

**ABSENTEEISM OF EDUCATORS IN THE LEJWELEPUTSWA DISTRICT
SCHOOLS IN THE FREE STATE PROVINCE**

by

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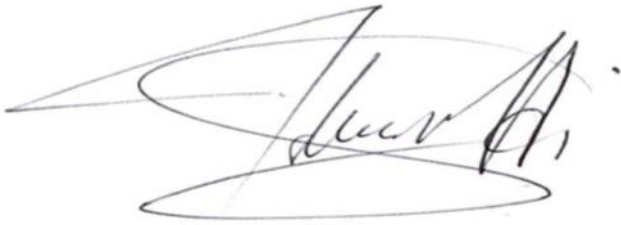
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FEBRUARY 2022

DECLARATION

Student number: 36818615

I declare that **ABSENTEEISM OF EDUCATORS IN THE LEJWELEPUTSWA DISTRICT SCHOOLS IN THE FREE STATE PROVINCE** is my own work and all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.



21 February 2022

.....
SIGNATURE

MR PHALALA JACOB TSHEKEDI

.....
DATE

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I would like to thank God, the Almighty for giving me the strength and wisdom to work towards achieving my dreams. I was able to complete this study with great enthusiasm even when things became tough. Compiling this mini dissertation would not have become a reality if it was not due to our father the almighty.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore factors that contribute to the absenteeism of educators. Fourteen schools were sampled in the Lejweleputswa District Office of the Free State Department of Education. An understanding of the reasons for educators' absenteeism is essential to provide viable solutions to manage educator absenteeism.

To achieve the purpose of this study, a mixed-method approach was employed. Data were obtained from a sample of educators, principals, and official reports from the Lejweleputswa District Office. A survey questionnaire was used to solicit information from educators in selected schools in the Lejweleputswa District. The principals of the selected schools were interviewed to gather in-depth information regarding absenteeism in the district.

The findings of this research have revealed that the working environment of educators is not conducive to teaching and learning, and that this affects staff morale. The availability of teaching resources such as teaching aids and equipment has been cited by participants as critical. In addition, it was found that teaching in overcrowded classrooms affects the quality of teaching, because the educators are unable to reach all the learners. The research also showed that teachers tend to abuse the privilege of personal leave. The findings further revealed that it has become the norm for educators to be absent from school on Mondays, Fridays, and paydays. A direct correlation between educator absenteeism and learner pass rate was evident. Absenteeism was seen to have a negative effect on the daily functioning of the school. As a result of the absenteeism, the school management must reschedule classes and reallocate the work of the educators who are absent. It is recommended in the study that the wellness office of the district, as well as the one of the province should be actively involved in assisting educators who are struggling with personal problems. A further recommendation is that the district and schools' management should measure the extent of the absenteeism problem and identify the causes accurately.

Keywords: absenteeism, educators, workplace, absenteeism, employee, abscondment, managing absenteeism, voluntary absence, involuntary absence.

KGUTSUFATSO

Sepheo sa thuto ena e ne e le ho batlisisa dintlha tse tlatselatsang bosiyong ba matitjhere dikolong. Dikolo tse leshome le metso e mene tsa ofisi ya setereke sa Lejweleputswa ya Lefapha la Thuto la Free State di ile tsa sampolwa. Kutlwisiso ya mabaka a ho se be teng ha matihere ke ya bohlokwa ho fana ka tharollo e sebetsang ya ho laola ho ba siyo ha matihere dikolong.

Ho fihlella sepheo sa thuto ena ho sebedisitswe mekgwa o kopaneng. Dintlha di fumanwe ho tswa ho sampole ya matitjhere, mesuwelohloho, le dipeho tsa semmuso ho tswa ofising ya setereke sa Lejweleputswa. Ho ile ha sebediswa lethathamo la dipotso tsa dipatlisiso ho kopa tlhahisoleseding ho matithere dikolong tse kgethilweng tsa setereke sa Lejweleputswa. Dihlooho tsa dikolo tse kgethilweng di ile tsa botswa dipotso ho bokella dintlha tse tebileng mabapi le bosiyong ba matitjhere seterekeng.

Diphumano tsa dipatlisiso tse di senotse hore tikoloho ya mosebetsi ya matitjhere ha e a lokele ho ruta le ho ithuta, mme sena se ama boitshwaro ba basebetsi. Boteng ba disebediswa tsa ho ruta tse kang dithusa thuto le disebediswa di boletswe ke matitjhere di le bohlokwa. Ho feta moo, ho ile ha fumaneha hore ho ruta ka ditlatseleng tse tletseng baithuti ka bongata ho ama boleng ba thuto, hobane matitjhere ha a kgone ho fihlella baithuti bohle. Dipatlisiso di boetse di bontshitse hore matitjhere a na le tshekamelo ya ho sebedisa tokelo ya matsatsi a phomolo hampe. Diphumano di ile tsa boela tsa senola hore e se e le tlwaelo hore matitjhere a be siyo dikolong ka Mantaha, Labohlano le matsatsi a moputso. Ho bonahetse kamano e tobileng pakeng tsa ho se be teng ha matitjhere le sekgahla sa ho pasa ha baithuti. Ho ba siyo ha matitjhere dikolong ho ile ha bonwa ho na le phello e mpe tshebetsong ya letsatsi le letsatsi ya sekolo. Ka lebaka la ho ba siyo ha matitjhere sekolong, batsamaisi ba sekolo ba tlameha ho hlophisa ditlatselase botjha le ho aba mosebetsi wa matitjhere a siyo botjha. Thuto e kgothaletsa hore ofisi ya bophelo bo botle ya setereke, hammoho le ya profense, di kenye letsoho ka matla ho thusa matitjhere a nang le mathata a botho. Kgothalletso e nngwe ke hore batsamaisi ba setereke le dikolo ba lekanye boholo ba bothata ba ho ba siyo ha matitjhere dikolong mme ba tsebe disosa ka nepo.

Mantswe a bohlokwa: ho ba siyo mosebetsing, matitjhere, sebaka sa mosebetsi, ho ba siyo mosebeletsing, ho ba siyo ha mosebetsi ka maikemisetso a ho se kgutlele mosebetsing, ho laola ho ba siyo mosebetsing, ho ba siyo ka boithatelo, ho ba siyo ka mabaka a seng taolong ya mosebetsi.

ISICATSHULWA

Injongo yolu phando ibikukuphonononga izinto ezinegalelo kukungabikho emsebenzii kootitshala. Izikolo ezilishumi elinesine zasampulwa/ zenziwa isampuli kwi-Ofisi yeSithili saseLejweleputswa kwiSebe lezeMfundo eFreyistata. Ukuqondwa kwezizathu zokungabikho emsebenzini kootitshala kubalulekile ukuze kubonelelwe ngezisombululo ezisebenzayo ukulawula ukungezi/ukungabikho kootitshala emsebenzini/ esikolweni.

Ukuphumeza/ ukufezekisa injongo yolu phononongo, kwasetyenziswa indlela exutyiweyo. Idatha yafunyanwa kwisampuli yootitshala, yeenqununu nakwiingxelo ezisemthethweni ezivela kwi-Ofisi yeSithili saseLejweleputswa. Iphepha lemibuzo lokuqokelela ulwazi lophando lasetyenziselwa ukufumana ulwazi/ingcaciso kootitshala kwizikolo ezikhethiweyo kwiSithili saseLejweleputswa. Iinqununu zezikolo ezikhethiweyo kwaqhutywa nazo udliwanondlebe ukuqokelela ulwazi/ingcaciso enzulu malunga nokungezi esikolweni kwisithili.

Iziphumo zolu phando zibonakalise ukuba imeko yokusebenzela yootitshala ayikukhuthazi ukufundisa nokufunda, kwaye oko kuchaphazela umoya wokuziphatha kwabasebenzi. Ubukho bezibonelelo zokufundisa ezifana nezixhobo zokufundisa nezixhobo zokusebenza bungqinwe ngabathathi-nxaxheba njengento ebalulekileyo. Ukongeza, kwafunyaniswa ukuba ukufundisa kumagumbi okufundela aphuphumayo/azeleyo kuyawuchaphazela umgangatho wokufundisa, kuba ootitshala abakwazi ukufikelela kubo bonke abafundi.

Uphando lukwabonise ukuba ootitshala bathanda ukusebenzisa kakubi ilungelo lomntu lekhefu. Iziphumo zaphinda zadiza ukuba sele iyinto eqhelekileyo ukuba ootitshala bangayi esikolweni ngeMivulo, ngooLwezihlanu nangeentsuku zokurhola. Unxulumano oluthe ngqo phakathi kokungabikho esikolweni kootitshala nezinga lokuphumelela kwabafundi luye lwacaca. Ukungabikho esikolweni/ukulova kwabonwa kunefuthe elibi kwindlela isikolo esisebenza ngayo mihla le.

Ngenxa yokungabikho kootitshala emsebenzini/esikolweni, abaphathi besikolo kufuneka bahlangahlengise/bacwangcise ngokutsha iiklasi baze bawabe ngokutsha umsebenzi wootitshala abangekhoyo esikolweni. Kuyacetyiswa kolu phando ukuba i-ofisi yezempilo yesithili, kwakunye naleyo yephondo, kufuneka zithathe inxaxheba ekuncedeni ootitshala abaneengxaki zokukokwabo. Enye ingcebiso eyongezelelweyo yeyokuba abaphathi besithili nabaphathi bezikolo mabalinganise ubungakanani bengxaki yokungezi esikolweni baze bachonge oonobangela ngokuchanekileyo.

Keywords: Amagama angundoqo:

absenteeism - ukungabikho emsebenzini

educators- ootitshala/abafundisintsapho

workplace - indawo yokusebenza

absenteeism - ukungabikho emsebenzini

employee- umqeshwa

abscondment- ukulahla/ ukubaleka /ukushiya emsebenzini kungaziwa

managing absenteeism- ukulawulwa (kokungezi /kokungabikho emsebenzini

voluntary absence - ukungabikho ngokuzithandela/ngokungaqhutywanga

involuntary absence- ukungabikho ungazimiselanga/ngokungazithandeli

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ACRONYM/ABBREVIATION	DESCRIPTION/DEFINITION
StatsSA	Statistics South Africa
EEA	Employment Equity Act
SMT	School Management Team
ELRC	Education Labour Relations Council
HIV	Human Immune Virus
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
LRA	Labour Relations Act
SDA	Skill Development Act
HOD	Head of Department
SASA	South African Schools Act
CCMA	Commission Conciliation Mediation and Arbitration
T & L	Teaching & Learning

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Absenteeism is a global challenge that affects economies of developed and developing countries and the general functioning of organisations. Its implications are far reaching for public institutions, more so for schools. For instance, loss of school days diminishes learners' achievements and overburden on educators. The purpose of this study was to investigate causes of absenteeism among educators and its impact on teaching and learning(T&L) in Lejweleputswa district schools.

Since the dawn of democracy in 1994, various legislative measures were adopted to deal with educator absenteeism. However, absenteeism remains a serious challenge particularly in public schools. This chapter outlines background and the rationale for the study, problem statement, research questions, research objectives, research design and methodology, conceptualisation, significance of the study, research scope, and limitations of the study and the chapter concludes with sequence of chapters.

1.2 BACKGROUND AND THE RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY

Absenteeism is generally perceived as failure of the employee to report for duty as scheduled regardless of reasons. Cucchiella, Gastaldia and Ranieri (2014:1159) define absenteeism as habitual absence from work for one or more days, usually justified by medical certificate but owing to personal interests and poor sense of duty.

McKenzie, Nugroho, Ozolins, McMillan, Sudarno and Sumarto, Toyamah, Febriany, Sodo, Bima and Sim (2014: xii) distinguish between two types of absenteeism, viz; teacher absenteeism from school and teacher absenteeism from class. Teacher absenteeism from school is defined the as the number of teachers absent from school for whatever reason, expressed as a proportion of all teachers who were scheduled to be teaching (McKenzie et al (2014: xii). While teacher absenteeism from class is defined as the number of educators who, although present at school but are not at their working stations,

expressed as a proportion of all teachers who were scheduled to be teaching. The authors argue that the loss of effective teaching time occurs not just when a teacher is absent from school but also when the teacher – although present at school – is absent from the class they are scheduled to be teaching. Studies conducted by Eagle and Glenn (2018:32), suggests that absence rate for teacher in the United States of America (USA) is in the order of over 5% of teachers who were absent from their jobs. However, studies conducted by Msosa (2020:2) reports the absence rate for teacher to be 25% in India while in Kenya the absence rate was found to be 30%.

