. Peck (2012) opined

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that the various behavioural disorders like absenteeism and truancy have so undermined effective teaching-learning processes that some teachers have become helpless and disorganized in their task of impacting knowledge to the learners.

Ghana currently operates an educational system in which not less than 250,000 students drop out from the Junior High School level every year without any skill due to several reasons (Ghana News Agency, 2013). This means that about 20 years of the JHS system has produced not less than 5,000,000 school drop outs walking on the streets of Ghana without any skill (Adam et al., 2016). As such, it is reported that some students resort to indiscipline acts (Ghana News Agency, 2013).

Studies in Ghana have generally shown several cases of general indiscipline behaviours (teenage pregnancy, alcoholism, drug abuse) which are exhibited by students at various levels of the educational ladder, particularly the second cycle and tertiary levels (eg. Basiru, 2013; Danso, 2010; Owusu-Boateng et al., 2015). The foregoing and other issues make it very important to ensure discipline in current educational systems. It is thus deemed relevant to provide effective measures to minimise students indulgence in vices such as armed robbery, rape, cultism, examination fraud and many other unruly behaviours which make headlines in print and electronic media (Vamguard, 2006; Ogwuda 2006; Komolafe and Ajao 2006).

A number of studies have also examined the effects of length of the school year on student achievement. Several studies on school quality include term length as one of the regressors (see Grogger, 1996; Eide and Showalter, 1998) but typically find insignificant effects. The biggest stumbling block to uncovering the impact of school days on student performance has been the lack of variation in the total number of school days in an academic year. Whiles some studies indicate that deviant acts such as absenteeism and truancy perpetrated by students are responsible for the downward turn

in the academic performance (Braimah, 2009; Young and Chavez, 2002), others have shown otherwise where students who practice absenteeism and truancy performed better in standardised tests (Sheldon, 2007; Marcotte and Hemelt, 2008). The latter finding revealed that relationship between absenteeism and poor student academic performance was insignificant. The results of the effect of absenteeism and truancy on student academic performance is therefore inconclusive.

There are also several research works in Ghana which only largely examined the causes of absenteeism and truancy specifically, among teachers, with little consideration of the impact of such attitudes on performance (Braimah, 2009, Basiru, 2015; Owusu-Boateng et al., 2015). When the results of these studies were analysed, it has been observed that the causes of school absenteeism and school dropouts are mostly originated from family, school and student. It is however not certain whether efforts taken by researchers, teachers, school administrators and stakeholders at linking absenteeism and truancy among students to performance with a view to curbing these behaviours have yielded any fruits in the past. In the light of the overall challenges of social vices in schools, this study set out to assess the effects of absenteeism and truancy on student academic performance in selected basic (Junior High) schools, taking the Oforikrom Sub-Metropolis as a case.

1.2 Research Objectives

The general objective of the research is to assess the effects absenteeism and truancy have on student academic performance in selected basic (Junior High) schools in the Oforikrom Sub-Metropolis. The following are the specific objectives for the study:

1. To identify the factors that result in truancy and absenteeism among students in basic schools in the Oforikrom Sub-Metropolis.

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2. To examine the social implications of truancy and absenteeism exhibited by students in basic schools in the Oforikrom Sub-Metropolis.

3. To assess the extent to which truancy and absenteeism impact on students' academic performance in basic schools in the Oforikrom Sub-Metropolis.

4. To make recommendations to inform strategies to minimise truancy and absenteeism among students and improve academic performance in basic schools in the Oforikrom Sub-Metropolis.

1.3 Research Questions

The research sought to provide answers to the following questions:

1. What factors cause truancy and absenteeism among students in basic schools in the Oforikrom Sub-Metropolis?

2. What are the social implications of truancy and absenteeism exhibited by students in basic schools in the Oforikrom Sub-Metropolis?

3. What is the extent to which truancy and absenteeism impact on students' academic performance in basic schools in the Oforikrom Sub-Metropolis?

4. What recommendations can be made to inform strategies to minimise truancy and absenteeism among students and improve academic performance in basic schools in the Oforikrom Sub-Metropolis?

1.4 Definition of Terms

- Vice: It is from the Latin word 'vitium' meaning defect or failing (Cabus and Witte, 2015). Freire and Amado (2009) define it as a bad habit or immoral activities.

- Social vices are regarded as bad traits, unhealthy and negative behaviours that are against the morality of a society and frowned at by members of the society

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(Regoli, 2012; Omonijo and Nnedum, 2012). Social vices are common among young male and female students. Common examples include prostitution, indecent dressing, robbery, cultism, pocket picking, drug addiction, examination malpractice, hooliganism, gambling, smoking, pre-marital sexual activities and rape.

- Truancy: It is an unexcused absence from school or class without parental knowledge or consent.

- Absenteeism: It implies unexcused absence without an official or recognized (excused) reason, that occurs when an individual fails to provide a satisfactory explanation for the absenteeism, or gives no reason at all (Walfin, 1981).

1.5 Scope of the Study

The study examined the effects absenteeism and truancy have on student academic performance in selected basic (Junior High) schools in the Oforikrom Sub-Metropolis. The schools were the Aprade, Weweso and Anwomaso Basic Schools.

1.6 Significance of the Study

The findings and recommendations of the study will inform students and help them understand the manifestations of social vices in schools. It will also enlighten them on ways of managing them and its influence on related activities. The study will also help teachers to easily know the effects of these vices on students' attitudes. They will also be equipped with the knowledge of managing students that are prone to these and working effectively with parents. On the part of parents, they will benefit from knowledge of the phenomena which will enable them identify the common vices so as to assist their wards address such problems and their consequences.

School authorities will be encouraged to pay more attention to social re-orientation programmes such as sex education, health and safety awareness, HIV/AIDS awareness, drug-free initiatives and adolescent counselling programmes. Relevant information on social vices in schools will inspire the Government to take pro-active measures. The study is expected to help the government and policy makers understand the dynamics associated with social vices and how they impact on the performance of students, as well as to provide adequate information that will guide in holistically developing appropriate policies for school development. Lastly, the study will provide evidence to guide authorities, specifically, the Ghana Education Service, to put in place the needed measures to address cases of truancy and absenteeism exhibited by students which have adverse implications on drop out, performance and their respective statuses in society.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

Three major limitations were encountered in the collection of data. These were:

- Unwillingness of parents to give out their wards to participate in the study after attempts by the researcher to identify such students. The researcher however made attempts to conscientise parents on the significance of the allowing their wards to participate in the study.

- Difficulty in tracking absentee and truant students from the various schools in their respective homes. There were incidents where the researcher at the time of administering the questionnaires could not find some of such students in their respective schools. The researcher, having realized the relevance of this study, however walked to the homes of such students.

- Unwillingness of some head teachers and teachers to release attendance list of students for the selection of students for the study. The researcher once again

explained the relevance of the researcher and ensured them of anonymity and confidentiality of the data.

- Due to the poor academic performance of students, they found it difficult to read, understand and respond to some of the questions. The researcher however explained in detail to them to obtain the relevant responses.

1.7 Organisation of the Study

This study was sectioned into six chapters. Chapter one entails the general introduction to the entire study and captures the background to the study, problem statement, research objectives, research questions, scope of the study, significance of the study, and an outline of the study. Chapter two provided extensive literature on the concept and types of social vices exhibited by students, the impact of social vices on society and the individual, theoretical and conceptual frameworks, among others. Chapter three presents details of the study location and research methodology. It thus gives a detailed description of the research design framework, elements for the study, the sample size determination and sampling techniques, the variables for the study, among others. Chapter four presents the findings from the survey. Chapter five presents discussions of the study's findings whiles the last chapter presents a summary of the key findings from the study, makes recommendation and a general conclusion to the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

Although there exist extensive studies on the causes and effects of vices among students; locally and nationally; it is however uncertain whether efforts aimed at linking behaviours among students to social vices with a view to curbing these behaviours have yielded any fruits in the past. The chapter discusses issues related to the concept of absenteeism and truancy among students in second cycle institutions, as well as the effects of absenteeism and truancy on the academic performance of students, and relevant theories related to the concepts and its effects. The chapter, among other discussions concludes with the conceptual framework linking the effect of absenteeism and truancy on academic performance.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

According to Henning et al. (2004, p. 25), "a theoretical framework provides an orientation to the study at hand in the sense that it reflects the stance the researcher adopts in his or her research". The theoretical framework also becomes the structure guiding the research making use of established explanation of relationships. The relevant theory related to this study (labelling theory) is discussed below.

2.1.1 Labelling theory

Labelling theory is another theory that strengthens the importance of this study. The theory was propounded by Howard Becker (1963). Howard Becker viewed deviance as the creation of social groups and not the quality of some act or behaviour. He asserted that social groups create deviance by making rules whose infraction creates deviance (such as absenteeism and truancy), and by applying those roles to particular

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people and labelling them as outsiders. From this point of view, absenteeism and truancy are not qualities of the act the person commits, but rather a consequence of the application of rules and sanctions to an 'offender'. The deviant is one to whom the label has been successfully attached.

According to Becker (1963), studying the act of the individual is unimportant because deviant behaviours such as absenteeism and truancy, are simply rule breaking behaviours that are labelled such culprits by persons in positions of power. He viewed those people that are likely to engage in rule breaking behaviours such as absenteeism and truancy, as essentially different from members of the rule making or rule abiding society. Those persons who are prone to rule breaking behaviour see themselves as morally at odds with those members of the rule abiding society. The process of being caught and labelled deviant by a person in position of authority leads to secondary deviance. Secondary deviance involves the acceptance of the deviant label. Certain rule breakers come to accept the label of 'deviant' as status (Becker, 1963). In this study, labelling theory provides a framework for explaining the way and manner society reacts to known cases of absenteeism and truancy.

2.2 Conceptualising Student Absenteeism and Truancy as Social Vices

2.2.1 Absenteeism

Absenteeism among students in a country are discussed as an important criterion to depict the quality of education in that country and this is regarded as an important predictor of the existing and future problems of the education system (Graeff-Martins et al., 2006). Absenteeism is noted to be one of the most basic indicators of what extent the educational needs of students are met by schools (Şahin et al., 2016). Shute and Cooperv (2015, p.6) further indicate that "if the students are turning their back on the education they are provided, it means that we need to ask ourselves the

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questions of "What is wrong in this education?" and "Is something happening in our schools and classrooms that distract students from education?"

Premised on the above, there are many variations to the definition of absenteeism. Defining absenteeism has not changed much in recent years. The definitions of excused absence include categories such as personal sickness, jury duty, religious holidays, and funeral leave and transportation problems (Kearney & Graczyk, 2014). Meanwhile, the unexcused absence meaning absenteeism without an official or recognized (excused) reason that occurs when an individual (student) fails to provide a satisfactory explanation for the absenteeism, or gives no reason at all (Walfin, 1981). Below are the working definitions of absenteeism:

Martocchio and Jimeno (2003) note that absence constitutes a single day of missed school or class or work. Absence occurs whenever a person (student) chooses to allocate time to activities that compete with scheduled activity (in this study, going to school), either to satisfy the waxing and waning of underlying motivational rhythms or to maximize personal utility (Walfin, 1981). An individual's lack of physical presence at a given location and time when there is a social expectation for him or her to be there (Martocchio & Jimeno, 2003). Absenteeism also refers to the non-attendance of individuals for scheduled activity (Kearney & Graczyk, 2014). Absenteeism from school is considered as a symptom of a deep-seated problem, and not as a problem on its own.

Regular attendance in school is therefore deemed very essential for the academic achievements of students, language and social development (Şahin et al., 2016). On this, Kearney and Graczyk (2014) argue that students who regularly attend school are likely to be successful in future professional lives through achieving work related skills such as persistence, problem-solving, and the ability to work with others

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to accomplish a goal. As such, it is generally argued that students with regular attendance in school have higher academic success, standardized test scores, graduation averages, university standardized test scores, graduation averages, university entrance rates and job opportunities, all things being equal (see Balfanz and Byrnes, 2012; Ferrell et al., 2013; Kearney and Graczyk, 2014). Compared to their colleagues, students who do not regularly attend school have relatively lower or poor academic performance with limited future employment opportunities and experience emotional and social problems in future careers (Askeland et al., 2015; Buscha and Conte, 2014).

Absenteeism is further argued to not only affect the academic progress or development of the student, but also has impact on in-class planning of teachers and the motivations of other students in class (Thornton, Darmody & McCoy, 2013). Chronic absenteeism is argued to have a significant relationship with certain dangerous behaviours such as substance abuse, violence, physical injury, suicide, showing sexually explicit behaviour at an early age, pregnancy and eventual dropout (Ferrell et al., 2013; Gage et al., 2013; Kearney and Graczyk, 2014; Nolan et al., 2013; Thornton, Darmody & McCoy, 2013).

2.2.2 Truancy

Truancy is noted to be one of the major antisocial discipline problems among students, particularly at the secondary school in African countries (Oluremi, 2013). The concept has received a lot of attention by researchers. According to Peck (2012), the various behavioural disorders like truancy has so undermined effective teaching-learning processes that some teachers have become helpless and disorganized in their task of impacting knowledge to the learners.

