

**MANAGEMENT OF EDUCATORS' ABSENTEEISM
IN SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS**

WITH

**SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO SCHOOLS
IN MAFIKENG AREA PROJECT OFFICE**

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**Dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Business Administration (MBA),
with the Graduate School of Business & Government Leadership,
North West University (Mafikeng Campus).**

APRIL 2006

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DECLARATION.

I hereby declare that this mini dissertation presented for the Master's Degree in Business Administration (MBA) with the North West University, Mafikeng Campus, South Africa, has not been previously submitted by me for the purpose of a Degree at this or any other University. It is my own work in design and execution and that all research materials utilized from the various academic scholars/sources have been acknowledged to the best of my ability.

Thundiyil George John Kunjunjukutty.

DEDICATION.

This work is dedicated to my father who gave me life, to my mother who nurtured me against all the indescribable odds and adversities, to my elder brother, who as a young man supported me with his limited resources, my two elder sisters who cared me and protected me in my childhood and my two younger sisters who treated with utmost respect. Above all it is dedicated to my **Lord** and **God** who gave me the wisdom and blessings to reach this level beyond all my dreams.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to thank the following for their invaluable contribution and support. My wife, Susy John, for her persistence and prayers to complete this course; my son, George John, for assisting me in obtaining the necessary literature and editing the work; and my son, Thomas John, for the computer graphics and layout. Contribution of Mr. Samuel in the final checking of this work is also acknowledged. Also Dr. (Mrs.) Teu for her inputs at the initial stages of my dissertation is acknowledged. Encouragement and constructive criticism of Prof. Ackermann was an eye opener for me in completing this work. I also thank my secretary, Debbie Roberts, for her assistance during the course of my MBA studies. The encouragement of my friends Mr. Udayan particularly, Mr. Govender and Mr. Moodley are also acknowledged. I also thank the SGB of Mmabatho High School for allowing me to use its facilities in the completion of my course and work. The co-operation of the management team and educators of the schools, which participated in the survey, is also acknowledged. Without their co-operation this work could not be completed.

Thank you, thank you and thank you all.

ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study is to determine whether absenteeism is a real concern amongst the educators in South African schools. Although there are sufficient and appropriate policies in place, the rate of absenteeism is on the increase on a daily basis.

Through the literature and investigations, the study tries to unravel the causes of absenteeism and the solutions thereof.

The study revealed that 66% of the educators abused the current leave policy. Great majority (64%) of the educators were in favour of the introduction of some form of incentives and seventy eight percent of the educators wanted the re-introduction of the accumulation of leave policy. Eighty four percent of the respondents also agreed that teacher absenteeism contributes to poor learner performance. Workload of educators was not a major contributing factor in the high rate of teacher absenteeism.

Some of the reasons attributed to absenteeism are depression, redeployment, ill health, lack of motivation and self esteem, low salary, demoralizing learners and poor working conditions.

All levels of educators suggested solutions to this ever-increasing problem, which is becoming difficult to manage. Recognition of least absenteeism, effective implementation of the policy, strong management team, motivating the staff, offering fringe benefits, organizing workshops to manage absenteeism and to equip educators and building team work are some of the noticeable and common solutions suggested by all levels of educators.

The study recommends the re-introduction of accumulation of leave policy and linking the school database of educators with departmental database so that on a daily basis the leave statistics can be updated and appropriate actions effected with out delay.

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CHAPTER 1: ORIENTATION

1.1. Introduction

Employee absenteeism is one of the major management problems faced by modern organisations. Absenteeism has numerous implications on business organisations, which has direct and indirect economic influence. However, the problem is especially difficult in schools, in which absenteeism causes additional influence, beyond economic. It affects the school's general existence strongly, like loss of school days that diminish the pupils' achievements, which causes damage to the school's reputation and induces pupil absenteeism (Rivin-Abeles: 2001).

The dawn of freedom and democracy in South Africa in 1994 brought about many changes in all spheres of life. So many policies were put in place in all governmental departments to safeguard the interest of all and to improve efficiency and productivity. Some of these policies made a positive contribution while others had a negative effect. Leave policy is one of them; it has affected all departments negatively, particularly the Department of Education, although it was never meant to be like that. It is perceived that absenteeism of educators has increased considerably in our schools, all over South Africa. Schools in the Mafikeng Area Project Office would not be an exception to the above perception. The ensuing study will unfold the level of absenteeism; its causes and its impact, in selected schools in the Mafikeng Area Project Office (see 1.6). Recommendations to curtail and manage absenteeism will also form part of the study.

1.2. Objectives

1.2.1 To determine from the literature and the survey that there is evidence of absenteeism being rife in South African schools.

1.2.2. To determine whether absenteeism is due to inadequate support to managers from higher authorities to take steps against the perpetrators

1.2.2.1 Hypothesis 1

Ho: Opinion and job experience are independent.

H1: Opinion and job experience are not independent.

1.2.2.1.1. Rationale

There are significant differences of opinions about the less and more experienced educators in terms of the support managers get from the higher authorities in the implementation of the leave policy.

1.2.3. To determine the age group based on gender and experience and the gender of educators who absent frequently.

1.2.3.1. Hypothesis 2

Ho: Opinion and gender are independent.

H1: Opinion and gender are not independent.

1.2.3.1.1. Rationale

There are significant differences of opinions between male and female educators about the age of absent educators. Norton (1998:95), from a study of Scott & McClellan (1990) state that there was a significant difference of absence for men between the ages of 21 and 39. He further states from the studies of Porwoll (1980) that teachers with two to four years of teaching experience and those with 23-25 years, had the fewest absences.

1.2.3.2. Hypothesis 3

Ho: Opinion and job experience are independent.

H1: Opinion and job experience are not independent.

1.2.3.2.1. Rationale

There are significant differences of opinions between the less and more experienced educators on the gender of educators who absented frequently. According to Norton (1998:95), in a study conducted by Unicom and others (1992) with 108 primary and 165 secondary teachers, differences in absence levels as the age group of teachers was not significant, but women and men did reveal different patterns of absenteeism with age. The number of absences claimed by female teachers increased with age. Male teachers on the other hand absented more days in their thirties, than at any other age.

1.2.3.3. Hypothesis 4

Ho: Opinion and gender are independent.

H1: Opinion and gender are not independent.

1.2.3.3.1. Rationale

There are significant differences of opinions between the male and female educators about the absenteeism of educators in terms of gender. According to Hamilton-Atwell, (2003:57) absenteeism is higher among females than among males. This is further supported by the studies of Pitkoff (1993:40). He states "females are absent more than males".

1.2.4. To determine whether there is an absenteeism policy in the school, if so, the type of policy in existence, the knowledge of policy by stakeholders and the extent of implementation and abuse of the policy.

1.2.5. To determine whether the workload and job satisfaction have an impact on the rate of absenteeism.

- 1.2.6. To determine whether offering incentives and abolition of accumulation of leave have an impact on the rate of absenteeism.**
- 1.2.7. To determine whether absenteeism has an effect on the performance of learners.**
- 1.2.8. To determine the day of the week when absenteeism is most and the group of people who absent most.**
- 1.2.9. To determine, in the management of absenteeism, if the schools maintain accurate records and if the School Management Team is communicating to the staff on the extent of absenteeism.**
- 1.2.10. To determine (i) whether the School Management Team (SMT) or Principal practice discrimination in granting leaves; (ii) whether the medical certificates submitted are genuine and (iii) whether absenteeism was experienced due to teachers' strike.**

The following questions will also guide the study.

- What are the underlying causes of absenteeism?
- What is the impact of absenteeism on the school community?
- What are the solutions to this problem of absenteeism and how do we improve the situation?
- Which group/s is/are most prone to absenteeism?
- What period (week, month, and term of the year) does absenteeism mostly occurs?

1.3. Importance of study

Unionised teachers responded to the call of the leaders to abstain from work during a strike called by South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU) against privatisation. The response was of a mixed nature. Teaching ground to a halt in many schools in Gauteng, with some schools reporting 100% to

50% stay-away (Kahn, 2002). Kahn further stated that in some provinces, some teachers absented themselves from work on pretext that they were in support of the strike while they actually were not members of SADTU. Disciplinary actions against the culprits are underway. According to Msiza, a departmental official in Mpumalanga, teacher absenteeism ranged from 15% to 35%. In Limpopo Province, teachers left the school before the end of the school day in a "number of schools." Free State reported 10% to 50% absenteeism (Business Day: 2002). In the Eastern Cape, the education department is concerned with officials and teachers who stayed away from work, estimated absenteeism at 50% throughout the year, and predicted that the situation was likely to worsen with the existing backlog on outstanding teachers' salaries, which was the cause of the high rate of stay-away (Kahn, 2002).

According to Zuzile, a reporter from Bisho, absent teachers could be costing the Eastern Cape Department of Education more than R1 billion a year. Government officials confirmed that the troubled department was losing R5, 3 million a day because of teacher absenteeism alone. There is an estimated 192-195 school days a year. During a media briefing on the progress made by the department, Education MEC Nomsa Jajula revealed high absenteeism, huge salary backlogs, corruption and drug abuse, and gangsterism and poor performances at schools. She said the absenteeism was discovered when the department, in collaboration with the Office of the Auditor General, conducted a head count of all 74 000 Education Department employees the previous year. The head count revealed that absenteeism among teachers was 23 percent. "This means that as many as 16769 teachers were absent during the head count. The department is losing R5, 3million a day due to absenteeism -- but the cost to learners cannot be put in rand terms at all," she said. She further commented, "A study clearly attests that there is a 98 percent correlation between teacher absenteeism and the matric pass rate."

Jajula said the department would also ensure that educators who were persistently absent would be dealt with in terms of the law and replaced by teachers who were willing to teach (Anon, F).

Muller, a Dispatch reporter, reported teacher absenteeism at the beginning of the year. In one school alone, up to 39% of the staff were absent on the first day (Anon, G).

Professor Hennie van der Mescht of Rhodes University's education department says that the issue of teacher absenteeism is "huge and has serious political implications. There is no obvious solution, especially since education has become increasingly politicised, and South Africa increasingly unionised" (Anon, H).

In addition to the above, teachers are absent from school, every working day, due to a host of reasons, and valuable teaching and learning time is lost. Therefore, it is important to study how this mayhem can be managed.

1.4. Rationale of the study

This study focuses on the management problem of absenteeism of teachers in South African schools in general, with specific reference to schools in the Mafikeng Area Project Office.

This study refers to terms concerned with absenteeism: excused and non-excused absenteeism, their interpretation within the school context and the connection between them. According to Rivin-Abeles (2001), teacher absenteeism is studied within the school context with special attention to the fact that the teacher is part of the school he/she works in. The teacher is part of the school culture, which includes school norms, characteristics of the other teachers and their behaviour regarding absenteeism. Furthermore, the school is typified by its form of management, including human resources management, in the context of control and supervision of the human resource element in the school.

Since the teacher "belongs" to the school (sociologically), he/she adapts to it and internalises its cultural norms and the behaviour of others in his/her workplace (the school absenteeism culture). The study assumes that

belonging to a certain school will constitute a unique interpretation in addition to the traditional explanations of teacher absenteeism (Rivin-Abeles: 2001).

The study also focuses on examining the differences in school absenteeism. A school is part of a (concentric) system; it belongs to a certain education stage, to a certain geographic area, to a certain education trend, even to a specific sector. All these cultural environments affect the school and its teachers. In as much as schools differ in many factors, they differ in their degree of absenteeism, and that some of the variance in school absenteeism (beyond teachers' absenteeism as individuals) can be explained by environmental cultural factors and by the in-school teachers' attributes (Rivin-Abeles: 2001).

The present study also has practical implications. Understanding the school context enables one to focus on dealing with absenteeism not only of teachers (as individuals), but also of the entire school, which makes it an analysis unit and an intervention unit (Rivin-Abeles: 2001).

1.5. Study environment

There are 10 Secondary School in the precincts of Mafikeng. These ten schools are chosen to conduct the exercise. Except one school, a male Principal heads all other schools. Only one school has more White educators than the other races and three other schools have a few white educators each. Principals of Indian origin head two schools; a White Principal heads one and the rest headed by Blacks. Four schools have a few teachers of Indian origin. In the rest of the schools, teachers are predominantly Blacks.

1.6. Clarification of concepts

Absenteeism is defined as the state of chronic absence from work (Newmarch.2000). Carrell *et al.* (1998:573) define absenteeism as being absent from work on any scheduled workday, whether the absence is excused

or unexcused. It is a formal term meaning not to be present; to stay away (Word Power Dictionary).

Absenteeism is usually addressed through progressively stricter disciplinary measures that could result in the termination of the individual's employment. This might be outlined in the organisation policy, which addresses chronic absence from work. Absenteeism policies usually contain guidelines for topics such as the following (Newmarch, 2000):

- Allowable absences;
- Payment for work including payment for days missed before and after a holiday;
- Types of excused and unexcused absences;
- Days/hours worked on a normal work schedule before payment of overtime hours occurs within a pay period;
- Policy about calling in absences; and
- Supervisor management of absenteeism via paying attention to selected patterns of absences and tardiness.

She further states that absenteeism policy is often used interchangeably with attendance policy, depending on content. Her view is that an attendance policy is much more narrowly defined and limited to attendance, as opposed to absenteeism policies, which are much broader and address absenteeism management issues and more.

Education Department means the Department and a department of any provincial government, which is responsible for education (National Education Policy Act, 27 of 1996).

Educator means any person who teaches, educates or trains other persons at an education institution or assists in rendering education services or education auxiliary or support services provided by or in an education department (National Education Policy Act, 27 of 1996). The term teacher is used interchangeably with educator in this study.

Student means any person enrolled in an education institution. The term **learner** means any person receiving education or obliged to receive education (National Education Policy Act, 27 of 1996). The term learner is used interchangeably with student in this study.

Area Project Office is an administrative unit falling directly under the Regional Office but is also answerable to the Department of Education.

This study refers to terms concerned with absenteeism: excused and non-excused absenteeism, their interpretation within the school context and the connection between them.

Although absenteeism is one of today's most complex employee problems, it is possible to isolate the variables that influence employee decisions to attend work. Considerable research has shown that the following factors contribute to absenteeism in the workplace (Carrel *et al*; 1998:570):

- **Personal Factors**

These include the employee's age, gender, and length of service, marital status, and education, health, and income level;

- **Organisational Factors**

The size of the organisation, size of the work group, nature of supervision, shift work, overtime, incentive schemes and type of work;

- **Attitudinal Factors**

These include job satisfaction and the state of the economy (when unemployment is high, absenteeism is lower) and

- **Social Factors**

Difficult township circumstances, inadequate transport systems, township and hostel violence.

1.7. Plan of the Study.

In the proposed study, the chapters are divided as follows:

Chapter 1:	Orientation
Chapter 2:	Literature Review
Chapter 3:	Method of Research
Chapter 4:	Data Analysis and Interpretation
Chapter 5:	Discussions, Conclusions and Recommendations

1.8. Conclusion

Most educators in South Africa are unionised. They tend to heed more to the call of unions than to the call of duty. The Mafikeng area, where unions did not make much inroads before, is becoming a centre of union activities now. Absenteeism is caused by a number of factors and is considered as a universal phenomenon. Managers all over the world find it difficult to manage absenteeism effectively. However, the onus rests with the managers to control, curtail and remedy the situation and this study is trying to find out how this can be addressed.

In the following chapter, the meaning of teacher absenteeism, its legal framework, the causes and its effect on the learner performance and guidelines for attendance management are discussed based on the literature study.

Chapter 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The traditional and basic model for the education of students in the schools of this nation is built on the interaction of a student with a teacher. When either the student or the teacher is absent, there are major problems with carrying on instruction with such a model. There is dramatic increase in both student and teacher absenteeism. Administrators throughout the country are reporting dramatic increases in teacher absences from classrooms (Elliot, 1979:18). Teacher absenteeism has dramatically increased during the past decade and teachers as a group exhibits a higher rate of absenteeism than employees in most other professions (Pitkoff, 1993:39). Absenteeism is considered one of the most complex employee problems associated with a range of variables as well as an array of classifications. In many instances, either it is an inevitable occurrence that has to be endured or human resource practitioners are not even aware of the extent of the problem (Hamilton-Atwell, 2003:56). Although excessive employee absences are problematic for any organisation, in a labour-intensive field such as education, excessive teacher absences are particularly troublesome (Jacobson, 1990:78).

Employee absenteeism is one of the major problems faced by modern organisations. Absenteeism has many varied implications on business organisations, in which the main direct and indirect influence is economic. However, the problem is especially difficult in schools, in which absenteeism causes additional damage, beyond the economic, and strongly affects school's general existence (Rivin-Abeles, 2001).

In this chapter, the meaning of teacher absenteeism, legal framework of absenteeism, causes of teacher absenteeism, and the fallacies of teacher absenteeism and management of teacher absenteeism will be explained.

2.2. Meaning of teacher absenteeism

"Absence" is defined as, not being on duty when scheduled to work. This definition thus excludes absence that is applied for and which is granted beforehand thus enabling the manager or supervisor to plan and schedule the necessary resources to maintain production and service levels (Hamilton-Atwell, 2003). Jacobson (1990:79) saw absenteeism as 'an expression of employee choice' and so distinguishable from 'involuntary and unavoidable' absence.

If, as Gibson (1966) (quoted by Jacobson (1990:79) asserts, absence events are a subclass of the events that constitute the behaviour of workers, then absenteeism represents a subclass of the events that constitute the absence behaviour of workers. While a teacher's absence might occur for any one of a number of reasons, if he or she is either unable and/or unavailable to work, that absence can be considered "legitimate" since most school districts have contractual provisions that specify allowable numbers of sick and personal leave days. If, on the other hand, a teacher is unwilling to work (although otherwise able and available to do so), the absence is 'illegitimate', that is, an example of voluntary absenteeism. What distinguishes absenteeism as a subclass of absence events is volition (Jacobson, 1990:79).

Innocent absenteeism is a term given to circumstances where, through no fault of the employee, he or she has been unable to attend to work, for example, due to prolonged or frequent illness or injuries (Trewin, 2001). Absenteeism is referred to herein as failure of employees to report for work when they are scheduled to work. Employees who are away from work on recognized holidays, vacations, approved leaves of absence, or leaves of absence allowed for under the collective agreement provisions would not be included (Anon B: 2004).

An absentee teacher is an absent teacher whose non-presence at work has been officially attributed to illness or incapacity (Bowers, 2001:137).

Innocent absenteeism is a term, which refers to employees who are absent for reasons beyond their control like sickness and injury. Innocent absenteeism is not culpable which means that it is blameless. In a labour relations context this means that it cannot be remedied or treated by disciplinary measures. Culpable absenteeism refers to employees who are absent without authorisation for reasons, which are within their control. For instance, an employee who is on sick leave, even though he/she is not sick, and it can be proven that the employee was not sick, is guilty of absenteeism. To be culpable is to be blameworthy. In a labour relations context this means that progressive discipline can be applied (Anon E: 2004).

Teacher absenteeism is studied within the school context with special attention to the fact that the teacher is part of the school in which he/she works. The teacher is part of the school culture, which includes school norms, characteristics of the other teachers and their behaviour regarding absenteeism. Furthermore, the school is typified by its form of management, including human resources management, in the context of control and supervision of the human resource element in the school (Rivin-Abeles, 2001).

2.3. Legal framework of absenteeism

Now, as per the Employment of Educators Act, No. 76 of 1998, Republic of South Africa, educators are entitled to avail the following leaves:

- Vacation Leave;
- Sick leave;
- Special sick leave;
- Special leave for study purposes;
- Special leave for military training;
- Special leave for examination purposes;
- Special leave for quarantine purposes;
- Special leave for participating in sporting and cultural events;

- Special leave for urgent private affairs with regard to educators employed at schools;
- Special leave for confinement;
- Special leave for continuity of service; and
- Special leave in extraordinary circumstances.

In addition to the above, absence from duty not to be recorded as leave (Employment of Educators Act, No. 76 of 1998, Republic of South Africa), include when an educator:

- Must appear as a witness:
 - in any court;
 - in misconduct proceedings or investigations in terms of law;
 - at inquest proceedings;
 - at rent proceedings except when such educator is the person who, in respect of such appearance, submitted a written complaint;
 - before a commission or committee appointed by the state or before any committee or institution instituted by or in terms of any Act.
- Appears as defendant or co-defendant in civil proceedings arising from his official duties and in which the State or any statutory body or institutions has a direct interest.
- Is taken into custody or must appear in any court on a criminal charge and the offence, he or she is charged with is withdrawn or if he or she is acquitted of such offence on the merit of the case.
- With the approval of the employer:
 - attends an instruction course or a lecture or has undertaken undergraduate or post-graduate studies;

- does practical work or practice teaching to comply with the requirements for a formal qualification offered by a recognised tertiary or post-secondary educational institution;
- in the interest of the employer or the organised teaching profession participates in any other activity or performs any other function.