In South Africa various pieces of legislation were developed to address the conditions of employment of educators which includes the issue of absenteeism. For example, the Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998 provides that an educator absent from work for a period exceeding 14 consecutive days without permission is deemed to be discharged from employment. In addition, various regulations and circulars were developed by the Department of Basic Education (DBE) with the intent to minimise educators' absenteeism, but such initiatives have not yielded significant positive results as the rate of educator absenteeism continue to increase (Mothibeli 2017:1). Although policies that regulate educator absenteeism are in place, there are no guarantees that they would be adhered to.

Although absenteeism is a challenge in all education systems worldwide, it is particularly challenging in developing countries such as South Africa (Usman, Akhmadi & Surydarma, 2007: 207). In 2012 the Free State Education Department has incurred losses to the tune of R16 million owing to absenteeism of educators during the one month in June 2012. About 24 000 educators were reported to be on sick leave ("Liesel in Free State News 07-13 September).

While it is clear from preceding discussion that educator absenteeism is a global phenomenon, a few studies have examined the causes of educator absenteeism in Lejweleputswa district schools. The researcher became aware of educator absenteeism

as a labour relations officer in the DBE in Lejweleputswa District schools and through various reports.

1.3 THE PROBLEM STATEMENT

The scourge of educator absenteeism affects many countries globally. However, this scourge is more prevalent in developing countries compared to more developed countries. According to the World Bank survey, absenteeism rate of around 10-12% is considered very high in developed countries and is lower than rate of developing countries. South Africa is not immune to these realities. According to the Schools Monitoring Survey report (2019: online) educator absenteeism has increased nationally from 8 to 10 % in 2018. Research conducted by the Human Science Research Council (2014:87) further highlights the problem of educator's absenteeism. This research shows that 40 000 teachers out of estimated 400 000 are absent from school daily. The study noted with concern that educators tend to abuse sick leave by being absent from work for one or two days without producing a medical certificate. A recent study by Msosa (2020:2) revealed that educator absenteeism is a major contributing factor to learner underperformance and appears to be more prevalent on Mondays and Fridays.

In 2017 the Schools Monitoring Survey brought the issue of educator absenteeism under spotlight once more when it found out that educators in the Free State Province do not only sign the register on arriving at school and, but they also sign for future days. This is a problem because register can reflect teacher as present even though educator is not at school. In addition, the report has also noted an increase of 8 -10% in educator absenteeism from 2011 to 2017 (DBE 2017:11). In Lejweleputswa Education Department District, an Audit Report (2017) has shown that educator absenteeism has increased from 8 to 10% 2017-2018 academic years. It is therefore the intent of the study to determine the factors that causes educator absenteeism in Lejweleputswa District schools in the Free State Province.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

To answer the main research problem, the study attempted to answer the following research questions:

- What is the theoretical framework that underpins educator absenteeism?
- How is absenteeism managed in Lejweleputswa District schools?
- What factors contribute to teacher absenteeism in Lejweleputswa district schools?
- What is the effect of absenteeism on functioning of schools in Lejweleputswa District?
- What strategies can be put in place to deal with absenteeism in Lejweleputswa District schools?

1.5 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

By answering the above questions, the study aimed at achieving the following objectives:

- To determine the theoretical framework that underpins educator absenteeism.
- To determine how absenteeism is managed in Lejweleputswa District schools.
- To establish factors that lead to absenteeism of educators in Lejweleputswa District schools.
- To determine the effect of absenteeism on functioning of schools in Lejweleputswa District.
- To explore strategies that can be put in place to deal with absenteeism in Lejweleputswa District schools.

1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

One important component of research is to select the most appropriate research design which supports the research questions and assist fulfilling the objective of the study (Hayes, Bonner & Douglas 2013:165). In this research a descriptive research design was employed with the purpose of describing the reasons for the high absenteeism of educators in Lejweleputswa schools.

In line with the main research question and objectives of this study a mixed method approach was employed in this study. A mixed method approach entails combining quantitative and qualitative approaches, methods, and procedures with the purpose of exploring and describing a research problem (Creswell 2014). The quantitative approach is grounded on numeracy and statistical inferences to make an opinion. Conversely, qualitative method provides an in-depth understanding of participants' experiences and the meaning of the phenomenon under study (Flowers 2009: 2-4). The advantage of combining the two approaches is that the researcher can broaden the dimension of the research and gain a comprehensive picture about the phenomenon under study.

Over and above the research approaches, the researcher used academic journals, books unpublished dissertations and thesis to collect secondary data. A detailed discussion on methodology is provided in chapter three of this study.

1.7 METHOD OF DATA COLLECTION

In this process, the researcher identified the appropriate data collection methods for this study. As part of the research design, the researcher planned how data would be collected and recorded to keep it intact, organised, and complete.

1.7.1 Questionnaires

Questionnaires have many uses, most notably to discover what the masses are thinking. These include market research, political polling, customer service feedback, evaluations, opinion polls, and social science research (O'Leary, 2014).

The primary object of a questionnaire is to solicit information about a phenomenon from people who are informed on a specific issue. Therefore, in this research, a questionnaire was used to collect primary data from educators, principals in Lejweleputswa District about educator absenteeism. To this end, 250 questionnaires were distributed to educators of the 14 selected schools in Lejweleputswa District and 179 were returned. This gives a 71.6% response rate.

1.7.2 Interviews

Interviews are primarily done in qualitative research and occur when researchers ask one or more participants general, open-ended questions and record their answers. Often audiotapes are utilized to allow for more consistent transcription (Creswell, 2012). According to de Vos, Strydom, Fouche, and Delport (2011: 186-202), the advantage of interview is that they provide high response rate. In addition, interviews provide the researcher with an opportunity for a detailed investigation regarding people's experiences and in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under study.

Although interviews are time consuming and costly, they allow for the opportunity to probe on responses provided by participants. In this study, structured interviews were used to solicit in depth information regarding educator absenteeism from principals and deputy principals in the 14 selected schools in Lejweleputswa District. A detailed discussion on research design and methodology is provided in chapter three of this study.

1.8 POPULATION

A population is the total number of items or individuals with similar characteristics from which a sample is drawn (Norris, Plonsky, Ross & Schoeman, 2015). For this study, the target population or sampling frame was 16 schools, eight secondary schools and eight primary schools in the Lejweleputswa District.

1.9 SAMPLING METHOD

According to Clow and James (2014: 225-226), the sampling process involves employing a small number of elements, items, or parts of the population to make conclusions about the entire population. Time and financial constraints also make it difficult to cover the entire population, hence a simple random sampling was used. The details about the sampling method used and justification are provided in chapter three of this study.

1.10 RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

According to Bryman (2012: 173-175), reliability means ensuring that the instrument gives consistent results. The implication is that the same issue investigated by another person

will yield a similar outcome. Bryman (2012: 173-175) further argues that research must be characterised by validity, meaning that the instrument of data collection must measure what it is intended to measure. There are two types of validity, namely, internal validity, and external validity. According to Gray (2014: 279-282) and Woodwell (2014: 95), internal validity concerns the quality of research itself. It may be concluded; therefore, that internal validity requires that the research study has one, non-outcome, and the questionnaires will be pre-tested among educators and then include the suggested corrections in the final questionnaire.

Woodwell (2014: 95) and Gravetter and Forzano (2012: 168-170) point out that external validity implies the extent to which the outcome of the study can be generalised beyond the study itself. Gray (2014: 280), however, maintains that generalisation should not be the aim of the study, as no two different environments will respond in the same way to the same factor. Furthermore, Gray (2014: 280) suggests that to bring external validity into perspective, the researcher can provide proof of fit between the sample and the population. As a result, the researcher will select a sample of educators and principals that represents the population of the schools in Lejweleputswa District.

According to Mustafa (2010: 153), the determination of sample size can be simple or compounded by variables such as the fundamental features of the population, the aims of the research, data analysis, validity, time, costs, and non-response possibility. In contrast, Cameron, and Price (2009: 226-227) argue that non-response possibility, or response rate, is the determinate of sample size. To ensure that validity of the research is addressed, the researcher used a large sample of schools.

1.11 ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

According to Williams, Sweeney, and Anderson (2012: 98-99), the analysis of primary data can be accomplished through descriptive statistics and/or inferential statistics. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) used to analyse data is a system which is used to report on statistical analysis. The researcher used the descriptive statistics information to analyse quantitative data, the percentages and pie charts were

used for demographic information and for the questionnaire information the percentages and bar charts were used.

The researcher used descriptive statistics to describe the findings about the absenteeism of the educators in Lejweleputswa District. The researcher organised data into frequency distribution, graphical presentation, and pie charts (Navidi & Monk, 2013: 14). Furthermore, mean as a measure of central tendency was employed. The researcher measured variability (standard deviation) of the sample to determine the degree to which the respondents agree or disagree in relation to the mean of the sample (Black, 2014: 55). All the interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed, and coded for themes formulation and analysis.

1.12 RESEARCH ETHICS

The procedure followed in this research was compliant with the research ethics policy and guidelines of the University of South Africa. On the 14 June 2018, ethics clearance was granted by the Research Ethics Review Committee of the Department of Public Administration and Management. The participants were invited to participate in this study because of their extensive experience in teaching fraternity. Participation in this research was anonymous, in that participants were not requested to disclose their identity, which means their identity and privacy were respected.

The following ethics principles were discussed with participants in this study.

1.12.1 Protection from harm

The participants were informed that they will not be exposed to any physical or psychological harm. In addition, participants were informed that the risk of participating in this study would not be greater than the risk of daily living.

1.12.2 Right to privacy

Participants were informed that their right to privacy would be protected and observed and under no circumstance would their oral and written responses be shared with other

participants. In terms of confidentiality, collected data will be locked in a safe for protection of the respondents' information.

1.12.3 Approval sought

The researcher obtained permission from the Free State Provincial Department of Education to carry out the research with principals and educators in Lejweleputswa District schools.

1.12.4 Plagiarism

The researcher is aware of plagiarism policies and will not make use of another researchers' work and submit it as his own. Sources used were duly acknowledged in line with simple Harvard referencing method.

1.13 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

For this study, the following words and terms will be defined. Deviations from these definitions which appear in cited works will be noted as they appear in the narrative.

1.13.1 Absenteeism

Gravetter and Farzano (2012: 168-170) define absenteeism as "any failure to report for work as scheduled, regardless of what the reason is". According to Mampane (2013:17) absenteeism is generally used to refer to unscheduled employee absences from the workplace. According to Müller (2013: 6), absenteeism is "when an employee is away from work for short periods, unauthorised absences of the employee from work and includes arriving late, leaving early and taking extended tea breaks or lunch breaks".

1.13.2 Abscondment

According to Grogan (2017:258), abscondment is deemed to have occurred when an employee is absent from work for a considerable period and the employer infers that the employee does not intend to return to work. *Sections 14 of Employment of Educators Act, 76 of 1998* provides that abscondment is said to have occurred when an educator is

absent from work for a period exceeding 14 consecutive days without the permission of the employer (Republic of South Africa,1998:319).

1.13.3 Educator/teacher

An educator can be described as “any person who teaches, educates or trains other persons or who provides professional services, including professional therapy and education psychological service, at any public school, departmental office or adult basic education centre and who is appointed in any educator establishment” (Republic of South Africa 1998: 336).

According to South Africa, National Education Policy Act 27 (1996), “an 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, but does not include any officer or employee as defined in section 1 of the Public Service Act, 1194 (Proclamation 103 of 1994).

1.13.4 Employer

Bendix (2019:139) defines an employer as any person, except an independent contractor, working for another person or the state and who receives remuneration, or any manner assists in carrying out or conducting the business of an employer. Procedure on Incapacity Leave and Ill-health Retirement (PILIR) (2009 :4) states that an employer is the Head of Department or a designated office which will be responsible for the handling and investigation of incapacity leave applications and ill-health retirement applications.

1.13.5 Employee

Labour Relations Act 66 (1995: 265) defines an employee as any person, excluding an independent contractor, who works for another person or for the State. An employee is a person who receives, or is entitled to receive, any remuneration for carrying out or conducting the business of an employer. Lastly, “employed” and “employment” have meanings related to that of an employee. Public Service Act 103 (1994) postulates that an employee is any person employed in terms of the Public Service Act of 1994,

irrespective of position or rank he or she occupies. Basic Conditions of Employment Act 75 (1997:9) and the South African Skill Development Act 97 (1998:270) define an employee as any person, excluding an independent contractor, who works for another person or for the State and who receives, or is entitled to receive, any remuneration.

1.14 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This research adds to the broad framework of current studies on educator absenteeism by exploring the views, perceptions, and experiences of educators in connection with educator absenteeism. Furthermore, the results and findings of this study will be presented in the form of a synopsis of subjects' responses to questions answered during their individual interviews. The result of this research may also improve the DBE's knowledge of educator's experiences and perceptions of educator absenteeism.

1.15 RESEARCH SCOPE

The research was conducted in Lejweleputswa District schools, Free State Province.