Truancy is similar to absenteeism, but truancy is an unexcused absence from school or class without parental knowledge or consent (Ali et al., 2014). Although truancy stems from a lack of parental knowledge, parents are usually the contributor to student truancy by not taking the responsibility to get their child to school each day (Teasley, 2004). "Truants and persistent absentees are most likely to come from disadvantaged home backgrounds and unfavourable social circumstances" (Reid, 2005, p.61). Parents think students are truant because they are bored with the curriculum and it's failing to meet their needs (Reid, 2005). Truant individuals are usually involved with promiscuous activities outside of the home while not in school.

Truancy is further regarded as the failure of a student in completing the current stage of education he or she is enrolled for several reasons (Dekkers & Claassen, 2001). In our day, societies are intensively facing student truancy problems that have personal, social and financial dimensions and trying to develop policies in order to prevent or decrease this problem (Estevao & Alvares, 2014). Studies show that individuals who drop out of school have more health problems, have an increased risk of involvement in crime, are obliged to work at a job with a low income (Cabus & Witte, 2015; Estevao and Alvares, 2014), live ten years shorter than the average and perform their social responsibilities such as voting in elections less compared to the others (Dockery, 2012).

2.3 Contributing factors and consequences of truancy and absenteeism

Absenteeism and truancy are influenced by a variety of factors. The factors include the influence of peers, relations with teachers, the setup of the curriculum, family aspects and bullying (Reid, 2005). Such individuals are influenced by their peers to not attend school and encourage peers to engage in activities outside of the school with them. Students that have poor or conflicting relationships with teachers will avoid school in order to avoid their teacher. Often the curriculum can be too easy or too

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challenging for individuals, in the latter it creates a mind set for students that they cannot achieve success. If a student does not feel they can succeed, there will be no desire for them to attend school (Teasley, 2004). Those who are bullied at school will not let parents or teachers know they are being bullied in fear of further consequences from the bully and will avoid school to stay away from the bully (Stanley, 2005).

Additionally, Ma'aruf (2005) revealed four major home factors as being the cause of truancy and absenteeism: (i) Poor relationship between children and parents; (ii) Poor physical conditions at home; (iii) Use of corporal punishment in the house; and (iv) Lack of parental interest in the child's welfare. Adewole (2014) further reported that the school is also a strong factor resulting in truancy and absenteeism among students. Adewole (2014) reported that the breakdown of communication, teacher shortages, over population of students, incessant strike actions, peer influence and the under use of corporal punishment at school have strong influence on student truancy. Kirk et al. (2003) also identified bullies by school staff, boredom, avoidance of tests and dislike of teachers as some of the cause of truancy and absenteeism.

Oyetubo and Olaiya (2009) presents seven distinct causes of the phenomenon to include: the idea of democracy with its emphasis on the rights and freedom of the individual; the "generation gap" in ideas, beliefs and values about the nature of man, life and society; the high level of sophistication of young men and women compared with that of the old generation; the influence of the media (i.e. the newspaper, the radio and television) which carry regular reports about students power against authority; the failure of the adults, both in society and at school to set standards of good behaviours for young men and women to follow; the failure of many homes to provide basic and essential moral training in the upbringing of the children and the failure of parents to set good examples'; and the failure in communication between young men and women

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insisting on their right and the authorities who tend to see the issues involved simply from the "official" point of view. These tend to adversely affect the attitude and performance of students in schools.

Ubogu (2004) also identified causes of truancy and absenteeism among students as illness, financial hardship, age, social class, geographical area, and institutional influence schools related factors such as teachers' attitude, poor administration, and high cost of education. Distance to school, school discipline, family background and school location are also noted to be among the increasing causes of truancy among school students (Emore, 2005). Siziya, Muula and Rudatsikira (2007) in their study in Swaziland found that truant adolescents had been reported to engage in risky sexual practice, illicit drug use, alcohol drinking and cigarette smoking. The foregoing shows that there exists a plethora of the cause of absenteeism and truancy among students in basic and secondary schools.

On the consequences, studies show that absenteeism and truancy could result into poor academic achievement, losing friends and partners, and disruption in class. The return of truants and absentees often adversely affect the behaviour of other students, difficulty in keeping accurate records, reduced ability to meet instructional targets and damaged school reputation (Oghuvu, 2006). Oghuvu (2006) further revealed that the attendance of students has positive relationship with their academic performance. Several other studies however revealed that school physical environment rather exert some dominant influence on learners' academic performance (Adeboyeje, 2000; Obayan, 2003), but not necessarily truancy and absenteeism. However, Fareo, and Okotoni (2009) gave contrary views that there was no significant relationship between physical environment and academic performance of students. This unending

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problems of truancy and poor academic performance of school students therefore call for a study like this.

Ford and Sutphen (1996) suggest there are long-term consequences to student absenteeism and truancy such as joblessness and lowered income which have profound impacts on a student later in their life. Because of their behaviours, they are not prepared to enter the workforce and therefore will contribute to the unemployment population. In relation with the lack of preparation for adulthood, if one is jobless, one will suffer from having no income. If one was able to find a job, their lack of skills and truant behaviour as a child would create hardships for them to find a good job, and therefore would have issues involving lowered income which in turn would create even more problems in supporting oneself or others.

In addition to long-term consequences, there are legal consequences to student absenteeism and truancy. "Truancy is associated with sexual promiscuity, alcohol and drug use, delinquency, and dropping out of school" (Teasley, 2004, p.119). Truant individuals become involved with alcohol and drugs which lead to health issues later in life and addiction. Along with the alcohol and drug use, these factors can contribute to sexual promiscuity at illegal ages and unprotected sexual activity for these truant individuals (DeSocio *et al.,* 2007). In addition to these consequences, many families and students become involved in the court systems by being summoned to attend truancy court for a judge to make a decision on behalf of a child who is not attending school, and the outcomes of these court decisions are usually undesirable.

2.4 Interventions for absenteeism and truancy

For student absenteeism and truancy, there are a number of interventions that have been implemented within the schools, families, and the community. Within the

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school setting administrators have implemented interventions and incentive programs with hopes to promote student attachment to school (Ford & Sutphen, 1996). Teasley (2004) also explained that peer tutoring has become an intervention in schools which older achieving students are trained to work with younger students who have attendance issues. He found that the dropout rate for students who participated in the program was one percent, whereas the comparison group rate was 12 percent (Teasley, 2004). Teacher or administrative mentors is also an approach at intervening with students with attendance issues. Mentors provide students with opportunities for "prosocial identification." They provide empathic support in helping to activate self-development, and they also promote experiences that contest students lowered academic ambitions (DeSocio et al., 2007). Students often look up to their mentors as a good role model and someone they aspire to be like. The mentor is able to overlook the student's progress and see if there are any ways in which the student can be further helped in getting them to attend school.

Mentoring has been seen to be particularly effective and works best when there is a relationship between the student and the mentor. Students feel more comfortable checking in with someone they know and can have some frame of reference to (Teasley, 2004). Within the mentoring program, students usually have a check-in and check-out type procedure. Before school starts, they would check-in with their mentor and at the end of the day they would check-out with their mentor, this provides an easy way for the mentor to know if the student is in school, and if the student stays at school the entire day. The mentor would also be able to check-in with the student regarding their school work and see how their day academically went as well (DeSocio et al., 2007).

Perfect attendance awards and certificates are used as an incentive to student attendance. This type of incentive helps to encourage students by a school wide

recognition as well as a personal certificate or award. In some instances, the principal read student names over the public announcement system (Ford & Sutphen, 1996). Other ways of using a reward incentive to increase daily attendance has been done through parties, gift certificates, recognition at assemblies and small items that a student can receive if they attend school (Epstein and Sheldon, 2002). "It may be that official recognition of improved attendance motivates some students to attend school more regularly" (Epstein & Sheldon, 2002).

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

Community and neighbourhood interventions are also important to increasing student attendance. Community organizations and getting students involved outside of their home and within their community have shown to be effective in motivating students. After school community organizations are available to help students with their school work and to provide a healthy atmosphere for success. Weekend programs help students to set goals and provide procedures to help students feel a consistency which

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will promote the consistency of attending school every day. Within the community there is leadership and community-based activities which give students a sense of pride and make them feel a sense of achievement for being a leader. Having a community around a student's home that is supportive to their needs is essential, and a place near their home would most likely have the same socioeconomic and ethnic makeup which would not intimidate a student or make them feel out of place (Teasley, 2004).

2.5 Conceptual Framework

Figure 2.1 provides a conceptual framework. First, several risk factors pertaining to absenteeism and truancy can be related to individual characteristics or to the interpersonal and environmental contexts (Baldry & Farrington, 2005). Also, factors related to absenteeism and truancy can co-occur at multiple levels of the social-ecological domains. Consistent with recommendations from Swearer and Espelage (2011), the social-ecological framework is seen as essential in understanding the phenomena of absenteeism and truancy. It is a framework which considers the complex interplay between the individual and his or her behaviour, and social-environmental contexts, such as family, peers, school, and community. The social-ecological influences are rarely considered collectively when investigating the relationship between absenteeism and truancy. Thus, co-occurring risk factors within family, peer, and community contexts are first identified.

While some youth are confronted with multiple problem behaviours, which simultaneously predispose them to several social vices such as absenteeism, truancy victimization and alcohol and drug use, others may experience early etiological processes that contribute to the onset and escalation of the vices. They may follow complex developmental pathways, experiencing problems such as depression and anxiety, and low academic achievement (Bender, 2010). The underlying question is

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how absenteeism and truancy are manifested over time and in contexts among students. The conceptual framework is also guided by a developmental structure, which purports that behavioural mal-adaptations, such as absenteeism and truancy reinforce one another.

Understanding this complexity can be facilitated by first investigating mediators and moderators. The conceptual framework also identifies potential mediators (i.e., internalizing problems, traumatic stress and low academic achievement) that can serve as developmental pathways connecting absenteeism and truancy experiences supported by the empirical literature (Bonnano & Hymel, 2010), and potential moderators (i.e., age, gender/sex, social supports, and school connectedness) that may strengthen or weaken the link between absenteeism and truancy.
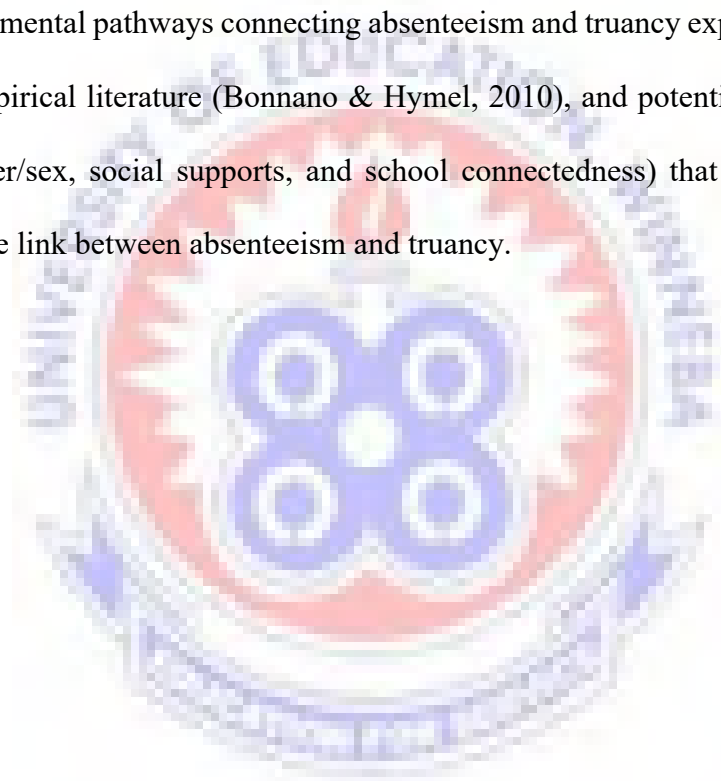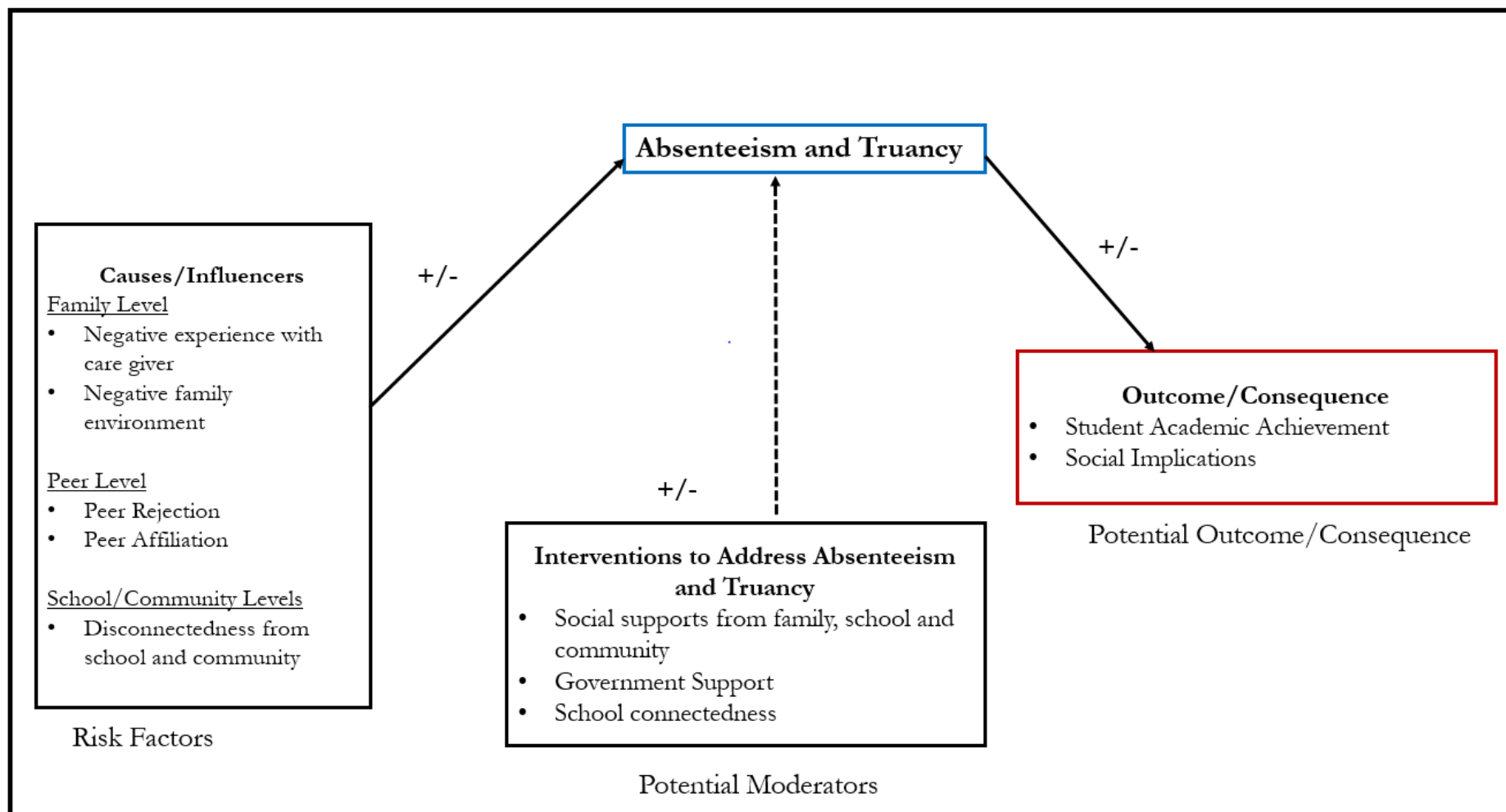
Figure 2.1: A conceptual framework on the association between student absenteeism and truancy