All these leave provisions contribute to teachers' absenteeism from the work place at any given time throughout the academic year.

2.4. Teacher absenteeism is a growing dilemma in education

Research on teacher absenteeism has centred largely on:

- who is absent from teaching responsibilities and when;
- causes for teacher absences;
- absenteeism and student achievement;
- the relationship of school climate and the absence of employee, and
- the impact of various incentives on teacher absenteeism (Norton, 1998:95-98).

2.4.1. Who is absent from teaching responsibilities and when

Gender, age levels, and personality traits are among those characteristics most often examined in studies of absenteeism in schools. Such study results often tend to differ. According to Norton (1998:95), in a study conducted by Unicom and others (1992) with 108 primary and 165 secondary teachers, differences in absence levels as the age group of teachers varied was not significant, but women and men did reveal different patterns of absenteeism with age. The number of absences claimed by female teachers increased with age. Male teachers, on the other hand, claimed more days in their thirties than at any other age (Norton, 1998:95).

Norton (1998:95) further states that Scott and McClellan (1990) supported this finding and noted that there was a significant difference in the occurrence of

absence for men between the ages of 21 and 39. Overall, men teachers had significantly fewer absences than women teachers did. The researchers also reported that primary school teachers missed school more often than they missed their secondary school counterparts.

Although several studies have noted higher absenteeism on Mondays and Fridays, this finding is not consistent. According to Norton (1998:95) a study by Unicom and others (1992) disclosed that teachers were absent on Wednesdays more frequently than any other day. Contrary to the popular belief, Mondays were the least claimed day of absences.

Research has not been consistent concerning the rate of absenteeism and the number or years of teaching (Norton, 1998:96). He further states from the studies of Porwoll (1980) that teachers with two to four years of teaching experience and those with 23-25 years had the fewest absences. Porwoll (1980) also noted that other researchers were unable to establish any relationship between the number of years of teaching experience and teaching attendance (Norton, 1998:96).

Some research has found that teacher absence is closely tied to leave provisions. According to Norton (1998:96), Jacobson (1990) reported that senior teachers nearing retirement were often absent more frequently than others were. Teachers who had accumulated the maximum number of sick days tended to use additional days indiscriminately rather than lose them. He further states from the study by Ehrenberg *et al* (1991) that school districts that allowed for unlimited accumulation of leave had somewhat lower usage of leaves than others.

Norton (1998:96) from the studies Pitkoff (1993) revealed that individuals who received low performance ratings were associated with higher levels of absenteeism. School employees rated as unsatisfactory or doubtful were absent significantly more days than those rated satisfactory. He further revealed from the studies of Ferris and others (1988) that in the case of females, low ability to control anxiety was associated with absenteeism.

2.4.2. The causes of teacher absenteeism

The causes of absenteeism are many and include:

- Serious accidents and illness;
 - Low morale;
 - Poor working conditions;
 - Boredom on the job;
 - Lack of job satisfaction;
 - Inadequate leadership and poor supervision;
 - Personal problems (financial, marital, substance abuse, childcare);
 - Poor physical fitness;
 - Inadequate nutrition;
 - Transportation problems;
 - The existence of income protection plans (collective agreement);
 - Provisions, which continue income during period of illness or accident;
 - Stress;
 - Workload;
 - Employee discontent with a bargaining process and/or its results.
- (Anon B: 2004).

Reasons for teacher absence are inextricably tied to who is absent. Reasons for absences are sometimes labelled as “soft” when viewed as being reducible. For example, absence taken to avoid the loss of leaves days or absences taken for recreational purposes and reported as sick leave would come under the label of soft absences (Norton, 1998:96).

According to Olivier & Venter, (2003:186) stress is currently a phenomenon that must be recognised and addressed in various professions, because of the complexity of present-day society, and the teaching profession is no exception. Stress in the workplace can cause “job compassion fatigue”. In the past teachers did not consider stress to be the primary cause when they needed to escape from the school environment, but rather claimed to be

overworked in such a case. Far too many teachers have to take sick leave, while others are leaving the profession because of burnout. Some teachers lack coping mechanisms to combat excess stress effectively, and this in turn can lead to absenteeism, alcohol and drug abuse, depression, frustration, hypertension, and other serious physical conditions, such as heart disease. Olivier & Venter states from the study of Yates (1979), that there are 'external' stressors causing stress, as the pressure come from the external environment, for example, from one's job or interpersonal relationships. On the other hand, 'internal' stressors are related to the person him/herself, such as being ambitious, competitive, or materialistic.

Studies carried out in several countries indicate that a large proportion of teachers report relatively high levels of occupational stress (Ngidi & Sibaya, 2002:7). According to them, this is well documented in reviews of Borg, (1990) & Turk, (1987). South African studies show that stress is a menace to various groups of people involved in a diversity of vocations including teaching. According to Ngidi and Sibaya (2002:7) studies conducted in South Africa by Buwalda & Kok, (1991); Marais, (1992); Van Zyl & Pietersen (1999), support that a large proportion of teachers experience relatively high levels of occupational stress. They further state that Bulwalda and Kok (1991) reported that 84, 2 percent of teachers in English medium secondary schools, in one of the provinces of South Africa, viewed teaching stressful. They further state from the studies of Marais (1992) that 63,7 percent of teachers in both English and Afrikaans medium schools, selected from the former Orange Free State and Cape provinces, also viewed teaching stressful. Similarly, according to them, study conducted among black secondary school teachers in the former homeland of Transkei, by Mwamwenda, Monyooe & Glencross, (1997) indicated that 91.3 percent of teachers report average levels of stress.

The South African educational system is in a transitional stage and change is the order of the day. The lack of discipline in schools, abolishment of corporal punishment, unmotivated learners, redeployment, retrenchments (right-sizing) and retirement packages for teachers, large pupil-teacher ratios and a new curriculum approach all contribute to raising stress levels of teachers (Saptoe, 2000:6). Furthermore, the new education approach of Outcome Based

Education (OBE), the management style of principals, new governing bodies for schools, the crime rate in the country, coping with current political change and corruption in state departments are causing stress to teachers (Olivier & Venter, 2003:186).

The major problems facing teachers are because the increases in responsibilities have not adequately been accompanied by appropriate changes in facilities and training, in order to equip teachers to deal with these new demands. Consequently, teachers may feel threatened by new demands, thus becoming stressed (Ngidi & Sibaya, 2002:7). It is not only change, but also change-on-change beyond the control of most teachers, that is a cause of stress. In the province of KwaZulu-Natal alone, about 3000 teachers took voluntary severance packages (Ngidi & Sibaya, 2002:7). They further state from Natal Mercury, (1997:1) and Sunday Tribune, (1997:1) that many teachers feign illness as a way of obtaining early retirement packages. These medical reports may be signs that some teachers experience educational changes as a major factor among sources of occupational stress in this province (Ngidi & Sibaya, 2002:8).

Poor working conditions are a major source of stress among teachers. Poor physical conditions such as overcrowding may in turn exacerbate problems such as teachers having to cover the syllabus in the little time available, as well as a lack of time for marking and lesson preparation (Ngidi & Sibaya 2002:8).

Burnout is another cause of absenteeism. It is a result of stressors emanating from both organisational and personal factors. Educators experience continuous work pressure as part of their daily duties at school. When the conditions at school contribute towards the educators' stress experience with detrimental results (distress), it could lead to burnout. (van der Linde and van der Westhuizen, 1999:192).

Van der Linde and van der Westhuizen (1999:192) report from Pines & Aronson, (1983) Maslach & Jackson, (1984) and Hock, (1988) that burnout is a multi-dimensional phenomenon that includes emotional, physical and

cognitive exhaustion, depersonalisation and a lack of personal accomplishment. Many female teachers experience the changes in the South African educational system as traumatic. The adjustments associated with these changes, together with the female teachers' normal duties and busy work schedules; result in continuous stress experience (van der Linde & van der Westhuizen, 1999:192).

Research conducted by the Graduate school of Education and School of Psychology & Social Work, Potchefstroom University found that female educators with 16-20 years experience, with Afrikaans as home language, in schools where Afrikaans is the medium of instruction, and those in urban/suburban schools, experience a higher degree of burnout than their colleagues in other biographic and demographic categories in the North West Province of South Africa (van der Linde and van der Westhuizen, 1999:196).

Afrikaans-speaking parents at Afrikaans-medium schools are well informed and often query decisions made by the teaching staff. This causes more stress and burnout in Afrikaans-speaking teachers than Tswana speakers where parents in general do not query school decisions but accept them as facts. Several Afrikaans-speaking teachers believe that the traditionally autocratic management style of principals contribute towards their burnout. Black school principals have a more democratic style of management, cause less stress in Tswana-speaking teachers, and therefore result in less burnout (Van der Linde and van der Westhuizen, 1999:195).

Olivier and Venter (2003:186) state from the studies of Saptoe, (2000); Van Wyk, (1998); Patel, (1991) and Biggs (1988) that many teachers complain about low morale, illness such as hypertension, diabetes, ulcers and heart attacks, while others plan to leave the profession and go on early retirement.

KwaZulu-Natal's MEC for education, Narendar Singh, has called for an audit of teacher absenteeism in the province (Mthethwa, 2004). He said absent teachers for medical reasons were having a negative impact on education. He has asked for a full audit and an independent assessment of the health situation of teachers to verify the authenticity of medical reports that may have

been submitted. He believes that there were teachers who were not as sick as they professed to be and the department would do everything to expose the corruption.

According to figures released by the Kwa-Zulu Natal education department, at least 216 of the 22,280 teachers in the e-Thekwini region and 222 of the 13,274 teachers in the Ukhumba region took sick leave for long periods in 2003. In the Pietermaritzburg region, 80 of the 15395 teachers booked off sick and 226 applied for medical boarding (Mthethwa, 2004).

According to Esbend, (2003) a head count undertaken by the Eastern Cape education department points to rampant truancy amongst its approximate 74,000 teachers. On a given day in Eastern Cape schools, as many as 17,000 teachers are reported absent.

In Hlabisa, teachers take sick leave for up to six months at a time. Funerals have become a common family excursion. Among teachers, nationwide AIDS related deaths have soared by more than 40 percent in 2000, according to statistics compiled by the South African Democratic Teachers Union (Simmons, 2001). She quoted the principal of Nkodibe High School in Hlabisa, that the rate of absenteeism and loss of teachers are having a devastating effect on learning. Nxesi (2002) further supports this. He states that absenteeism will be compounded as teachers take time off to care for family members, and attend funerals and hospital appointments and the education department has not budgeted for temporary substitute teachers to address this situation. This is going to affect the quality and consistency of the education.

Management style is a factor, which causes absenteeism. When an employee calls ill it does not mean he/she is truly physically ill to work. One reason, outside of illness, that employees are absent is stress, and the number one reason employees are stressed has to do with their relationship with their manager/supervisor. Management styles that are too authoritarian tend to promote high levels of absenteeism among employees (Anon C: 2004).

An HSRC study (2005) has shown that the burden of absenteeism on the education labour force was highest due to high blood pressure, followed by smoking, being HIV positive, stomach ulcers, arthritis or rheumatism, and high risk drinking. Low job satisfaction and high job stress are strongly associated with a higher number of self-rated absenteeism and 'presenteeism' (unhealthy days, or un productive/unwell at work) (Anon A: 2005).

The efficacy of our educational system depends on the efficacy of our teachers. To the extent that its ranks are depleted by teacher death, illness, absenteeism, or chronic disabilities due to HIV/AIDS, the education of our children is then put at risk. Levels of access to education are reduced, standards of education lowered, opportunities for secondary and tertiary advancement reduced, job skills forfeited, and society stunned (Shisana et al: 2005).

2.4.3. Absenteeism and student achievement

According to Norton, (1998:96) in schools where students are poorest and failing the most academically, teachers tend to be absent more often. In one study by Pitkoff, (1993) the percentage of students reading below grade level was found to be the greatest predictor of school employee absenteeism. Norton (1998:96) further state from the studies of O'Brien et al (1983), that teacher absenteeism impacts negatively on student learning.

There is a critical point at which the rate of teacher absenteeism begins to inhibit student learning. The point, of course, varies greatly from school to school. In schools classed as "high achieving" or "low achieving", the rate of teacher absenteeism made no discernible difference in the level of student achievement. However, in so-called "average achieving" schools, teacher absenteeism did make a difference. The absentee culture, which contributes to such achievement problems, must be eliminated. (Lewis Jr, 1981:29).

Loss of school days that diminish the pupil's achievements causes damage to the school's reputation and induces pupil absenteeism (Rivin-Abeles, 2001). Studies in several school systems indicate that both the frequency and the

duration of teacher absences negatively affect student learning (Lewis Jr, 1981:29).

According to Pitkoff, (1993:39, 41) when teachers are absent from school, their students achieve less. His studies further revealed that significant relationships existed between increased teacher absenteeism and lower student achievement in reading, writing and mathematics; poor student attendance and higher dropout rates.

Areas, which have high levels of student under achievement, will often have schools where the teachers' absenteeism rates are high (Bowers, 2001).

2.4.4. School climate and its Impact on teacher absenteeism

Organisational climate has been defined as the collective personality of a school; the atmosphere as characterised by the social and professional interactions within it (Norton, 1998:96). According to Norton, Eisenberg and others (1986) examined three specific contentions related to climate and teacher absenteeism. They found that perceived organisational support increases an employee's efforts to meet the organisation's goals through greater attendance.

The strength of an employee's work effort was found to be dependent on the treatment received by the organisation. Employees who believed that the organisation valued their contributions and cared about their well being tended to be absent less often than others (Norton, 1998:96) were.

Norton (1998:96) states that Imants and Van Zoelen (1995) studied the question of whether teacher absenteeism and school climate were related. Collegial relations and leadership style of the principal were found to be associated with the rate of teacher absences. In another study, according to Dworkin *et al*, (1990) teachers who had supportive principals were less likely to report stress-related illness than those with unsupportive principals (Norton, 1998:96).

A change in working conditions can reduce the rate of absenteeism. Working conditions referred relate to co-worker relationships. Not only does relationship stress occur between the employee and manager, but also between employees. Some do not turn up for work because they are fearful or angry with another employee. These employees usually report that they just could not deal with "so and so" today, so they called in ill. Organisations that adopted policies and values that promote employee respect and professionalism, and promote an internal conflict resolution procedure, are organisations that reduce employee stress, which reduces employee absenteeism (Anon C: 2004).

Research unanimously supports the contention that school climate affects job satisfaction on the part of staff personnel. When job satisfaction is positive, staff personnel are motivated toward serving the organisation and goal achievement. Such an attitude leads to improved attendance (Norton, 1998:97).

2.4.5. The impact of incentive programs on absenteeism

According to Norton (1998:97), Freeman and Brant (1987) presented a plan called the Meritorious Attendance Recognition Program that included administrators and teachers. The plan combined recognition and competition-based incentives. In one year, the average staff absence dropped from 7.6 days per employee to 6.4 days. Although, he further reports that Madden and others (1991) concluded that higher rates of teacher attendance could not be attributed to incentive awards.

According to Jacobson (1988:280), teacher absence declined significantly and perfect attendance rose from 8 percent to 34 percent during an attendance incentive plan. Much of the recent interest in educational reform has focused on the use of monetary incentives to motivate teachers. Unfortunately, research on teacher compensation and reward preferences provides only limited support for the premise that the availability of increased monetary rewards can effectively motivate teachers to improve their performance. Indeed, many researchers feel that teachers are motivated more by the

content and processes of their work than by the opportunity for extra compensation.

Giving employees incentives for reduced absenteeism is not the same as rewarding or giving employees bonuses for reduced absenteeism. An incentive provides an employee with a boost to his/her motivation to avoid unnecessary absenteeism. It simply helps the employee decide to go to work versus staying home and watching favourite T.V. programmes. Various incentive programmes can be used. Employees can be allowed to cash-in unused sick days at the end of every cycle. Two hours of bonus pay can be given for perfect attendance every month. A buffet lunch or certificates of achievement are other alternatives. Being able to leave one hour early on Friday for perfect attendance all the week is another idea. It is best to start with small incentives and work up to larger ones (Anon C: 2004).

According to Kuzmit, (1980:4-15) as attendance has a direct bearing on the organizational goals, both good and poor attendance should be formally recognised by management. At a minimum, employees with good attendance records should receive management's appreciation for making the organization function more smoothly and effectively. Depending on budgetary constraints, the organisation should consider financial reward systems such as bonuses for perfect attendance or payback plans for unused leave.

Recognition for a job well done, good supervisory-subordinate communications, and a genuine interest in educator's problems can motivate performance and increase the educator's desire to go to work. On the other hand, supervisory incompetence can turn-off and turn-away even the high achiever (Kuzmit; 1980:4-15).

2.5. Geographical distribution of teacher absenteeism

According to Bruno (2004), there is a strong association between the geographical quality of school site setting and teacher absenteeism. Schools located in what might be termed Negative Geographical Space or NGS are particularly troublesome with regard to promoting equity and excellence in

their instructional programmes. The effect of teacher absenteeism is felt not equally across all school sites, but is felt most unfavourably in the schools that are located in poor, low median family income geographical space. He finds that in areas of "negative" (low-income) geographical space, teachers are more likely to think of their sick days as entitlements and more apt to use them.

Pitkoff, (1993:40) noted that size of the municipality and the distance travelled by educators contributed to absenteeism. He found that urban area employees are absent more than suburban and rural employees and people who travel more are absent more.

2.6 Seven beliefs and fallacies of absenteeism:

According to Lewis, Jr (1981:30), Superintendents and other administrators have let a set of false beliefs, which have become norm for teachers. This is one of the reasons the absenteeism culture has such a grip on schools. Seven of these commonly accepted beliefs, each paired with the estimation of why it is false are discussed here:

2.6.1. The belief: Nothing much can be done about teacher absenteeism, because of liberal leave provisions in the collective bargaining agreement. School administrators merely should require staff members to report their absences and then concentrate only on chronic absentees.

The fallacy: A liberal collective bargaining agreement does contribute to high staff absenteeism, but that does not relieve administrators from their responsibility to make every attempt to curtail absenteeism. It is the administrator's job to lead and supervise employees (Lewis Jr, 1981:30).

2.6.2. The belief: Absenteeism is high among teachers because it is difficult to separate legitimate absence from illegitimate absences. The

collective bargaining agreement, after all, gives every teacher a certain number of sick days to be used as the teachers see fit.

The fallacy: School systems do not give any one a guaranteed number of days off; rather, the agreement provides teachers an insurance plan to cover legitimate illnesses. The plan is to be used only for that purpose (Lewis Jr, 1981:30).

2.6.3. The belief: Excellent attendance is expected of every teacher. The schools should not waste time recognising and rewarding teachers for perfect attendance. That is what they are being paid for in the first place.

The fallacy: This belief ignores everything we know about the motivational theory of recognition. Recognition is an effective form of motivation and can be used to maintain good attendance (for teachers with good records) and to reward those whose attendance improves (Lewis Jr, 1981:30).

2.6.4. The belief: Teachers suffering from burnout need their days off to survive.

The fallacy: It is true that burnout is a problem, but the answer is not to give teachers unlimited excused absences from school. The antidote for burnout is proper in-service training to help teacher's function in the classroom, not more time off (Lewis Jr, 1981:30).

2.6.5. The belief: It is impossible ever to achieve perfect attendance, so why try? As long as teachers do not abuse sick leave provisions let them have their days off.

The fallacy: This defeatist posture is incongruous with proper school administration. Administrators must do everything they can to initiate processes for dealing with all kinds of school problems- including teacher absenteeism (Lewis Jr, 1981:30 & 40).

2.6.6. The belief: Disciplinary action is an effective means to curtail absenteeism. Punitive use of authority by administrators will have positive effects.

The fallacy: Although the punitive measures might lead to some positive results, these results in most cases are short lived. Concentration should be on positives (attendance), not negatives (absences) (Lewis Jr, 1981:40).

2.6.7. The belief: The school system should maintain records of absences only to monitor the accrued sick leave and personal leave days teachers use.

The fallacy: Only when there is well-planned attendance information data system, schools are able to identify absentee patterns and then initiate actions to deal with them (Lewis Jr, -1981:40).

2.7. Unconsciously encouraging teacher absenteeism

According to Lewis, (1981:29), teacher absenteeism is a disease approaching epidemic proportions. If it is considered as a minor problem then it is going to contribute to the downward skid in the quality of public education and a decline of public confidence in schools. Staff absenteeism is approaching 10 to 15 percent in some schools. Departments and administrators have allowed teacher absenteeism to increase dramatically. An absenteeism culture has taken over in the schools resulting in lagging staff morale and in some cases, declining student achievement (Lewis Jr, 1981:29).