1.16 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The results of this study may not be generalised to other districts of the DBE owing to the uniqueness of these district. The researcher is permanently employed, and this could result in time constraints.

1.17 SEQUENCE OF CHAPTERS

CHAPTER 1

Chapter one introduces the entire study and provides background and the rationale of the study, the problem statement, research questions, research objectives, research design and methodology, conceptualization, significance of the study, research scope, and limitation of the study and sequence of chapters.

CHAPTER 2

This chapter reviews literature on educator's absenteeism in South Africa. In addition, this chapter provides a theoretical framework for absenteeism of educators.

CHAPTER 3

This chapter describes research methodology employed in this study. This chapter presents data collections methods and analysis for exploring causes of educator absenteeism in the Lejweleputswa District schools.

CHAPTER 4

This chapter will provide analysis and interpretation of data to establish factors that led to high teacher absenteeism in Lejweleputswa District schools.

CHAPTER 5

In this chapter, conclusions were drawn based on the findings of the study; recommendations are made, and proposal are made for future research arising from this study.

1.18 SUMMARY

This chapter has set the tone for the entire study. This chapter has provided rationale for undertaking this study. This include objectives and rationale were provided, accompanied by preliminary takes on aspects of the research methodology utilised in this research. Lastly, key terms were provided to provide a common understanding, and this is followed by a brief exposition of the reset of the chapters. The next chapter reviews literature on educator absenteeism.

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK ON ABSENTEEISM

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Chapter one gave the orientation of the research. It emphasised the main purpose of the study and raised vital questions guiding this study. In addition, the motivation and significance of the study were examined. This chapter reviews literature on educators' absenteeism in public schools. The chapter proceeds with contextualisation of absenteeism. This is followed by classification of absenteeism, conceptual framework on absenteeism, absenteeism in developing and developed countries. Legislative and policy framework on absenteeism is also interrogated. The reasons for educators' absenteeism are interrogated, causes of absenteeism, costs brought by absenteeism, impact of educator's absenteeism and strategies to reduce educator absenteeism are discussed in this chapter. What is further discussed is measures to control workplace absenteeism. This chapter concludes with a discussion on employee-employer relationships dimensions. The next section provides contextualisation of absenteeism.

2.2 CONTEXTUALISATION OF ABSENTEEISM

Various definitions of the concept of absenteeism have been offered by various authors. These definitions are explored in the next section.

2.2.1 Absenteeism

According to Vijayalatha and Brindha (2014:32), absenteeism is defined as the failure of the worker to report for work as scheduled. For Rathod and Reddy (2012:80), absenteeism is an employee's non-availability for work when work is available for that employee. Senel and Senel (2012:44) describe absenteeism as an unscheduled absence from work, regardless of the reason, including long- and short-term disability. Grogan (2017:255) defines absenteeism as absence from the workstation and the workplace for short periods including late comings. Harrison and Newman (2013:265) agrees that absenteeism is a function of time at work, for instance, absenteeism is a tendency to miss a scheduled work at specified time intervals.

To contextualise educator absenteeism, an analysis of the construct seems appropriate. Sikorki (2001) defines absenteeism as the employee not being present or attending his or her normal workplace during scheduled working hours as required by the contract of employment. This definition encompasses two other scenarios:

- (a) The employee being absent from the workplace for some of working hours.
- (b) Employee being at his or her workplace as scheduled working hours but not fully engaged in work-related activities for which he is employed for.
- (c) The case where an educator is at workplace but is engaged in other activities that are not related to his work. For example, attending union meetings personal matters.

Msosa (2020:3) reports that educator absenteeism is a multi-dimensional issue. The author contends that these dimensions include absence from school and absence from the classroom. Msosa (2020:3) describes absence from school as the absence of educator from school on a specific day for different reasons, while absenteeism from classroom refers to failure of the educator to report for a scheduled classroom despite reporting for work on a particular day.

It can be deduced from the above discussion that educator absenteeism is the absence of educator from work. However, absence should not only be limited to absence from work but absence from the classroom should also be considered as absenteeism because when the teacher is not in class, he or she is not performing their duties as per contract agreement with their employers. The next section focuses on classification of absenteeism.

2.3 CLASSIFICATION OF ABSENTEEISM

According to Msosa (2020:2), the notion of absenteeism can be classified into two categories. This classification is based on circumstances which cause the educator to be absent. In addition, the author states that the employee may have or not control of the circumstances. These are explored in the next section.

2.3.1 Voluntary absence

Sezgin, Kosar, Kilinc and Ogdem (2014:613) state that voluntary absence refers to factors over which an individual has control. Carpenter and Wyman (2008: 2) asserts that often employees use this type of absence to attend to personal issues such as taking time off for vacation and look for employment or business opportunities. Sezgin et al. (2014:613) argue that this type of absence has been a concern in many organisations for decades.

2.3.2 Involuntary absence

In contrast, involuntary absence is described as factors beyond the control of an individual for example absenteeism owing to health-related excuses, death in the family, family responsibilities, taking a child to the doctor and other urgent private matters. Sullivan (2012:69) agrees that involuntary absenteeism is largely outside the control of the employee. involuntary absences are distinguished by its long periods of absence from school, depending on the nature and circumstances causing the educator to be absent (Sezgin et al., 2014 :613).

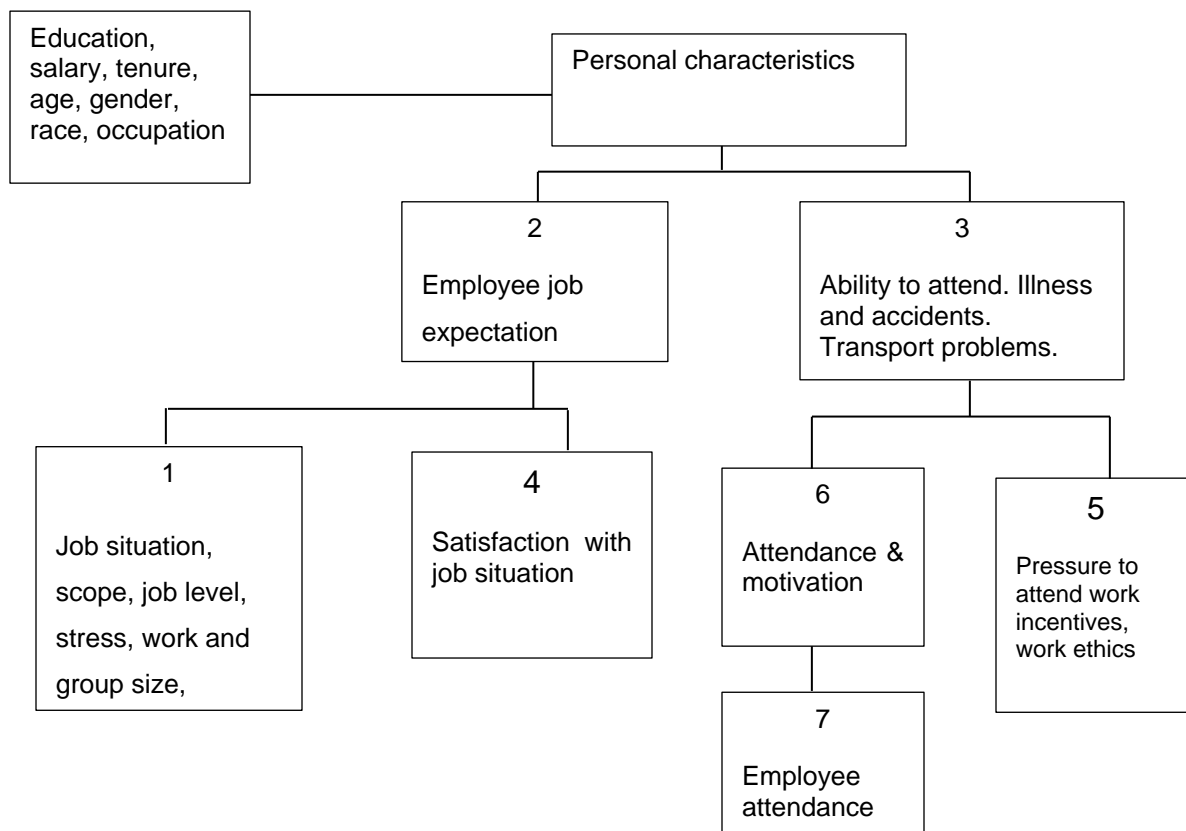
The author contends that the lines between voluntary and involuntary absence are not always clear and could be easily crossed in practice. The decision whether and when ill health justifies absence from work (involuntary absence) is in fact in the employee's hands and is not always clear cut. Therefore, the same health condition (e.g., slight cold) may keep some people at home, while others will show symptoms and still come to work.

From the foregoing classification of absenteeism, it can be deduced that the difference between the two categories or types of absence lies with the fact that the employee has control or no control over the absence. However, lines between voluntary and involuntary could be blurry at times. The next section focuses on various dimension of employee and employer relations.

2.4 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK ON ABSENTEEISM

Ndhlovu (2012:19) combine two theories to create a theoretical framework which asserts that the attendance of an employee is based on two factors: the ability to attend and the motivation to attend. The focus of the theoretical framework is on ethics, demographics, and the work environment. Other types of absenteeism may be difficult to prove, especially in a situation where the employee operates from two or more different stations or when the employee operates from a virtual office. The duty to render service is also disturbed or hindered in situations where the employee is physically present but mentally absent, as would be the case of sleeping on duty. Workplace absenteeism is caused by many factors, one of which is changes in the work environment that overburden the coping mechanism.

FIGURE 2.1: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK MODEL



(Adapted from Ndhlovu 2012: 20)

The conceptual model uses individual predictors of absenteeism such as age, salary level, tenure, race, gender, occupation, educational level, job satisfaction and organisational commitment, and pressure to attend work activities. Organisational commitment is described as having loyalty to the organisation, identifying with its core values and influences whether an employee feels it is appropriate to take unauthorised, unscheduled absences. The group level absenteeism is not viewed as a predictor of individual absenteeism (Ndlovu 2012:21).

2.4.1 How the conceptual framework was used as a research tool

The conceptual framework in this instance indicated that employee attendance is premised on two factors namely, the ability to attend his/her duties and motivation to attend his/her duties. The framework paid attention to individual work ethics, demographics and the work environment. The conceptual framework model focused on the employee's personal characteristics which also produced employee's level of education, level of his/her salary, tenure, age gender, race, and type of occupation of the employee. The model also focused on the employee's ability to attend his/her duties, illness, accidents, and transport problems which may disturb the employee's ability to attend the duties (Ndlovu 2012:20).

The model was used in this research as a guideline during the process of data collection and analysis process. It assisted the researcher to understand reasons for certain behavioural attributes of the educators.

2.5 ABSENTEEISM IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

As indicated in chapter 1 of this study there is a difference in the absenteeism rates in the developing countries as compared to developed countries, especially when one refers to educator absenteeism in the global context. Developing countries are characterised by low level of affluent citizens, high level of unemployment and low education rates. In contrast, the developed countries are advanced in technology, advantageous and they have stable governments (Msosa 2020:2).

Absence rates in developed countries are very low compared to developing countries. For example, in developed countries such as the USA absence rates are as low as 5% per educator per year while absence rates in developing countries ranges above 10% to as high as 40%. For example, on a day 11% of educators are absent in Peru and in Bangladesh 16% of educator are absent from school in a year.

According to Mothibeli (2017:36), Uganda is one of countries with the highest educator absenteeism globally with absenteeism rate of between 20 to 30% that varies depending on districts. The major causes of absenteeism in Uganda are as follows; administrative lapses, poor leadership in schools, poor monitoring and lack of teacher mentoring and supervision. In addition, lack of professional support, low staff motivation and inadequate teaching materials rank high in the list of challenges faced by teachers in Uganda. According to Mothibeli (2017:35), a study conducted in Ghana found that 35% teachers arrive late and leave early particularly on Thursdays and Fridays. To make matters worse, teachers are absent from school on Mondays and Fridays leaving on Tuesday and Wednesday as the only days when learners receive full lessons. The report noted that absenteeism is caused by lack of supervision and management of instructional time on the part of school management.

Educator absence in developing countries is often cited as a reason for poor performance. There is also a lack of good administration data which might be necessary to assess the level of absenteeism. In the developing countries teacher absenteeism is common problem. According to Guerrero, Leon, Zapata ,Sigumari & Cute (2012:4,5) The presence of educators in the classroom is central in promoting teaching and learning and other outcomes. Although , different types of interventions have been implemented in the past to resolve teacher absenteeism in developing countries, no significant improvements were made . This will hopefully assist to understand the problem of absenteeism in more depth and solutions could be found. The next section focuses on educator absenteeism in South Africa.