Source: Author's Construct, 2018

2.6 Summary

The review of relevant literature on the study has shown that social vices, specifically, absenteeism and truancy pose serious threats to learning in most schools. The school on the other hand does not seem to be able to cope with the problems, because no meaningful attempt has been made to reach its root. One thing that is clear is that there is a growing tendency for school children to be involved in social vices, such as stealing, smoking, rioting, among others. This is because most homes no longer play their traditional functions bringing up the children in an upright manner. Many parents are mostly preoccupied with duties (working and travelling) outside the homes that they have little or no time to keep watch over the action and behaviour of their children.

In most of the schools, there is no conducive atmosphere for learning. This is due to fact that schools are highly populated, poorly equipped and understaffed. Since students cannot cope with their unfavourable conditions, which these school are placed, this eventually leads to absenteeism, truancy and other social vices found in our society and most schools today. The purpose of reviewing literature is to broaden one's scope. It is evident that in every scientific study, there is always the need to validate one's findings with empirical evidence. The succeeding chapters present the methodology to be employed for the study, the profile of the study area as well as logical presentation and analysis of the result of the investigation from the field.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter provided a review of literature on the concept of social vices and indiscipline, specifically, truancy and absenteeism among students in second cycle institutions, as well as their possible effects on performance. This chapter is devoted to the research methodology that was used in the study. It discusses the method for addressing the research questions of the study, towards achieving the research objective.

According to Kallet (2010), research methodology describes the rationale for the application of the specific procedures or techniques used to identify, select, and analyse data applied to understanding the research problem. This allows readers to critically evaluate the study's overall validity and reliability. Furthermore, Babbie (2010) indicates that the methodology includes the design, setting, sample, limitations, and the data collection and analysis techniques employed in a study. This section therefore presents the research design adopted approach, sample frame, sampling procedure and sample size determination to assess the effects of absenteeism and truancy on students' academic performance in three (3) basic (Junior High) schools out of the six within the Weweso Circuit in the Oforikrom Sub-Metropolis. The schools selected were: Weweso M/A, Aprade and Anwomaso Junior High Schools. Data needs and their sources, data collection tools and techniques as well as data analyses and presentation techniques are emphasized in this section.

3.2 Research Design

According to Kothari (2004), research design is the arrangement of conditions for collection and analysis of data in a way that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose. In other words, it is a conceptual structure within which research is conducted. A research design is further regarded as an empirical process of linking data collection to the research objectives and finding solutions to address them. The research design selected for a particular study should be in line with the research topic and the questions the study seeks to address.

Following this, the case study research design was employed for this study in selecting the schools. According to Yin (2009: 240), case study method is relevant when a social phenomenon requires an extensive and "in-depth" description in a real-life context, as reflects in this study. The study sought to have an extensive understanding on the effects of absenteeism and truancy on students' academic performance. Yin (2004) further asserts that a case study investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident. Zaidah (2007) adds that case study helps to explore and investigate contemporary real-life phenomenon. This involves detailed contextual analysis using a limited number of events or conditions, and their relationships which may not be captured through experimental and survey research. This enabled the research to have a better understanding of the phenomenon and bring awareness to the policy front. Furthermore, it is a robust research method particularly when a holistic, in-depth investigation is required (Zaidah, 2007).

3.3 Research Approach

This study adopted the mixed research approach to gather and analyse relevant data; which involves both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The premise of the approach was that, the study sought to assess the effects of absenteeism and truancy on student academic performance in selected basic (Junior High) schools in the Oforikrom Sub-Metropolis. It involves groups with the purpose of describing and understanding the phenomena from participants' perspective (Leedy & Ormrod, 2005). The approach yields data that could be both quantitatively and qualitatively measured. This demands that the setting of the research is described and explained. The mixed research approach also involves the collection of data for the purpose of describing and interpreting prevailing conditions, practices, beliefs, attitudes, on-going processes, and quantitatively presenting the findings to achieve the objectives of the study. A mixed research thus answers the questions of who, what, where, when, how and how many (Yin, 2009).

Qualitative methods or designs are mostly "used in preliminary and exploratory studies to allow researchers gain insight on people's perceptions, attitudes, and opinions and based on interpretation of data collected for the purpose of clarification" (Orodho, 2009, p. 12). Qualitative research is also a way of exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem (Creswell, 2014). Kothari (2004) also adds that qualitative research approach deals with subjective assessment of attitudes, perception, opinions and behaviour. It generates results which are not subjected to rigorous quantitative analysis. In this study, for instance, qualitative data is capable of providing rich and in-depth process. This aided in gaining in-depth knowledge necessary for this study on the perception of respondents on the factors that result in truancy and absenteeism among students, the social implications of such

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behaviours and the effects of truancy and absenteeism on academic performance. The quantitative approach was also used to measure and understand the extent of impact of absenteeism and truancy on students' academic performance in the selected basic (Junior High) schools in the Weweso Circuit of the Oforikrom Sub-Metropolis. This was deemed relevant because it sought to assess the relationship between truancy and absenteeism as independent variables and student academic performance as the dependent variable.

3.4 Population, Sampling and Sampling Technique

3.4.1 Study Population

Study population is defined as any group of individuals that have one or more characteristics in common that are of interest to the researcher (Creswell, 2014). The population may be all the individuals of a particular type or a more restricted part of a group (Mugo, 2010). Simply, it is the larger group from which individuals are selected to participate in a study. For the purpose of this study, the population and units of enquiry have been organised under three methods for the collection of data in the study; cross-sectional survey and key informant interviews.

The population for the key informant interviews largely comprised head teachers of the selected basic schools in the Oforikrom Sub-Metropolis. The population for the cross-sectional survey however comprised students of the respective selected basic schools in the Oforikrom Sub-Metropolis. The units of enquiry, hence, were the students of the sampled schools. The selection of the units of enquiry was premised on the ground that the study sought to assess the effects of absenteeism and truancy on students' academic performance in the three (3) basic (Junior High) schools in the Oforikrom Sub-Metropolis, specifically, the Weweso Circuit. The schools were

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purposively selected due to familiarity, time and resource constraints as well as proximity.

3.4.2 Sample size

Kothari (2004) defines sampling as the process of obtaining data about an entire population by examining only a part of it. The purpose of sampling is to make generalizations or to draw inferences about the population. In obtaining the population (student who play truant and absent themselves from school), interviews were first held with head teachers and teachers at the various schools. A list of students who are often truant and absent, based on attendance, was given to the researcher. First the researcher classified absents as students who do not turn up in school at least once a week, consistently over a period of one month. Truants were classified as those who absent themselves from school twice a week in a consistent manner. In all, a total of fifty (50) students was obtained; five (5) truants and forty-five (45) absentees. All students were thus identified and interviewed for the relevant data. The distribution is presented in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Summary of Sample Size Distribution

Name of school	Absentees	Truants	Total Number of Students
Weweso M/A	28	0	28
Aprade	9	5	14
Anwomaso	8	0	8
Total	**45**	**5**	**50**

Source: Author's Construct, August 2018

Table 3.1 indicates that there are fifty students (50) students in the three schools (JHS) in the Weweso Circuit of the Oforikrom Sub-Metropolis, who, based on attendance are truant and often absent. Approximately 56% (28), 28% (14) and 16%

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(8) were found in the Weweso, Aprade and Anwomaso basic schools, respectively. Due to the smaller size, all students were identified and interviewed.

3.4.3 Sampling technique

The non-probability sampling technique was employed to interview the students. First, the purposive sampling technique was used to select the Weweso Circuit in the Oforikrom Sub-Metropolis, as the study area due to familiarity, time and resource constraints as well as proximity. The schools within the area were also purposively selected.

The technique is a process of identifying and selecting individuals, who have specialized knowledge on a particular subject (Kumekpor, 2002). This research requires sufficient knowledge of the experts or sources to make the appropriate decisions and identify potential subjects for the study (Kumekpor, 2002). Similarly, the head teachers in the three (3) schools, 2 teachers each from the schools and Director of Sub-Metro Education Directorate were purposively sampled and interviewed to ascertain the factors that result in student truancy and absenteeism as well as their effects on student academic performance. Students in the selected basic schools were conveniently (based on availability and willingness to participate in the survey) sampled and interviewed.

3.5 Sources of Data

A combination of primary and secondary data was used to address the research questions. The secondary data were obtained through a review of various literature which include peer-reviewed journals, conference proceedings, book chapters, magazines and newspapers. The other sources of secondary data were published and unpublished documents such as books, project reports, journals, government policy documents and unpublished documents (such as project reports and students' theses) on social vices or deviant behaviours among students in basic schools. The secondary

data was gathered with the aid of a checklist which was prepared to cover the following areas: social vices, specifically, truancy and absenteeism; theories related to vices among students in basic schools; the impact of vices on school academic performance; strategies to minimise truancy and absenteeism of students, among others.

The primary data was gathered through a systematic process of interview schedule design through pre-testing to the administration of interview schedules and interviewer-administered questionnaires. The primary data was obtained through direct observation and face-to-face interviews with the units of inquiry. Semi-structured questionnaires were administered, through direct interviews (face-to-face) with the 50 students for the quantitative data at the selected basic schools in the Oforikrom Sub-Metropolis. The qualitative data was obtained through focused interviews with the 3 head teachers, 6 teachers (2 teachers from each school), 8 students and the head of the Sub-Metro Education Directorate as well as focus group discussions with students in the various schools. Hence, key informant interviews and semi-structured interviews were used to obtain data from students and teachers, head teachers.

The primary data captured information on the demography of respondents, perceptions of respondents on the factors that result in truancy and absenteeism among students, the social implications of such behaviours and the effects of truancy and absenteeism on academic performance. The questionnaire had a blend of open and close ended questions. The open-ended questions were needed to offer in-depth understanding of the responses offered in the closed ended questions.