According to Lewis Jr. (1981:29) some of the symptoms, which lead to encouraging absenteeism, are as follows:

2.7.1 Lack of direction from the seniors

Whether because of inattention or ignorance, lack of leadership in dealing with teacher absenteeism abounds in public education. The Department

seldom notices the problem. Senior managers often sweep it under the rug or turn their attention to "more pressing" problems. The few attempts to deal with teacher absenteeism usually flop because they resort to negative, punitive measures.

2.7.2. Failure to recognise the problem

Because few school systems systematically analyse the attendance performance of school employees, absenteeism patterns go unnoticed, teachers with good attendance records are never recognised, and the school system's strengths and weaknesses in attendance are never identified. Thus, administrators seldom recognise the gravity or the extent of the problem.

2.7.3. Job dissatisfaction

The absentee culture tends to foster an unhealthy school environment because school environment is determined by administrators' leadership styles. Where absenteeism is high, leadership is lacking and morale drops. This leads to widespread job dissatisfaction among teachers.

There is evidence to suggest that the relationship between job satisfaction and absenteeism, tenuous as it appears to be, is conditioned by the design of the teacher's job. Specifically, job satisfaction and absenteeism are more apt to be related under a condition of high work interdependence than under moderate or low interdependence (Bridges, 1980:41).

2.7.4. Incomplete records and lack of attendance monitoring

Few teacher attendance records are kept in many school systems. Those that are kept are often not used as part of an analytical process. There are schools at which teacher absences are not recorded at all.

Without proper record keeping, of course, monitoring of performance of individual teachers or groups of teachers is impossible.

2.7.5. Failure to recognise good attendance

In the absentee culture, teachers who enjoy good or perfect attendance records are not rewarded for their efforts. Where there is no programme to recognise achievers, even staff members with excellent records can begin to slip.

Most school systems do not monitor employee attendance properly – either for individuals or for the entire school system. If absenteeism is monitored properly, it will reveal that 80 percent of absences are incurred by approximately 20 percent of the school staff. Failing to monitor employee attendance, naturally, can lead to abuses. If teachers by regulations are allowed ten days of sick leave per year, for example, some will take all ten days off – regardless of whether they are sick or not, if they know they will not be held accountable for their absences. Over time, some employees will come to view those days of leave as an inalienable right rather than as a generous provision. Lewis Jr. (1982:30) stated that some employees would exceed the number of allowable absences.

The main purpose of employee attendance profile is to help employees improve their attendance records. If teachers can see clearly, when and how often they are absent, they can work to improve their performance. As a management tool, attendance profiles also will help administrators (1) detect trends or patterns of absences throughout the school system, (2) pinpoint problems with specific employees, and (3) establish attendance goals for specific schools and for the school system (Lewis Jr, 1982:30).

An educator's attendance record constitutes an important criterion of employee performance. In defining the "good" educator, management often includes such descriptions of behaviour as 'always shows up for work,' "hardly ever absent," and "always on time". Many organisations stress that good attendance is important for a favourable performance appraisal and a prerequisite for promotion into more responsible and higher paying jobs Kuzmit (1980:4-15).

According to Kuzmit, (1980:4-15) perhaps one of the most significant forces affecting an educator's overall job satisfaction- and thus his or her inclination to attend to work regularly- is the quality of supervision. Educators often describe the senior as a powerful gatekeeper who regulates the flow of job satisfaction to or away from the educator. The expert senior can bring life and enrichment to an otherwise routine job through a leadership style that includes a healthy concern for not only production but the human element as well.

Research on supervisor style and absenteeism pinpoints three key behavioural areas. The first area focuses on fair and just dealing with employees concerning all aspects of the work environment. Employees place critical importance upon a supervisor's ability and desire to enforce policies and standards, solve employee problems, take disciplinary measures, and dole out rewards with a sense of justice and impartiality. Many an employee has taken a brief, temporary leave because of not getting a fair chance or a fair arrangement. Second, most employees tend to prefer democratic rather than punitive or autocratic leadership styles. Employees want to have a voice in decisions concerning the rules, policies, and standards that affect their jobs, and the ability to participate in management decision-making seems to have an important bearing on their motivation to attend work. Third, high-attendance work groups are characterized by supervisors who "go to bat" for employees. "For the organization that is serious about absenteeism control, gathering data on supervisory behaviour is of utmost importance. Survey techniques may be used to collect employee opinions about the quality of supervision, and the results may be analysed to pinpoint problem areas" Kuzmit (1980:4-15).

2.7.6. Obsolete leadership

The lifespan of the typical degree in educational administration is only three to five years. Administrators who do not stay abreast of changing theory or new strategies of dealing with teacher absenteeism unwittingly contribute to the absentee culture (Lewis Jr, 1981:30).

2.8. Teachers' absenteeism adds to education chaos

Rampant absenteeism by teachers in schools around KwaZulu-Natal and the refusal by the majority of them to sign attendance register are adding to the chaos in education. This emerged at the education portfolio committee meeting. The committee was told that teachers were simply not coming to work and those who were signing the attendance registers were doing so of their own will. The committee were told that the department did not know how many educators and pupils it had in the province, (Madlala, 2002).

The burden of absenteeism on the education labour force was highest due to high blood pressure, followed by smoking, being HIV positive, stomach ulcers, arthritis or rheumatism, and high-risk drinking. Low morale at the educational institution, intention to quit teaching, low job satisfaction and high job stress are strongly associated with a higher number of self rated absenteeism and 'presenteeism' (unhealthy days, or un productive/unwell at work) (Anon A: 2005).

2.9. Attendance management

Early recognition, effective assessment and rapid intervention are key when it comes to managing absence in the workplace and can prevent absenteeism from becoming a long-term problem (Anon C: 2004).

The purpose of attendance management is to develop a willingness on the part of all educators to attend to work regularly and to assist them in motivating their co-workers to attend work regularly. This can be done through:

- Addressing the physical and emotional needs of the employees;
- Communicating the attendance goals of the organisation so employees can understand and identify with them;
- Dealing with cases of excessive absenteeism effectively and so deterrence can occur.

(Anon B: 2004).

Successful administration of an attendance management programme requires managers and supervisors to be aware of, and create work environments in which the following can be actualised:

- The greater the extent to which individuals identify their goals with the goals of the organisation and care what happens to it, the greater their motivation to be regular in attendance;
- The more people find their jobs meaningful to them, their greater motivation to be regular in attendance;
- As employee's workload increases due to the absence of a co-worker, peer pressure is exerted on the absent co-worker to attend work on a regular basis;
- The more people like working for the organization the higher their motivation to attend regularly. Recognition of good employee attendance helps improve attendance;
- Employees will have a lower absence ratio if they feel free to discuss their on-the-job problems with their immediate supervisor;
- Employees with a low absence ratio have attitudes of confidence and team spirit;
- Low absence cue ratio employees are found to be more satisfied with their opportunity for promotion and upgrading.

(Anon B: 2004).

To make an attendance management programme truly successful, it will require insight into the special dynamics present in the workplace. It will require two-way communication, as both the needs of the employees and of the management must be met if good attendance is to be achieved. Attendance is the responsibility of the facility management and ultimately the administrators (Anon B: 2004).

Attendance is not an expectation. It is a right of employers to have good attendance. Each and every employee has a contractual obligation to attend to work regularly. All levels of management must believe in, be committed to, and communicate their expectations of good attendance. Expectations must be clear to both management and employees in order for attendance management programme to get maximum results. Goals must be tangible. Attendance expectations must be clearly communicated and followed (Anon B: 2004).

Management must take positive steps to reverse the behaviour of educators whose absenteeism extends beyond expectations of management. Progressive disciplines, combined with corrective counselling techniques, are effective tools in dealing with problem absentees. In using corrective counselling techniques, managers should avoid the tendency to bawl out or threaten the employee and instead focus on finding solutions to the problem. Educators are made aware of the problem, informed of the consequences of further absences, and are encouraged to seek their own ways to improve attendance (Kuzmit, 1980:4-15).

2.9.1. Guidelines for absenteeism control

Absenteeism is a problem whose solution escapes many managers. Its cost for an organisation is high. Dealing with absenteeism properly can provide an important clue to improved, more effective management (Anon D: 2004).

2.9.1.1. Identifying excessive absenteeism

Attendance records should be reviewed regularly to make sure that an educator's sick leave days are not excessive compared to other educators. If the Principal suspects that an educator is excessively absent, this can be confirmed through reviewing the attendance records.

If all indications show that the educator is excessively absent, the next step is to gather as much information as possible in order to get a clearer picture of

the situation. All available information on the particular educator's history should be documented (Anon E: 2004).

2.9.1.2. Individual communication

After all available information has been gathered, the Principal should individually meet with each educator who has been identified as having higher average or questionable (or pattern) absences. This first meeting should be used to bring concerns regarding attendance of the educator's attention. It is also an opportunity to discuss with the educator, in some depth, the causes of his/her attendance problem and possible steps he/she can take to remedy or control the absences. Listen carefully to the educator's responses.

The tone of the meeting should not be adversarial, but a major purpose of the interview is to let the educator know that management treats attendance as a very important component of overall work performance. Keep the comments non-threatening and work-oriented. Stick to the facts (patterns, profiles and rates). The educator should be given a copy of the attendance report with absences highlighted for discussion.

This interview will give the principal the opportunity to explore in depth with the employee the reasons for his or her absence. Gather facts – do not make assumptions. Provide support and counselling and offer guidance as the occasion demands to assist the educator to deal with the specific cause of absence.

Often, after the initial meeting the educator may reduce his/her absenteeism. The meeting shows that the principal is concerned and that absenteeism is taken seriously. The educator's attendance should be closely monitored until it has been reduced to acceptable levels. Appropriate counselling should take place as is thought necessary. If a marked improvement has been shown, commend the employee. The meeting should be documented and a copy placed in the educator's file (Anon E: 2004).

2.9.1.3. After the Initial Interview

If after the initial interview, enough time and counselling efforts, as appropriate, have passed and the educator's absenteeism has not improved, it may be necessary to take further action. Further action must be handled with extreme caution - a mistake in approach, timing or severity can be crippling from both an administration and labour relation's point of view.

Determining whether counselling or disciplinary action is appropriate depends on whether the educator's absences are innocent or culpable. If the educator's absenteeism is made up of both innocent and culpable absences, then each type must be dealt with as separate issue. In a labour relation's context, innocent absenteeism and culpable absenteeism are mutually exclusive. One in no way affects the other (Anon E: 2004).

In most cases, absenteeism is likely related to lack of motivation, indicating poor job satisfaction or poor communication between managers and educators. The solution to the problem lies not in financial incentives or in appealing for union co-operation; both of which lose their effectiveness over time. Instead, experts suggest managers focus on the problem case by case. Take the following approach with each returning absentee:

- Welcome the educator back. Make sure the educator realizes that you know he or she is back on the job;
- Ask how the educator is feeling. About his or her health, injury, feelings and readiness for work;
- Tell the educator that he or she was missed by you as well as by other educators;
- In a positive way, get messages across that someone else had to fill in to get the job done. Make sure the returning educator knows the importance of his or her contribution to the successful completion of the work.

People are motivated by different needs. A good manager must identify and meet the individual motivational needs of each educator. If handled in a

genuinely supportive manner, the educator will begin to feel that he or she really matters to the organisation (Anon D: 2004).

According to Kuzmit (1980:4-15), the war against absenteeism can be effectively fought only with an armament of sound management systems, tools, methods, and techniques. A patchwork approach simply does not work. Time and again, hastily applied and ill planned absentee control efforts have proved useless. Absenteeism –like other complex management problems- requires complex solutions involving tough decisions and a good deal of human and organizational change.

It is wise to begin the problem-solving process by learning a good deal about the factors responsible for the existence of the problem. It makes good management sense to begin with an in depth audit of the policies, procedures, practices, and attitudes that have an impact on whether an employee decides to come to work or stay away. The audit procedure involves a systematic and honest appraisal of management's overall absenteeism control system. Its objective is to judge the adequacy of the present system and to seek changes that will enable the organization to function more effectively and profitably.

2.9.1.4. Absenteeism policies

A good leave policy is one that promotes high levels of regular, consistent attendance. It is written to enforce both management's critical need for reliable workforce and the employee's infrequent need to be away from work, and it is fair, enforceable, and agreeable to both management and educators. Kuzmit (1980:4-15).

One of the most important aspects of any absenteeism control system is the written absenteeism policy. As a principal determinant of employee behaviour, the policy defines the limit to which the employee may stay away from work without fear of disciplinary action. Unfortunately, the policy itself often becomes a significant cause of absenteeism. In a "catch-22" fashion, the policy may actually invite absenteeism rather than motivate attendance. One particularly troublesome absenteeism policy is that of offering paid sick

leave. Educators benefit from a package of 12 days per year with full pay for illness or 36 days with full pay in a leave cycle of 3 years. The problem, as many managers verify, is that sick leave may be used for purposes that conflict with written policy. Some educators use sick leave as vacation days to balance what they perceive as an inequitable working situation. They see sick days as days "coming to them" for putting up with low pay, poor working conditions, or disagreeable manager. Others simply attach more importance to activities centring on their personal lives and take advantage of sick leave to pursue these. (Kuzmit, 1980:4-15).

Another absenteeism policy that has proven difficult to control pertains to limitless "unpaid" absences. By recommending withholding the daily salary/wage from absent educators, management feels educators will avoid taking leaves unless it is absolutely necessary and unavoidable. In addition, management may reason that "we don't suffer any loss if don't pay absent educator." Unfortunately, management is generally incorrect on both counts. An eroding work ethic, combined with the fact that many educators have a second income or working spouse, mean that withholding pay may have little effect on some educators' decisions to attend work regularly. The cost of absenteeism extends far beyond the daily wages of the absent educators (Kuzmit, 1980:4-15).

What characterises a good absenteeism policy is the one that promotes high levels of regular, consistent attendance. It is written to recognize both management's critical need for a reliable workforce and the educators' infrequent need to be away from work, and it is fair, enforceable, and agreeable to both management and educators (Kuzmit, 1980:4-15).

2.9.1.5. Absenteeism goals

According to Kuzmit (1980:4-15) goals are ends to be sought. Policies are guides to direct management thinking and employee behaviour. The two are separate and very distinct organizational entities. Typically, absenteeism goals will reflect a desired rate of absenteeism much less than the maximum allowable policy. Without absenteeism goals, the often-liberal absenteeism

policy may set the standard by which the employee in the organisation in question defines acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.

2.9.1.6. Absenteeism control information system

Accurate, timely, and relevant information is the backbone of the managerial decision-making process. Regardless of what the outside observers think, luck rarely plays a role in the making of effective management decisions. In all facets of managerial life planning, organizing, staffing, leading, and controlling-quality decisions are made based on quality information and the reduction of employee absenteeism is no exception to this rule.

What makes an effective absenteeism control information system? In general, a model information system will do three things. First, it should compare actual absenteeism behaviour for the period against absenteeism goals for individuals. Usually, the majority of absenteeism is caused by a small percentage of the total employee group- often about 10 to 20 percent of the total workforce. Analysing the gap between actual and desired absenteeism rates will pinpoint employees that may be claiming an inordinate share of the organization's overall absenteeism and inform management where control efforts must be emphasised. Second, the system should be time-bound. The data should be collected and recorded weekly or monthly. Long-term absenteeism trends should also form part of the review to uncover significant increases in absenteeism and to judge the success of absenteeism control efforts. Third, the system should pinpoint individual employees who require immediate management attention. Employee disciplining is effective only when it takes place as soon as possible after a problem has occurred, and the system should provide weekly feedback to departmental heads who will counsel the employee with an absenteeism problem (Kuzmit, 1980:4-15).

2.10. Conclusion

According to Kuzmit (1980:4-15), a school cannot achieve an absenteeism rate of zero: a certain amount of absenteeism is unavoidable and should be considered normal. However, many schools are living with excessive

absenteeism and are stymied in their efforts to reduce and manage the problem. Absenteeism has multiple roots and often the causes of the problem remain well hidden from management's view. That is why an important part of the school's overall absenteeism control effort is a systematic, detailed audit that pinpoints key areas for management action.

For some schools, major revisions in policies and information systems may be in order. For others, supervisory training, an improved disciplinary system, or changes in selection procedures may be called for. Causes of absenteeism may vary dramatically from schools to schools, and a well-planned and implemented audit will aid management in designing strategies and programs that get results (Kuzmit, 1980:4-15).

The next chapter will deal with the research design. Here the research tools used, the administration procedure of the tools, population sampling and statistical techniques will be discussed.

Chapter 3: RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1. Introduction

This chapter outlines the research methodology used in the study. A review of literature regarding the art of doing research so as to validate the methodologies followed in this study, the rationale behind the methodology, data collection, the research instruments used, are all explained in this chapter.

3.2. Research Tool

3.2.1. Questionnaire

There are many possible ways of gathering data or information directly from the participants. Questionnaires can be used as an instrument without direct personal contact with respondents. Respondents themselves complete self-administered questionnaires. Questionnaires can be distributed and collected back once they have been filled out. Since the information is gathered by questionnaire, some basic conditions must be met to assure objectivity (Bless & Higson-Smith, 2000).

The questionnaire is the most important device that enables respondents to answer questions. It is a means of communication between the respondents and the researcher (Legotlo, 1996). A questionnaire is carefully worded for clarity. The questions that are asked should be able to produce data required for the study. A good questionnaire must create a feeling of importance on the part of the respondent, a sense of relevance and that their co-operation is of significance (Legotlo, 1994; Teu, 1998).

According to Bless and Higson-Smith, (2000:107) in order to be successful, firstly, the respondents must co-operate. They must be willing and motivated to share their knowledge. Secondly, respondents must express what they perceive as their reality rather than what they wish reality to be, what they

think it ought to be, or what they believe to be the best answer to satisfy the researcher. Thirdly, respondents must be aware of what they feel, think, and be able to express it in order to communicate the information.

3.2.1.1. Advantages of questionnaire

The most important advantage to using questionnaires is that a large coverage of population can be realised with little time or cost. Anonymity is assured and this will help them to be honest in their answers. Some type of questions, which might require reflection or consultation before answering, will be more appropriately dealt when the respondent has more time for an answer (Bless & Higson-Smith, 2000:112).

Bless and Higson-Smith (2000:112) attributes the following advantages to questionnaire as a means of data collection:

- Easily standardized;
- Low drain on time and finances;
- Very little training of researchers.

3.2.1.2 Disadvantages of questionnaire

The main prerequisites for the use of questionnaires are a sufficient level of literacy and familiarity with the language used. A large proportion of the population of a less industrialised country does not satisfy these. In countries where a number of languages are spoken, respondents may be obliged to participate using a language other than their home language. When sending out questionnaires, it is usually not possible to assess in advance whether or not the respondent has this minimum level of literacy (Bless & Higson-Smith, 2000:109).

The participant may lack interest and misplace the questionnaire or cannot be bothered to fill it in; or is too busy to fill it in. It is very common for respondents of self-administered questionnaires to skip over difficult or

embarrassing questions, thereby spoiling the whole questionnaire. Low response rate has important negative consequences for the quality of the research. The representativeness of the sample may be undermined since non-respondents are usually quite different from respondents. Their absence from the sample will constitute an important bias (Bless & Higson-Smith, 2000:110).

The major disadvantages of a questionnaire as a means of data collection, according to Bless and Higson-Smith (2000:112), are:

- Difficult to interpret subjects' responses;
- Difficult to check that subject;
- Low response rate and response bias.

Legotlo and Teu (1998) cite the following disadvantages:

- The respondents may not co-operate, thus not willing to share their knowledge;
- Data from different questionnaires may be difficult to synthesise.

Because of some of the problems mentioned above, questionnaires should have simple and straightforward questions. The type of answer expected and how the answer should be recorded must be unambiguous. The need to avoid misunderstood questions in investigating complex research issues prevents researchers from using this technique of data collection in such cases (Bless & Higson-Smith, 2000:110).

3.2.2 Construction of a questionnaire

According to Bless and Higson-Smith (2000:113), whether conceived to be filled in by a respondent directly or by an interviewer, a questionnaire remains a complex instrument of data collection. There are many types of questions and question formats:

3.2.2.1 Development of questionnaire items

Researchers have identified a number of factors and several aspects of design and layout in securing a good response rate to questionnaires (Borg and Gall, 1989). A questionnaire is a measuring instrument used to collect data and it has the greatest influence on the reliability of the collected data (Legotlo, 1996). According to Borg and Gall (1989:430-431), some of the basic rules for constructing a questionnaire are:

- Clarity, items should mean the same to all respondents;
- Short items are preferable;
- Negative items should be avoided;
- Double-barrelled items, which require the subjects to respond to two separate ideas with a single answer, should be avoided;
- Biased questions are to be avoided and
- Questionnaires must be brief.