2.6 ABSENTEEISM IN SOUTH AFRICA: A LOCAL PERSPECTIVE

In South Africa, like in other developing countries, absenteeism has been a subject of public debate and research in various organisations for decades. This is owing to its negative effect on the functioning of organisations. According to Mothibeli (2017:35), at the root of absenteeism is the deterioration of the culture of teaching and learning. The author argues that the destruction of the culture of teaching and learning during the 1980s contributed to the culture of teaching and learning in public schools. Furthermore, ill-discipline among teachers has been worsened by lack of clarity on policy and code of conduct. For example, in majority of leave taken, teachers are absent for one or two days (discretionary leave) and are not required to submit medical certificate. This could be one of the reasons why discretionary leave days is abused by educators.

Naidoo (2017:37) argues managers and supervisors do not have the required skills to effectively manage absenteeism and suggests that managers needed to focus on policies, rules and programmes to effectively deal with absenteeism. In addition, poor management styles and poor working conditions were some of the reasons for people being absent. According to Naidoo (2017:38) a well-managed school have a culture that is underpinned by strong sense of accountability; good management: culture of learning; adequate teacher content knowledge; coverage on the curriculum; adequate learner performance and low repetition of dropout rate. Naidoo (2017:38) explains that it is critical for school managers to realise the importance of social relations, especially when it pertains to professional exchanges between the staff regarding the curriculum and instruction culture.

According to the Schools Monitoring Survey report (2019: online), educator absenteeism has increased nationally from 8 to 10% in 2018. Research conducted by the Human Science Research Council (2014:87) has further highlighted the problem of educators' absenteeism. This research shows that 40 000 (10%) teachers out of estimated 400 000 are absent from school daily. The study noted with concern that educators tend to abuse sick leave by being absent from work for 1 or 2 days without producing a medical certificate. A recent study by Msosa (2020:2) has revealed that educator absenteeism is

a major contributing factor to learner underperformance and appears to be more prevalent on Mondays and Fridays.

The authors argue that in many cases school principals and district official are not adequately conversant with legislative provisions and departmental rules and regulations. Principals are required to provide leadership and management in all spheres of school life to establish and support those situations where quality teaching and learning can take place (DBE, 2014:47).

According to Spaul (2013: 216), the solution to absenteeism in schools lies with inculcating a culture of teaching and learning that is driven by strong accountability; good management; culture of learning; discipline and order; adequate learning; teaching and support material; adequate teacher content knowledge: coverage of the curriculum: adequate learner performance and low repetition of dropout rate. The next section will focus on legislative and policy framework regulating working relations and employment of educators.

2.7 LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

Various legislative measures and policies are in place to regulate working conditions and employment of educators in South Africa. For the purposes of this research, attention will be paid to the following Acts:

- The Employment of Educators Act of 1998 governs the employment of educators. This legislation also regulates the leave measures for institution-based educators.
- Section 3(2)(a) of the Employment of Educators Act of 1998 stipulates that educators must be at school for seven hours and it is only for a special reason and with the prior permission from the principal that an educator may leave the school premises. The core responsibility of an educator is to engage in class teaching and, therefore, any absence from school means that the educator concerned is not fulfilling this core duty, as it is enshrined in the Employment of Educators Act (EEA) Section 4(5)(e). This Act confers on the DBE the right to dictate to an educator to

be in class during a specified time, performing their duties. Accordingly, any unauthorised educator absence from work during the specified time constitutes educator absenteeism.

- Section 18(i)(j) of the Employment of Educators Act no 76 of 1998 provides that an educator is committing a misconduct when he/she absents him/herself from work for 14 consecutive days, without a valid reason and without permission. The Act makes provision for 36 paid sick leave, within 36 months leave cycle. The Act provides that educators in the public schools are required by law to be at either the school or the workplace for a minimum of seven working hours, while their absence from either the school or the workplace constitutes a breach of their employment contract.
- Basic Conditions of Employment Act of no.75 of 1997 also makes provision for sick leave and enforces the submission of a valid medical certificate in cases in which an educator is absent for more than two consecutive days. The Employment of Educators Act, through the Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM), also makes a provision for an eight-week cycle in which educators who have exhausted the 36 days sick leave cycle require a medical certificate from a doctor for any absence. In this case, an educator is granted the right of temporary incapacity.

Section 29(i) of the South African Constitution, 1996 postulates that “everyone has a right to basic education” and, therefore, there is an obligation on the part of the educator to be in the classroom and teaching daily.

2.7.1 Types of leave

In terms of employment conditions, educators in South Africa are entitled to take leave according to various categories. Certain types of leave that may be taken by educators are contained in the Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM), G, N, 222 of 1999, published in Government Gazette No.19767 dated 18 February 1999 and amended in 2003 as published in Government Gazette No.24948 dated 21 February 2003.

The types of leave of absence to which educators are entitled are summarised in table below.

Table 2.1: Leave summary

NO	LEAVE TYPE	EXPLANATION
1	Special leave for quarantine purposes	The type of leave to an educator who has been exposed to a medical condition or a situation that warrants his/her being placed under quarantine.
2	Normal sick leave	Educators are entitled to 36 working days sick leave with full pay over a three year-cycle. Unused sick leave shall lapse at the expiry of the three-year cycle.
3	Maternity leave	An educator is entitled to four consecutive months maternity leave on full pay to commence at least 14 days prior to the expected date of birth but not later than the actual date of birth in the case of a premature confinement.
4	Temporary incapacity leave	An educator who has exhausted his/her sick leave credit in a three-year cycle and who, according to the relevant medical practitioner, needs to be absent because of an incapacity that is not permanent may be granted additional sick leave with full pay.
5	Permanent incapacity	Educators whose degree of incapacity has been certified by a competent medical practitioner as permanent shall, with the approval of the head of department, be granted a maximum of 30 working days paid sick leave, or such additional

NO	LEAVE TYPE	EXPLANATION
		number of days required by the employer to finalise the processes of incapacity.
6	Leave for occupational injury and diseases	Educators who, because of their work, suffer occupational injuries or contract occupational diseases, shall be granted occupational and diseases leave for the duration of the period they could not work.
7	Leave for adoption	An educator who adopts a child younger than two years, qualifies for adoption leave to a maximum of 45 working days.
8	Family responsibilities leave and special leave for urgent private affairs	An educator shall be granted three working days per annual leave cycle if the educator's partner gives birth, spouse of life partner is sick, immediate family member dies or child, spouse or life partner dies.
9	Special leave for professional and personal development and for religious observances.	Special leave with full pay maybe granted to an institution-based educator for professional development and personal development and also for religious observances.
10	Special leave for study purposes	Special leave may be granted for an approved course of study and or a period approved by the employer either with full or partial pay or without pay.
11	Special leave for examination purposes	Special leave maybe granted for examination purposes with full pay plus one additional day which may be taken on the working day immediately prior to the day of examination.
12	Special leave in extraordinary circumstances	Special leave for a period and on conditions approved by the head of a department for the

NO	LEAVE TYPE	EXPLANATION
		purpose of participating in sports as well as cultural, local council and other relevant activities.
13	Unpaid leave	When an educator has used all his/her accrued annual leave, the head of department may grant unpaid leave up to a maximum of 184 consecutive days.
14	Unpaid leave for continuity of services	Unpaid leave for a maximum of 129 consecutive days may be granted to an institution-based educator who was previously employed as an institution-based educator by the same or another education department for the purpose of retaining the continuity of the educator's service.
15	Annual leave	Educators are on annual leave during school holidays
16	Prenatal leave	From 1 January 2013, an eligible employee will be entitled to eight working days prenatal leave, per pregnancy to enable the employee to attend medical examinations.

Source: Free State Department of Education Educator leave summary,2018.

The next section will focus on reasons for educator's absenteeism.

2.8 REASONS FOR EDUCATORS' ABSENTEEISM

Various factors have been attributed to educator absenteeism and these vary from country-to-country (Msosa 2020:3). Common factors that lead to teacher absenteeism are discussed next.

2.8.1 Ill-health and personal responsibilities

HIV/AIDS is still a cause for teacher absenteeism in South Africa, and its pandemic also led to sick leave which shows prevalence among the South African workforce and ranges from 7,9% to 25% (Basson & Roets 2013: 1164). Authors state that teachers living with HIV are continuously absent from work. This educator stress results directly in a loss of time while also adversely affecting the quality of teaching and learning in the classroom. Badubi (2017: 1164) also mentioned numerous social factors that contribute to absenteeism, stress, burnout, fatigue, alcohol or drug related issues, illness of spouse and personal illness. Owing to this factor, school principals continuously struggle with staff shortage, as well as the complex process of educator substitution.

2.8.2 Situational and personal factors

According to Msosa (2020:3), educator absenteeism is caused by what he refers to as situational and personal factors. The author describes situational factors as tasks that are routine and repetitive in nature. The routine and repetitive nature of the task may lead to stress and resentment by the employee because it is no longer challenging and exciting like before. On the other hand, personal factors are employee-related factors such as gender, level of education and age of the educator. Msosa (2020:4) contends that these personal factors may affect the behaviour of the employee towards the job. According to Msosa (2020:3), educator absenteeism can be better explained by Steers and Rhodes model of attendance. This model suggests that employee satisfaction towards the job is caused by organisational and personal factors. This means the working environment i.e., general working conditions and the job itself determines job satisfaction. Other important factors that relate to the job that have a bearing on employee satisfaction include opportunities for personal development and growth and relations between colleagues. According to Badubi (2017:1164), authoritarian style of leadership by principal or headmasters can trigger resentment towards the job and ultimately absenteeism. In addition, student attitudes toward the educator, travelling distances between home of the teacher and school and unconducive learning environment can contribute towards educator absenteeism.

2.8.3 Training and workshops

In most cases these training workshops take place during learner contact time while the training programme may, in some instances, provide inadequate or irrelevant information which may create anxiety and stress among educators which may also lead them to absence from school. In such cases, the headmasters do not report these absences

2.8.4 Governmental duties

Chaudhury in Mampane (2013:31) reports that, in South Asia other reasons for high absenteeism are caused by governmental duties which are not part and parcel of the school, for example, voter registration and public health campaigns in such cases, the headmasters do not report these absences.

2.8.5 Societal and cultural values

Societal values may explain work behaviour which either promotes or reduces absenteeism at schools. Rosenblatt, Shapira-Lishchinsky and Shirom in Mampane (2013:31-32) study teacher absence in Israel. The study investigated teacher absenteeism from an organisational normative and organisational ethics perspective. The results of the study showed that in a highly ethical and caring school climate, educator absenteeism is lower. In addition, authors argue that absenteeism is not only affected by individual differences but the social context, including attendance norms, collegial relations, and principals' supportive leadership styles. Studies conducted by Robbins (2009:63) found that organisational culture is directly linked to absenteeism. For example, an organisational culture that supports good employee relations, transparency and reward for excellent employee effort is unlikely to have challenges of absenteeism.

It is clear from the foregoing that multiple underlying of factors lead to educator absenteeism. In addition, absenteeism is caused by both internal and external factors. The next section will focus on the costs brought by absenteeism.

2.9 COSTS BROUGHT BY ABSENTEEISM

Absenteeism is costly and disruptive to organisations in general and result in both direct and indirect costs. According to Singh, Chetty and Karodia (2016:113) the organisation's direct costs include lost days, sick pay, production loss and reduced service provision. The authors explains that the indirect cost includes disruptions, management's time to revise work schedules, administrative costs to monitor and administer leave policy, loss of expertise and experience, training costs for replacement workers, low morale of workers, reduced productivity, higher turnover, and loss of income. According to Senel and Senel (2012:1148), the cost of absenteeism not only damages the workflow and human resource planning in the workplace, but also reduces production efficiency.

Birmingham (2013:8) indicates that costs incurred by organisations include direct and indirect costs. Payment of salary, overtime pay, and replacement of absent staff all fall under direct costs. Indirect costs include a decrease in productivity, ineffective administration, a decreased quality of service and any social security contributions an employer is making for the sake of an absent educator. "Absenteeism, for whatever reason, is a costly and disruptive problem facing managers. It is costly as it reduces output and bring disruption because it requires schedules and programmes to be modified". This means that any form of absenteeism should be identified as early as possible and be managed appropriately all the time. When an organisation loses funds owing to excessive absenteeism, it should be a concern for management because cost implications affect the entire organisation's plans and systems, which may also lead to the organisation exceeding its budget owing to costs incurred by bringing in temporary employees, part time employees, poor service delivery or low productivity, as well as poor quality of service provision.

Furthermore, the costs of health care are the most serious challenge for the bottom line. Moreover, any organisation can lower its health care costs by at least 15% if it has a behavioural management strategy, which implies that absenteeism can be reduced by 15%.