Table 3.2: Respondents for Primary Data

Units of Inquiry	Number of Questionnaires
Students	50
Head Teachers	3
Teachers	6
Sub-Metro Education Directorate	1

Source: Author's Construct, August 2018

3.6 Data Collection Instrument and Procedure

The study gathered both qualitative and quantitative data from the secondary and primary data sources. The data collection instruments were administered through semi-structured and key informant interviews. The researcher designed semi-structured questionnaires and interview guides to elicit the required responses from the units of enquiry as indicated in Table 3.2. The interview guides gathered data on factors that result in truancy and absenteeism among students, the social implications of such behaviours and the effects of truancy and absenteeism on academic performance. The guide was self-administered to ensure data credibility and quality. The guide allowed the researcher the opportunity to probe deeper for more relevant expert information on the subject. The interviews were conducted in English, because it is the official language of the country. Data was gathered through two major techniques: key informant interviews and focus group discussions. These are described in the next section.

3.6.1 Key Informant Interviews

Interviews were used to obtain data from experts and the relevant institutions (specifically, the Sub-metro Education Directorate). Authors like Kumar (1989) have discussed the benefits of key informants in research work. Key informant interviews

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often provide data and insight that cannot be obtained with other methods. This is because data from key informants comes directly from knowledgeable people. The key informants thus comprised the head teachers and teachers at the various schools and Director of the Sub-Metropolitan Education Directorate. The interviews took the semi-structured format where the researcher initiate the conversation with the topics of interest and encouraged the interviewees to elaborate. The survey largely employed open ended questions which brought to bear respondents' own knowledge, personal experience and perceptions. This helped to obtain meaningful data on the phenomenon under study. The use of open-ended questions also ensured that the perspectives of interviewees are captured more fully and accurately.

3.6.2 Focus Group Discussions

Yuen et al. (2009) argue that focus groups provide specific and pertinent data. With such group interactions, there is an advantage of obtaining more information than individual interviews. The researcher conducted three group interviews of students for this research. Three focus group discussions were conducted with a minimum of seven and a maximum of 9 participants. The focus group discussions for this study took the semi-structured form which is the same technique adopted for the key informant interviews. The focus group interviews provided different perspectives than one-on-one interviews as participants raised opposing viewpoints but at the end tackle problematic issues with each other, and resolved conflicting perceptions. For the focus group interviews, there were "brainstorming" during the interviews to ensure that the outcome is a balanced description of actual occurrences. By this practice, the accurate understanding of issues of interest with regards to the causes and effects of truancy and absenteeism on students' academic performance were obtained. During these

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interviews, the researcher always acted as a facilitator of the discussion and remained neutral without supporting or rejecting participant's opinions on issues.

The responses were handwritten and audio-recorded, after seeking consent from respondents. Recordings enabled the interviewer to have access to 'actual' responses for analysis; handwritten notes provide further explanation to the interviews. Prior to the interviews, informed consent was sought for from participants.

3.7 Data Analysis and Presentation

All the survey instruments were reviewed for completion and accuracy and compiled in a database, prior to data analysis. Analysis of the quantitative data from the 50 students was preceded by coding and designing a template for analysis. The data collected was scrutinized and edited for errors before entering responses for the closed ended questions into the template of the statistical software used. The open-ended questions were analysed manually. The quantitative analysed data was presented in descriptive forms as well as graphical illustrations in the form of pie charts and bar graphs.

The study also sought to assess the relationship between academic performance of students and absenteeism and truancy. This was done with the use of the Pearson's chi-square test. The chi-square test for independence, also called Pearson's chi-square test or the chi-square test was used to discover if there is a relationship between two categorical variables. In all cases, a p-value <0.05 was considered to be statistically significant. Due to the weakness of the chi-square test in depicting the strength of the association between the two mutually exclusive variables, the study used the multiple linear regression model using academic performance as the dependent variable and the

absenteeism and truancy behaviours as the independent variables; to test for the strength of association between the dependent and independent variables.

With respect to the qualitative data from the 3 head teachers, 6 teachers, the Sub-metro Education Director and participants of the 3 focus group discussions, the thematic and content analyses basically analysing for key themes was adopted to analyse the responses from the respondents through an inductive and deductive coding process (Rubin and Rubin, 2005). This process was facilitated by the use of the NVIVO 10 software package for coding the data and developing categories. Audio responses were transcribed, and categorised under the various themes, examined, tabulated and interpreted. While codes were inductively developed from the research participants' perspectives on issues such as effects of student absenteeism and truancy on students' academic performance and social implications of truancy and absenteeism exhibited by students in basic schools, categories such as factors that cause student absenteeism and truancy were deductively created based on the review of literature and the research objectives. However, guided by the inconsistencies that might arise in the analysis process (Bryman and Burgess, 1994), relationships were established by reconciling and refining codes and categories into more conceptual categories based on common relationships. This process increased the understanding of the whole data set, as the research participants' perspectives on effects of student absenteeism and truancy on students' academic performance reflected in the final categories. The analysis was done based on the context, consistency, intensity and specificity of the responses to the questions.

3.8 Observation of Research Ethics and Preliminary Field Investigation

A letter, introducing the researcher, was obtained from the University of Education, Winneba. A duplicate copy of the introductory letter was given to the heads of the institutions covered in the study. The institutions were thus adequately informed about the purpose of the study before interviews began. The units of inquiry and analyses covered by the study were also be given copies of the introductory letter. Prior to the interviews, the interviewees were briefed about the purpose of the study and the time needed to complete the questionnaire/interview guide. They were reassured that their responses would be treated with confidentiality. Participants were required to give their consents prior to the interviews upon agreeing to participate voluntarily in the study. The rationale and need for the study, procedures involved, rights of respondents, confidentiality, voluntary participation and the right to dissociate at any time of the study without prejudice; were well explained to participants.

To ensure the suitability, reliability and validity of the data collection instrument (questionnaires and interview guide), a preliminary field investigation as well as pretesting of the instrument were conducted by the researcher in the study area with randomly selected students to assess and have a fair understanding of situations. The preliminary field investigation involved informal visit to the identified schools. The pre-test was done using the semi-structured questionnaire administration and inconsistencies were used to modify the instruments.

3.9 Summary of Chapter

This chapter has indicated that the data to be used for achieving the objectives of this study were obtained from both secondary and primary sources; having adopted the mixed research approach for the analyses. The primary sources of data were

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obtained from head teachers, teachers, Director of the Education Directorate and students in three (3) basic (Junior High Schools) in the Weweso Circuit within the Oforikrom Sub-Metropolis The methods employed in the research above contributed to assessing the objectives set out for this work for which the findings have been presented in Chapter four.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the analyses of the data collected from the field concerning the effects of absenteeism and truancy on student academic performance in three selected JHS schools in the Oforikrom Sub-Metropolis. The section presents data from sampled students, teachers and head teachers from the schools (Aprade, Weweso & Anwomaso). This section of the study thus presents data and discusses the research findings, to address the objectives of the study.

Analysis of the field data was done both qualitatively and quantitatively in order to assess the effects of student absenteeism and truancy on student academic performance. Data was analysed broadly under the four specific objectives as detailed in Chapter One of this report: to identify the factors that result in truancy and absenteeism among students; to examine the social implications of truancy and absenteeism exhibited by students; and to assess the extent to which truancy and absenteeism impact on students' academic performance in basic schools in the Oforikrom Sub-Metropolis. Fifty (50) questionnaires were administered to selected students who exhibited absenteeism and truancy. In addition to the questionnaire administration, students were interviewed using interview guides for qualitative data to support the quantitative data. Additionally, three head teachers and six teachers were to be interviewed from the three selected schools, respectively. All fifty questionnaires administered to the students were retrieved.

4.2 Profile of Respondents

This section presents the socio-demographic background of students contacted during the survey. The succeeding subsections relate to information about the gender of the respondents. Out of the fifty respondents interviewed, 28 (representing 56%) were in Weweso M/A, 14 (28%) and 8 (representing 16%) were in Aprade and Anwomaso M/A JHS, respectively, as shown in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Number of respondents in schools

School	Frequency	Percent
Weweso	28	56.0
Aprade	14	28.0
Anwomaso	8	16.0
Total	**50**	**100.0**

Source: Field Survey, December 2018

Gender is key in any form of decision making especially when it is concerned with educational attainment. Findings of the study revealed that approximately 34% and 66% of the students (who happen to be absentees and/or truant) were females and males, respectively (see Figure 4.1). This suggests that there are more males (more than twice) than females, who exhibit habits of absenteeism and truancy in the various schools.
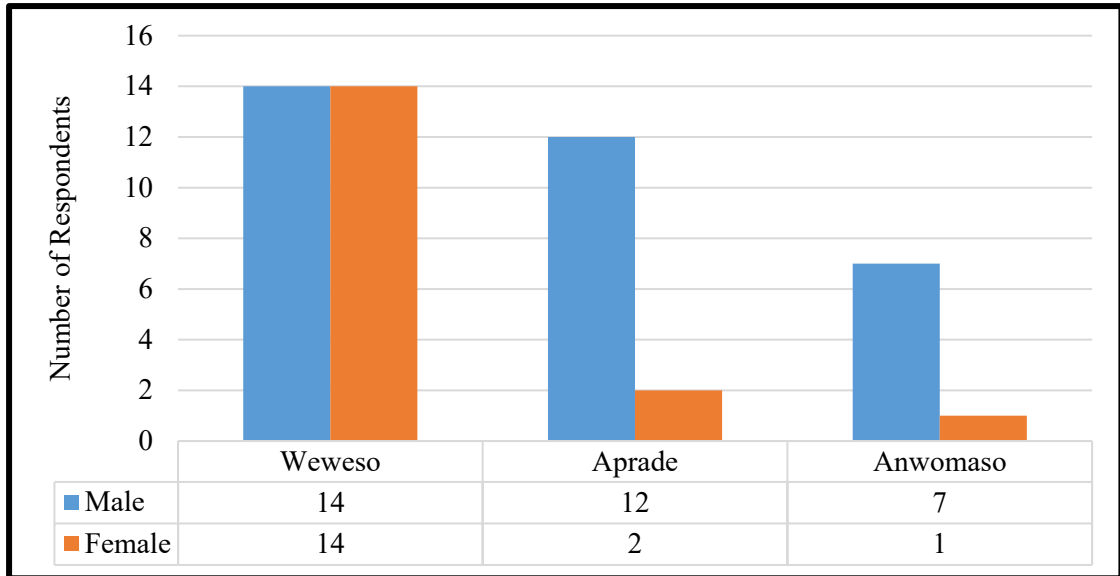
Figure 4.1: Sex of respondents

Source: Field Survey, December 2018

The data gathered also showed that there were more students who exhibited absenteeism (90%) than truancy (10%). As shown in Figure 4.2, all students revealed to be truants were found in the Aprade M/A JHS.
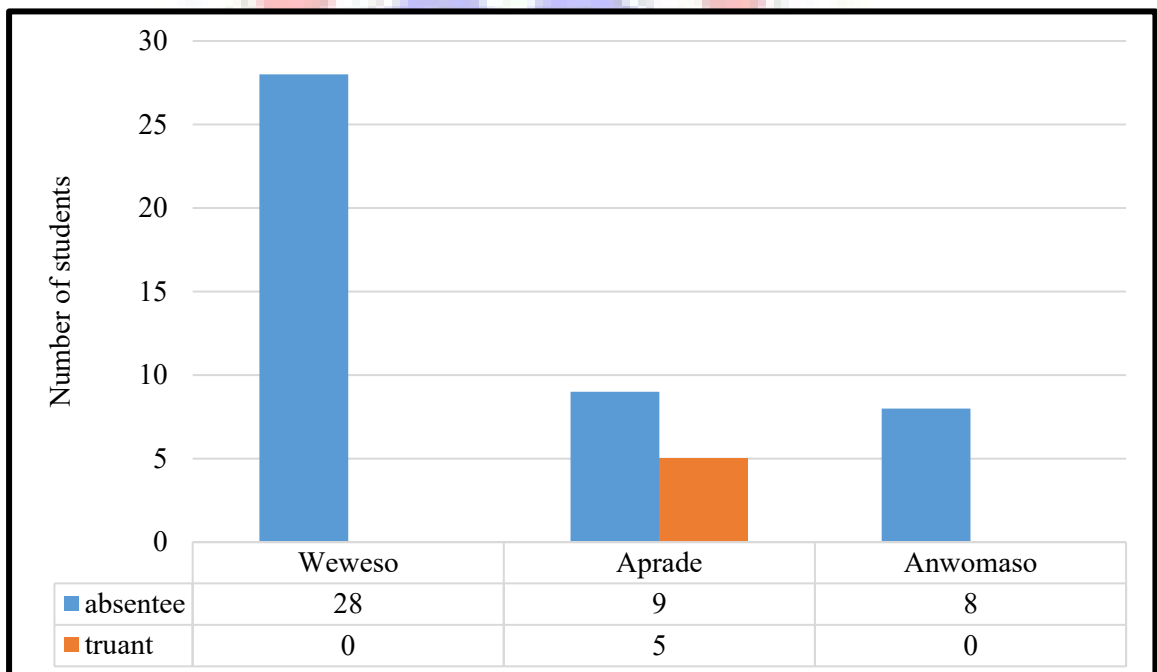
Figure 4.2: Category of Student

Source: Field Survey, December 2018

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Assessing the educational level of students was therefore deemed very significant. This is to give a better understanding of their ability to understand basic life principles to ensure successful development or growth.