Bless and Higson-Smith (2000:114-115) cite the following precautionary measures to observe when constructing a questionnaire:

- The researcher should give great attention to the wording of questions;
- Questions should be simple and short. Complex questions should be broken up into several simple ones.
- Questions should be unambiguous. Words which are too general, too vague, or which could give rise to different interpretations, should be replaced with terms that are more specific.
- Questions should be understandable. Use vocabulary adapted to the level of education of the participants. Avoid technical expressions and sophisticated language.
- Questions should not be double-barrelled, that is, contain two questions in one.
- Leading questions should be avoided.

The researcher should structure the questions carefully (Bless & Higson-Smith: 115).

- A logical sequence of questions, which exhausts one topic before shifting to the next, is the most meaningful approach (funnel questionnaire method).
- The repetition of the content of a question, formulated in different ways and placed in different parts of the questionnaire, is another method of checking the veracity of answers and the honesty of a participant.
- The tendency of participants to answer all questions in a specific direction regardless of the content of the questions, called response set, should be counteracted.

3.2.2.2. Format and content of questionnaire

According to Bless and Higson-Smith (2000:116-119) the content of a question can seek either factual information or opinion:

- **Factual questions** request objective information about the respondents, such as their social background or related personal data. Questionnaires usually contain factual questions related to characteristics such as age, sex, marital status, and level of education.
- **Opinion questions** are more problematic, since the respondent is the only person who knows the true answer. The respondent may be influenced by what he/she considers socially desirable. Therefore, questions should be stated in such a way that makes answers socially acceptable.

Information can be gathered in different ways. The participant could be confronted with a statement, which must be assessed, or with a question. In the latter case, it could be a direct or indirect question. Statements have the property of being more personal and allow a shorter formulation. Direct questions are also brief and to the point. Indirect questions, used especially when dealing with delicate issues, allow the purpose of the question to be less obvious, and give respondents the impression that they state general opinion,

that they do not commit themselves, and they are thus likely to be more honest.

There are un-structured or open-ended questions and the structured ones. Open-ended questions leave the participants completely free to express their answers as they wish, as detailed and complex, as long or short, as they feel appropriate. No restrictions, guidelines, or suggestions for solutions are given (Bless & Higson-Smith: 118).

- **Structured questions** indicate a range of possible answers. They give a choice of answers (multiple-choice questions) or guidelines on the procedures to follow (for example, ranking questions). Sometimes only two possibilities are given (such as "yes/no" or "agree/disagree") which allow for very little differentiation.
- **Ranking questions** are used when a set of possibilities is offered and the participant should assess the importance of each of them relative to the others.
- **Contingency questions** are a special type of structured question, which apply to subgroups of respondents only, namely the ones who have given a particular answer to a particular question.
- **Fill-in questions** constitute a transitional type question, between open-ended and structured, since no format is suggested.

According to Bless & Higson-Smith (2000:119), the main distinction between the open ended and structured types of questions is that the open-ended questions are not based on already conceived answers. They are thus well suited to exploratory studies, case studies, or studies based on qualitative analysis of data. Answers may be quite complex and not easily comparable to those of other respondents. Their recording and scoring gives rise to some difficulties. In contrast, structured questions, by restricting the number of possible answers, may produce bias if important categories are left out. They

have the great advantage of being simple to record and to score and they allow for an easy comparison and quantification of the results.

The two types can be used to gain the confidence and co-operation of the participants in different ways. Open-ended questions may relieve the anxiety of the participants of giving "false" answers since they can speak freely. However, easy, structured questions will also reassure participants who recognize that they are able to answer precise, straightforward questions without difficulty.

A mixture of close-ended (structured/fixed response) and open-ended (unstructured, free response) was included in the questionnaire. This was in line with Neuman's (2000:261) principle of question construction. The following principles were followed to ensure reliability and validity of results (Neuman, 2000:252):

- Experts in the academic field reviewed all questions.
- Overlapping and unbalanced responses were avoided.
- The questions were asked in easy to understand English. Special care was taken to avoid ambiguity, confusion and vagueness in each of the question.
- Emotional language, double-barrelled questions and leading questions were avoided.
- Special attention was given to professional appearance, neatness and sequential layout of the questions based on different aspects (Neuman, 2000:269).

The questionnaire consists of three sections (see. Appendix B)

- **Section A.** (Questions 1 – 6). These questions enabled to collect biographical and demographical information of the respondents. This information was essential to understand the position of the respondents in the school.

- **Section B. (Questions 7 – 8)**

Question 7 dealt with Absenteeism Policy and was subdivided in to 7.1 – 7.6.

Question 8 dealt with other issues with regard to educator absenteeism and was subdivided into 8.1 – 8.15.

- **Section C. (Question 9).** This section was to elicit additional information about absenteeism, especially asking for suggestions to reduce absenteeism.

3.2.3. Pre-testing of the questionnaire

Initially two sets of questions were developed; one set for the management and the other for the educators. Staff members at Mmabatho High school were given samples of the two questionnaires and they were requested to comment on them. These questionnaires were then taken to the supervisor for comment. As the two sets of questionnaires contained a vast array of questions, the researcher was reminded of the difficulty in analysing the data if the two sets were distributed. The supervisor merged the two sets into one and reduced the total number of questions. A new questionnaire was thus developed. The finalised questionnaire was taken to the supervisor for approval

3.2.4. Final questionnaire

The final questionnaire was distributed to ten secondary schools in the Mafikeng Area Project Office. Each school was issued with 10 questionnaires and a request was made to the Principal that four of them should be completed by the SMT (School Management Team) and six by the educators in his/her school.

3.3. Reliability and Validity of the questionnaire

According to Neuman, (2000:164) reliability and validity are central issues in all scientific measurements.

3.3.1. Reliability

Reliability means dependability, so that the numerical outcomes never vary due to the nature of the measurement process or the measurement instrument itself. Some of the problems, which threaten the reliability of a study, occur when there are missing data, data being lost after collection or data never being collected. The reliability can also be compromised when the official definitions of the methods of collection and documenting information change over time, or if there is no proper documentation system for the entity, which is to be measured (Neuman, 2000:265). Reliability of a measuring instrument is the degree of consistency with which it measures whatever it is measuring (Cates, 1985:124).

3.3.2. Validity

According to Neuman, (2000:167) validity in its simplest form is "true" or "correct". It is the part of a dynamic process where the accumulation of evidence related to an indicator brings meaning to all units of measurements by interrelating with each other. The better the fit, greater the measurement validity. Validity is the degree to which a test is capable of achieving certain aims (Borg & Gall, 1989:250).

3.3.3. Relationship between reliability and validity

Reliability is essential for validity and it is easier to achieve reliability. Although reliability is necessary for obtaining a valid measure of an idea or concept, there is no guarantee that a measure will be valid (Neuman, 2000:164).

3.4. Covering letter

At the beginning of the questionnaire, a statement was made to introduce the questionnaire to the respondent. The objective of the questionnaire was mentioned and respondents were assured full confidentiality of all information.

Another official letter was obtained from the Graduate School of Business & Government Leadership requesting the Schools to grant permission to collect data for the research project. (See Appendix A)

3.5. Population Sampling

A list of ten secondary schools in the Mafikeng Area Project Office was compiled with the input from the supervisor. Some of these schools are in the town itself while some of them are in the suburbs. Well performing and poorly performing schools were included in the sample. Altogether 100 questionnaires were distributed.

3.6. Administration Procedure

Nine schools were visited to distribute the questionnaires. The tenth school is where the researcher is the Principal. Principals of the other schools were approached personally and copies of the questionnaires delivered to them. Each school was provided with ten questionnaires each. A time frame was given to the principals. At the end of the period, the schools were revisited to collect the questionnaires back. In a few cases, more than one visit was needed. Ultimately, most of the questionnaires were collected back.

Out of the 100 questionnaires distributed, only 89 were returned (89%), but only 75 (84%) were completed in all respects for statistical analyses. Fourteen questionnaires (16%) were not completed in all respects.

Table 3.1 Distribution of questionnaires regarding the 10 schools

Number of Secondary Schools	Number of Questionnaires Distributed (10x10)	Number of Questionnaires Returned	Incomplete Questionnaires	Completed Questionnaires
10	100	89 (89%)	14 (16%)	75 (84%)

3.7. Statistical Techniques

According to Steyn (1999:9), there has been an exponential and phenomenal development in the field of electronics over the past decades, which has facilitated the practical use of any statistical analysing technique, however, complex. A computer aided statistical analysis is used to compute the descriptive data for each respondent. Frequency distribution, frequency percentages, histograms, pie charts and Chi-squares, are some of the tools used.

3.7.1. Descriptive data

Computation of frequencies, frequency percentages and graphical representations are used to determine the results of the study as envisaged in the aims and objectives.

3.7.2. Quantitative data

Statistical analysis such as tables, frequencies, frequency percentages, pie charts, graphical representations and chi-squares are used to determine the results of the study. They are used to describe, explain and interpret the relationships amongst the variables.

3.8. Limitations of the study

Only a limited number of schools were selected for the purpose of this study and most of the schools were from the precincts of Mafikeng. If it was extended to real rural schools, the researcher is not sure if the results would have been otherwise. There was a growing demand from some unions for the re-introduction of accumulation of leave. It is therefore not sure while answering question 8.3 this has influenced the respondents.

3.9. Conclusion

In this chapter a scrutiny of the literature, which supports the methodology followed in conducting the proposed study, was discussed. A questionnaire was the main tool for collection of data for this study. The outcome of the study is presented in the next chapter as results.

Chapter 4: RESULTS OF THE INVESTIGATION.

4.1. Introduction

The results of the empirical investigation are presented in this chapter. The study is intended to find out about: the rate of absenteeism; the support to managers from higher authorities for the management of absenteeism; the age group based on gender and experience and the gender of the educators who absent frequently; the availability of an absenteeism policy; the type of policy; the knowledge of policy; the implementation of the policy and the extent of the abuse of the policy; the impact of workload and job satisfaction on the rate of absenteeism; the impact of incentives and reintroduction of accumulation of leave on the rate of absenteeism; the effect of absenteeism on the performance of learners; the day of the week when absenteeism is most and the group of people who commit most absenteeism; in the management of absenteeism whether the schools keep accurate records and communicate to the educators on the rate of absenteeism; the fairness in granting leaves and finally to find the validity of medical certificates submitted by educators and to solicit recommendations to curtail absenteeism in South African schools with specific reference to selected schools in the Mafikeng Area Project Office.

4.2. Results of Section A of the questionnaire

This deals with the biographical and demographical information of the respondents. They are as follows:

4.2.1. Respondents based on position in school

In table 4.1, the positions of the educators at schools are reflected based on the data received. 100 questionnaires were distributed and 89 were returned (89%). The number of principals and deputy principals are the same, 8 each, the

number of Heads of Departments (HODs) 16 and the number of educators 57. The number of educators is more than the number of the management members.

Table 4.1. Respondents based on position in school

Position	Frequency	Percent
Principal	8	9
Deputy Principal	8	9
HOD	16	18
Educator	57	64
Total	89	100

4.2.2. Respondents based on their years of experience

Table 4.2. shows the total number of respondents based on their years of teaching experience. The results have shown that the there is a relationship between the number of years experience and rate of absenteeism. This was tested by hypothesis 3 (1.2.3.1) using the Chi-square test 3.

Table 4.2 Respondents based on their years of experience

Number of years employed	Frequency	Percent
1 to 5	12	14
6 to 10	20	23
11 to 15	18	20
16 to 20	16	18
21 and above	23	25
Total	89	100

4.2.3. Respondents based on their age group

Table 4.3 shows the number of respondents based on their age groups. Nine educators are in the age group of 21-30 years; 32 in the age group of 31-40 years, 29 in the age group of 41-50 years, 18 in the age group of 51-60 and 1 in the age group of 61- 65. There are more educators in the age group of 31 to 40 (36%) followed by 41 to 50 age group (33%). The results have shown that there is a relationship between the age of educators and the rate of absenteeism. This was tested in hypothesis 2 (1.2.3.1) using Chi-square test 2.

Table 4.3.Respondents based on their age group

Age group (yrs)	Frequency	Percent
21-30	9	10
31-40	32	36
41-50	29	33
51-60	18	20
61-65	1	1
Total	89	100

4.2. 4. Respondents based on gender

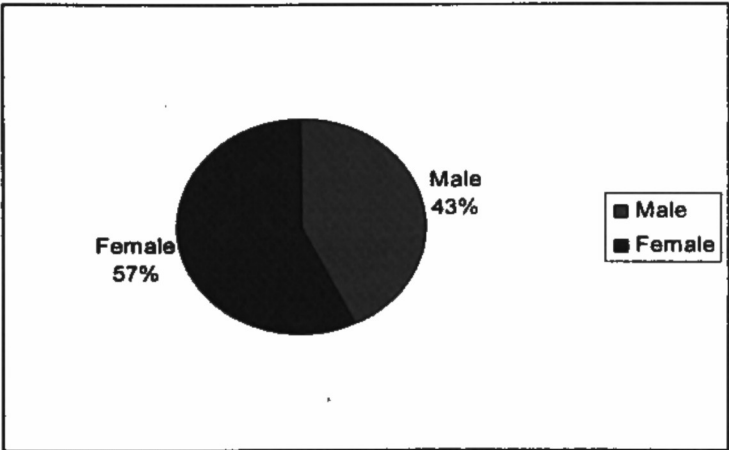


Figure 4.1. Respondents based on gender

There are more female respondents than male respondents (Figure 4.1). Of the 89 respondents, 38 (43%) are male and 51 (57%) are female. The results have shown that there is a relationship between the gender of educators and the rate of absenteeism. This was tested in hypothesis 4 (1.2.3.3) using Chi-square test 4.

4.3. Results of Section B of the questionnaire

4.3.1. Rate of absenteeism in the current year

According to the survey, 56% agreed that the rate of absenteeism increased during the current year and 33% said it decreased. Ten respondents (11%) gave no answer. Results of this investigation are shown in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4. Rate of absenteeism in the current year

Has the absenteeism rate this year	Frequency	Percent
Increased	50	56
Decreased	29	33
No answer	10	11
Total	89	100

4.3.2. Extent of the support from higher authorities

Table 4.5 shows the extent of support from higher authorities. The answer is a split one, 46% apiece. Seven educators (8%) gave no answer. This is also put to test based on the experience of the educators, as more experienced educators tend to know the policy of the Department better than that of the less experienced educators. This was tested in hypothesis 1 (1.2.2.1) using Chi-square test 1.

Table 4.5. Extent of the support from higher authorities

Do you get the necessary support from the higher authorities in the implementation of the policy?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	41	46
No	41	46
No answer	7	8
Total	89	100

Hypothesis.1.

Chi-square test 1.

	Do you get the necessary support from the higher authorities in the implementation of the leave policy?		
Job Experience (yrs)	Yes	No	Total
10 and below	19	9	28
Over 10yrs	22	32	54
Total	41	41	82

H_0 : Opinion and job experience are independent

H_1 : Opinion and job experience are not independent

Significance level: 5%

Chi-square statistic = 5, 42

Degrees of freedom = 1

Since p-value = 0, 02 < 0, 05 level of significance, reject H_0 in favor of H_1 (that is; opinion depends on teaching experience of educators). There is a significant difference of opinion between the less and more experienced educators about the leave policy. It means that most less experienced educators (less than 10

years) (that is, $19/28 = 68\%$) tend to agree that educators do get support from the authorities in the implementation of the leave policy, whereas experienced educators (over 10 years) (that is, $32/54 = 59\%$) tend to disagree

4.3.3. Age group of educators and rate of absenteeism

This survey was done on educators ranging from age 21 to 65. They were divided into 5 age groups. The objective was to find out whether there is a relationship between age of educators and the rate of absenteeism (Hypothesis 2; 1.2.3.1). According to the survey, the age group of educators who absented most, 50% is 31-40 age groups. 21 – 30 age groups (29%) follow this. Seven percent are in the age group of 41-50, only 1% in the age group of 51-60 and 2% in the age group of 61-65. Ten participants (11%) did not give an opinion. (Table 4.6)

Table 4.6. Age group of educators and rate of absenteeism

What age group of educators is absent more frequently?	Frequency	Percent
21 – 30	26	29
31 - 40	44	50
41 - 50	6	7.
51 - 60	1	1.
61 - 65	2	2.
No answer	10	11
Total	89	100

Hypothesis.2.

Chi-square test 2.

	Which age group of educators is absent more frequently?		
Age group (Years)	Male	Female	Total
21-30	14	12	26
31-40	14	30	44
Over 40	6	3	9
Total	34	45	79

H₀: Opinion and gender are independent

H₁: Opinion and gender are not independent

Significance level: 10%

Chi-square statistic = 5, 55

Degrees of freedom = 2

Since p-value = 0, 06 < 0, 10 level of significance, reject H₀ in favor of H₁ (that is, opinion depends on gender of educators). There is a significant difference of opinion between male and female educators about the age of absent educators. It means that most female educators (that is, 30/45 = 67%) tend to agree that middle-aged educators (31-40 years) are absent more frequently; whereas male educators think that young educators are absent more frequently.

4.3.4. Gender and rate of absenteeism

Table 4.7 shows the gender and the rate of absenteeism. The survey shows 35% of male educators absent more frequently to 53% of female educators who absent more frequently. Twelve percent (11/89) did not give an answer. The

opinion of the male and female educators varied in the rate of absenteeism by the other gender. This is tested in hypothesis 4 (1.2.3.3) using Chi-square test 4.

Experience of the educators along with the gender was also considered in analyzing the data. This is tested in hypothesis 3 (1.2.3.2) using Chi-square test 3.

Hypothesis. 3.

Chi-square test 3.

	Which group of educators is absent more frequently?		
Job Experience (yrs)	Male	Female	Total
10 and below	16	13	29
Over 10yrs	15	34	49
Total	31	47	78

H_0 : Opinion and job experience are independent

H_1 : Opinion and job experience are not independent

Significance level: 5%

Chi-square statistic = 4, 59

Degrees of freedom = 1

Since $p\text{-value} = 0,03 < 0,05$ level of significance, reject H_0 in favor of H_1 (that is, opinion depends on teaching experience of educators). There is a significant difference of opinions between the less and more experienced educators about the gender of absenting educators. It means that most less experienced educators (that is, $16/29 = 55\%$) tend to agree that male educators are absent more frequently, whereas experienced educators (that is, $34/49 = 69\%$) think that female educators are absent more frequently.

Table 4.7. Gender and rate of absenteeism

Which group of educators is absent more frequently?	Frequency	Percent
Male	31	35
Female	47	53
No answer	11	12
Total	89	100

Hypothesis. 4.

Chi-square test. 4.

	Which group of educators is absent more frequently?		
Gender	Male	Female	Total
Male	8	27	35
Female	23	20	43
Total	31	47	78

H_0 : Opinion and gender are independent

H_1 : Opinion and gender are not independent

Significance level: 5%

Chi-square statistic = 7, 56

Degrees of freedom = 1

Since $p\text{-value} = 0,01 < 0,05$ level of significance, reject H_0 in favor of H_1 (that is, opinion depends on gender of educators). There is a significant difference of opinions between male and female educators about the absenteeism of educators in terms of gender. It means that most female educators (that is, 23/43

= 53%) tend to agree that male educators are absent more frequently, whereas male educators (that is, 27/35 = 77%) think that female educators are absent more frequently.

4.3.5. Schools with absenteeism policy documents

Out of the 89 respondents, 65 respondents (73%) stated that their school has an absenteeism policy, while 22 respondents (25%) stated that their school has no absenteeism policy. Two respondents (2%) gave no answer. This is shown in Table 4.8.

Table 4.8. Schools with absenteeism policy documents

The school has an absenteeism policy	Frequency	Percent
Yes	65	73
No	22	25
No answer	2	2
Total	89	100

4.3.6 Knowledge of the policy and the type of policy at school

According to table 4.9, 60% (53/89) agreed that the policy is a written policy. Thirty six percent (32/89) did not agree. Four respondents (4%) gave no answer at all.