The above costs are frequently under-estimated. Absence from work, less experienced replacements, and the additional expenses of hiring substitute labour have a severe impact on the organisation in terms of lost productivity, quality of service provided and possible loss of customers.

From the foregoing, the costs of absenteeism in many organisations are either direct or indirect. These costs have a serious impact on management, workers, time, work schedules, administration low staff morale and staff high turnover. The impact is also visible on quality of service. The next section will focus on the impact of educators' absenteeism.

2.10 THE IMPACT OF EDUCATOR ABSENTEEISM

Ameeq, Hassan, Jabeen & Fatima (2018: online) claim that absenteeism on a regular basis negatively affects learner performance. Over and above that it has a negative effect on other educators as they are shuffled around to fill in the positions of those who are absent and has a snowballing effect on learner absenteeism as well. Authors further state that organisations suffer the detrimental effects and consequences of employee absenteeism. Management spent valuable time to realign duties to respond to absences. When employees who are in management or in highly specialised job assignments report sick, the work allocated to them remains undone and will wait for them when they return. The responsibility and accountability entrusted to these employees may influence less use of sick leave.

Bipath, Venketsamy and Naidoo (2019: Online) report that teacher absenteeism has adverse effect on the entire school's system from poor learner attendance, tarnishing school reputation to broader economic losses. The authors argue that teacher absenteeism is linked to low learner attendance, implying that there are mutually reinforcing implications for teacher absenteeism and overall learner performance.

Clotfelter, Ladd and Vigdor (2009:28) reveal that when educators are regularly absent from the classroom, the opportunities for students to learn are curtailed. The disappointment in this instance is that educators who are absent from their classrooms are normally replaced by less experienced or less qualified educators and this, in turn, affects the overall performance of the school. Eventually, students might not do well at the end of the year.

The disappointment in this instance is that educators who are absent from their classrooms are normally replaced by less experienced or less qualified educators and this, in turn, affects the overall performance of the school. Eventually, students might not do well at the end of the year.

Cook (2013:42) asserts that ensuring a high level of productivity is an objective to all organisations. He also refers to unplanned employee absence as a bad tendency since it has a serious impact on organisation's productivity. In addition, Cook (2013:42) refers to the impact experienced by organisations since they have to request their employees to work overtime in order to complete the workload which was supposed to have been done by employees who are absent, and this costs organisations exorbitant amount of money because overtime rates are higher than normal rates. Naidoo (2019: Online) agrees that teacher absenteeism drain school resources and increases administrative time spent on finding suitable replacements.

Employee absenteeism has various negative and positive consequences for the employee, the organisation, the operations of the sector, and the provision of goods and services to the society, and this seems to be a global problem. Furthermore, absenteeism has an immediate observable impact on an organisation's service delivery and put pressure on employees at work environment. For Moshokwa (2016:35) for any organisation to understand the impact of absenteeism, it is important that absenteeism rates and cost of absenteeism should be measured correctly.

Chartered Institution of Personnel Development (CIPD) (2009:9) found that in 2009 it was estimated that the average United Kingdom (UK) worker was absent for seven days per year. It was also reported that on average 10% of the Swedish workforce are on sick leave on any given workday compared to 4.5% of the South African workforce (Robbins et al., 2009:18). More than 30 million working days were lost in 2008 in the UK owing to work-related sicknesses and 6 million were attributed to workplace injuries (Mellor et al., 2008:1).

From the above discussion, it can be deduced that employees who are present at work are put under enormous pressure owing to absence of other employees. Management should refrain from putting pressure on employees who are always present at the workstation owing to the absence of other employees because this action is not assisting at all instead and it does not bring fairness to the loyal employees instead it will demoralise them and contribute further to the poor productivity performance to the organisation. The next section will focus on the strategies to reduce absenteeism.

2.11 STRATEGIES TO REDUCE EDUCATOR ABSENTEEISM

Various strategies that are used in schools to reduce excused or voluntary educator absenteeism are discussed next.

2.11.1 Understand the causes of educator absenteeism

Ivatts as cited in Komoni (2015:3) argues that there are several causes of teacher absenteeism, and they vary from one country to another and from one region to another. These causes include teacher demography, gender, seniority, type of employment, type of school, job satisfaction, professional commitment, school and institutional management, weak monitoring systems, incentives and sanctions and educational administration.

A district could manage and determine the extent of educator absenteeism by considering the following:

- no direction from the board and superintendent of the school.
- incomplete and/or conflicting board policy;
- school administration which does not recognise the problem.
- job satisfaction.
- records which are not complete.
- no attendance.
- no recognition to good attendance; and
- outdated leadership.

2.11.2 Policy development and implementation

The implemented attendance policy may bring down educator absenteeism. As a result, dealing effectively with educator absences is necessary to use disciplinary sanctions which include a formal warning, suspension of salary, demotion, transfer to another school and temporary dismissal.

2.11.3 Provision of incentives for attendance

These may be like introducing overtime, educating payments and substitute educating payments.

2.11.4 Increase at educator morale

This would be an important factor to increase the educator attendance as it would make them feel that they were.

- fairly and equally treated,
- valued and appreciated for their work,
- recognized for their work,
- paid a fair wage for their work,
- doing work that is important.

2.11.5 Official school business

In addition, the whole process must be organised by the provincial directorate in advance to give principals more time to arrange for the substitutes. It is also recommended that the educating time with learners must not be compromised. This may be achieved provided good planning, correct allocation of responsibilities is done depending on the availability of educators. It is clear from the above discussion that various strategies or interventions can be used to reduce educator absenteeism. Staff morale, close monitoring of absenteeism, provision of incentives and the implementation of policy on absenteeism feature prominently among possible interventions. The next section will focus on measures to control workplace absenteeism.

2.12 MEASURES TO CONTROL WORKPLACE ABSENTEEISM

Vijayalatha and Brindha (2014:33) proposed the following are measures to control workplace absenteeism:

- An adoption of a well-defined recruitment procedure should be introduced.
- Between supervisors and workers there should be a warm and friendly relationship. Reasonable wages, allowances and job security for workers should be provided.
- Social measures and motivation of workers should be implemented.
- Proper communication, speedy handling of grievances and efficient management of leaves should be implemented.
- Prevention of accidents, promotion of safety, provision of hygienic working conditions together with worker's education to be developed.

2.13 EMPLOYEE-EMPLOYER RELATIONSHIP DIMENSIONS

The employment relationship is about balancing the simultaneous convergent and divergent interests of the employer and the employee in a regulated manner with the aim of getting the work of the institution done. According to Ndlovu (2012:17), an employment relationship exists when the individual is employed in exchange for some remuneration.

It is through this employment relationship that reciprocal rights and obligations are created between the employer and the employee.

The employees, through this relationship, are enabled to gain access to the rights and benefits associated with their employment. The Labour Relations Act, no. 66 of 1995 (RSA 1995) regulates the management of the conflict in the employment relationship through dispute resolution structures such as the Commission for Conciliation, Mediation and Arbitration (CCMA), Labour Court and Labour Appeal Court when internal processes fail to resolve the conflict. The employment relationship can be traditional or typical and terms and conditions of service of employment are regulated by collective agreements. This is a tacit acknowledgment of the existence of a typical employment relation.

2.13.1 Employment relationship as a multi-dimensional phenomenon

Industrial relations and human resource management are bound together by the employment relationship through labour, employer, and industrial relation triangle. It is important to note that the employment relationship is characterised by various dimensions as is the case in a broader society and these dimensions influence the nature of the relationship.

2.13.2 Economic dimension

The economic dimension arises through the provision of labour by the employee in the form of skill, knowledge, energy, abilities, and productive time to the employer in exchange for remuneration. Ndlovu (2012:17) argues that a reduction in working hours increases the hourly cost of production in a unit unless there is a commensurate increase in productivity. The contract of employment includes insured benefits such as incapacity, ill health, and early retirement. According to Ndlovu (2012:17), employee benefits are the total compensation package, other than the pay for the time worked, offered to employees either partially or completely funded by the employer contributions. In 2006 about R19 billion was lost owing to absenteeism from sick leave (LexisNexis 2006:670). Employee benefits are intended to attract, retain, and motivate employees. Some of the benefits offered to employees are mandated by law such as the minimum leave provision as

contained in the Basic Conditions of Employment Act of 1997 and Resolution 7/2000 of the Public Service Co-ordinating Bargaining Council (PSCBC 7/2000; RSA 1997).

2.13.3 Legal dimension

Section 3 of Schedule 8 of the Labour Relations Act 66 of 1995 provides that while employees should be protected from arbitrary action, employers are entitled to satisfactory conduct and work performance from their employees. The legal framework provides for the regulatory requirements for human resource management in the working environment. The contract is regulated by specific laws and formal rules with all the inherent rights and responsibilities to the employer and the employee. In terms of the employment contract, one of the responsibilities of the employee is to render service to the employer at specified agreed upon time except where the employer has authorised the absence of the employee from the workplace. Employees have a fundamental duty to render services, and the employer has the right to expect the employees to tender such services (Ndlovu 2012:18).

A basic element of the duty to render service is that the employee must be at the workplace at the specified agreed upon times unless there is adequate reason to be absent. The contract is subject to automatic changes whenever a new collective agreement is in place. The contract and its inherent benefits are breached by elective absence behaviour of the employee. The legal dimension has an impact on the individual dimension (Ndlovu 2012:18).

2.13.4 Individual dimension

The employee enters a working contract with the employer on an individual basis. The contents of the contract are subject to the Basic Conditions of the Employment Act 75 of 1997. The terms and conditions of employment in the public service are subject to collective bargaining and collective agreements which influence the employment contract in the Public Service Co-ordinating Bargaining Council (PSCBC 7/2000; RSA 1997). The contract of employment is entered into between the employer and the employee under the supervision of the employer and for remuneration purposes.

2.13.5 Collective dimension

The collective dimension of employment relationship refers to the organised group aspect of the employment relationship which is between labour as a group and employers and their representative public sector institutions. The collective dimension aspect of employment relationship pertains to legislation relating to bargaining, dispute resolution and industrial action (Ndlovu 2012:19).

2.13.6 Psychological dimension

The psycho-social dimension of the employment relationship represents the unexpressed needs and expectations of the employer and employees. It refers to behaviour in the public sector institutions within the context of the collective dimension

Ontario (2013:1) clarifies that to determine whether an employer-employee relationship exists, many factors must be considered including the terms and conditions of the worker's employment and common law principles. A relationship exists when the worker agrees to work for a specific employer, on a full-time basis, for a specified or indeterminate period, in return for wages or a salary. The employer has the right to decide where, when and how the work is to be completed.

In an employer-employee relationship the employer controls, directly or indirectly, the way the work is to be done and the work method to be used. The employer assigns specific tasks that define the framework within which the work is to be done. The employer also exercises control in that he or she has the right to hire or fire. In this way, the employer clearly exercises control over the worker, who is then considered to be an employee as per the contract between the parties (Ontario 2013:2).

To determine the existence of a legal relationship between the parties, Ontario (2013:2) examined the terms and conditions of the worker's employment as they relate to the following four factors: control, ownership of tools, chance of profit or risk of loss, and integration. It is important to note that there is no set formula as to the application of these and other factors. The relative weight of each factor will depend on the particular facts

and circumstances of the situation and the intent of the parties were also considered. This intent can be observed in the terms of a written contract and in the mutual understanding of the parties at the time of entering the contractual relationship. Contractual relationships will only be given weight if they accurately reflect the relationship between the parties.

The first source to be examined when seeking to determine whether parties to a work relationship are employers and employees, respectively, is the contract into which they have entered.

From the above discussion, employer and employee relationship are categorised into various dimension and each of these dimensions characterise important aspects of the relationship. For instance, the legal dimension defines the relationship through a formal employment contract. It is therefore important to strike a balance between the different dimensions or aspects of the employee/employer relationship. A successful relationship depends by and large on the balancing all aspects. The next section focuses a conceptual framework on absenteeism.

2.14 CONCLUSION

This chapter focused on the literature review on educator absenteeism. Emanating from the chapter, the literature review has revealed contextualisation of absenteeism whereby various definitions have been offered by different authors, classification of absenteeism has also been revealed and the two types of absences were discussed which is voluntary and involuntary absences. What was also discussed is the economic dimension, collective dimension, and psychological dimension. Another discussion was also on absenteeism in developing countries and the rate thereof was considered. Absenteeism in South Africa was also discussed with its negative effects on the functioning of organisations.

A further discussion was on legislative and policy framework whereby prescripts and policies were discussed which assisted in the regulation of the workplace. Literature review went on and revealed reasons for educators' absenteeism which were brought in

by various factors. Costs brought by absenteeism which were direct and indirect were also touched which were disruptive to organisations. A discussion on this chapter also focused on the impact of educator absenteeism which brought about extra burden to those educators who were always present at work. The impact was also found on economy and loss of productivity.