The study showed that almost two-thirds (55%) of the respondents were in JHS 3, while 38% and 7% were in JHS 2 and 1 respectively. This goes to suggest that as students moved up the educational ladder, the more they exhibit absenteeism and truancy in school. This was confirmed by a head teacher in one of the schools:

"After pupils/students are registered for the BECE, they tend to behave as if they have completed school already …"

4.3 Factors leading to absenteeism and truancy among students

This section of the study seeks to present findings on the first research question; "What factors cause truancy and absenteeism among students in basic schools in the Oforikrom Sub-Metropolis?" First, all respondents, including teachers, head teachers and students exhibited high level of awareness of absenteeism and truancy. One of the head teachers defined truancy as:

"a situation where a pupil could absent him/herself from school for a period of time, which occurs frequently or habitually; whiles he defined absenteeism as a situation where a pupil may not attend school a day or two within a time frame".

Several reasons were given by students as the cause of their truancy and absenteeism behaviours. Some students complained about the boredom of some lessons as well as the fearful (shouting and caning) attitude of some teachers. Some students interviewed mentioned financial hardship as one of the reasons for their behaviours as they had little and most times, no money to be in school. This was buttressed by a student that:

"There is no money at home. The little we have is not enough for us. I come to school with just 1 cedi. When the money gets finished, I have to go home or assist someone in her shop for money"

Additionally, interviews with four (4) of the truants indicated the divorce of their parents/single parenthood has adversely affected them, thus resulting in their behaviours, as they had to work and support their respective families. This was well explained by a student in Aprade who said that:

"I have about 9 siblings but my parents are divorced. My mother cannot care for all of us and so I have to at times skip school to work and take care of myself and siblings. I wash Cars for money".

This implies that family problems such as divorce, domestic violence and death of a parent can have a highly negative effect on the student's attendance at school. In such cases, students lack concern, love and parental control and become more inclined to show aimless attitudes such as absenteeism and school dropout.

Another common reason for absenteeism and truancy among students was sickness/diseases and stigmatisation. It was revealed that one student had swollen legs which looked like 'elephantiasis' and acted as a barrier to regularly attending school. There was also a student who suffered from an occasional sickness where he had to be detained for about a month, hence, preventing him from attending school regularly. Additionally, three cases of stigmatisation were recorded, which was popularly in the form of 'name calling or teasing'. The student with the swollen leg revealed that:

"Whenever I come to school, they tease me that my leg has swollen or big. It is very painful to hear that. I therefore do not have the joy of coming to school".

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Similarly, a student indicated that:

"... because of my age, whenever I come to school, my colleague students call me

'papa' and even say that how can a papa be in the same class with his children.

Because of this, I do not like coming to school often".

Lastly, a student in JHS 2 who suffered from persistent name calling asserted that: *"...*

they call me black panther because of my skin colour and also that I come from a

village. I have told them several times to stop but they keep doing it…"

The above notwithstanding, students were asked to indicate by means of a five-point Likert scale, the extent to which they agreed with some causes of their absenteeism and truancy behaviours. The results are presented in Table 4.2 below.

Table 4.2: Causes of Absenteeism and Truancy among students

Item	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)
Waking up late	75%	22%	3%	-	-
Students dislike particular subjects	80%	-	-	13%	-
Attitude of teachers (poor engagement in learning in classroom)	100%	-	-	-	-
Fear of some teachers (unhealthy atmosphere unhealthy due to poor relationships between teachers and students)	83%	17%	-	-	-
Drug abuse	-	26%	61%	13%	-
Peer influence	76%	19%	4%	-	1%
Trouble at home/Family problems	91%	6%	3%	-	-
Weak punishment	-	54%	17%	23%	6%
Uncaring attitude of guardians (irregular follow-up with parents)	86%	14%	-	-	-
Illness	93%	4%	3%	-	-
Thought that borrowing notes is as good as attending class	-	19%	62%	11%	8%
Students' working to support family along with studies	76%	10%	13%	-	1%

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Item	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Neutral (%)	Disagree (%)	Strongly Disagree (%)
Poor sensitisation campaigns on the adverse effects of absenteeism and truancy	51%	22%	-	20%	7%
Lack of peer mentoring sessions by classmates and senior students to improve attendance	11%	67%	4%	11%	7%
Long distance from home to school	8%	71%	6%	4%	11%
Psychological difficulties/trauma	89%	11%	-	-	-
Bullying	77%	16%	-	-	7%

Source: Field Survey, December 2018
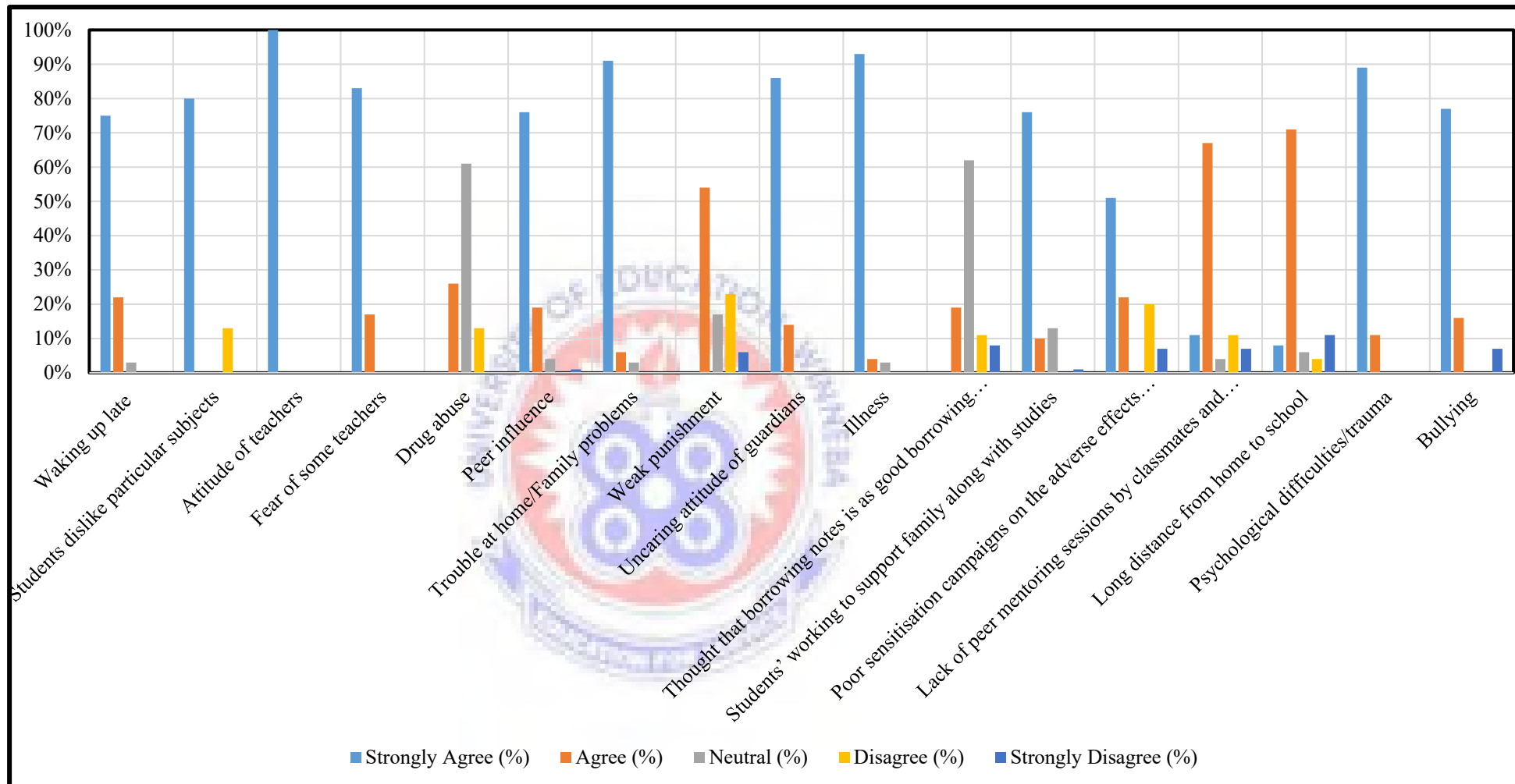
Figure 4.3: Factors leading to absenteeism and truancy of students

Source: Field Survey, December 2018

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Table 4.2 and Figure 4.3 thus show that several factors account for the frequent absenteeism and truancy among students in the study area. Most importantly, the study showed that attitude of teachers (poor engagement in learning in classroom) was the highest factor resulting to the absenteeism and truancy attitudes of students, as all students (100%) strongly agreed to that variable. The quantitative data is presented in Table 4.2. The subsequent sections presents the qualitative data to better explain and understand the quantitative data obtained. Details are given subsequently.

Considering that students spend a large part of their time in communication with their teachers, it is obvious that the social and emotional support that teachers provide to students is highly important. Discussions with some students revealed that some teachers exhibited bad attitudes such as scolding and caning, and also had boring classes. This finding shows the importance of the factor of liking the teacher and the subject. Negligent control of student absenteeism, failing to contact the parents in case of absenteeism and not investigating the causes of absenteeism were observed to be major causes of absenteeism and truancy of students.

Cases such as divorce, domestic violence and death of a parent have a highly negative effect on the student's attendance at school. The study also revealed that students who lack school supplies and cannot do their homework due to the lack of a suitable study environment at home do not want to go to school and are often absent from school. Again, lack of pocket money and travelling money emerged as a cause of school absenteeism and truancy among students. Factors emerging from the family such as the obligation of students to help their parents at home, look after their younger siblings and work and bring money home also have significant effects on their absence from school. Working part-time

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during holidays and the school season was noted to have an increasing effect on the students' motivations and is suggested as an effective way of getting ready for their future roles in life.

It was also revealed that students of families that do not communicate with the school are absent from school more and have higher dropout risk compared to the others. It was realised that the children of families who cannot have a good communication with their children, who are highly oppressive or who have no authority on their children and have accepted the failure of their children show considerably high cases of absenteeism and truancy.

Additionally, it was revealed through the interviews with students that families may prefer not to send their children to school because of several reasons such as going shopping, funerals, weddings, going out of the city or district or having guests at home. The study also revealed that parents' lack of education and accordingly their disregard for education occur as an important cause of absenteeism and truancy among students. The study also showed that some students complained about the negative attitudes of their head teachers. The negative behaviours and extremely oppressive attitudes of administrators toward students led the students to absenteeism and truancy. It can thus be deduced that weak communication of students with the administrators within the period they attend school is a factor that has a negative effect on the students' success and their decision to drop out of school.

The lack of socio-cultural activities, insufficiency of the physical structures of schools and excessive course loads emerged as causes of absenteeism and truancy of students. Also, student's seeing oneself worthless, being an object of derision, exclusion,

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being unjustly accused and feeling insecure were found as causes of absenteeism and school dropouts. It can be inferred that when students view themselves as an important constituent of school, their academic success increases and their probability of dropping out of school decreases.

Furthermore, students' friendship with their peers is one of the most important factors that affect their attendance at school. Causes such as wanting to meet girl/boyfriends, trying to be accepted by their friends, the pressure of friends who are truant and wanting to go to internet cafes were note to have a highly significant effect on the absenteeism of students from school. Among the individual causes of absenteeism and truancy, illness was also noted to be a factor resulting in absenteeism and truancy. Hence, health issues were noted to result in students' absence behaviour from school. Academic failure and learning disabilities also emerged as a highly important cause of both absenteeism and school dropout.

The above findings revealed that school authorities should pay close attention to these factors so as to minimise cases of absenteeism and truancy and improve upon performance.

4.4 Effects of absenteeism and truancy on student academic performance

The study examined the effects of absenteeism and truancy on student academic performance from the perspective of teachers, head teachers and student. The results are thus subsequently presented in Table 4.3.

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Table 4.3: Effects of absenteeism and truancy on student academic performance

Respondent	Very high	High	Moderate	Low	Very low
Head teachers	-	-	-	100%	-
Teachers	-	-	-	40%	60%
Students	-	-	-	72%	28%

Source: Field Survey, December 2018

The results show that all head teachers indicated that students who exhibited attitudes of absenteeism and truancy had low academic performance. Also, 2 out of the 5 teachers (representing 40%) stated that such students had low performance whiles 60% indicated that they had very low academic performances. Most of the students interviewed (72%) were of the view that absenteeism and truancy behaviours resulted in their low academic performances, where the average best scores after exams were between 23% and 60%. The above notwithstanding, the head teacher of one of the schools indicated an exceptional case where the student who engaged in washing of cars performed very well, irrespective of his truant behaviour. The head teacher remarked that:

"... the boy who engages in washing of cars to support the family is very brilliant. He mostly takes in the 4th position in class. His case is an exceptional case compared to other absentee and truant students ..."