Table 4.9. Type of policy used at the school

Is it a written policy	Frequency	Percent
Yes	53	60
No	32	36
No answer	4	4
Total	89	100

Out of the 89 respondents, 58 (65%) indicated that the absenteeism policy is agreed by/known to the stakeholders, while 27 (30%) disagreed. Four (5%) respondents gave no answer at all (Table 4.10)

Table 4.10. Knowledge of the policy at school

Are the policy agreed by/known to all stakeholders?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	58	65
No	27	30
No answer	4	5%
Total	89	100

4.3.7. Implementation of the absenteeism policy at school

The school may have an absenteeism policy and it may be agreed and known to all stakeholders; but if it is not implemented as intended, it may not yield the expected results. Table 4.11 shows the implementation of the absenteeism policy at school. According to this, 55% agree that the policy is implemented as agreed whereas 38% agree that the policy is not implemented as agreed. Six respondents (7%) gave no answer.

Table 4.11. Implementation of the absenteeism policy at school

Is the policy implemented as agreed?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	49	55
No	34	38
No answer	6	7
Total	89	100

4.3.8. Extent of the abuse of the absenteeism policy at school

According to Table 4.12, 66% of the respondents agree that educators abuse the current absenteeism policy. Thirty-two percent say that it is not abused. Two respondents (2%) gave no answer

Table 4.12. Extent of the abuse of the absenteeism policy at school

Do you think that some educators are abusing the current leave policy?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	59	66
No	28	32
No answer	2	2
Total	89	100

4.3.9. Workload and absenteeism of educators

Fifty percent of the respondents say that the workload is a factor contributing to absenteeism whereas 48% say it is not a contributing factor. Two percent gave no answer. Table 4.13 shows this result.

Table 4.13. Workload and absenteeism of educators

Do you think that workload is a factor contributing to increased absenteeism?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	44	50%
No	43	48%
No answer	2	2%
Total	89	100%

4.3.10. Job satisfaction and absenteeism

Eighty-two percent (73/89) responded that job satisfaction is a factor contributing to absenteeism while 15% (13/89) responded otherwise. Three percent (3/89) gave no answer.

4.3.11. Incentives and absenteeism

Table 4.14 shows that 64% agreed that offering incentives would reduce the rate of absenteeism; 34% said it had no effect. Only two respondents (2%) had no opinion.

Table 4.14. Incentives and absenteeism

Do you think offering incentives will reduce the rate of absenteeism?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	57	64
No	30	34
No answer	2	2%
Total	89	100

4.3.12. Accumulated leave and absenteeism

Until 2000, educators were allowed to accumulate the unused vacation/annual leave. From 2001, this was discontinued. Educators forfeited the unused leave. This survey wanted to find out if this policy had any effect in terms of the rate of absenteeism at schools. According to the survey, 78% of the educators agree that this policy encouraged educators to use their leave days. Nineteen percent say this has no effect. Three respondents (3%) have no opinion (Table 4.15).

Table 4.15. Accumulated leave and absenteeism

Accumulation of leave is no more practiced. Do you think that this encourages educators to use their leave days?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	69	78
No	17	19
No answer	3	3
Total	89	100

4.3.13. Performance of learners and absenteeism of educators

The majority of respondents, 84%, agree that educator absenteeism has a direct bearing on the performance of learners. A small group, 15%, agrees that absenteeism of educators and performance of learners is not related. Only one respondent (1%) has no opinion. This finding is shown in Table 4.16.

Table 4.16. Performance of learners and absenteeism of educators

Do you think absenteeism has a direct bearing on the performance of learners?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	75	84
No	13	15
No answer	1	1
Total	89	100

4.3.14. Day of the week when absenteeism is the most

Seventy-five educators responded to this question. Thirty-nine percent say Monday is the most commonly absenting day and 32% say Friday is the most commonly absenting day of the week. (Table 4.17). Ten percent commented it is Tuesday and three percent commented it is Wednesday. Fourteen educators (16%) gave no response.

Table 4.17. Day of the week when absenteeism is the most

Which day of the week do you experience most absenteeism?	Frequency	Percent
Monday	35	39
Tuesday	9	10
Wednesday	3	3
Thursday	0	0
Friday	28	32
No answer	14	16
Total	89	100

4.3.15. Absenteeism based on ethnic groups

Table 4.18 shows the absenteeism of educators based on ethnic groups. On the issue of the ethnic group absenting most frequently; 60% ((53/89) responded that Blacks absented most. Whites, 8%, followed this (7/89). Twenty-two percent (20/89) gave no response.

Table 4.18 Absenteeism based on ethnic groups

Which ethnic group is absent more frequently?	Frequency	Percent
Blacks	53	60
Whites	7	8
Indians	4	4
Coloured	5	6
No answer	20	22
Total	89	100

4.3.16. Absenteeism and record keeping

Seventy-six percent (67/89) of the educators agree that their schools keep accurate record of the different types of leaves taken by each educator; 21 % (19/89) say otherwise. Three percent (3/89) gave no answer.

4.3.17. Communication of absenteeism

On the issue whether the School Management Team (SMT) communicated to the educators on the extent of absenteeism, 62% (55/89) said the SMT communicated regularly.

4.3.18. Other issues under investigation

In addition to the above-mentioned aspects some other issues were also put to the educators to get their opinion

Sixty eight percent of the respondents agreed that the Principal or the SMT did not practice discrimination while granting leaves. It was also agreed that the

Medical Certificates submitted by the educators in 61 %(54/89) of the cases were genuine. There was also absenteeism caused by teacher strike and 70% (62/89) agreed to this question.

4.4. Follow up of certain questions from Section B (7.4, 8.1, 8.2, 8.8 and 8.11) and additional information from Section C is discussed in chapter 5 as they form part of recommendations/solutions.

4.5. Conclusion

From the account given above it is obvious that quite a number of factors contribute to the absenteeism of educators on a regular basis. Some are not satisfied with the job, some are not happy that accumulation of leave is no more practiced, some are looking for incentives to be awarded on a regular basis; the reasons are varied. These are applicable to educators of different age groups, different levels of experience and different capacities. These are applicable to both male and female educators. Based on these observations and the literature review, the next chapter will concentrate on the discussions, solutions, recommendations and conclusion.

Chapter 5: DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Introduction

In the previous chapter, the results of the study were presented. In chapter 5 these results are discussed and interpreted relating it back to the research objectives formulated in chapter 1 and the literature survey presented in chapter 2. Keeping in line with the above, the focus is now on the discussions of the findings, conclusions and recommendations there of.

5.2. Discussions

5.2.1. Objective 1: To determine from the literature and the survey that there is evidence of absenteeism being rife in South African schools

According to the survey as presented in Table 4.4. 56% (50/89) of the respondents agreed that absenteeism has increased while 33% (29/89) agreed there was no increase. Ten respondents (11%) gave no answer. The survey therefore shows that absenteeism is on the increase in the schools.

This result is further supported by the literature. Unionized teachers responded to the call of the leaders to abstain from work during a strike called by South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU) against privatization. Teaching ground to a halt in many schools in Gauteng, with some, schools reporting 100% to 50% stay-away (Kahn, 2002). Kahn further stated that in some provinces, some teachers absented themselves from work on pretext that they were in support of the strike while they actually were not members of SADTU. According to Msiza, a departmental official in Mpumalanga, teacher absenteeism ranged from 15% to 35%. In Limpopo Province, teachers left the school before the end

of the school day in a "number of schools." Free State reported 10% to 50% absenteeism (Business Day: 2002). In the Eastern Cape, the education department is concerned with officials and teachers who stayed away from work, estimated absenteeism at 50% throughout the year, and predicted that the situation was likely to worsen with the existing backlog on outstanding teachers' salaries, which was the cause of the high rate of stay-away (Kahn, 2002). According to Zuzile, a reporter from Bisho, during a media briefing on the progress made by the department, Education MEC said the absenteeism was discovered when the department, in collaboration with the Office of the Auditor General, conducted a head count of all 74 000 Education Department employees the previous year. The head count revealed that absenteeism among teachers was 23 percent. "This means that as many as 16769 teachers were absent during the head count.

Muller, a Dispatch reporter, reported teacher absenteeism at the beginning of the year, in one school alone, that up to 39% of the staff were absent on the first day (Anon, G).

Professor Hennie van der Mescht of Rhodes University's education department says that the issue of teacher absenteeism is "Huge and has serious political implications. There is no obvious solution, especially since education has become increasingly politicized, and South Africa increasingly unionized" (Anon, H).

According to figures released by the education department, Kwa-Zulu Natal, at least 216 of the 22,280 teachers in the e-Thekwini region and 222 of the 13,274 teachers in the Ukhamba region took sick leave for long periods in 2003. In the Pietermaritzburg region, 80 of the 15395 teachers

booked off sick and 226 applied for medical boarding (Mthethwa, 2004). In Hlabisa, teachers take sick leave for up to six months at a time.

Question 8.1. Wanted to find out if the absenteeism in the current year increased or decreased. Based on the results found in table 4.4, 56% said the absenteeism rate increased. The survey also wanted to find out the reason why the absenteeism rate increased. To this, there were various viewpoints. Principals were of the opinion that the educators considered leave as their right, not a privilege so they wanted to make use of their leave days. Some suggested that it was due to depression, overwork, redeployment and doctors booking off teachers easily and there was less dedication to the job.

Deputy Principals suggested that it was due to health reasons or due to further education by some educators. HODs also gave different reasons. One said that the educators are taking advantage of the situation, for example, if one is granted permission, the rest follow. Another one suggested that it was a passive resistance to the manager who is ill-treating the educators who do not want to come to school to face his oppression. One HOD suggested that it was due to lack of implementation and enforcement from higher authorities above school level. Another one suggested that it was due to heavy workload, lack of motivation, lack of interest in the job, no challenge at the work place and no job satisfaction.

Educators too gave many reasons. They agreed with the management that furthering studies is a reason for absenteeism. Some suggested that it was due to low esteem, low salary (lack of annual increase), learners demoralizing teachers and personal reasons, and lack of support from government, no incentives to teachers who are going an extra mile. Illness (even minor ailments) and family problems were also suggested as reasons. Stress and depression also contribute to an increase in

absenteeism rate. Lack of commitment, no institution of disciplinary actions and work overload are other reasons suggested by educators.

Therefore, it can be concluded that teacher absenteeism is rife in our schools due to a host of reasons and it requires urgent management attention.

5.2.2. Objective 2: To determine whether absenteeism is due to inadequate support to managers from higher authorities to take steps against the perpetrators

According to the survey as presented in Table 4.5, forty-one educators (46%) responded that the management is getting the necessary support from the higher authorities in the implementation of the leave policy and thereby to take necessary steps against the perpetrators. An equal number also responded that not enough support is provided. Seven respondents (8%) gave no answer. This was put to a test in hypothesis 1 (Chi-square test 1). This revealed that there are significant differences of opinions about the less and more experienced educators in terms of support the managers get from the higher authorities in the implementation of the leave policy. The opinion depends on teaching experience of educators. There is a significant difference of opinion between the less and more experienced educators about the leave policy. Most less experienced educators (less than 10 years) (that is, $19/28 = 68\%$) tend to agree that educators do get support from the authorities in the implementation of the leave policy, whereas experienced educators (over 10 years) (that is, $32/54 = 59\%$) tend to disagree. This is important, as most of the experienced educators are in the management positions that are looking for the necessary support but to no avail. Therefore, it can be concluded that management needs more support from higher authorities to take necessary steps against the perpetrators.

5.2.3. Objective 3: To determine the age group of educators based on gender and experience and the gender of educators who absent frequently

The age group of the educators under study varied from 21 years to 65 years. This is reflected in Table 4.3. According to this, 21 to 30 years made 10% (9), 31–40 years made 36% (32), 41–50 years made 33% (29), 51 to 60 years 20% (18) and 61–65 years 1% (1). The years employed ranged from 1–5 years 14% (12), 6–10 years 23% (20), 11–15 years 20% (18), 16–20 years 18% (16), and 21 years and above 26% (23) (Table 4.2). The gender representivity of the educators are as follows; male 43% (38/89) and female 57% (51/89) (Figure. 4.1).

Table 4.6 shows the age group of educators absenting more frequently. This reveals that 31–40 age groups (55.7%) are the most common group. These are educators with up to 18 years of teaching experience (maximum). 21–30 age groups with up to 9 years (maximum) experience follow this. The study shows that educators with up to 35 years of experience, in the age category of 51–60 absented the least (1%). The study further shows that educators with up to 27 years' experience, in the age category of 41–50 absented about 8%.

As it is mentioned in the literature review, according to Norton (1998:95) from a study of Unicom and other (1992), differences in absence level as the age group of teachers varied was not significant, but women and men did reveal different patterns of absenteeism with age. The number of absences claimed by female teachers increased with age. Male teachers, on the other hand, claimed more days in their thirties than at any other age. Overall, men teachers had significantly fewer absences than women teachers did. Chi-square Tests 2 and 3 shed some light into this.

There is a significant difference of opinion between male and female educators about the age of absent educators. Most female educators (that is, $30/45 = 67\%$) tend to agree that middle-aged educators (31-40 years) are absent more frequently; whereas male educators think that young educators are absent more frequently (Chi-square test 2).

There is a significant difference of opinions between the less and more experienced educators about the gender of absenting educators. Most less experienced educators (that is, $16/29 = 55\%$) tend to agree that male educators are absent more frequently, whereas experienced educators (that is, $34/49 = 69\%$) think that female educators are absent more frequently (Chi-square test 3).

Most of the respondents, 60%; agreed that female educators absented more frequently and 40% agreed male educators absented more frequently (Table 4.7). Analysis of the survey further showed that most female educators tend to agree that male educators are absent more frequently; whereas male educators think that female educators are absent more frequently (Chi-square test 4). The study of Pitkoff (1993:40) state, "females are absent more than males". According to Norton (1998), male teachers had significantly fewer absences than female teachers did. This is further supported by Hamilton-Atwell (2003:40) and according to him; absenteeism is higher among females than among males.

It can therefore be concluded from the study that teacher absenteeism is most among the middle-aged, less experienced and female educators.

5.2.4. Objective 4: To determine whether there is an absenteeism policy in the school, if so, the type of policy in existence, the knowledge of

policy by the stakeholders and the extent of the implementation and abuse of the policy.

The survey revealed that most schools had absenteeism policy (75%) (Table 4.8) and the policy was agreed by and known to most stakeholders (68%) (Table 4.10). The policies were written ones to which 62% of the respondents agreed (Table 4.9) and 59% of the respondents also agreed that the policies were implemented as agreed (Table 4.11). At the same time 66% of the respondents agreed that, the educators abused the current leave policy (Table 4.12).

One of the most important aspects of any absenteeism control system is the written absenteeism policy. A good leave policy is one that promotes high levels of regular, consistent attendance. It is written to enforce both management's critical need for reliable workforce and the employee's infrequent need to be away from work, and it is fair, enforceable, and agreeable to both management and educators (Kuzmit, 1980:4-15). As a principal determinant of employee behaviour, the policy defines the limit to which the employee may stay away from work without fear of disciplinary action. Unfortunately, the policy itself often becomes a significant cause of absenteeism. In a "catch-22" fashion, the policy may actually invite absenteeism rather than motivate attendance. One particularly troublesome absenteeism policy is that of offering paid sick leave. Educators benefit from a package of 12 days per year with full pay for illness or 36 days with full pay in a leave cycle of 3 years. The problem, as many managers verify, is that sick leave may be used for purposes that conflict with written policy. Some educators use sick leave as vacation days to balance what they perceive as an inequitable working situation. They see sick days as days "coming to them" for putting up with low pay, poor working conditions, or disagreeable manager. Others simply attach

more importance to activities centering on their personal lives and take advantage of sick leave to pursue these (Kuzmit, 1980:4-15).

Another absenteeism policy that has proven difficult to control pertains to limitless "unpaid" absences. By recommending withholding the daily salary/wage from absent educators, management feels educators will avoid taking leaves unless it is absolutely necessary and unavoidable. In addition, management may reason, "we don't suffer any loss if we don't pay absent educator." Unfortunately, management is generally incorrect on both counts. An eroding work ethic, combined with the fact that many educators have a second income or working spouse, mean that withholding pay may have little effect on some educators' decisions to attend work regularly. The cost of absenteeism extends far beyond the daily wages of the absent educators (Kuzmit, 1980:4-15).

Most school systems do not monitor employee attendance properly – either for individuals or for the entire school system. If absenteeism is monitored properly, it will reveal that 80 percent of absences are incurred by approximately 20 percent of the school staff. Failing to monitor employee attendance, naturally, can lead to abuses. If teachers by regulations are allowed ten days of sick leave per year, for example, some will take all ten days off – regardless of whether they are sick or not - if they know they will not be held accountable for their absences. Over time, some employees will come to view those days of leave as an inalienable right rather than as a generous provision (Lewis. Jr, 1982:30).

Question 7.4 wanted to establish if the absenteeism policy is implemented as agreed and if not the reason why it was not implemented as agreed. Fifty five percent said it was implemented as agreed and thirty-eight percent said it was not implemented as agreed (Table 4.11). Those

who said it was not implemented as agreed gave various reasons for this. HODs were of the opinion that many people do not follow procedures and some are even ignorant of the policies and even overlooked the importance of them. It was also mentioned that when implemented, teachers resist and in this case, there is nothing in place to cover the authorities. Another reason suggested was that it is difficult to implement in a strict manner. Educators were of the opinion that the management does not make sure that the necessary leave forms are filled when someone is taking leave and nothing is done to those who do not fill the forms. They further suggested the principal was very accommodating and there was inconsistency from the side of the principal.

It can therefore be concluded that most schools have written absenteeism policies agreed by and known to educators. However, it also leaves room for abuse, which the educators do not hesitate to practice.

5.2.5. Objective 5: To determine whether the workload and job satisfaction have an impact on the rate of absenteeism.

On the question of the workload of educators and its effect on the rate, absenteeism the response was almost even. Fifty percent said that workload had an effect while 48% said it had no effect (Table 4.13)

According to Ngidi & Sibaya (2002:7), the major problems facing teachers are due to the fact that the increases in responsibilities have not adequately been accompanied by appropriate changes in facilities and training, in order to equip teachers to deal with these new demands. Consequently, teachers may feel threatened by new demands, thus becoming stressed. This leads to increased absenteeism

A very important pointer was the fact that job satisfaction had an impact on the rate of absenteeism. Eighty two percent (73/89) responded that job satisfaction influenced the rate of absenteeism. Fifteen percent (13/89) responded otherwise.

The absentee culture tends to foster an unhealthy school environment, because school environment is determined by administrators' leadership styles. Where absenteeism is high, leadership is lacking and morale drops. This leads to widespread job dissatisfaction among teachers (Lewis. Jr, 1981:29). There is evidence to suggest that the relationship between job satisfaction and absenteeism, tenuous as it appears to be, is conditioned by the design of the teacher's job. Specifically, job satisfaction and absenteeism are more apt to be related under a condition of high work interdependence than under moderate or low interdependence (Bridges, 1980:41). Research unanimously supports the contention that school climate affects job satisfaction on the part of staff personnel. When job satisfaction is positive, staff personnel are motivated toward serving the organization and goal achievement. Such an attitude leads to improved attendance (Norton, 1998:97).

Therefore it can be concluded that both workload and job satisfaction affect the rate of absenteeism. Although workload was not a major contributing factor, job satisfaction was a contributing factor.

2.6. Objective 6: To determine whether offering incentives and abolition of accumulation of leave have an impact on the rate of absenteeism.

According to the survey, as presented in Table 4.14, sixty-four percent of the respondents agreed that offering incentives would reduce the rate of

absenteeism while thirty-four percent said it would have no impact. Three percent gave no answer.

According to Kuzmit, (1980:4-15) as attendance has a direct bearing on the organizational goals, management should formally recognize both good and poor attendance. At a minimum, employees with good attendance records should receive management's appreciation for making the organization function more smoothly and effectively. According to Jacobson (1988:280), teacher absence declined significantly and perfect attendance rose from 8 percent to 34 percent during an attendance incentive plan. According to Norton (1998:97), Freeman and Brant (1987) presented a plan called the Meritorious Attendance Recognition Program that included administrators and teachers. The plan combined recognition and competition-based incentives. In one year, the average staff absence dropped from 7.6 days per employee to 6.4 days. An incentive provides an employee with a boost to his/her motivation to avoid unnecessary absenteeism (Anon C: 2004).