Strategies to be followed to reduce educator absenteeism and measures to control workplace absenteeism were discussed. With reference to strategies to be followed, the following were discussed; understanding the causes of educator absenteeism, provision of incentives for attendance and increase of educator morale. With reference to measures to control workplace absenteeism, a well-defined recruitment procedure was introduced between supervisors and workers. What was also discussed is the employee-employer relationship dimensions such as multi-dimensional phenomenon. Finally, although many studies on absenteeism have been conducted, no study has investigated educator absenteeism and its impact on teaching and learning in Lejweleputswa district schools. The aforesaid problem prompted this study. In the next chapter, the research design and methodology are discussed.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter discussed the review of literature on absenteeism. The purpose of this chapter is to describe and explain the research methodology that was employed in this study. In addition, this chapter focuses on philosophical perspectives, research design and methodology, data collection method, document analysis, data analysis and interpretation, and sample method. The research ethics will also be discussed in this chapter. Limitations of the research study are also presented.

3.2 PHILOSOPHICAL PERSPECTIVES

According to Creswell (2013:18), philosophical perspective of a research study gives a direction to the way the researcher formulates the research problem and questions which in terms of a qualitative study can best be explained with due consideration of its interpretivist nature. As a result, researchers should not divert from what was promised prior to undertaking research so that participants would not have reason to question its anticipated authenticity and to further give a detailed account pertaining to what is being investigated. In this instance, the researcher will be helped to understand the problem in its entirety. Furthermore, the information obtained from individual participants should not be misrepresented but reported as was provided from data collection processes.

3.2.1 Pragmatism

According to Creswell (2014:18), pragmatism is not committed to any one system of philosophy and reality. This implies to mixed methods research in that researchers draw liberally from both quantitative and qualitative assumptions when they engage in their research. Individual researchers have a freedom of choice. In this way, researchers are free to choose the methods, techniques and procedures of research that best meet their needs and purposes.

Pragmatists do not see the world as an absolute unity. In a similar way, mixed methods researchers look to many approaches for collecting and analysing data rather than subscribing to only one way (e.g., quantitative, or qualitative). The truth is what works at the time is used. It is not based in a duality between reality independent of the mind or within the mind. Therefore, in mixed methods research, researchers use both quantitative and qualitative data because they work to provide the best understanding of a research problem.

The pragmatist researchers look to what *and how* to research based on the intended consequences where they want to go with it. Mixed methods researchers need to establish a purpose for their mixing, a rationale for the reasons why quantitative and qualitative data need to be mixed in the first place. Pragmatists agree that research always occurs in social, historical, political, and other contexts. In this way, mixed methods studies may include a postmodern turn, a theoretical lens that is reflective of social justice and political aims. Pragmatists believe in an external world independent of the mind as well as that lodged in the mind. But they believe that we need to stop asking questions about reality and the laws of nature. Therefore, for the mixed methods researcher, pragmatism opens the door to multiple methods, different worldviews, and different assumptions, as well as different forms of data collection and analysis.

3.3 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

According to Creswell (2014), research design is a plan or proposal to conduct research and it also involves the interaction of philosophy, strategies of inquiry and specific methods. Punch (2014:114) refers to research design as a basic plan for research, and includes four main ideas, namely a) strategy is the first one; b) conceptual framework is the second; c) the third is the question of who or what will be studied; and d) the fourth carry the tools and procedures to be used for collecting and analysing empirical materials. The research design employed in this study is a mixed method which entails mixing quantitative and qualitative approaches, methods, and procedures with the aim of exploring and describing the research problem. This approach assisted the researcher

to explore views of participants (educators and principals) of the selected district schools regarding educator absenteeism.

According to Creswell (2013:43), the value of mixed method is embedded in the idea that all methods have bias and weaknesses, and the collection or integration of quantitative and qualitative methods neutralise such bias from data. Creswell and Plano-Clark (2011) argue that mixed method research can address a wide range of research questions because the research is not limited to one single design. However, it should be noted that the choice of method is informed by the main research theme of the study.

3.3.1 Data collection method

Data collection refers to the process of gathering data about the phenomenon under investigation. As part of the research design, the researcher planned how data will be collected and recorded to keep it intact, organised, and complete. The decision of the selected data collection methods was because this study combines both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods.

- The data collection process was conducted in two separate phases. In the first phase the researcher administered questionnaires to educators, then the questionnaires were then analysed to draft questions for phase two of data collection process, namely structured interviews with principals and deputy principals of the selected public schools in the Lejweleputswa District. Creswell and Plano Clark (2011:274) refer to this data collection process as the explanatory sequential data collection method.

Once ethics clearance (EC) was obtained from the University of South Africa (Unisa), the researcher obtained consent from individual participants (educators and principals) regarding their willingness to serve as data source for this research. A participant consent form was distributed to all participants in this research. The participant consent form is attached as appendix C.

- Pilot study

According to Senekal (2015), pilot study is a preliminary study conducted before any large-scale research is undertaken to assess the efficacy of the research instrument and other aspects of research methods. The research instrument was administered to 179 educators of the 14 schools that were selected for this study in Lejweleputswa District. The instrument was then refined through a consultative process with the statistician and the supervisor. The researcher conducted a pilot study to determine the difficulty and ambiguity of the instrument. The researcher also determined the sampling frame, and the suitability of the measuring instrument.

3.3.2 Structured Interviews

The researcher interviewed the principal and deputy principal from each school. The interviews were conducted at the principal's office of the various selected schools where participants are based to avoid unnecessary inconvenience and interruptions for the participants. The researcher managed to interview two participants a day, being the principal and his deputy during official working hours in a quiet office space that was arranged specifically for purposes of the interviews. Prior arrangements with principals of various selected schools assisted the researcher to avoid interruptions during the interviews. The researcher requested interviews to be conducted during working hours (between 8:00 and 16:00) to avoid inconvenience for participants. Before interviews could commence the researcher requested participants to kindly request to switch off their cellular phones. The interviews took place during the third and fourth week of September 2018.

Interviews were audio-recorded, and the researcher also took notes for observation. The recorded data was sent to a statistician to transcribe into a word processing file in preparation for data analysis. The next section discusses how quantitative data was collected.

3.3.3 Questionnaires

The researcher developed a questionnaire as a data collection instrument to gather quantitative data. The questionnaire used a five-point Likert scale was designed to obtain views of the educators regarding absenteeism in the selected Lejweleputswa District schools. The questionnaire consisted of five sections. Section A elicited demographic information of the respondents. In Section B, the questionnaire items were constructed to establish views and experiences of educators on absenteeism. Section C items determined patterns of educator absenteeism in schools while items in Section D determined educators' understanding of the impact of absenteeism. Section E consisted of open-ended questions to determine the relationship between absenteeism and learner performance. The modified instrument was then self-administered to educators of the selected schools Lejweleputswa District schools to collect quantitative data for the research. Respondents were required to complete scales measuring different dimensions of the research problem under study. The numbering and coding made the process easier for analysis.

Subsequently, 250 questionnaires were distributed to the respondent out of which 179 were returned. The respondents completed the questionnaire with no assistance from the researcher. The collected questionnaires were then electronically captured in Excel and then migrated to the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 23). To ensure the accuracy of the data, the researcher engaged in data cleaning by verifying the mismatches between original and captured data (Babbie & Mouton, 2010:417). Mistakes were brought to the statisticians' attention, and data were then recaptured. Thereafter, a report was produced, and that report was used for analysis.

3.3.4 Data analysis and interpretation

The analysis of data refers to the way in which data were captured and analysed, and how statistical procedures were used to derive meaning and measurement (De Vos et al. 2005: 333). According to De Vos, et al. (2005: 217), analysis means categorising, ordering, manipulating, and summarising data to answer research questions. The purpose of the analysis is to reduce data to an intelligible and understandable format so

that relations of the research problems can be studied, tested and conclusions can be drawn. In this study, data were analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS version 23) and the researcher was assisted by the statistician.

3.3.5 Quantitative data analysis and interpretation

The analysis of data refers to the way in which data were captured and analysed, and how statistical procedures were used to derive meaning and measurement (De Vos 2005:333). According to De Vos, et al. (2005:217), analysis means categorising, ordering, manipulating and summarising data to answer research questions. The purpose of the analysis is to reduce data to an intelligible and understandable format so that relations of the research problem can be studied, tested and conclusions can be drawn. In this study, data were analysed using SPSS. In this regard, the researcher was assisted by the statistician. The researcher used descriptive methods to describe and analyse data as primary characteristics without losing valuable information. This was done to simplify and manage the process. Data were analysed according to themes which were then presented and displayed in graphic format.

Interpretation refers to a process when the researcher derives meaning from the data by making inferences, drawing conclusions, and making implications of the findings. The researcher obtained meaning from data and established relations between results and theory provided in the literature review chapter. This was done in a manner that supported or disputed the researcher's expectations.

3.3.6 How qualitative findings explains quantitative results

The qualitative findings of this research have assisted the researcher to obtain more in-depth data through structured interviews on the factors that contribute to educator absenteeism that were not clear in the quantitative results. Furthermore, interviews were conducted to obtain data regarding how absenteeism is managed in the selected schools in Lejweleputswa District and to create a platform for principals to explain challenges they face regarding absenteeism in their schools.

3.3.7 Qualitative data analysis and interpretation

The qualitative data analysis process started after interviews with participants were concluded. Babooa (2008 :152) argues that the first step in qualitative data analysis is a critical examination of the collected data. The researcher must search for data to obtain evidence that leads him/her to make a final decision by keeping the research questions in mind during the interview process (De Marrais & Lapan, 2004 :234).

The researcher analysed the qualitative data from the study by reading the interview documents and transformed the information from the audiotape or voice recorder into transcripts. He developed group responses into themes and grouped emerging themes from transcripts together and created the main categories and subcategories.

3.3.8 Document analysis

Owing to the nature of this study, it was necessary that the researcher peruses official documents, legislation, unpublished thesis and dissertation, academic books to support findings of this research. This research was conducted by perusing official records of the Free State Department of Education. Undertaking document analysis has enabled the researcher to supplement information collected and verify accuracy of primary data collected from participants.

3.4 SAMPLING METHOD

A sample is a group of participants on which a study is conducted (Haegale & Hodge, 2015). It is impractical and uneconomic to involve all members of the population in a research study. Hence, the researcher relies on data is obtained from a sample of the population.

Welman et al. (2005:55) underscore the importance of sample selection to generalise the results of the study; hence, the sample must be representative. This means that the sample has the exact properties as the population from which it is drawn, but in smaller numbers. According to Welman et al. (2005:56), a distinction drawn between probability and non-probability samples is characterised by random sampling, which means that an

element or member of the population can be included in the sample, whereas non-probability sampling is more subjective as it includes convenience sampling as well as the selection samples.

3.4.1 Sample selection

According to Maree (2011 :4), a researcher using mixed methods should conform to the mixed method procedure which requires the researcher to combine the probability sampling procedure, which is based on randomisation, with the non-probability sampling procedure based on non-randomisation. The researcher should clearly articulate reasons for selecting a specific sampling type (Creswell, 1998:118). Purposive sampling means that members of a sample are chosen with a purpose to represent a location by covering all subject matter and all key criteria (Ritchie & Lewis, 2003:79).

In this study, purposive sampling was considered appropriate because the researcher was able to deliberately choose individual (principals and deputy principals) participants based on their experience as people with expert knowledge about absenteeism in their respective schools. The researcher relied on their experience because they deal with matters of absenteeism daily; therefore, they are better placed and informed about it.

For the quantitative part of the research, simple random sampling was employed to select educators who completed the questionnaire. This sampling method is deemed appropriate because it provides educators who are not part of management of the school equal opportunity to be represented. The research instruments (interview and questionnaire) were used to collect primary data from educators belonging to schools within the Lejweleputswa District. The study sampled 14 schools, seven primary schools and seven secondary schools out of 61 schools in the Lejweleputswa District. About 250 questionnaires were administered to educators in the selected schools. For the qualitative part of the research, purposive sampling was used to illicit views and experiences of principals and deputy principals regarding educator absenteeism 14 participants (principals and deputy principals from the sampled 14 schools) were interviewed by the researcher.

3.5 RESEARCH ETHICS

In this study, the following ethical principles were strictly observed and adhered to.

3.5.1 Protection from harm

The participants were informed that they will not be exposed to any physical or psychological harm. In addition, participants were informed that the risk of participating in this study would not be greater than the risk of daily living.

3.5.2 Informed consent

A researcher can also pronounce the benefits of the research, but however, he or she should not do it in the manner that smacks of bribery. In this study, respondents were fully informed about the study, its aims and purpose. The respondents are also informed about their choice to decline participation and to withdraw from the study at any time.