To better understand the trends in performance of students who exhibited absenteeism and truancy behaviours in the BECE, data was obtained from head teachers over a three-year academic period. The results are shown in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Average grade of absenteeism and truant students in the BECE

Year/Rate	Moderate	Low	Very Low	Average Grade
2015/2016		100%		24
2016/2017		100%		23
2017/2018			100%	30

Source: Field Survey, December 2018

Table 4.4 generally shows that all head teachers rated the performance of students as low for the 2015/2016 and 2016/2017 academic years but very low for the 207/2018 academic year. The results further show a decreasing performance of students who exhibit absenteeism and truancy with an average grade of 30 for the 2017/2018 academic year.

Head teachers and teachers further stated that a student who is frequently absent can influence other student to copy same thereby increasing absenteeism in the respective schools. It was further revealed that teachers had it difficult monitoring the progress of frequently absent students because of class size and other responsibilities. It was further shown that most students performed poorly because they could not cover all topics that are treated in class. The head teacher of one of the schools remarked that:

"Most of the topics are built or organised from known to unknown. So, if a pupil is absent, he or she will lose continuity of the topic…"

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4.5 Relationship between academic performance of students and absenteeism and truancy

As stated in chapter three, the study sought to establish whether there is an association between absenteeism and truancy behaviours of students and academic performance as shown in Table 4.5. This section of the study thus seeks to present findings on the third research question; "What is the extent to which truancy and absenteeism impact on students' academic performance in basic schools in the Oforikrom Sub-Metropolis?" This was done with the use of the Pearson's chi-square test. The chi-square test for independence, also called Pearson's chi-square test or the chi-square test of association, is used to discover if there is a relationship between two categorical variables.

Table 4.5: Association between academic performance and absenteeism and truancy

academic performance of students * absenteeism and truancy use Cross tabulation					
			Does absenteeism and truancy influence academic performance of students?		Total
			Yes	No	
Type	Students	Count	46	4	50
		Expected Count	36.8	13.2	50.0
	Teachers and head teachers	Count	7	0	0
		Expected Count	5.2	1.8	7.0
Total		Count	53	4	57
		Expected Count	42.0	15.0	57.0

Source: Field Survey, December 2018

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Table 4.6: Chi-square test

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (2-sided)	Exact Sig. (1-sided)
			Chi-Square Tests		
Pearson Chi-Square	4.437[a]	1	.035		
Continuity Correction[b]	3.821	1	.051		
Likelihood Ratio	4.455	1	.035		
Fisher's Exact Test				.049	.025
Linear-by-Linear Association	4.411	1	.036		
N of Valid Cases	57				

a. 0 cells (0.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is 39.05.
b. Computed only for a 2x2 table

Table 4.7: Symmetric Measures

		Value	Approx. Sig.
Nominal by Nominal	Phi	.159	.035
	Cramer's V	.159	.035
N of Valid Cases		57	

a. Not assuming the null hypothesis.
b. Using the asymptotic standard error assuming the null hypothesis.

The computed Chi-square statistic value of 4.437 with (Asymp.) or p-value of 0.035 is less than the significance value of 5% or 0.05 (p<0,05) which gives an indication that there is a statistically significant association between academic performance of students and absenteeism and truancy behaviours. In other words, the academic performance of students is not independent of their absenteeism and truancy behaviours. Hence, in order to improve upon the academic performance of students, all things being equal, there is the need to critically consider the absenteeism and truancy behaviours before other factors. The chi-square test value however does not depict the strength of the association between the two mutually exclusive variables. However, the Phi value of 0.159 (see Table 4.7)

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indicates that absenteeism and truancy behaviours of students have small to moderate effect on student academic performance at the Basic school in the Oforikrom Sub-metropolis.

Furthermore, in an attempt to examine relationships between absenteeism and truancy behaviours of students and academic, the study calculated the multiple linear regression model using academic performance as the dependent variable and the absenteeism and truancy behaviours as the independent variables.

Table 4.8: Model Summary of the relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variables

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	-.981[a]	-.962	.215	.160

Dependent Variable: Academic performance of students

Predictor: (Constant), absenteeism and truancy behaviours of students

The multiple correlation coefficient (R)= -0.981 indicates that respondents perceive a strong but negative significant correlation between the academic performance and the absenteeism and truancy behaviours of students as shown in Table 4.8; where the p value was less than 0.05 (p≤.000). It can thus be deduced that the absenteeism and truancy have an inverse relationship with academic performance. Thus, the higher the absenteeism and truancy behaviours of students, the lower the academic performance of students, and vice versa. The multiple regression model produced a coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.962; indicating that 96% of the variation in academic performance (Dependent variables) has been accounted for through the linear effects of the predictor variables (absenteeism and

truancy behaviours of students). The above calls for measures to address the absenteeism and truancy behaviours of students in the various schools.

4.6 Measures to address absenteeism and truancy behaviours of students

Respondents were asked to suggest measures to address absenteeism and truancy behaviours of students as well as improve upon performance of such students. The results are shown in the succeeding paragraphs. From the perspectives of head teachers and teachers, some measures suggested were:

- Teachers should have cordial relationships with pupils;

- Absenteeism and truants with financial problems should be provided with scholarships to motivate them;

- Seminars should be organized for prominent people to visit the schools and talk about the need to be in school always;

- Infrastructure, quality textbooks with enough TLMs should be provided;

- Teachers should be well catered for in terms of salaries and allowances;

- Parents should desist from defending their wards for exhibiting attitudes of absenteeism and truancy;

- Teachers should create a conducive and serene atmosphere for teaching and learning process in the classrooms;

- School authorities should inculcate extracurricular (sports, quizzes) activities in the schools;

- Implement innovative teaching methodologies (use of projectors, social media platforms); and

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- Extend school feeding programme at the JHS level.

The above were suggestions raised by the interviewed head teachers and teachers from the three selected schools. Most importantly, the head teacher in one of the basic schools indicated that:

"Strict rules should be introduced to address absenteeism and truancy by GES and head teachers, which should be enforced".

Discussions with the students however revealed three key suggestions to addressing absenteeism and truancy. These were: (i) extending the school feeding programme in JHS; (ii) having frequent extracurricular activities in the schools, particularly, sports; and (iii) organising entertainment programmes. Discussants (absentees and truants) during a focus group discussion stated that:

"School is boring. The authorities should organise more sporting activities because we know how to play football very well. They should also organise periodic entertainment programmes like dancing competition, parties ..." by a student in one of the schools.

Another student in one of the schools similarly remarked that:

"I like football very well and will always come to school if there is a football match. I think that can also reduce absenteeism and truancy. The school authorities should frequently organise football matches with other schools..."

They further indicated that:

"Surprisingly, all students noted to exhibit absenteeism and truancy behaviours show up during such activities and disappear afterwards…Also, if education is free, it should be entirely free. There should be no classes or PTA fees"

Other measures suggested by the students in addition to the above were:

- Teachers should engage students well in learning in the classroom;

- Relationships between teachers and students should be strengthened to erase fear;

- Organizing counselling sessions on peer influence;

- Regular follow-up by parents/guardians on you in school;

- Talk to parents on how best to address students' working to support family along with studies; and

- Eradicating bullying in school

4.8 Summary of the Chapter

The chapter analysed the effects of student absenteeism and truancy on student academic performance in three selected JHS Schools in the Oforikrom Sub-Metropolis. The chapter specifically presented results on the factors that result in truancy and absenteeism among students; the level of awareness of students about the adverse consequences of truancy and absenteeism on academic performance and future development; the social implications of truancy and absenteeism exhibited by students; and the extent to which truancy and absenteeism impact on students' academic performance in basic schools in the Oforikrom Sub-Metropolis.

It was observed that attitude of teachers, economic challenges, illness and stigmatisation were the major factors resulting in the absenteeism and truancy behaviours. Again, the study revealed that students who practiced truancy and absenteeism had very low academic performance, which was indicated by all teachers and most of the students interviewed. Statistical tests established positive relationship between academic performance and absenteeism and truancy behaviours of students. Finally, the revealed some measures by head teachers, teachers and students to address absenteeism and truancy behaviours of students, and generally improve upon their academic performance.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

5.1 Introduction

This section of the study discusses the key and novel findings of the research. The section thus highlights the major findings of the research and the inferences made from them in view of findings from related previous studies.

5.2 Discussion of main findings

The study investigated the effects absenteeism and truancy on student academic performance in selected basic (Junior High) schools in the Oforikrom Sub-Metropolis. Specifically, the study addresses three (3) objectives, namely; (a) to identify the factors that result in truancy and absenteeism among students in basic schools in the Oforikrom Sub-Metropolis; (b) to examine the social implications of truancy and absenteeism exhibited by students in basic schools in the Oforikrom Sub-Metropolis; and (c) to assess the extent to which truancy and absenteeism impact on students' academic performance in basic schools in the Oforikrom Sub-Metropolis.

With respect to the first objective, the study revealed that fifteen (15) themes/factors largely resulted in the absenteeism and truancy behaviours of students: family-child relationship, ignoring of absence, family problems, view of education, economic impossibilities, head teacher-student relationship, teacher-student relationship, in-class behaviours of the teacher, attitude towards absence, school structure, negative school atmosphere, adaptation to school, individual reasons, relationships with the environment, and environmental factors.

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Most importantly, the study showed that some students complained about the negative attitudes of their head teachers. The negative behaviours and extremely oppressive attitudes of administrators toward students led the students to absenteeism and truancy. According to a study by Bayhan and Dalgiç (2012), weak communication of students with the administrators within the period they attend school is a factor that has a negative effect on the students' success and their decision to drop out of school. Discussions with some students revealed that some teachers exhibited bad attitudes such as scolding and caning, and also had boring classes. In their study, Shute and Cooper (2015) state that students sometimes go to school and then skip some classes during the day and such cases are twice more than cases of skipping whole school days.

The study revealed that family problems such as divorce were major causes of student absenteeism and truancy behaviours. This finding is in line with Sahin et al. (2016) assertion that family problems such as divorce, domestic violence and death of a parent have a highly negative effect on the student's attendance at school. In such cases, students lack concern, love and parental control and become more inclined to show aimless attitudes such as absenteeism and school dropout. Hynes (2014) in his study similarly revealed that children who have one or both parents in jail are 79% more likely to leave school, children who lost a family member are 53% more likely to leave school, and children who are abused by a parent are 45% more likely to leave school. The presence of a family member that requires care at home is also one of the factors that affect absenteeism and school dropout.

Economic challenges such as lack of "pocket money" and low income of families were also revealed to be major causes of absenteeism and truancy behaviours. This finding

suggests that poor economic situations of families play a significant role in absenteeism and truancy of students. According to Sahin et al. (2016), children of seasonal worker families or children that are forced to work as seasonal workers are kept away from school for a long time and this has a considerably negative effect on the children's school lives. It can be said that particularly the obligation of boys to work at a job and contribute to the economy of the family and thus beginning to work at an early age is a highly important factor in school dropout. Similarly, studies (Balfanz and Byrnes, 2012; Koepke, Kupczynski & Holland, 2011; Nolan et al., 2013; Petrick, 2014) show that chronic absenteeism and truancy are highly common among students who come from low-income families. It can thus be said that particularly the obligation of boys to work at a job and contribute to the economy of the family are important factors in absenteeism and truancy. In their study, Haberli and Güvenç (2012) showed that factors emerging from the family such as the obligation of students to help their parents at home, look after their younger siblings and work and bring money home have significant effects on their absence from school. According to Tayli (2008), working part-time during holidays and the school season has an increasing effect on the students' motivations and is suggested as an effective way of getting ready for their future roles in life. However, students who work at full-time jobs and under heavy working conditions have a higher possibility to drop out of school.

On family-child relationship, it was revealed that students of families that do not communicate with the school are absent from school more and have higher dropout risk compared to the others. On this, Thornton, Darmody and McCoy (2013) state that participation in parent–teacher meetings and other activities, monitoring the child's school attendance and homework supports the child's academic progress and school attendance.

It is seen that the children of families who cannot have a good communication with their children, who are highly oppressive or who have no authority on their children and have accepted the failure of their children show considerably high cases of absenteeism and school dropout. Altinkurt (2008) similarly found out that students' desire to attract the attention of their parents and parents' putting excessive pressure on the child to go to school have a high effect on the increase of absenteeism rates.

Thornton, Darmody and McCoy (2013) confirmed in their study that Irish families sometimes do not send their children to school for reasons such as going on holiday, which is consistent with this study's finding that families may prefer not to send their children to school because of several reasons such as going shopping, funerals, weddings, going out of the city or district or having guests at home. Foley, Gallipoli and Green (2014) found that parents' giving importance to and valuation of education have positive effects on school dropout behaviour. Unwillingness of parents to send girls to school for religious reasons and early marriage of girls have an important place in the causes of absenteeism and school dropout among girls. Adigüzel (2013) states that, reaching puberty and early marriage of girls are stated as an important cause of absenteeism and truancy among girls. Alat and Alat (2011) point out that some families withdraw their children from school, especially the girls, to send them to Korean courses or marry them at an early age.

Negligent control of student absenteeism, failing to contact the parents in case of absenteeism and not investigating the causes of absenteeism were observed to be major causes of absenteeism and truancy of students. Uysal (2008) similarly revealed that there is no detection on young people who drop out of school and dropouts are not even asked about their reasons for leaving school.