Question 8.2 wanted to establish whether offering incentives would reduce the rate of absenteeism. If so, what kind of incentives would be recommended? Based on the results found in table 4.14, 64% of the respondents agreed that offering incentives would reduce the rate of absenteeism. On this issue, two principals suggested monetary incentives and one suggested paying cash for leaves not taken. Deputy Principals made suggestions like offering awards, bonuses, considering for promotion and salary increase. HODs suggested some similar to that of principals and deputy principals and added some more. As an incentive, leave credits should be allowed to accumulate and paid for the accumulated leave. This was the most common suggestion. In addition to this, they also suggested the following: awarding of certificates of merit,

appointing senior educators in some management positions, acknowledging regular presence at work, buying lunch pack, remunerations on duties performed by individuals and increasing salary notches closer to those of seniors. Educators also suggested types of incentives to be offered to educators for good attendance. Some are similar to those suggested by the Principals, Deputy Principals and HODs. Only those not mentioned already are given below: recognizing educators who contribute more to the school by issuing certificates on a monthly basis, allowing to knock off early on certain days, offering breakfast/lunch, motivational talks from external people, involvement of department throughout (not only when there is a crisis), workshops, offering some end of the year awards to top learners in the class of the educator who comply with the absenteeism policy and housing and motor allowances.

On the question of the abolition of accumulation of leave policy; 78% of the respondents said it encouraged absenteeism. Nineteen percent said it had no impact. Three percent gave no answer (Table 4.15).

Norton (1998:96) states from the studies of Ehrenberg and others (1991) that school districts that allowed for unlimited accumulation of leave had somewhat lower usage of leaves than others.

It can therefore be concluded that majority of educators appreciates offering some kind of incentives. Likewise, abolition of accumulation of leave contributed to increased rate of absenteeism.

5.2.7. Objective 7: To determine whether absenteeism has an effect on the performance of learners.

According to the survey, as reflected in table 4.16, eighty-four percent of the respondents agreed that absenteeism affects the performance of the learners. Fifteen percent said otherwise and one percent gave no answer.

Norton (1998:96) states from the studies of O'Brien et al (1983), that teacher absenteeism impacts negatively on student learning. There is a critical point at which the rate of teacher absenteeism begins to inhibit student learning. The point, of course, varies greatly from school to school. In schools classed as "high achieving" or "low achieving", the rate of teacher absenteeism made no discernible difference in the level of student achievement. However, in so-called "average achieving" schools, teacher absenteeism did make a difference. The absentee culture, which contributes to such achievement problems, must be eliminated. (Lewis Jr, 1981:29). Studies in several school systems indicate that both the frequency and the duration of teacher absences negatively affect student learning (Lewis Jr, 1981:29). According to Pitkoff, (1993:39, 41) when teachers are absent from school, their students achieve less. His studies further revealed that significant relationships existed between increased teacher absenteeism and lower student achievement in reading, writing and mathematics; poor student attendance and higher dropout rates. Areas, which have high levels of student under achievement, will often have schools where the teachers' absenteeism rates are high (Bowers, 2001).

Therefore, it can be concluded that teacher absenteeism affects the performance of learners; where absenteeism is rife, learners perform poorly.

5.2.8. Objective 8: To determine the day of the week when absenteeism is most and the group of people who absent most.

Table 4.17 reflects the results on the day of the week when absenteeism is most. According to this 39% of the respondents agreed that Monday is the most common day. This is followed by Friday with 32%. Tuesday accounted for 10% and Wednesday, 3%. Thursday recorded nil response. Sixteen percent of the respondents gave no answer.

Question 8.8 was to find out on which day of the week most absenteeism is experienced and the possible reason(s) for this. The reasons advanced for this were varied. Principals were of the opinion that educators absented more on Mondays because they wanted to take a long weekend, other commitments and engagements over the weekend extended into Monday and lack of love for work. Deputy Principals gave the following reasons, amongst others: weekend hangover and over indulgence during the weekend.

HODs advanced the following reasons: social responsibilities, excuse on family matters, educators who are not local and whom travel home extend their weekends (no actions are taken against them so they take things for granted). Educators who suggested it was Mondays most commonly absented gave many reasons. Having a nice weekend and coming to a place that is not functioning properly will let anybody want to stay home. Monday blue hangover (too much alcohol during weekend resulting in severe hangover), being tired, the bodies are still adjusting to the weekend holidays; weekend fever/month ends and commitments over the weekend were other reasons. Others said they needed more time for relaxation after too much work, unforeseen circumstance over weekend, extension of

the weekends and educators giving themselves long weekends, as they are tired.

Table 4.18 shows the absenteeism based on ethnic groups. According to this Blacks' absenteeism rate was 60% followed by Whites, 8%. Coloureds accounted for 6% and Indians 4%. Twenty two percent of respondents gave no answer.

As indicated in Chapter 1 (1.5), Blacks dominate the study environment selected for the survey. Therefore the researcher is afraid to draw any conclusion about this aspect although the survey indicates that Blacks absent more than other groups.

5.2.9. Objective 9: To determine, in the management of absenteeism, if the schools maintain accurate records and if the School Management Team is communicating to the staff on the extent of absenteeism.

The survey shows that 76% (67/89) of the respondents agree that their schools keep accurate record of the different types of leaves taken by educators. Twenty one percent (19/89) do not agree. Three respondents (3%) gave no answer.

According to Lewis Jr (1981:29), few teacher attendance records are kept in many school systems. Those that are kept often are not used as part of an analytical process. There are schools at which teacher absences are not recorded at all. Without proper record keeping, of course, monitoring of performance of individual teachers or groups of teachers is impossible.

An educator's attendance record constitutes an important criterion of employee performance. In defining the "good" educator, management often includes such descriptions of behaviour as 'always shows up for work,' "hardly ever absent," and "always on time Kuzmit (1980:4-15).

On the issue whether the SMT communicated to the educators on the extent of absenteeism, 62% (55/89) said the SMT communicated regularly. Thirty four percent (30/89) did not agree. Four percent (4/89) gave no answer.

To make an attendance management programme truly successful, it will require insight into the special dynamics present in the workplace. It will require two-way communication, as both the needs of the employees and of the management must be met if good attendance is to be achieved. Attendance is the responsibility of the facility management and ultimately the administrators (Anon E: 2004). Attendance is not an expectation. It is a right of employers to have good attendance. Each and every employee has a contractual obligation to attend to work regularly. All levels of management must believe in, be committed to, and communicate their expectations of good attendance. Expectations must be clear to both management and employees in order for attendance management programme to get maximum results. Goals must be tangible. Attendance expectations must be clearly communicated and followed (Anon E: 2004).

Question 8.11 wanted to establish whether the SMT is communicating to the staff about the extent of absenteeism and the form of communication frequently used. Sixty two percent of the respondents agreed that the SMT is communicating to the staff. Principals used the following methods: addressing educators during briefing sessions and staff meetings, one on one discussion with educators concerned and briefing at morning devotions. Deputy Principals mentioned the following methods: giving memo to individuals, verbal announcements, and staff meetings during the week. Most of the HODs also mentioned the same methods as the principals and the deputy principals. One mentioned that making records available for inspection, providing policy materials for study and appealing

to staff were the methods used. Most of the educators concurred with the methods mentioned by the SMT members.

Therefore, it is clear from the survey that the schools keep accurate records of the various leaves taken by the educators and the school management team communicates to the staff regularly on the extent of absenteeism.

5.2.10. Objective 10: To determine (i) whether the SMT or Principal practice discrimination in granting leaves; (ii) whether the medical certificates submitted are genuine and (iii) whether absenteeism was experienced due to teachers' strike.

On issue number (i) 68% (60/89) of the respondents said the SMT or the Principal did not practice discrimination.- About the Medical Certificates submitted, 61% (54/89) said they were genuine. On issue number (iii), seventy percent (62/89) also agreed that there was absenteeism due to teachers' strike.

5.3. Limitations of the study

Only a limited number of schools were selected for the purpose of this study and most of the schools were from the precincts of Mafikeng. If it was extended to real rural schools, the researcher is not sure if the results would have been otherwise. There was a growing demand from some unions for the re-introduction of accumulation of leave. It is therefore not sure while answering question 8.3 this has influenced the respondents. Likewise, most of the respondents were Blacks; therefore, the researcher is not sure whether the results shown in Table 4.18 can be applied across the spectrum.

5.4. Solutions suggested to reducing the rate of absenteeism.

This formed Section C of the questionnaire. All levels of educators gave their suggestions. This is a very comprehensive section. Therefore, the solutions suggested by each category are presented separately. Identical suggestions from different levels of educators are not repeated; as in many instances, they gave identical solutions.

5.4.1. Principals

- Each educator should be supplied with a copy of the rules and regulations of the school.
- Department should be strict and monitor educators' leaves effectively because educators know there is no follow up by the department.
- Let leave days accumulate and leave days not used must be compensated for by cash.
- Department should give schools support in terms of treating unauthorized leaves effectively.
- Recognition for least absenteeism, like financial incentive, 1 day off per month for educators not absent.
- Absenting teachers should pay for replacement teacher; this should be deducted from the salary.
- Performance management to be effectively implemented.

5.4.2. Deputy Principals

- Have a written and agreed policy on absenteeism; implement this and practice it fairly without discrimination.
- Keep accurate records of different types of leaves taken by educators, get the leave forms filled and discuss the extent of absenteeism with the concerned educators individually.

- Provide better working conditions and conditions of service.
- There should be efficient management team (SMT).
- Teachers need to be more dedicated. This is intrinsic and no one can help with it.
- Teachers who do not like the job should rather leave the profession. In the private sector, absenteeism will be dealt with differently.

5.4.3. Heads of Departments (HODs)

- Those who are absent quite often should be taken to task.
- A list of absentees should be put in the staff notice board so that people should see who the regular absentees are. This may embarrass the culprits and absenteeism will be reduced.
- Management should at all times keep staff motivated.
- Allocate work to educators according to their strengths and preferences in the subjects they qualified in.
- SMT should acknowledge educators' contributions.
- Give information and feedback about absenteeism at all times.
- All teachers who absent themselves unnecessarily should be given leave without pay.

5.4.4. Educators

- Staff morale to be improved. Low staff morale contributes significantly to absenteeism because sometimes they dread to go to work.
- Reduce the workload.
- All staff members should be treated the same way.
- The principal must make sure that every time the educator is absent, when he/she returns, he/she reports to the principal.

- Inculcate a loyalty to school and the learners. Educators should feel the genuine need to work for the welfare of the student community.
- Accurate record must be kept for each employee no matter what the position is. Corresponding rules of punishment and reward should be applied to everyone.
- Offer educators enough fringe benefits. This will make a positive change in the system.
- Try to reduce attending to personal matters during working days and attend to personal matters during the holidays or after school time.
- Educators' needs to be taken care of: offer entertainment to educators on campus and improve work place conditions.
- Manager must be firm and stop practicing discrimination.
- The department of education should go to different institutions to address the issue. Give teachers a hearing about their problems and try to alleviate those problems.
- Organizing workshops to equip educators with relevant skills.
- There should be proper discipline at school and a good relationship with staff and management.
- Teamwork should be the order of the day and disciplinary actions should be taken against those who do not cooperate.

5.5. Recommendations.

The survey provided quite a number of solutions to reduce the rate of absenteeism of educators. Most of them are in line with the ones identified in the literature review. This is an indication that educators all around the world think alike when addressing the problem of absenteeism of educators. Educators of Mafikeng Area Project office in the Northwest Province of South Africa are not an exception. Based on their suggestions, the following recommendations are made to address this ever-increasing problem.

- Reintroduce the policy of accumulation of vacation/annual leave and pay out the cash equivalent when the educators retire/leave the service.
- All institutions should have a written absenteeism policy agreed upon by all stakeholders, in line with the leave policy of the department of education, and this policy should be implemented consistently and without prejudice.
- Introduce some form of incentives to those educators whose attendance record is exemplary. The form/type of incentives should be agreed at institutional level.
- Improve the working conditions, reduce the workload and motivate the educators.
- Department of education and officials above the school level should provide all the necessary support and assistance to the school management team when cases of chronic absenteeism are reported.
- All schools should be provided with the current leave policy documents.
- School managers should be given regular workshops to manage absenteeism.
- As there is manipulation going on at higher levels while consolidating the leaves, all schools should be linked electronically with the head/regional office so that on a daily basis the schools can enter and update the different types of leaves taken by educators.

5.6. Conclusion

A sincere effort was made in this study to find out whether absenteeism is rampant in our schools. Whether the schools had, an absenteeism policy formulated with the input from all levels of educators and whether these policies are implemented as agreed. The study also tried to establish whether offering incentives and bringing back accumulation of leave policy would reduce the rate of absenteeism. The age group and gender of educators absenting frequently and the day of the week when educators

are mostly absent were also investigated amongst other factors. Efforts were also made to find out if absenteeism is managed effectively. All the findings, solutions and recommendations are presented and discussed in this mini dissertation. Finally, solutions were also sought from all levels of educators to curtail this pandemic.

According to Kuzmit (1980:4-15), the war against absenteeism can be effectively fought only with an armament of sound management systems, tools, methods, and techniques. A patchwork approach simply does not work. Time and again, hastily applied and ill planned absentee control efforts have proved useless. Absenteeism, like other complex management problems, requires complex solutions involving tough decisions and a good deal of human and organizational change.

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TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

FROM : BENNETH MKANSI

DATE : 12 NOVEMBER 2004

PERMISSION TO COLLECT DATA FOR RESEARCH

This serve to confirm that Mr. J. Kunjunjukuty student no: 10586032 is a registered Master of Business Administration student with the North-West University (Mafikeng Campus).

By copy of this letter, I hereby request your office to grant him permission to collect data for his research project on: Management of absenteeism in South African schools with specific reference to Mafikeng (Area Project Officer) APO

Regards,



**BENNETH MKANSI
PROGRAMME OFFICER**



Dear Sir/Madam

As part of my MBA programme I have to submit my dissertation work. The topic I have selected is the **"Management of Absenteeism in South African Schools with specific reference to Mafikeng Area Project Office"** This project can be completed only with your assistance. Therefore I am requesting for your full co-operation in this respect. All information will be treated strictly confidential. Thanking you for your time.

Where applicable, please tick the appropriate column.

Section A:

Personal Data

1. Position
 - ☐ Principal
 - ☐ Deputy Principal
 - ☐ Head of Department
 - ☐ Educator
2. Number of years employed
 - ☐ 1-5
 - ☐ 6-10
 - ☐ 11-15
 - ☐ 16-20
 - ☐ 21 and above
3. Number of years in the same capacity
 - ☐ 1-5
 - ☐ 6-10
 - ☐ 11-15
 - ☐ 16 and Above
4. Number of years in the current institution
 - ☐ 1-5
 - ☐ 5-10
 - ☐ 11-15
 - ☐ 16 and Above
5. Age group
 - ☐ 21-30
 - ☐ 31-40
 - ☐ 41-50
 - ☐ 51-60
 - ☐ 61-65
6. Gender
 - ☐ Male
 - ☐ Female

Section B:

7. Absenteeism Policy

7.1 The school has an absenteeism policy

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

7.2 Is the policy agreed by / known to all stakeholders?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

7.3. Is it a written policy?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

7.4. Is the policy implemented as agreed?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

If not, what do you think is the reason for not implementing as agreed?

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

7.5. Do you think that some educators are abusing the current leave policy?

- ☐ Yes.
☐ No.

7.6. Do you get the necessary support from the higher authorities in the implementation of the policy?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

8. Other issues with regard to educator absenteeism.

8.1. Has the absenteeism rate this year

- ☐ Increased
☐ Decreased

What is the reason for your answer?

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

8.2. Do you think offering incentives will reduce the rate of absenteeism?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

If yes, what kind of incentives would you recommend/suggest?

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

8.3. Accumulation of leave is no more practiced. Do you think that this encourages educators to use their leaves?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

8.4. Do you think absenteeism has a direct bearing on the performance of learners

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

8.5. What age group of educators are absent more frequently?

- ☐ 21 – 30
☐ 31 – 40
☐ 41 – 50
☐ 51 – 60
☐ 61 – 65

8.6. Which group of educators are absent more frequently?

- ☐ Male
☐ Female

8.7. Which ethnic group is absent more frequently?

- ☐ Black
☐ White
☐ Indians
☐ Coloured

8.8. Which day of the week does you experience most absenteeism?

- ☐ Monday
☐ Tuesday
☐ Wednesday
☐ Thursday
☐ Friday

What do you think is/are the possible reason(s) for this?

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

8.9. Does your school keep accurate record of different types of leaves taken by each educator?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

8.10. Do you think that workload is a factor contributing to increased absenteeism?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

8.11 Is your SMT communicating with the staff about the extent of absenteeism?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

If yes, write down the form of communication frequently used.

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

8.12 Do you think job satisfaction has an impact on the rate of absenteeism?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

8.13 Do you think that the SMT or Principal practice discrimination in granting leaves?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

8.14 Do you think that the Medical certificates you receive are genuine?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

8.15 Have you experienced absenteeism due to teacher strike?

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

Section C: Additional Information

9. What can you suggest as solution(s) to reduce the rate of absenteeism?

THANK YOU VERY MUCH FOR YOUR VALUABLE TIME & CO-OPERATION.

CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS

A correlation coefficient ($-1 \leq r \leq 1$) measures the strength of linear relationship between two ordinal variables.

Table 1

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Number of Years Employed</i>	<i>Number of years in the same capacity</i>	<i>Number of years in the current institution</i>	<i>Age Group</i>	<i>What age group of educators is absent more frequently?</i>
Position	1.00					
Number of Years Employed	-0.46	1.00				
Number of years in the same capacity	0.16	0.55	1.00			
Number of years in the current institution	-0.15	0.52	0.49	1.00		
Age Group	-0.41	0.78	0.48	0.46	1.00	
What group of educators is absent more frequently?	0.15	-0.18	-0.08	-0.20	-0.01	1.00

12

**AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE CHALLENGES OF FOOD SECURITY
POLICY IMPLEMENTATION: A CASE STUDY OF THE BAROLONG
BOORA TSHIDI PEOPLE OF THE NORTH WEST PROVINCE (SOUTH
AFRICA).**

A MINI DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF HUMAN
SOCIAL SCIENCES IN THE NORTH WEST UNIVERSITY IN PARTIAL
FULFILMENT FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTERS OF ARTS IN PEACE STUDIES
AND INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS.

NORTH WEST UNIVERSITY



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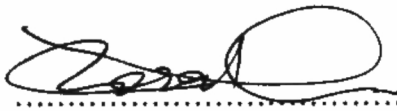
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DECLARATION

I, hereby, declare that this dissertation submitted for a Degree of Master of Arts In Peace Studies and International Relations, at the North West University, has never been previously submitted by me for any degree at any University. It is my work in design and execution and all material contained herein has been duly acknowledge.



.....

KEGOMODITSWE LORATHU

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Firstly, I would like to thank God for giving me the strength of finishing This study after going through a difficult period in my life where I was faced with ill health and death of the beloved one.

My family for leaving them unattended and going to the library and attending interviews.

My supervisors Prof Kaya H.O, Mr Kale Ewusi and Mrs M.Pooe who guided me through this important project.

Mrs. Matshepe Molemane who helped me with searching for information and using her computer to surf the Internet, she supported me at any time without any reservations, even with time.

I am grateful to the respondents of Lekoko village who supported me. Gratitude is extended to Mrs Maria Mokwatisi who accompanied me when I went to different homes for interviews. I would like to thank the lady who opened her house for me while she wanted to close it in order to go and harvest "morogo" in the veld.

To the chief of the village who left his business to talk to me.

I would also like to thank Mr Mkhonto from the Department of Agriculture who gave me information and pamphlets and spent time with me to enlighten certain issues.

ABSTRACT

The study found that there is marked poverty in Lekoko village, and that food security is lacking. Purchasing power of household commodities and consumables is observed to be non-existent. Agriculture as a form of food security has eluded many because of drought. All those who practised subsistence farming are unable to do so. Food security is greatly impaired; the people cannot access sufficient aid and nutritious food. This includes the problem of food production, preservation and storage. The projects and programmes initiated by the Government to alleviate poverty do not reach the people. Substantial changes are needed to expedite the distribution of food Production resources. Formal and informal institutions should be involved in bringing about transformation of the structures, which are currently blocking the socio-economic. Premium access to information and social networks as well as to the State should be improved. The onus rests with extension officers to support the people and bring about generation of livelihoods with institutional reform to reduce vulnerability and risks.

CHAPTER ONE

1.1 BACKGROUND

Frost (1993) defines food security as access to the food needed for a healthy life by all people at all times. The right to adequate food is the right of all individuals in the community with others or alone. This can be achieved by the ability of the nation or household to meet consumption needs in terms of access to food. There are many activities involved in food security such as having a reasonable degree of stability in the supply of food per annum and that each household has access to food. Markets, like local farmers markets, community-supported agriculture; indigenous food processors should be included in the food security system. The right to adequate food includes food safety and food security, for example food should be free from adverse substances like adulteration, poor environment hygiene or other causes (United Nations, 2002)

Continued poverty, which is manifested in food insecurity, affects a large number of South Africans, that is, fourteen million people. They are unable to consume a sufficient number of calories (Land Redistribution Program, 2000). A great number of women, children and the elderly are susceptible to food insecurity especially in rural areas. On addressing food insecurity, the Government of the North West Province of South Africa has implemented programmes that target women and women farmers ensuring fair proportional access to resources for female-headed households.