3.5.3 Right to privacy

Participants were informed that their right to privacy would be protected and observed and under no circumstance would their oral and written responses be shared with other participants. In terms of confidentiality, collected data was locked in a safe for protection of the respondents' information.

3.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The timing of the study was a bit awkward because the Free State Department of Education did not allow any research activity to take place during the third term of each year, the reason being that those activities may disturb the primary and secondary examination processes. Lejweleputswa District consist of ten circuits, but the department of education only granted permission for this study on circuit one only owing to time constraint. Other circuits could not be reached since they were far and as already mentioned time was very limited.

3.7 CONCLUSION

This chapter described and explained the research design and methodology, data collection instruments, population, sampling procedure followed by the research ethics of the study. Quantitative and qualitative were regarded as the most appreciated methods for the study because both were concerned with how people interpret their experiences and the social world and considering the meaning thereof. The research instruments (interview and questionnaire) which were used to collect primary data from educators belonging to schools within the Lejweleputswa District. Data were collected from 14 sampled schools. Moreover, the chapter provided the research design which for the purpose of this study is relevant to achieve valid research findings. The chapter further discussed elements of qualitative and quantitative research methods. In addition, research strategy, data collection method, document analysis, data analysis and interpretation, sampling method and research ethics were also discussed.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter outlined the research design and methodology used in this study. In this chapter, data analysis and interpretation are presented. A brief description of area of study is also presented. As indicated in chapter three, this study employed mixed method research approach as modes of inquiry. The results presented in this chapter are derived from data collected via a questionnaire administered to educators and interviews conducted with principals and deputy principals of the selected schools in Lejweleputswa District. A total of 179 questionnaires were completed by educators and structured one-on-one interviews were conducted. 28 interviews were conducted from different schools in Lejweleputswa district. Official documents were used to verify results presented through interviews and questionnaires.

4.2 LEJWELEPUTSWA EDUCATION DISTRICT

Lejweleputswa District comprises of ten circuit (areas) offices spread around five towns in the Free State Province. The district office is in the mining town of Welkom, Free State Province.

4.2.1 Section A: Demographic analysis

This section of study presents the biographical information of the participants that participated in this research. This information include gender, age, teaching experience, rank of participants, highest qualification achieved and finally whether the school is at primary or secondary level. The respondent's demographic information is presented in the next section.

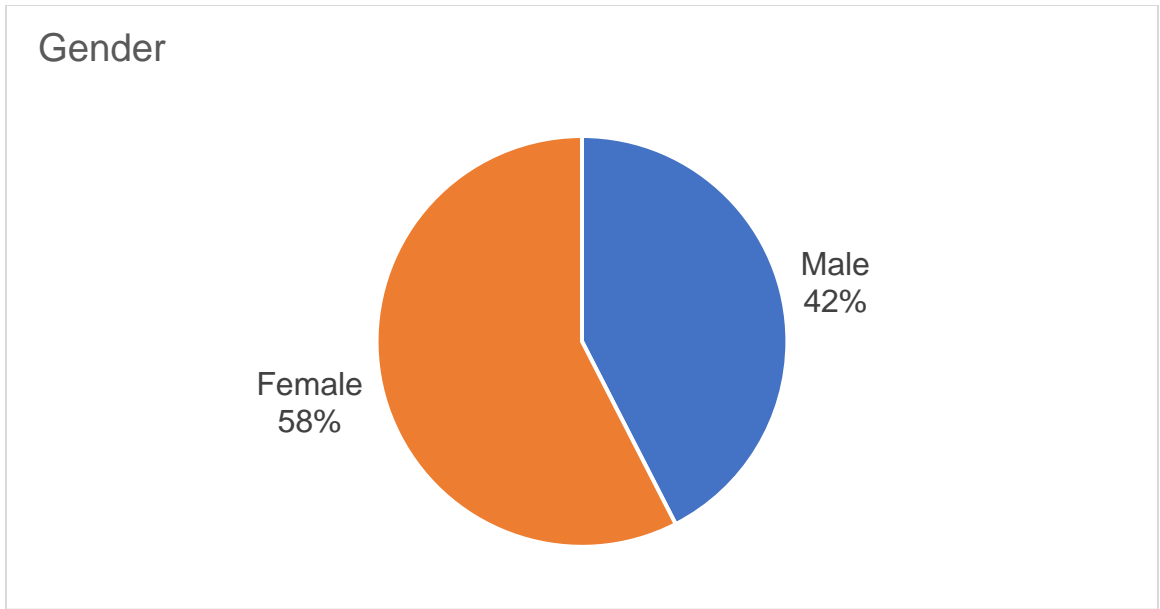


Figure 4.1: Gender

Figure 4.1 above depicts the gender of educators who participated in this research. Of the total of participants, 58% were females and 42% were males. This split represents an equal gender representation.

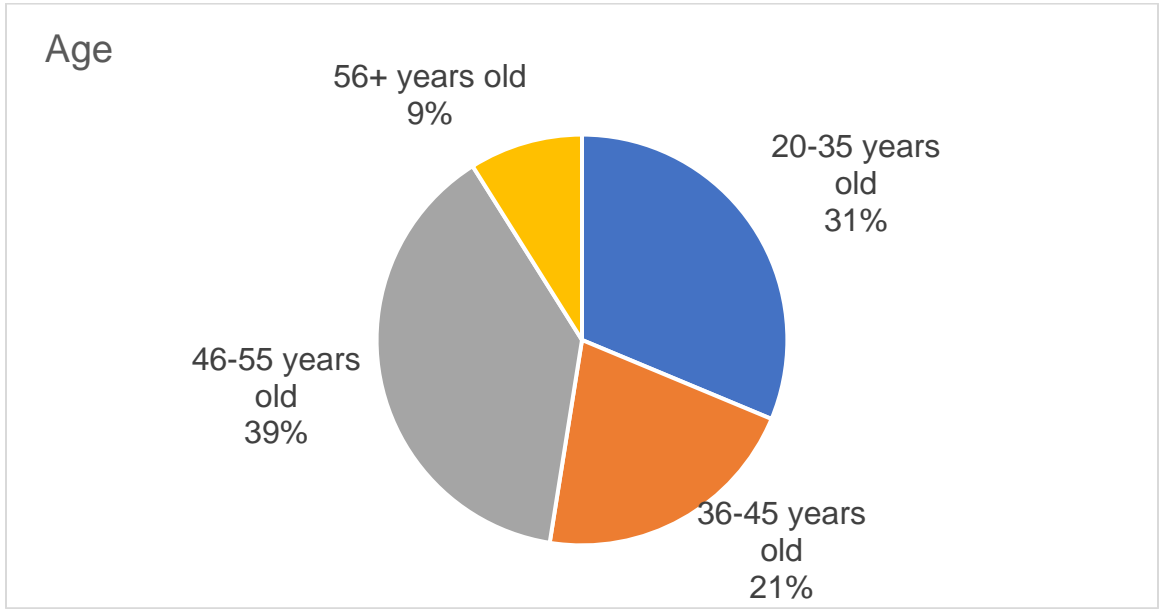


Figure 4.2: Age group

Figure 4.2 indicates age group of the educators at Lejweleputswa selected schools. The results show that 39% of the respondents are of the age range of 46-55 years, 31% are of the age range of 20-35 years, while 21% of the respondents are of the age range of 36-45 years and 9% are of the age range of 56+years. This indicates that most of the respondents middle aged and experienced educators, while the minority were entry level professionals and 9% were more matured educators who were about to go on retirement.

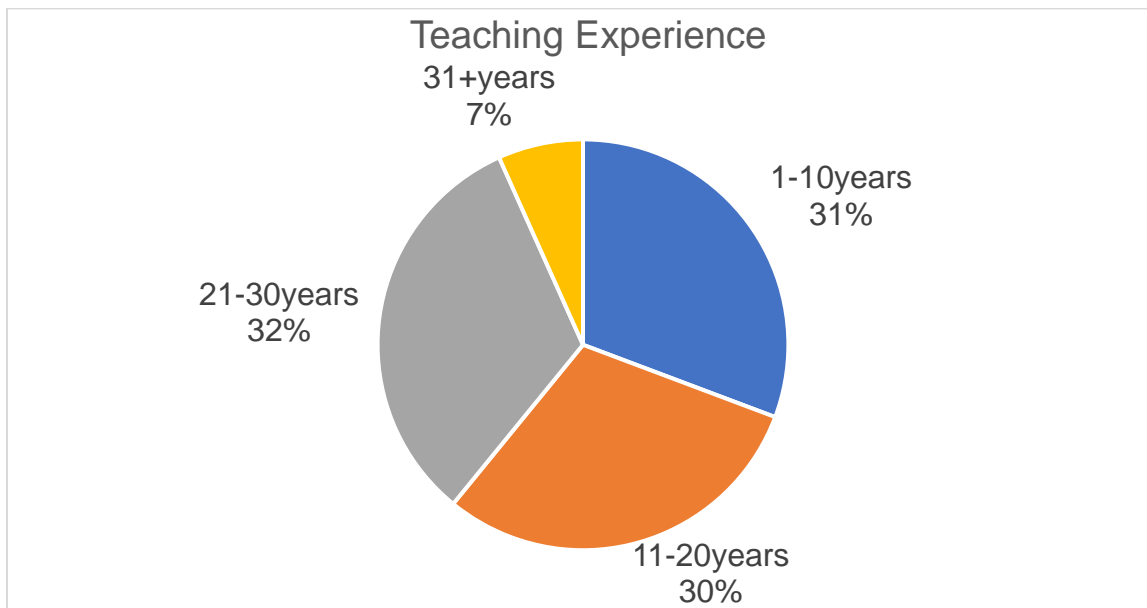


Figure 4.3: Teaching experience

Figure 4.3 depicts teaching experience of the respondents. The results indicate that 32% of respondents have 21-30 years of teaching experience. While 31% of respondents have between 1- and 10-years teaching experience. 30% of the respondents have 11-20 years of teaching experience and 7% have 31+years of experience. This indicates that majority of respondents have teaching experience of between 10 and 30 years.

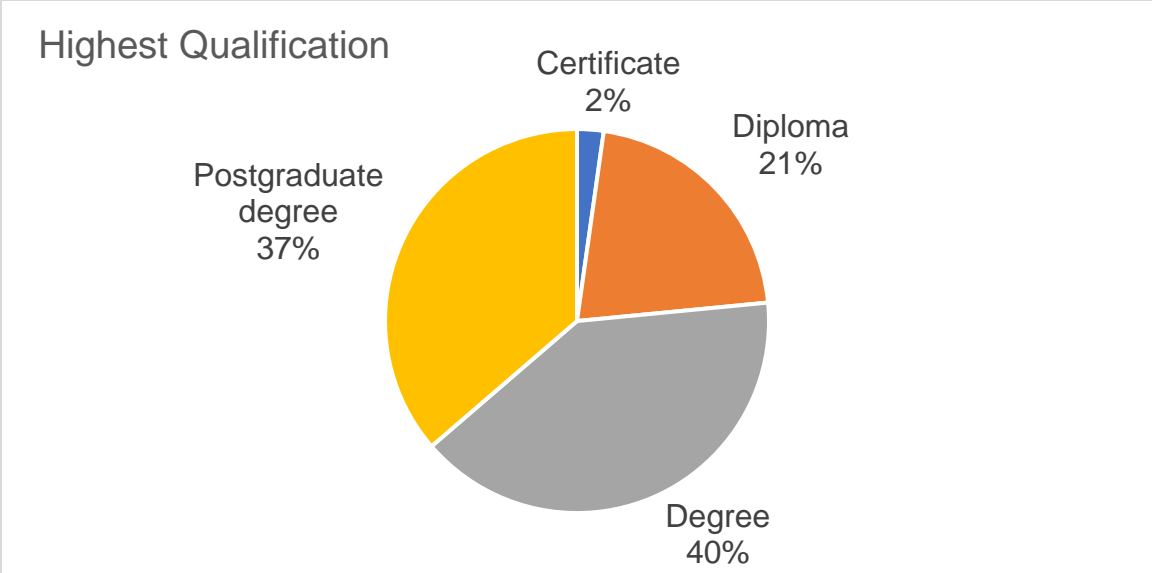


Figure 4.4: Highest qualification

Figure 4.4 above illustrates that 37% of respondents have postgraduate qualifications, followed by 40% who have bachelor’s degrees, 21% of respondents have diplomas and lastly, only 2% of respondents who have certificates. It is evident that on average respondents are well educated.