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Student's seeing oneself worthless, being an object of derision, exclusion, being unjustly accused and feeling insecure were found as causes of absenteeism and school dropouts. According to Strand and Granlund (2014), the sense of belonging to school, trust in school, trust in the staff, commitment to various school activities decrease absenteeism rates, the negative aspects of the school setting may cause stress in students and lead to dropout. According to Sari (2013), when students view themselves as an important constituent of school, their academic success increases and their probability of dropping out of school decreases.

Students' friendship with their peers is one of the most important factors that affect their attendance at school. Altınkurt (2008) states that causes such as wanting to meet girl or boyfriends, trying to be accepted by their friends, the pressure of friends who are truant and wanting to go to internet cafes have a highly significant effect on the absenteeism of students from school. Among the individual causes of absenteeism and truancy, illness was noted to be an important factor that has effect on absenteeism and truancy. Yildiz and Kula (2012) also found that the biggest cause of students' absence from school was health problems. Academic failure and learning disabilities emerge as a highly important cause of both absenteeism and school dropout. Strand and Granlund (2014) state that learning disabilities are highly common among student groups with high absenteeism rates. Besides, according to Nolan et al. (2013), students enrolled in special education are under a higher risk of absenteeism compared to other students.

On the second objective (extent to which truancy and absenteeism impact on students' academic performance), the study generally revealed that respondents were of the view that the academic performance of such students were low. It was further revealed

that the performance of students who exhibited absenteeism and truancy behaviours were rated low for the 2015/2016 and 2016/2017 academic years but very low for the 2017/2018 academic year. The study further showed a decreasing performance of students who exhibit absenteeism and truancy with an average grade of 30 in BECE for the 2017/2018 academic year.

This finding is consistent with the assertion that regular attendance at school is essential for the students' academic achievements, language development and social development. Students who attend school regularly can be successful in their future professional lives through achieving work-related skills such as persistence, problem-solving, and the ability to work with others to accomplish a goal (Kearney and Graczyk, 2014). It is argued that students who attend school regularly have higher academic success, standardized test scores, graduation averages, university entrance rates and job opportunities (Balfanz & Byrnes, 2012; Kearney & Graczyk, 2014). Compared to their peers, students who do not attend school regularly have lower academic performance, limited future employment opportunities and will experience social and emotional problems in adulthood (Askeland et al., 2015; Buscha and Conte, 2014; Nolan et al., 2013).

Statistical tests showed a statistically significant association between academic performance of students and absenteeism and truancy behaviours with a computed Chi-square statistic value of 4.437 with (Asymp.) and p-value of 0.035. Also, multiple regression analysis showed a strong inverse relationship between academic performance and absenteeism and truancy behaviours of students, with a multiple correlation coefficient (R) of -0.981. Hence, the higher the absenteeism and truancy behaviours of students, the lower the academic performance of students, and vice versa. The above finding implies

that students who attend school regularly can be successful in their future professional lives through achieving work-related skills such as persistence, problem-solving, and the ability to work with others to accomplish a goal (Kearney and Graczyk, 2014).

5.3 Conclusion

The net-returns on investments in education is positive (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), 2009). As such, governments, development partners and civil society groups across the globe have shown commitments towards expanding and ensuring access to formal education. Generally, these stakeholders consider access to education as a 'right' (Christie, 2010; De Sas Kropiwnicki et al., 2014; UNESCO, 2014; 2011), which is rationalized by the enlightenment philosophy and formations of modernity (Christie, 2010). This right is exemplified by a myriad of international treaties (e.g. Millennium Development Goal 2 and Sustainable Development Goal 4), and has been affirmed by both legally binding and non-binding instruments such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, International Bill of Human rights, International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNESCO, 2017; 2014). The above suggests the need to address absenteeism and truant behaviour of students so as to improve individuals' access and right to formal education.
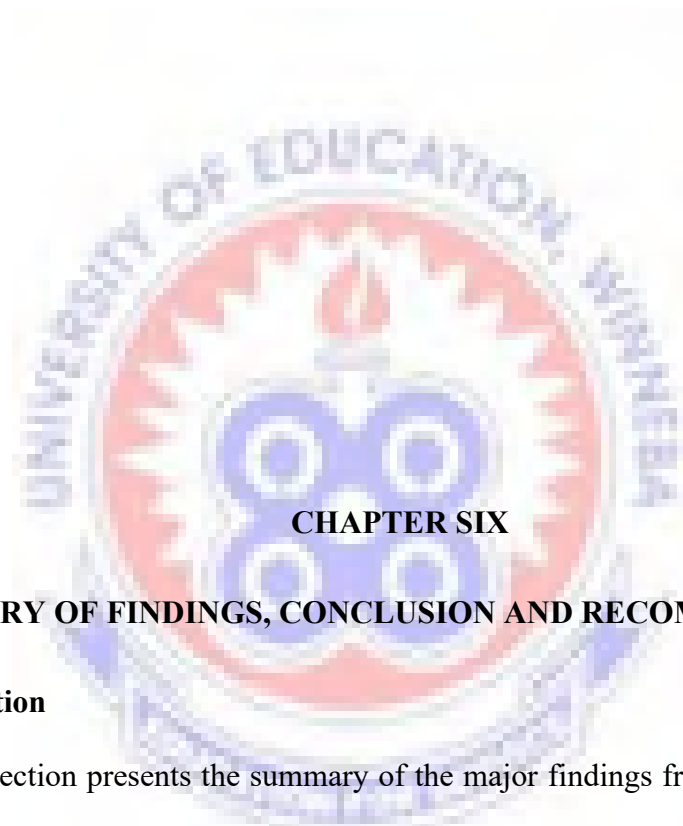
CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This section presents the summary of the major findings from the analyses of the data collected from the field. Based on the findings, the chapter then presents the recommendations deemed to address some of the issues identified from the research. The chapter concludes with areas of further research and the general conclusion of the research.

6.2 Summary of Major Findings

This section presents the summary of the major findings from the analyses made. The purpose of this study was to assess the effects of student absenteeism and truancy on

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student academic performance in three selected JHS schools in the Oforikrom Sub-Metropolis. The study adopted the mixed research approach to gather and analyse relevant data; which involved both quantitative and qualitative approaches. The total number of respondents were fifty (50) students who exhibit absenteeism and truancy behaviours, two (2) head teachers and five (5) teachers from the Aprade, Weweso and Anwomaso Basic Schools. Additionally, eight (8) students were interviewed purposely for qualitative data on the phenomenon. All respondents were purposively sampled based on their knowledge on the phenomenon studied. The methods used on gathering data were interviews using interview guides for the head teachers and teachers, questionnaire administration for the students, observation and focus group discussion with the students. The thematic and content analyses were employed to analyse the qualitative data. The major findings have been outlined below:

6.2.1 Factors that result in truancy and absenteeism among students in basic schools in the Oforikrom Sub-Metropolis

Several factors were revealed to be the causes of truancy and absenteeism among students in the schools. Notable among them were: students disliking particular subjects; poor attitude of teachers such as poor engagement in learning in classroom; fear of some teachers (unhealthy atmosphere unhealthy due to poor relationships between teachers and students); peer influence; family problems; economic or financial challenges; illness; bullying; and stigmatisation, among others. The findings on the factors resulting in the absenteeism and truancy behaviours of students were summarised under fifteen (15) themes: The results can be summarised under the following themes: family-child relationship, ignoring of absence, family problems, view of education, economic

impossibilities, head teacher-student relationship, teacher-student relationship, in-class behaviours of the teacher, attitude towards absence, school structure, negative school atmosphere, adaptation to school, individual reasons, relationships with the environment, and environmental factors.

Illness or health problems and poverty were that major causes of student absenteeism and truancy in the various schools. On family problems such as divorce, domestic violence and death of a parent, Hynes (2014) revealed in his study revealed that children who have one or both parents in jail are 79% more likely to leave school, children who lost a family member are 53% more likely to leave school, and children who are abused by a parent are 45% more likely to leave school. On environmental factors such as difficulty of transportation and negative weather conditions, Özbaş (2010) points out that the distance of the location where the students live to the school and negative climate conditions are the factors that cause absenteeism. Lastly, on financial or economic challenges, the lack of pocket money and travelling money were major causes of school absenteeism and truancy among students which confirmed findings of previous studies.

6.2.2 The extent to which truancy and absenteeism impact on students' academic performance

Considering that the regular attendance of students at school is essential for the students' academic achievements, language development and social development, the study assessed the extent of impact of absenteeism and truancy on student academic performance. The study revealed that respondents were of the view that the academic performance of such students were low. For instance, all head teachers indicated that students who exhibited attitudes of absenteeism and truancy had low academic

performance. Also, 40% of the teachers interviewed indicated that such students had low performance whiles 60% indicated that they had very low academic performances. Lastly, most of the students interviewed (72%) were of the view that absenteeism and truancy behaviours resulted in their low academic performances, where the average best scores after exams were between 23% and 60%. It was further revealed that the performance of students who exhibited absenteeism and truancy behaviours were rated low for the 2015/2016 and 2016/2017 academic years but very low for the 2017/2018 academic year. The study further showed a decreasing performance of students who exhibit absenteeism and truancy with an average grade of 30 for the 2017/2018 academic year.

Chi-square test to establish whether there is an association between absenteeism and truancy behaviours of students and academic showed a statistically significant association between academic performance of students and absenteeism and truancy behaviours with a computed Chi-square statistic value of 4.437 with (Asymp.) and p-value of 0.035. Hence, the academic performance of students is not independent of their absenteeism and truancy behaviours. Lastly, multiple regression analysis showed a strong inverse relationship between academic performance and absenteeism and truancy behaviours of students, with a multiple correlation coefficient (R) of -0.981. Thus, the higher the absenteeism and truancy behaviours of students, the lower the academic performance of students, and vice versa. The above finding implies that students who attend school regularly can be successful in their future professional lives through achieving work-related skills such as persistence, problem-solving, and the ability to work with others to accomplish a goal.

6.2.3. Measures to address absenteeism and truancy behaviours of students

Several strategies were given by head teachers, teachers and students to be important to help address absenteeism and truancy behaviours of students in the schools. Some of these measures given were: providing scholarships to students to motivate them; organising seminars to educate on the need or importance of education; providing adequate infrastructure and TLMs to improve teaching and learning; teachers should be well catered for in terms of salaries and allowances; parents should desist from defending their wards for exhibiting attitudes of absenteeism and truancy; establishing cordial relationships between teachers and students; extending the school feeding programme to the JHS; having frequent extracurricular activities in the schools, particularly, sports; and organising entertainment programmes, among others.

6.3 Recommendations

Based on the various findings, the following recommendations have been made to address truancy and absenteeism behaviours among students and improve upon their academic performance:

- Students and school authorities should avoid behaviours that distract the students from school. Students should be helped to enjoy school and a positive school atmosphere that enhances the students' commitment to school should be created. If necessary, in-service training programs should be organized for this aim.

- Issues concerning the punishment of students who are absent from school and have a tendency to drop out of school, the investigation of the causes of absenteeism and the creation of solutions should be primarily the responsibility of school counseling

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services. Besides, absenteeism and truancy monitoring should be done by the school counseling service on a daily, weekly and monthly basis.

- Causes of absenteeism and truancy should be determined on the basis of school and individual and solutions should be provided accordingly. Regarding solutions, rather than sanctions for punishment, precautions aiming at counseling services should be prioritized.

- Elective courses should be varied depending on the interests and needs of students and suitable environments for these courses should be prepared at schools. The number of social and sportive activities at schools should be increased; schools should be turned into centers of attraction.

- Students should be provided opportunities to realize themselves, their anxieties of failure should be tried to be prevented.

- Cooperation between the school and the family should be maintained and the awareness of families regarding the attendance at school should be raised.

6.4 Conclusion

The future development of any nation is dependent on the young ones who constitute the potential human resources needed for the continuity of the society (Ali et al., 2014). Additionally, the net-returns on investments in education is positive (OECD, 2009). The study analysed the effects of student absenteeism and truancy on student academic performance in three selected JHS Schools in the Oforikrom Sub-Metropolis. The study specifically presented results on the factors that result in truancy and absenteeism among students; to assess the level of awareness of students about the adverse consequences of

truancy and absenteeism on academic performance and future development; the social implications of truancy and absenteeism exhibited by students; and the extent to which truancy and absenteeism impact on students' academic performance in basic schools in the Oforikrom Sub-Metropolis.

The researcher observed from review of relevant literature to data collection (interviews and questionnaire administrations) that several factors led to the absenteeism and truancy behaviours of students in the various schools. It was however observed that poor attitude of teachers (poor teacher-student relationships), economic challenges, illness and stigmatisation were the major factors resulting in the absenteeism and truancy behaviours. Again, the study revealed that students who practiced truancy and absenteeism had very low academic performance, which was indicated by all teachers and most of the students interviewed. Statistical tests established positive relationship between academic performance and absenteeism and truancy behaviours of students. Finally, the revealed some measures by head teachers, teachers and students to address absenteeism and truancy behaviours of students, and generally improve upon their academic performance.