The North West Province of South Africa is mainly rural with poor food security. The community practices subsistence farming, where production of food is mainly consisting of maize of low quality. Food insecurity is also exacerbated by the small piece of land that around the households. Since the 1970's employment has declined rapidly. Machines have substituted manual work. This has resulted in food Insecurity and inability to pay for goods and services. This state of affairs has resulted in many challenges for South Africa (S.A) of which food insecurity is one of them. The most affected communities are those households which are vulnerable especially women

headed households because of unreliable food production, lack of buying power and poor nutritional status.

The report by The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (2002), proposed a right to food approach to agricultural trade in agreement to the framework of the World Trade Organization (WTO) on agriculture. A right to food approach to the agreement would stress the human rights principle of non-discrimination encouraging affirmative action for the poor.

Trade rules for the protection of vulnerable people.

According to the Strategic Plan for South Africa (2001) the Government should provide an environment in which the sectors can compete. It should also promote the creation of competitive advantage. It must make structural adjustment incentives to reduce the costs of switching into competitive products. It also must introduce financing instruments to help the small business and existing farmers manage the effect of high rates and cash flows. Given the historical background of South Africa the origins of food insecurity resulted centuries ago from colonial and apartheid policies. These policies were designed to create conditions unfavorable to the well being of black people in all its aspects, especially in the former homelands. The position of African blacks was hampered by food insecurity where they were only expected to provide labour to mining industry and largely to agriculture. Before the 20th century the means of agriculture for the blacks was agrarian but it has grown rapidly through the growth of commodity markets.

According to the Integrated Food Security Strategy for S.A.(IFSS SA, 2002), South Africa is able to meet its national food requirements for major food items from domestic production and inputs, the future trends and macroeconomic developments call for cautions in food security policy and programmes. The primary objective of IFSS is to overcome food insecurity by increasing participation of food insecure household in productive agriculture sector activities. These include increase access to productive

resources, improve access to credit by the poor including women, support extension agents to disseminate information through the media particularly the radio, and improve nutritional standards and food safety by supporting targeted interventions (e.g. micro nutrients, vitamin supplements etc, (IFSS ,2002).

By 18th August 2003 the North West Provincial Government distributed R64,8 m food parcels to seventy two thousand households. The distribution of food parcels should be supplemented by distribution of agricultural starter packs. The NWP Department of health, through community based nutrition programmes, and the Department of Agriculture through the activities of extension officers are also involved in community development and income generating projects, often with explicit nutrition and food security aims.

To emphasise its intention the North West Provincial Government has advertised in The Mail, (2nd July 2004) that NGO's and CBO's dealing with Food Security and Economic Development Programmes should submit their proposals and guidelines for grant applications in relation to programmes of poverty eradication. The grants are amounting to five hundred thousand rand with a maximum of eight hundred thousand rand per grant.

1.2 RATIONALE OF THE STUDY

This study focused on food security and providing opportunities for the community to access any Government aid or projects by the North West Province Government (NWPG). There are projects and programmes initiated by the Government to ensure food security in poverty stricken areas. This venture ensures interaction between then the communities and the Government. It has a significant social, political and financial implication to the community as the Government is able to come closer to the communities. The end results may include the revision of the strategies of implementing food security projects.

Many households are experiencing poverty and those who are dependent on agriculture do not harvest enough to make a living. The researcher has thus observed that the communities are failing in their endeavour because they may find it difficult to access Government aids.

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM.

The North West Province of South Africa is mostly rural. The communities are dependent on agriculture for food security. Agriculture sector is also dependent on rain, which is often scarce because the province is in a semi-desert, and is an arid region. The state of affairs is translated into impoverishment. The researcher, has, thus observed the poverty in vulnerable households especially female headed households. The study was guided by the following research questions: -

- What is the status of food security in Lekoko village ?
- What are the challenges to food security that exist in the Barolong boora Tshidi people in the North West Province?
- Are the Barolong Boora Tshidi in Lekoko village able to access Government aids?

1.4 AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study was to investigate the challenges into food security policy implementation among the Barolong Boora Tshidi people in Lekoko village in the North West Province.

1.5 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The study examined identified and documented the following specific aspects.

- The impact of the status of food security in Lekoko village.
- The available projects and programmes initiated by the NWP

- **Government in Lekoko village.** The role played by the NWP Government in the implementation of food security policies in Lekoko village people in the NWP.

1.6 LITERATURE REVIEW

Concerns about food security have formed part of the debates in many forms of gatherings especially summits on sustainable developments like The Johannesburg Summit, 2002. Food security manifests itself as poverty but it has its roots on food production deficits. Since the nineties there has been a great concern in relation to food insecurity hence the revelation by The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, (FAO, 1999) that the total number of people that will encounter food insecurity by the year 2015 will be six hundred and thirty five (635) million.

The colonial power destroyed indigenous food production and security systems by its primary economic task of integrating people in the colonies into the worldwide capital market. As most of the African colonies were considered essential sources of agricultural raw materials, this task basically compelled African population to produce those commodities required by the European industries, like, sisal, cotton, tea and other commodities, the method to attain this objective, this practice generally differed from colony to colony.

Laws promulgated destroyed traditional methods of food production and security systems. Communities were compelled to cultivate particular crops, cash crops, from which they had no profit or income rather than food crops. Socio-economic structures had been built in order to ensure a more permanent flow of agricultural raw materials from Africa to Western Europe and North America (Loewenson, 1992).

During colonial ruling economy was pervaded by exploitation of blacks from full participation in the economy. Only lowest paid jobs had been opened to blacks. This deprivation led to economic gains for whites only. Whites were able to secure higher

occupational status, lower rates of unemployment and higher family income. Blacks could not be absorbed in the labour market, they practised subsistence farming which left them very poor.

Colonial agricultural strategy focused on commanding a surplus production from indigenous smallholders. Colonial authorities justified their strategy and the use of forced agricultural labour on the assumption that traditional farmers had surplus and extra labour time, which they spend, on their subsistence farms. Consequently, the food crop production of indigenous farmers declined. Faced by the demand to work in the commandants' fields, and to find money to pay taxes and other arbitrarily imposed dues, indigenous farmer used their reserve grain stocks to cover household food shortfalls; ultimately in this situation they could not meet their needs.

From the beginning of mercantilism in the eighteenth century, Africa was characterized by slave trade which had to supply the labour power in order to speed up the process of capital accumulation in the Atlantic Europe. Slave trade, apart from its other horrors, led to a regression of agricultural food production systems, poverty in African states. The African states found themselves in a dilemma of economic development whose contrasted effects are even more explosive because of rapid urbanization and mass employment shortage and agricultural stagnation, soil deterioration, famine and massive imports of food products, and the growing external dependence the emphasis is to maximise food production and security especially on and developing countries.

Agriculture plays an important role in addressing the needs of a growing population to eradicate poverty especially in developing countries and enhancing the role of women at all levels and in all aspects of rural development, agriculture, nutrition and food security are important.

Agricultural policies in developing countries including South Africa focus on maximising short-term profits rather than long-term sustainable management of local

resources by local farmers. Sustainable agriculture and rural development are important to the implementation of integrated approach to maximising food production and enhancing food security and food safety (Political Declaration and Plan of implementation - UN).

In 1987, the World Commission on Environment and Development (WCED) made the world aware of the potential danger related to food insecurity and challenged it to come up with policies to address such problems.

Following the call by WCED in 1987 many organisation focused their attention on food security and sustainable development. Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations (UN) helps the developing countries and countries in transition modernise and improve agriculture, forestry and fisheries practices and ensure good nutrition for all. FAO focuses its effort on regular access to enough high quality food to lead active healthy lives to the people. FAO is also a source of knowledge and information (www.fao.org). In the background paper of the UN following the World Summit on Sustainable Development, Johannesburg 2002, it is stated that the different governments should utilize maximum available resources, respect for food and water.

A background paper of the UN (date unknown) states that the States have obligations to proactively engage in activities intended to strengthen people's access to and utilization of resources and means to ensure livelihood. Under the Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights – General Comment no 3 it is stated that the States have an immediate obligation to ensure at the very least a minimum essential level of the right to drinking water and that even in times of severe resource constraints, vulnerable or marginalized groups must be protected by the adoption of relatively low cost targeted water programs.

Following the South African history of discrimination, Act 108 of 1996, made

provision for the constitution. The Chapter 2 (27:1 (6)) states that everyone has the right to have access to sufficient food and water. It further indicates that the State must take reasonable legislative and other measure within its available resources, to achieve the progressive realisation of each of the rights. The Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) in 1994 identified food security as a priority in the objective of the policies.

The South African Government has, thus, focused the public spending on improving food security conditions of historically disadvantaged people (The Integrated Food Security and Nutrition Programme (IFSNDP, 2003) .National Governments of developing countries have to improve their policies on food security by involving their locals in making solutions to food insecurity (National Consultation to food Security, 1997) In order to alleviate poverty the developing countries should make their policies central to food security strategies.

In South Africa the agricultural policies are centred on improving household food security especially in vulnerable homes and women headed households by a more equitable resource distribution of resources. There must be agricultural reforms with policies that support the emergence of a diversified production structure with an increase in the numbers of smallholder farming enterprises. This will lead to availability and affordability of nutritional food (Departmental News, 1999) . At the national level there is food security in South Africa . There is enough staple food and the surplus is exported. National food security indicators have revealed that South Africa is able to meet the needs of the growing population from domestic services in the past twenty years.

Horticultural products and sugar are over one hundred and sixty percent, resulting in exportation where enough foreign exchange has efficiently generated funds to import food products it cannot produce. Maize exports are only confined to SADC countries. South Africa is the largest exporter within SADC countries (Minutes, IFSS, 2002). However according to statistics South Africa; about thirty percent of

the total population is vulnerable to food insecurity, especially women and children and the elderly. It has been proven that in 1996 a third of household spent less than one thousand rand per month on food.

The distribution of poverty in the country is uneven while the intensity differs from different provinces. In the North West poverty is experienced in the rural areas including Lekoko village. Rural households are vulnerable because they rely on remittances from urban areas. There is limited economic activity in the adjacent communities, inappropriate farmer support services, poor gainful employment and lack of information and transport.

Five geographical location of worst affected poverty nodal points have been prioritised according to Statistics South Africa' coping. The North West province is third in the list. Mafikeng is noted to be the most hit.

The whole province has to receive two thousand food parcels. Children enrolled in primary school feeding programme are supposed to receive food parcels on identified days for three months. Minister Skweyiya launched an emergency food programme where the largest programmes were to be launched in the North west near the Botswana border where seventy two thousand households were identified, by 13 March (Afrol news,2005)

The International Food Programme (IFP 2003) spelt out the two broad options for achieving food security at national and house hold levels i.e. food self sufficiency which means satisfaction of food needs through domestic supply and food reliance in order to maintain food level production in order to meet the food needs of the population.

The Johannesburg Summit, 2002, has encouraged many people have hope towards sustainable development. The summit dwelled on poverty eradication and emphasized the role of national policies and development strategies which are regarded as the

responsibility of each country. The officials encouraged the different states to halve the proportion of the world's people whose income is less than one dollar per day by 2015.

Food security approaches are strategies to combat poverty through linking capacity building and economic empowerment e.g. in South Africa the White Paper on Social Welfare advocates for developmental social welfare, which stresses empowerment of individuals and groups towards attaining self-reliance.

Community based nutrition programmes by the Departments of Health and of agriculture through the activities of the extension workers are involved in community development and income generating projects. Non-governmental organizations (NGO's) play a role in community self help initiatives (Agricultural Policy Unit, 1997).

The Integrated Food Security Strategy for South Africa (IFSS, 2002) defines food security as access of food for all people at all times to enough food for an active healthy life. This definition has three but inter-related components.

Food availability which is effective supply of food at national and household level; Food accessibility of nation and its household to acquire sufficient food on sustainable basis. Reliability of food - utilisation and consumption of safe and nutritious food distribution- equitable provision of food to points of demand at the right time and place.

The South African Government has thus initiated programmes, which are aimed at meeting the needs of the people as defined by IFSS and envisaged by the African National Congress in their charter. The objective of the IFSS is to overcome rural food insecurity by increasing the participation of food insecure households in productive agriculture sector activities

The North West Government has initiated projects like Integrated Food Security Strategy Programmes (IFSS) and Food Mountain. These are in line with the Food Security and Nutrition Strategy as approved by the cabinet in 2002. These projects must benefit from all poverty alleviation projects (The Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Environment, 2003).

Though South Africa is able to meet its food requirements there is a need to improve food policies and actions through research, evaluation and involvement of the public (National Consultation in Food Security, 1997). Poverty in developing countries makes their agricultural policies central to food security strategies. The success of developing countries is dependent on regulation of domestic agriculture and the removal of policies that distort and interfere with people's rights to food for themselves. This will lead to availability and affordability of food (Departmental News, 1999)

The Special Programme for Food Security states that food security exists when all people have physical and economic access to sufficient, safe and nutritious food to meet their dietary needs and food preference for an active and healthy life at all times, hence they help those living in developing countries especially with low income to improve their food insecurity through increases in production.

MEC of Agriculture in the North West has emphasized the importance of food security. He has called for a united and meaningful approach between local municipalities, NGOs and private companies and the government to fight hunger. He indicated his concern for a few communities like Gatshekedi in the Kgalagadi region who suffer from chronic hunger and malnutrition. He emphasized the need "for mobilizing the poor to feed themselves and put an end to hunger." He mentioned the fact that eliminating hunger as the first step towards reducing poverty and ensuring food for all to build a people's contract and advance the vision for a better life for all to eradicate poverty and create jobs.

In his address to the guests which included traditional leaders, politicians, church leaders in Gatshekedi village he encouraged to communities to cultivate a culture of garden plots to fight hunger and accelerate change.

1.7 THEORETICAL PERSPECTIVES

These issues of food security, especially approaches, have been in theory and practice perceived and conceptualised in different perspectives. This section discusses the various perspectives pertaining to indigenous food security strategies. It is important to analyse indigenous approached to food security from different perspectives because societies perceive food security in different perspectives.

1.7.1 FUNCTIONALISM

From the functionalist perspective, society is like an organism and every part of the organism must contribute to the maintenance and survival of the organism. Society also has basic needs or requirements, which must be met for its survival (Haralambos and Holborn, 1991). Food is one of the basic needs needed for the survival of the society or members of society.

Since food is the source or metabolic energy, the minimum requirement of the food system is to produce enough food to keep the family and society as a whole alive, the children growing and eventually reproducing society. For instance, food security for the survival of the present and future generations has been one of the most important occupations of most indigenous communities. A number of local strategies were used. Every member of society in the basis of age and gender was expected to contribute to the food security of the community at both the household and community levels.

1.7.2 CONFLICT PERSPECTIVE

Conflict theories on food security argue against the functionalist approaches. They believe that there are fundamental differences of interests between social groups or members of any society. These differences are due to the existence of different classes, races and ethnic groups in societies.

They lead to conflicts in preferences of food production and security Approaches and technologies. Conflict perspectives to food security further argue that it is the failure of society to allocate its resources fairly that explains the continued existence of food insecurity. Marx blames food security on capitalism and social class, which is purely based on economy.

People are influenced by their economic material position. He believes capitalism generates poverty. The capitalist society exploits labour employing people to produce items for sale. The wage is less than the value of production.

The dominant class exploits the subordinate working group. This exploitation increases poverty. The economy works against the poor. It entraps them in a vicious circle i.e. they are paid only poverty level wages, they cannot get better paying jobs and cannot leave their jobs.

Globalisation and other forms of imperialism have affected indigenous approaches to food production and security in developing countries. Globalisation is the process whereby the population of the world is increasingly bonded into a single society (Gellner, 1992). According to Miller, biodiversity has tremendous implications for agriculture. The range of food resources has declined over time, although this trend has long been ignored. It is estimated that more than three thousands (3000) plant species have been used for food throughout human history; however there has been a significant reduction in the varieties. Now, most of the world's food comes from twenty (20) species.

This reduction is primarily function of conquest and domination, which were usually associated with the suppression local crops and the introduction of exotic varieties, and plant breeding programs, which have focused on a narrow range of crops (Land 1996)

The leaders of Africa have discovered that poverty and backwardness of Africa can be observed to be in contrast to the prosperity of developed world, and that there is continued marginalisation of Africa from the globalisation process. The logic of Africa's development has been undermined by the credit and the aids from other countries. This hinders the growth of African countries. There is absence of fair and global rules.

These have made the strong nations to advance at the disadvantage of the weak ones especially in trade, finances and technology. The weak nations are not compensated. The process of mobility of capital where borrowers compete with each other in global markets has been borne disproportionately by Africa. This distribution of benefits makes global interests by Africa quite invisible (NEPAD, 2001). Africa finds it difficult to harness the process of globalisation because of the stunt growth and development due to resource outflows unfavourable terms of trade. It finds conditions difficult to compete in. Environmental management should not be restricted to conservation of natural resources only, but measures to help the poor use and manage environment in a sustainable position.

Agriculture and rural development that is equitable, effective and sustainable cannot be pursued without an explicit recognition of the tremendous contribution of rural women to food and agricultural production and their crucial role in determining and guaranteed food security and well being of the entire household. Women are beneficiaries of development since their husbands have migrated into the cities to work in mines.

This issue of patent is at the core of the debate over the equity issues related to gem plasm. Farmers and scientists in the industrialised world have altered structures of plants through selective breeding. Consequently, researchers used the Third World as the source of free primitive gem plasm. These genetic resources are used to produce genetically altered seeds for the international markets. The patented stuff is often environmentally as well as financially costly. The food security picture of developing country farmers focus on hybrid varieties to the detriment of, and at the risk of causing disappearance of indigenous seed varieties (Yearley, 1996).

1.8 HYPOTHESIS

The study was based on the following hypotheses:

- There is no government support to Lekoko Community.
- Food security problems encountered at Lekoko tend to be the least to the Department of Social Welfare.
- The social workers seem to be more interested in other areas of Mafikeng than in Lekoko Village

1.9 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The study will assist in identifying the problems and obstacles that prevent the community from accessing Government aid, improved technologies and management practices.

The Barolong Boora Tshidi communities will also be empowered in terms of the resources available to them, while the Agricultural extension workers will be assisted in formulating the methods they can use to educate the different communities and how to access the resources and ensuring that the different projects are geared at reaching the people in order to improve the food security of the people.

1.10 METHODOLOGY

This case study was used to describe and explore the implementation of projects and programmes in food security in rural areas initiated by the NWPG. The longitudinal method of case study was used to obtain current information with regard to the past and present status of food security in the Barolong boora Tshidi community in Lekoko village.

Both qualitative and quantitative research methods of investigation were used. Information was obtained from the key persons in the village which included elders in Lekoko village and the chief. Other subjects included the youth households heads and the women. Interviews and questionnaires were used as method of data collection.

Sixty questionnaire were distributed. Only forty were returned and analysed. Face to face interviews were conducted in private in a language preferred by the respondents. They were also encouraged to discuss all aspects on food security. Questions were mostly semi structured to help in focusing on the study on hand and provide a better response. They were also centered in the respondent's life world and to understand the phenomenon in that world. The questionnaire is attached as Appendix A

Data analyses

Data was analysed following consideration of interviews and responses on questionnaires.

1.11 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Strained cooperation from the respondents was expected because the respondents may have never been exposed to research investigations before. Some elderly people were too old that they became short tempered to provide information. Some respondents

also felt that the researcher was wasting their time. Literacy level also prolonged the period of study.

Questionnaires were not all be returned because most of the people in the community were not interested because they believe the results would not help them in any way. The researcher had to include questionnaire in her interviews.

1.12 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Respondents were treated with respect and courtesy. They were assured of complete anonymity and confidentiality. They were also informed that participation in the study was voluntary .

1.13 ORGANISATION OF THE FINAL REPORT

Chapter One - It provides the background, aim, objectives and methodology of the study.

Chapter Two - The Demographic Characteristics of Respondent community members.

Chapter Three –Focuses on the impact of food security among the Barolong Boora-Tshidi in Lekoko Village.

Chapter Four – Role-played by the North West Provincial Government in ensuring food security in Lekoko Village

Chapter Five: Challenges of food security in the Barolong Boora Tshidi people in the North West Province.

Chapter Five: Conclusion and Recommendations

CHAPTER TWO

DEMOGRAPHIC CHARECTERISTICS OF THE RESPONDENTS

The study was interested in establishing the demographic characteristics of the respondents' in Lekoko Village in terms of age, gender, marital status, number of people receiving welfare grants per household, number of people per household and those who are familiar with governmental aid in rural areas. This was important for establishing categories of women and men involved food security issues in the study area. The study concentrated on female respondents , because in the traditional communities, most people who are involved in food security are women. . However, a small proportion of males were found.

1. GENDER STRUCTURE

Firstly, the study wanted to establish the gender structure of the respondents in order to establish which gender in the study area was involved in food security. The findings are reflected in Figure 1 below.

GENDER	PERCENTAGE (%)
MALE	16.7
FEMALE	83.3
TOTAL	100

Figure 1: Gender Structure

Figure 1 indicates that the majority of the respondents in the study areas were female. This is because most of the time females are the ones who are responsible for food security in rural communities as the case is in Lekoko Village.

2. AGE STRUCTURE

The study also wanted to establish the age structure of the respondents who practiced food security. Identification of the age groups of the respondents is significant for

understanding why the respondents use the survival strategies that they employed to ensure food security within their households. The findings are reflected in Figure 2.

AGE GROUP	PERCENTAGE (%)
25 – 30 YEARS	0
31 – 40 YEARS	16.7
41 – 49 YEARS	16.7
50 + YEARS	66.6
TOTAL	100

Figure 2: Age Group

Figure 2 shows that the majority of the respondents in Lekoko Village (66.6%) were in the age group 50 years and above. The age groups 31 – 40 years and 41 – 49 years had an equal representation of 16.7% each. Young people, in the age group 25 – 30 years, were not into food security issues. They preferred going to look for work in towns to get money and provide for their basic necessities

3 HOUSEHOLD HEADS

The study wanted to establish the households, which were headed by females as compared to those headed by males. Figure 3 shows the results.

HEAD OF FAMILY	PERCENTAGE
MALE	90
FEMALE	10
TOTAL	100

Figure 3: Household heads

Figure 3 shows that 90% of households had males as heads of the family while only 10% of the households are female headed. The households who were living within the bread level and that understand more about the grants are those that are male headed.

4. MARITAL STATUS

Thirdly, the study also wanted to find out the marital status of the respondents in order to establish whether males, who were married, family men, were the ones involved in food security, as they had families to take care of. The findings are shown in Figure 4.

MARITAL STATUS	PERCENTAGE (%)
MARRIED	50
SINGLE	0
DIVORCED	33.3
WIDOW	0
WIDOWER	16.7
TOTAL	100

Figure 4: Marital Status

According to Figure 4, half of the respondents (50%) were married. They engaged in farming because they had to provide food for their wives and children. 33.3% of the respondents were divorced and the remaining 16.7% widowed.

5. WELFARE GRANTS RECEPIENTS

Figure 5 shows the number of members of the community who receive welfare payments. This indicates the level of Government aid that reaches the people. This will give a picture as to level of food security.

NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
CHILDREN	37.5
ADULTS	62.5
TOTAL	100

Figure 5: Welfare Grants recipients

Figure 5 shows that only 37.2% children and sixty two (62%) of the adults receive welfare payments whereas there is a big number of members of the community who are entitled to such an opportunity but do not receive any.

6. KNOWLEDGE OF GOVERNMENT PROJECTS AND PROGRAMMES

Figure 6 gives a picture of the percentage distribution of people who know how to access Governmental aids as a way of alleviating poverty and food insecurity among rural people.

GENDER	PERCENTAGE
Males	50%
Females	15 %

The above figure shows that fifty percent (50%) of males and fifteen percent (15%) of females know how to access the aid

CHAPTER THREE

THE IMPACT OF FOOD SECURITY AMONG BAROLONG BOORA TSHIDI IN LEKOKO VILLAGE.

The aim of this chapter is to highlight the impact of food security in the communities of Lekoko village. Various methods of food security will also be highlighted.

Increased poverty and unemployment compounded by seasonal variability in income levels experienced by households in South Africa made it difficult for them to meet their daily food requirements. Since 1970 there has been a decline in employment. This has resulted in food insecurity in the country especially Lekoko communities. People are unable to pay for goods and services necessary for living. This occurs mostly in rural areas.

3.1 STRATEGIES FOR ENSURING FOOD SECURITY IN LEKOKO VILLAGE

The communities of Lekoko village utilised many methods to ensure food security, which included "Letsema: and other methods of food preservation.

3.1.1 LETSEMA.

This was the popular method of food security where the farmer invites members of his family and other members of the community to be involved in the harvesting process. During this process the farmer ensures food security for the harvesters. At the end of harvesting the produce is divided among the people who were involved. This method ensured food security for members of the community.

3.1.2 INDIGENOUS METHODS OF FOOD PRODUCTION AND PRESERVATION

Women in Lekoko village played a big role in food security. They were responsible for ploughing the fields and providing food for the whole family.

Traditional structures of resources provided them with the authority to access basic factors of food production like seedlings and ploughs. In spite of their subordinate position to men they were the backbone of food production, and were involved in resource control and production.

The Lekoko communities produced crops which were diverse and not static depending on the nature of the seasons. Multiple cropping by the farmers was sustainable with the help of extension workers. Farmers considered maize and sorghum without the inputs of chemical fertilisers and pesticides. Animals like donkeys and cows were used for ploughing and weeding. The planting process started as soon as the rainfall started. Cropping was a conscious process, as a result the process of picking the grown crops was attended to in preparation for the next crop.

3.1.3 FOOD PRESERVATION

To prevent destruction of stored crops by pests the Lekoko communities preserved food in bags while vegetables like pumpkins were dried on roof tops to ensure a strong and nutritional product. The seeds would also be strong enough to withstand pests. The grains were sprinkled with ash to preserve them.

The women built houses with mud (diboana) for storage purposes. The houses were completely closed except for a small window where grains could be retrieved. These were demolished and new ones were built as soon as new crops were available. To ensure future food supply the women cooked different produces like mielies and vegetables and dried them. The cooking methods prevented pest infestation and rotting. The dried food were also stored in big clay pots (ditsaga) to be cooked later.

When cattle, goats and sheep were slaughtered they were cut in different parts, cut into thin long strips, sprinkled with salt and dried to be cooked later. Biltong was also made and eaten later.

3.1.4 MARKETING

They were also involved in household agricultural output marketing. Their chief method of generating income was through trading. They had small stalls in the village and in town markets where farm produce were sold.

3.2. CURRENT STATUS OF FOOD SECURITY IN LEKOKO VILLAGE

Lekoko village is a rural area where indigenous methods of food production is used. The basis for sustainable agriculture where there is a struggle to produce enough nutritious food for the family and to maintain productivity of the land by using local technologies is lacking. Food output has declined because of soil erosion, pollution and loss of organic matter and salting of irrigated land.

Many people lacked land, capital, employment and education. Those who had small pieces of land around their households lack the means of working them. For a large number of people the need was to find employment. The community consisted mostly of elderly residents as younger people had gone into towns to seek employment.

Employment could only be found in the farms where wages were very low where employees were paid low wages like two hundred rand a month in spite of the Government' policy on standardised wages and registration of employees.

Apart from farm work, there is local employment. Some better off households employ domestic workers with low wages. Young people obtain money through

small-scale trading in urban areas as a result they spent the day from home leaving the elderly to fend for themselves.

Others provided services as house building and often look for work with contractors in town and neighbouring cities. The poorest were prime-age adults with no regular income and no pension. The elderly received pension monthly, but, because of the rate of unemployment in the area many households share the pension where often one household consisted of thirteen members. A grandparent often shares a house with his children who also has children. Some are married and bring their spouses into the common domicile.

Many are unable to seek employment outside farming as they are not skilled. They live permanently under the authority of white farmers because this arrangement offers food security. Lack of information in relation to social security entitlements prevents many elderly and the disabled to access welfare payments. They often depend on their children and neighbours to contribute money or food and labour for their upkeep. Pensioners are often expected to look after the grandchildren and be paid a meagre wage for it.

3.2.1 POVERTY

Insufficient and unstable food supplies at household levels has resulted in hunger and malnutrition in Lekoko village. Most of the producers in the former homelands are unable to feed their families because they have a narrow production base. Many people rely on purchased food and non-farm income to meet most of their household needs. Crisis is often experienced because of climatic variations. Droughts that occur on regular basis substantially threaten the food security position of agriculture-based households. There is always extreme crop failure and asset loss. The Government assistance is often a major source of income. There is,

therefore, periodic bouts of hunger. The collapse of the Bophuthatswa Government has worsened the situation. Many farmers are in debt with Agricor and are unable to pay.

3.2.2 LACK OF PURCHASING POWER

The rate of unemployment is very high as many people were retrenched from their former employments. This has led to reduced purchasing power. A great number of households have no cash to purchase food as many are unemployed. The communities have the lowest standards of living and are much more vulnerable to poverty and food insecurity. Poor nutritional status is noted in one child in six under the age of six. This is highlighted by the increase in malnutrition in rural areas. The sad story has been observed in Lekoko village.

CHAPTER 4

THE ROLE PLAYED BY THE NWP GOVERNMENT IN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF FOOD SECURITY POLICIES IN LEKOKO VILLAGE.

This chapter will show that the NWPG has initiated a few projects in the Province especially in poverty stricken areas like Maiyaiyane and Mabudutswane.

The North West Province which is significantly affected by poverty uses the definition of R800 per month as the minimum food basket, thirty seven percent of households in the Province is classified as poor while fourteen percent of household are with no income and fifty two percent live below the breadline (Statistics South Africa, 2002). The Province has initiated The Food Mountain or Letsema la Mantsha-tlala project in order to seek to improve food security at the household level. The Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Environment has been allocated R3,5m for agricultural production aspects of the project. The activities include mobilisation of the community, training of participants, physical verification of beneficiaries, income generating starter packs, training of trainers and baseline survey.

According to the memorandum to the Economic Development and Infrastructure Exco Committee of 20 Feb. 2000, Agricultural products to be distributed to each household should include twenty four week old African fowl chicks worth R240 and infrastructure support for chickens at R130, a few household sharing a milk cow, rabbits and provision of a sow in an area where swine fever is not a major problem (IFSS, 2002). Only one group is involved in poultry farming with aid from the Department of Agriculture.

IFSS initiated by the Government has a primary objective of reducing food insecurity by increasing the participation of food insecure households in productive agricultural activities and increase income and job opportunities.

Through Letsema la Mantsha tlala different programmes and projects such as Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programme (CASP) and Land Redistribution Agricultural Development (LRAD) to uplift the lives of the people. Communities of Maiyaiyane and Mabudutswane were assisted through these projects. They were provided with broilers, seedlings and goats. In other communities boreholes were provided and repairs were done on existing farms.

The most vulnerable households will benefit from measures to be handled by the National Food Emergency Scheme. The measures include food parcels, production starter packs, sifted maize meal packets monthly at discounted prices through a chain of retail outlets. Food parcels were to be issued for three months in order to combat poverty among the destitute, thereafter social grants and food production starter packs and/or income generating activities were to be instituted. After three months the affected households will be expected to produce their own food. Many households do not receive the food parcels or any starter packs. No one heard about them.

Food security is non-existent in Lekoko village because many people are still living below the bread level. Unemployment is still rife and many have left their homes to seek employment elsewhere.

Some community members have "tuck shops" in their yards so as to generate income. These may not yield enough but it is able to sustain life. Commodities are very expensive. No purchasing power.

A few number of people receive grants for their children, where in some instances a grant of one child maintains a household of two adults and two children.

The policy of the Department of Agriculture states that for grants to be afforded people should form groups of ten and above. No application for individuals will

be considered. The reason for this is that the benefits should be spread to as many individuals as possible in view of limited resources (Sedumedi, 1997).

The NWPG had encouraged people to form cooperatives, where they would get assistance from the Government. Those who could be successful in these projects, could be introduced into another project. This happened in Mabudutswana where sixty four (64) families were each provided with two goats each family and piece of ground for vegetable farming. The group that progressed was provided with a green house and borehole.

In Lekoko village only one cooperative was formed and was provided with broilers. This cooperative was assisted with the business plan and training by the Department of Agriculture but it later collapsed.

CHAPTER 5

CHALLENGES ON FOOD SECURITY IN THE BAROLONG BOORA TSHIDI PEOPLE IN THE NORTH WEST PROVINCE

This chapter looks at the challenges that the Barolong Boora Tshidi have to deal with in order to secure food. The understanding of the community in Lekoko village can only be done by their attempt to organise effective strategies for survival in relation to the development process.

According to Andile Mngxitama, blacks need a piece of ground on which they can live in order to prosper, but this is difficult with Lekoko community they do not have access to more land (The Round Table, SABC 3)

The community of Lekoko village practised subsistence farming as a result they could not be settled in commercially viable farms. There is a shortage of arable land. There is little space for growing crops or keeping stock on some house sites.

There are many challenges in food security which include food shortages and impoverishment, methods of food production, structural adjustment, market accessibility initiatives, claims and resources that are available to them, activities they have to undertake in order to generate a sustainable livelihood, commodities and services they require for an acceptable standard of living.

There is lack of exposure because of the educational status and distance from the resources of the community. The community has to seek information on different programmes and projects.

5.1 COMBATING FOOD SHORTAGES

The situation is compounded by the fact that the communities have no land for crop production. Many households have plots around their houses where they practise

subsistence farming. Some lands lay barren because the owners have no means of ploughing their fields. The amount of food produced is not enough for the size of each household. More often there is only one type of crop produced, commonly maize which makes planting seasonal.

Methods of planting were very conservative. There was lack of income as a result there is no money to buy fertilisers to improve the quality of the soil. They depend on the manure from their kraals which is not effective. There are tractors to be hired but, these can only be afforded by only a few. It is, therefore, necessary to introduce technologies to improve the quality and amount of the produce. The communities, therefore, depends on the Government for support.

5.2 ACCESS TO LAND

The communities have no land of their own except for small pieces of land around their houses, which lay barren because of lack of capital.

Some members of the community keep livestock especially goats. Goats are favourable because they can withstand the drought. They are always not enough to cater for the needs of the households.

The people need to look for cooperatives by the Government where they can get involved in the Government projects and programmes. This focuses on resettling commercially viable farmers from previously disadvantaged communities by Land And Redistribution Programmes.

The communities of Lekoko village practised subsistence farming as a result they could not be settled in commercially viable farms. There is a shortage of arable land. There is little space for growing crops or keeping stock on some household sites.

5.3 ACCESSING GOVERNMENT AID.

Climatic conditions played havoc with their crops where in many instances their crops are destroyed. Whenever they lose their crops there is no remuneration.

The farmers had to content with credits/debts from the commercial banks. They now have to learn how to access aid. They had to look up for agricultural credit schemes that were made available to smallholder producers as well as agricultural starter packs that are distributed to cooperative development systems. The community had to make sure that they are able to access assistance, programmes and projects that were established for sustainable rural financial systems. Cooperatives that were established and introduction of stock agricultural financial assistance.

One elder in the village spoke of an application they made towards assistance in relation to farming. The people formed a group of two hundred and thirty members (230) who were advised to form a Poverty Stricken Farmers Union by the Department of Agriculture. They secured two farms in Nooitgedacht and Ga-Khunwana. The group applied for the aid but only received it after four years. They had started ploughing but they are unable to pay for the commodities as the claim forms are lying on a senior officer's desk and they are made to understand that he was refusing to sign them. No explanation is given. Chances were that the project was doomed to fail.

According to the chief in the village officers from home affairs came three times last year to inform the community about accessing welfare payments and identity documents. They also taught them to access them.

Not all members attended the meetings, they, therefore, do not have information as to new developments in the community and the aids by Government.

5.4 WELFARE PAYMENTS.

Lack of information on entitlements to security grants and the households' marginal position within the community prevented them from getting welfare payments. The community had the onus of getting access to the state offices. Registration of the disabled was a problem as many did not know that they were entitled to Governmental grants. The elderly who are often left with the grandchildren did not know how to obtain the necessary documentation.

The community must obtain the identification documents in order to access welfare payments. There are no offices nearby where documents can be obtained.

There is a family of two brothers who are unemployed, while one is mentally challenged, who do not get any welfare payment. There are many others who do not know how to go about to apply for grants.

5.5 TRAINING

This can only take place in certain institutions of which some are known to have created insecurity for a number of the population. This could only be obtained if adjustments can be done on some structures. The chief who is the commander in chief of the village has to be trained first lest the community remains in the dark. The community should look for institutions that would train them on the available resources to them. Training was insufficient as many wanted to apply for the Government aid but did not have knowledge as to go about it.

5.6 MARKET INITIATIVES

There is no exposure to markets for those who could secure Governmental aid markets where their produce can obtain a better price in order to generate a

sustainable livelihood. The communities do not have a leeway of selling their produce. The community who deal with broilers in Lekoko village supply the butchery in town with chickens do not have a contract with the said butchery. This allows the owner of the butchery to have an opportunity to buy cheaper chickens elsewhere. The community is then left with many chickens which they were compelled at the street corners at a lower price.

5.7 LACK OF INCOME

The rate of unemployment is high so the community has to overcome the difficulty. There are farms like Kliparani nearby where members of the community can seek employment but they have to be trained on their rights.

Some community members have “tuck shops” in their yards so as to generate income. These may not yield enough but it is able to sustain life. The culture of saving is not known as a result like in a community of Madibogo the post office must teach the people saving initiatives.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Conclusion

The study draws its conclusion from a number of observations and make recommendations to that effect. Poverty and unemployment played a big role in the lives of the Lekoko villagers. Though projects and programmes are initiated in Lekoko village they did not take place for several reasons which include lack of land, training and skills. With the Government initiative of LRAD the Government would be able to purchase a farm for any group of people who have identified a farm for farming purposes.

Though the communities had information in relation to forming cooperatives they had no knowledge of accessing training or aid in any form. The other conditions like starting a banking account had made many suspicious. This has discouraged a few others to an extent that some members of the group have left because they could even afford to open a joint savings account.

Cooperatives were not easy to establish because of lack of knowledge, capital and group dynamics. The arrangement by the Government benefited only a few and the targeted clients got very little out of it.

Farmers did not get the results of the tests done on the soil. They therefore did not know whether their fields were fit for planting and which seeds should be planted.

Government employees did not come to assistance of the poor as they kept on giving them different dates on which to submit their applications.

The communities that stay in an area near the main road were accessed easily and were the only ones who were able to register for welfare payments. Those

who stayed about 30 kilometres from the house of the chief or road were not helped and nobody had ever reached them.

The chief did not have support from the councillor who stayed 100km from his constituency. He did not know the problems of the community he is supposed to serve. The community seldom saw him and did not even get to know of any developments from the Government.

6.2 Recommendations

Individual participation should be weighed and initiated by the NWPG. It is imperative that the extension officers should be appointed and get into the community and train all those who are interested in starting their own cooperatives and give them support throughout the projects. They should be informed of the relevant institutions like the Department of Agriculture and what they offer.

Policies should be revised and loans be granted to clients of low income groups with low interest rates. To look after their assets the banks should employ NGO's to train and advise the farmers.

The Government should put structures in place to ensure that their initiatives are carried out and that follow ups are done. Extension workers do not update the relevant parties as to their activities and the results of the test they undertake in their surveys. Every laboratory test should be published and the relevant parties be advised accordingly.

Training and development on new projects cannot be over emphasized. Obstacles like land distribution, structural adjustments and loans by banks should be removed so that people gain access to land, loans and welfare payments.

The government should purchase land for farmers who are interested for farming purposes. They should be supported throughout.

Mobile clinics should be employed so that social workers can go deep into the village and register the destitute and orphans and vulnerable children so that they can register for welfare payments.

Whenever there is a "pitso" at the "kgotla" the clerks from home affairs should be employed to register those who do not have identity documents and birth certificates in preparation for registering for welfare grants.

Councillors should come from the same village as the community they serve so as to know their problems and assist them as soon as possible and give them information on the new developments and make sure that they receive grants.

Batho Pele principles (the Government policy which put people first) should be applied and assistance should be easily made available. People who serve the people should be those who know the situation on the ground and apply the said principles in order to serve the people.

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APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE

GENDER

MALE		FEMALE	
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AGE STRUCTURE

20- 30	
30 -40	
40 -50	
50 +	

Who is the head of the family?

GENDER

MALE		FEMALE	
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MARITAL STATUS

Marital Status	
Married	
Single	
Divorced	
Widow	
Widower	

Who receives welfare grant in the family?

Recipient of welfare grant	
Adults	
Children	

Do you have any income? _____

What is the number of members in your household? _____

Do you know of any Government projects in your area? _____

Is there any Government support that any member of your household is receiving?

If any, which one? _____

Do you know how to access Government aid? _____

Do you attend any meeting by the Government employees or any "pitso" at
"Kgotla" ? _____

Have you ever heard anyone talking about grants ?