The study recommends the need for effective cooperation between family of victims and schools to address such behaviours. Also, the study suggests that elective courses should be varied depending on the interests and needs of students and suitable environments for these courses should be prepared at schools. In conclusion, education has proven to be of great benefit ranging from improvement in thinking and decision making, through strategies for healthy living and to better employment (Groot and van den Brink, 2007). This however does not necessarily imply that if someone has no higher education, the individual cannot partake in any decision leading to the better outcomes. This buttresses

Shute and Cooper's (2015, p.4) argument that: "If the students are turning their back on the education they are provided, it means that we need to ask ourselves the questions of "What is wrong in this education?" and "Is something happening in our schools and classrooms that distract students from education?". There is therefore the need to ensure that the needed measures are put in place to address student absenteeism and truancy behaviours.

6.5 Suggestions for Future Research

- Further larger-scale quantitative and qualitative studies should be conducted on absenteeism and truancy and their impact on other factors such as the society in general and the local economy.

- The role of parents and guardians in effectively addressing absenteeism and truancy behaviours of their wards in schools can be investigated.

- The traits of teachers and head teachers that lead to increased student absenteeism and truancy behaviors should be examined.

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APPENDIX I: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR HEADTEACHERS

I am conducting a research on "**The effects of student absenteeism and truancy on student academic performance in selected JHS Schools in the Oforikrom Sub-Metro**". I will be grateful if you allow me to involve you and some of your teachers in this study. The information obtained will be used for the purpose of the research and the identities of the respondents will be kept confidential. Your co-operation will be highly appreciated.

Thank you.

SECTION A: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Sex of respondent   Male [   ]   Female [   ]

2. Educational Level? SHS [   ] Training college [ ] University [ ] Polytechnic [ ]

3. For how long have you been in the teaching profession? a) 1–5 years [   ] b) 6–10 years [   ] c) 11 - 15 years [ ] d) 16 – 20 years [   ] e) 21 - 25 years [   ] f) Over 26 years [   ]

4. For how long have you been a head teacher? a) 1–5 years [   ] b) 6–10 years [   ] c) 11-15 years [   ] d) 16 – 20 years [   ] e) 21 - 25 years [   ] f) Over 26 years [   ]

5. For how long have you been a head teacher in your current school? a) 1–5 years [   ] b) 6 – 10 years [   ] c) 11-15 years [   ] d) 16–20 years [   ] e) 21-25 years [   ]

6. Have you ever attended any course, seminar or workshop on education or educational management?   Yes [   ]   No [   ]

7. What is the religious affiliation of your school? ……………………………..

8. How many students in total are there in your school (JHS)? Boys _____   Girls _____

9. Over the past five years, the total number of first year students coming to the school has:

   Increased [   ]   Decreased [   ]   Remained relatively stable [   ]

83

10. To what extent does the school liaise with the following services/agencies for any support? (Please tick appropriately)

	To a great extent	To some extent	Not to any great extent	Not to any extent
Ghana Education Service				
GETFund				
District Education Directorate				
Circuit Directorate				
Local youth/community workers				
Special Needs Organisers				
Voluntary groups				

SECTION B: CAUSES OF ABSENTEEISM AND TRUANCY

11. What is your view or understanding of the concept of:

   a. Truancy

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   …………………………………………………………………………………………
   …………………………………………………………………………………………
   ………………..

   b. Absenteeism

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   ………………

12. Which level is absenteeism and truancy very common and why (if there is any reason)?

   JHS 1 [ ]   JHS 2 [ ]   JHS 3 [ ]

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   …………………………………………………………………………………………
   …………………………………………………………………………………………
   ……………

13. How do you rate absenteeism and truancy of students in your school for males and females? (Kindly tick the most appropriate answer)

Sex/Rate	Very high	High	Moderate	Low	Very Low

84

| Male |
| Female |

14. What do you think are the causes of absenteeism and truancy among students in your school?

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SECTION C: EFFECTS OF ABSENTEEISM AND TRUANCY

15. Generally, what are some of the effects of absenteeism and truancy behaviours of students?

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16. How do absenteeism and truant behaviours affect the academic performance of students?

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17. What is the average grade of absenteeism and truant students in the BECE over the past 3 years?

Sex/Rate	Average Grade
2015/2016	
2016/2017	

85

2017/2018

18. How do you rate the academic performance of absent and truant students in standardised tests (e.g. BECE, end of term exams, etc) over the past 3 years?

Sex/Rate	Very high	High	Moderate	Low	Very Low
2015/2016					
2016/2017					
2017/2018					

19. What do you think can be done to address absenteeism and truancy behaviours of students?

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20. What do you think should be done to improve academic performance of students in general?

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21. What challenges do you encounter in minimising student truancy and absenteeism as well as improving upon student performance?

    a. Challenges in minimising student truancy and absenteeism

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    a. Challenges in improving students' academic performance

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APPENDIX TWO: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR TEACHERS

I am conducting a research on "**The effects of student absenteeism and truancy on student academic performance in selected JHS Schools in the Oforikrom Sub-Metro**".

I will be grateful if you allow me to involve you and some of your teachers in this study. The information obtained will be used for the purpose of the research and the identities of the respondents will be kept confidential. Your co-operation will be highly appreciated.

Thank you.

This questionnaire is divided into three section A, B and C. Please complete each section according to the instructions. Please respond to all the questions. Tick ($\sqrt{}$) where applicable.

SECTION A: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1. Sex of respondent   Male [ ]   Female [ ]

2. Educational Level? SHS [ ] Training college [ ] University [ ] Polytechnic [ ]

3. For how long have you been in the teaching profession? a) 1–5 years [ ] b) 6–10 years [ ] c) 11 - 15 years [ ] d) 16 – 20 years [ ] e) 21 - 25 years [ ] f) Over 26 years [ ]

4. For how long have you been a teacher in your current school? a) 1–5 years [ ] b) 6 – 10 years [ ] c) 11-15 years [ ] d) 16–20 years [ ] e) 21-25 years [ ]

5. Have you ever attended any course, seminar or workshop on education or educational management?   Yes [   ]   No [   ]

6. Over the past five years, the total number of first year students coming to the school has:

   Increased [   ]   Decreased [   ]   Remained relatively stable [   ]

SECTION B: CAUSES OF ABSENTEEISM AND TRUANCY

7. What is your view or understanding of the concept of:

    a. Truancy

    …………………………………………………………………………………………
    …………………………………………………………………………………………
    ……………

    b. Absenteeism

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    …………………………………………………………………………………………
    …………………………………………………………………………………………
    …………………………………………………………………………………………
    ……………………

8. Which level is absenteeism and truancy very common and why (if there is any reason)?
    JHS 1 [   ]   JHS 2 [   ]   JHS 3 [   ]

    …………………………………………………………………………………………
    …………………………………………………………………………………………
    …………………………………………………………………………………………
    ………………

9. How do you rate absenteeism and truancy of students in your school for males and females? (Kindly tick the most appropriate answer).

Sex/Rate	Very high	High	Moderate	Low	Very Low
Male					
Female					

10. What do you think are the causes of absenteeism and truancy among students in your school?

    …………………………………………………………………………………………
    …………………………………………………………………………………………
    …………………………………………………………………………………………
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11. Please indicate the extent to which you agree with each of the following. What do you think are the causes of absenteeism and truancy among students?

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Students waking up late					
Students dislike particular subjects					
Attitude of teachers (poor engagement in learning in classroom)					
Fear of some teachers (unhealthy atmosphere unhealthy due to poor relationships between teachers and students)					
Drug abuse					
Peer influence					
Trouble at home/Family problems					
Weak punishment					
Poor enforcement of rules					
Uncaring attitude of guardians (irregular follow-up with parents)					
Illness					
Absence of Innovative teaching methodologies					
Thought that borrowing notes is as good as attending class					
Students' working to support family along with studies					
Poor sensitisation campaigns on the adverse effects of absenteeism and truancy					
Lack of peer mentoring sessions by classmates and senior students to improve attendance					
Long distance from home to school					
Psychological difficulties/trauma					
Bullying					

SECTION C: EFFECTS OF ABSENTEEISM AND TRUANCY

12. Generally, what are some of the effects of absenteeism and truancy behaviours of students?

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13. How do absenteeism and truancy behaviours affect the academic performance of students?

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14. What do you think can be done to address absenteeism and truancy behaviours of students?

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15. What do you think should be done to improve academic performance of students in general?

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91

16. What challenges do you encounter in minimising student truancy and absenteeism as well as improving upon student performance?

    a.   Challenges in minimising student truancy and absenteeism

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    b.   Challenges in improving students' academic performance

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APPENDIX THREE: QUESTIONNAIRE FOR STUDENTS

I am conducting a research on "**The effects of student absenteeism and truancy on student academic performance in selected JHS Schools in the Oforikrom Sub-Metro**". I will be grateful if you allow me to involve you and some of your teachers in this study. The information obtained will be used for the purpose of the research and the identities of the respondents will be kept confidential. Your co-operation will be highly appreciated.

Thank you.

1. Category of student   Absentee [   ] Truant   [   ]
   ……………./week/month/term

2. Sex of respondent   Male [   ]   Female [   ]

3. Have ever been absent from school?   Yes [   ]   No [   ]
   a. If, YES, how often are you absent from school? Very often [   ] Thrice a term [   ] Less than thrice a term [   ]   Once a term [   ]
   b. What was/were the reason(s) for being absent in class?
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SECTION B: CAUSES OF ABSENTEEISM AND TRUANCY

4. How do you rate your absenteeism or truancy? Very high [   ] High [   ] Moderate [   ] Low [   ]   Very low [   ]

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5. How do you rate your cause of absenteeism or truancy in your school?

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Waking up late					
Students dislike particular subjects					
Attitude of teachers (poor engagement in learning in classroom)					
Fear of some teachers (unhealthy atmosphere unhealthy due to poor relationships between teachers and students)					
Drug abuse					
Peer influence					
Trouble at home/Family problems					
Weak punishment					
Poor enforcement of rules					
Uncaring attitude of guardians (irregular follow-up with parents)					
Illness					
Thought that borrowing notes is as good as attending class					
Students' working to support family along with studies					
Poor sensitisation campaigns on the adverse effects of absenteeism and truancy					
Lack of peer mentoring sessions by classmates and senior students to improve attendance					
Long distance from home to school					
Psychological difficulties/trauma					
Bullying					

SECTION C: EFFECTS OF ABSENTEEISM AND TRUANCY

6. What are some of the effects of your absenteeism or truant behaviour on you?

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7. Do you think your absenteeism or truant behaviour has an effect on your academic

performance?   Yes [   ]   No [   ]

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a. If Yes, how? If No, why?

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8. Absenteeism and truancy cause low academic performance (Rate the following).

a. Strongly agree [ ] Agree [ ] Indifferent/Not sure [   ]   Disagree [   ] Strongly disagree [ ]

9. To what extent do you agree with the following measures to address your absenteeism or truant behaviour?

Item	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Students should sleep early so as to wake up early					
Students should pay equal attention to all subjects					
Teachers should engage students well in learning in the classroom					
Relationships between teachers and students should be strengthened to erase fear					
Education on drug abuse					
Counselling sessions on peer influence					
Addressing family problems					
Institute strict punishments for students who are truant					
Regular and firm enforcement of rules					
Regular follow-up by parents/guardians on you in school					
Implement innovative teaching methodologies (use of projectors, social media platforms)					
Talk to parents on how best to address students' working to support family					

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along with studies					
Undertake sensitisation campaigns on the adverse effects of absenteeism and truancy					
Implement peer mentoring sessions by classmates and senior students to improve attendance					
General counselling sessions on how to overcome psychological difficulties/trauma					
Eradicating bullying in school					

10. Beside the list, what other measures do you think can be done to address absenteeism

and truancy behaviours of students?

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APPENDIX FOUR: INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR STUDENTS

1. What is your view or understanding of:

    a. Truancy

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    …………………………………………………………………………………………
    …………………………………………………………………………………………
    ………………

    b. Absenteeism

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    …………………………………………………………………………………………
    …………………………………………………………………………………………
    ………………

2. Have ever been absent from school?   Yes [   ]   No [   ]

3. What was/were the reason(s) for being absent in class?

    …………………………………………………………………………………………
    …………………………………………………………………………………………
    …………………………………………………………………………………………
    ………………

4. How do you rate your absenteeism or truancy? Very high [   ] High [   ] Moderate [   ]
    Low [   ]   Very low [   ]

5. Which level is absenteeism and truancy very common and why (if there is any reason)?
    JHS 1 [   ]   JHS 2 [   ]   JHS 3 [   ]

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    …………………………………………………………………………………………
    …………………………………………………………………………………………
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6. What do you think are the causes of absenteeism and truancy among students in your
    school?

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7. What are some of the effects of your absenteeism or truant behaviour on you?

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8. Do you think your absenteeism or truant behaviour has an effect on your academic

    performance?   Yes [   ]   No [   ]

    a. If Yes, how? If No, why?

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