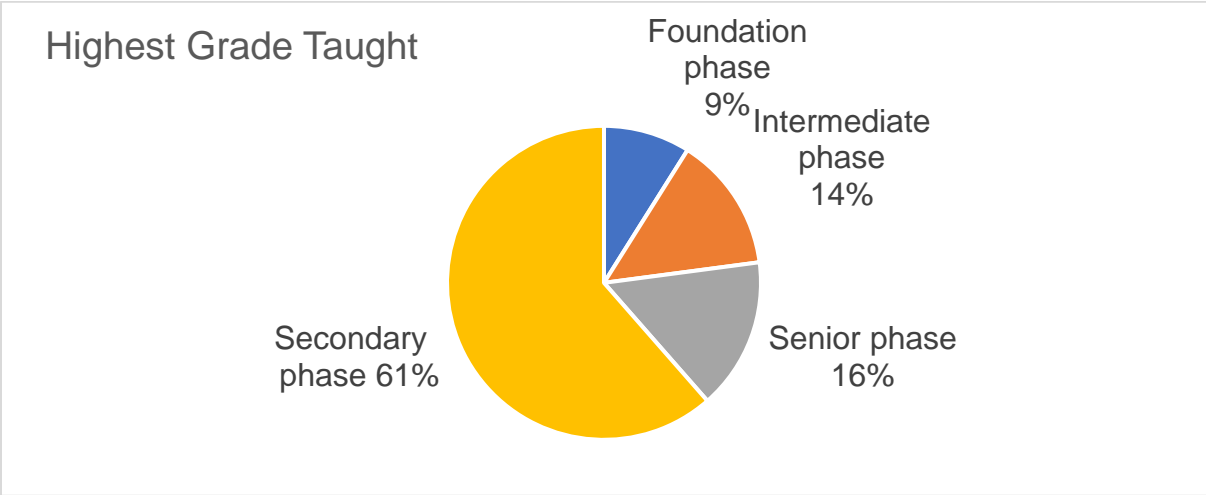


Figure 4.5: Highest grade taught

Figure 4.5 above shows that 61% of the respondents teach at secondary phase, 16% teach at senior phase, 14% teach at intermediate phase, and 9% at foundation phase.

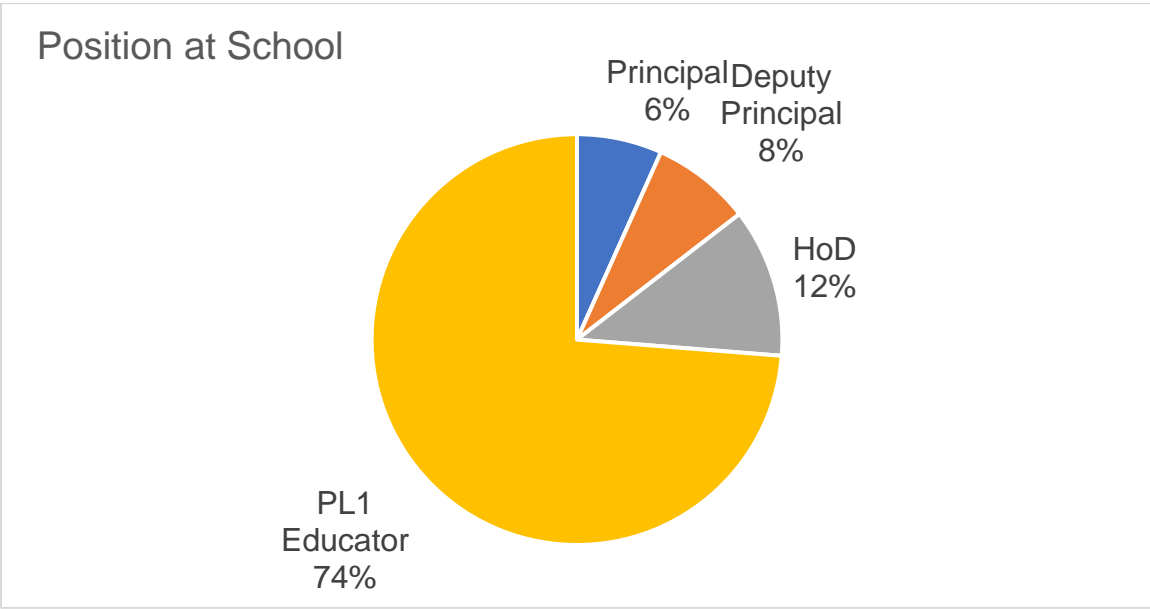


Figure 4.6: Position of educator at a school

Figure 4.6 illustrates that 74% of the respondents are post level 1 PL1 educators. While 12% are head of departments 8% are deputy principals and 6% are principals.

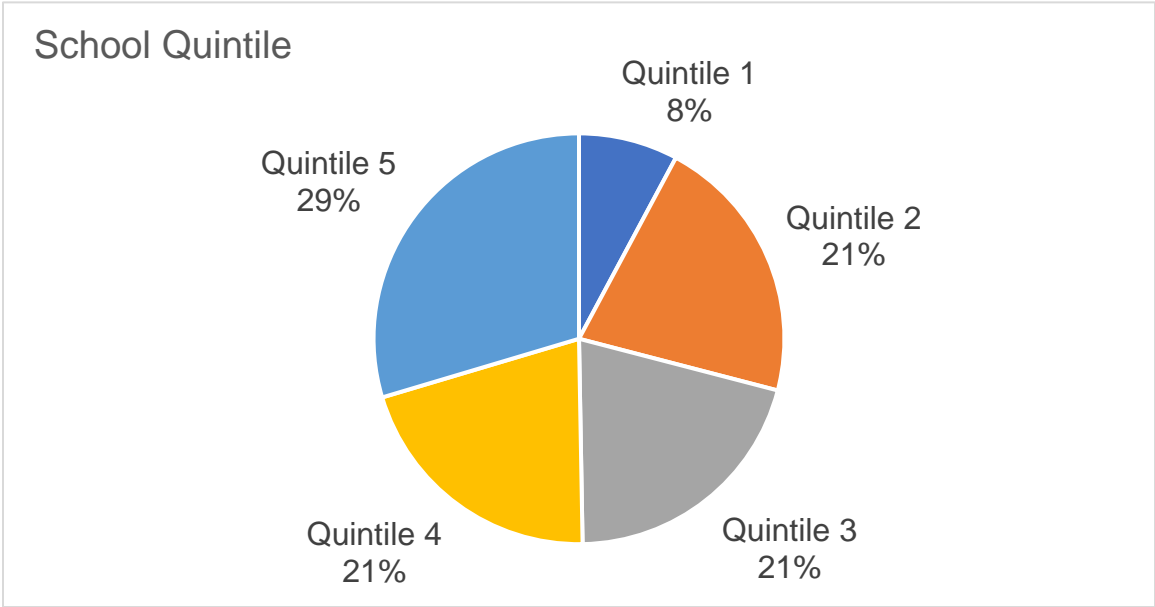


Figure 4.7: School quintiles

Figure 4.7 shows classification (quantiles) of schools of the respondents. The result show that 29% of the respondents were quintile 5 school, 21% were quintile 4 school, 21% were quintile 3 school, 21% were quintile 2 school and 8% were quintile 1 school. This indicates quantiles 2, 3 and 4 have equal representation while quintile 1 has the least representation.

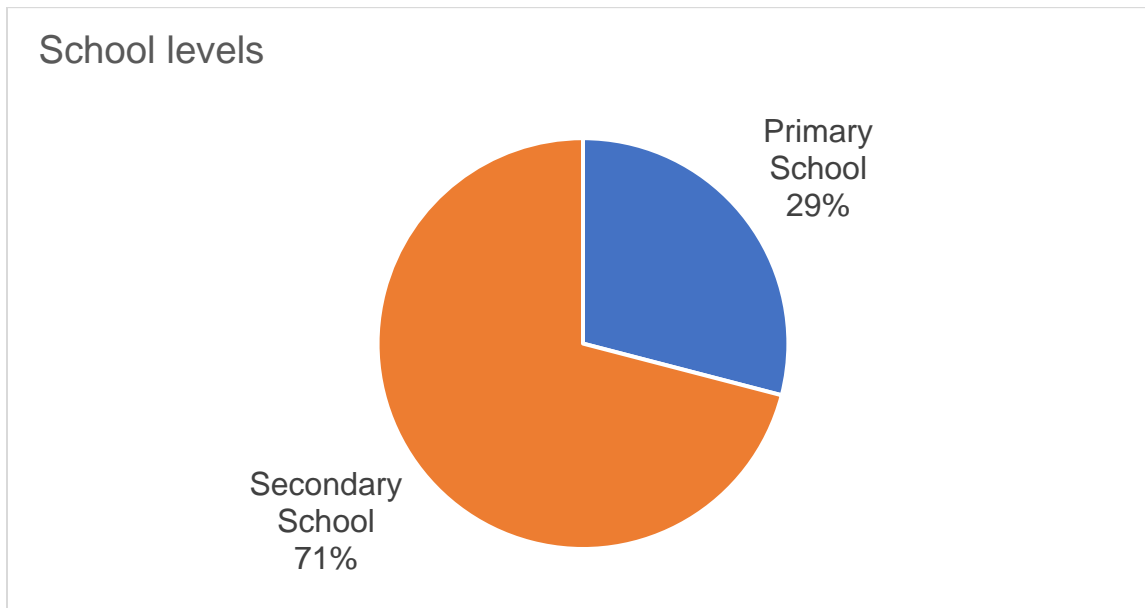


Figure 4.8: School levels

Figure 4.8 shows that respondents who participated in this study come from primary and secondary schools. Of the respondents, 71% were educators from secondary schools while 29% were from the primary schools. It is clear from the pie chart that most of the respondents were found at the secondary schools. The split between primary and secondary depict the reflection of the schools in the district or circuit.

4.2.2 Section B: Views and experiences of educators on absenteeism

Section B of the questionnaires required that respondents to use the 5-point Likert scale system with 1 being “Strongly disagree” 2 “Disagree” 3 “Neither agree nor disagree” 4 “Agree” and 5 “Strongly agree”. The results of the questionnaire are presented in the graphic format for easy interpretation and discussed individually. Results are presented and discussed next.

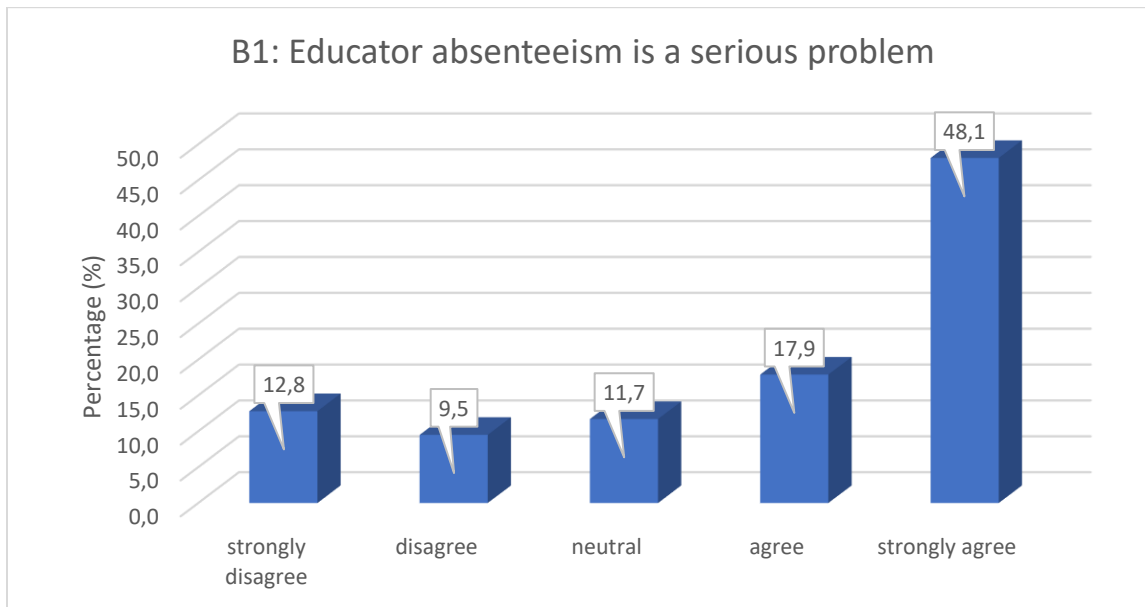


Figure: B1: Educator absenteeism is a serious problem

Figure B1 seeks to establish whether educator absenteeism is a serious problem in the Lejweleputswa District schools. Of the respondents, 66% agree that educator absenteeism is a serious problem while 22,3% disagreed and 11,7% were neutral. The results indicate that absenteeism is a serious concern. This is supported by views expressed by principals 3, 4, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14 who indicated that educator absenteeism is a serious problem at their schools because educators who are absent from school for significant period find it difficult to complete the syllabus. As a result, school management must always intervene to address the situation (Principal interview October 2018). However, principal 1, 2, 5, 8 and 9 indicated that “absenteeism is not a serious problem in our schools as most of our teachers are always at school (Principal interview October 2018).

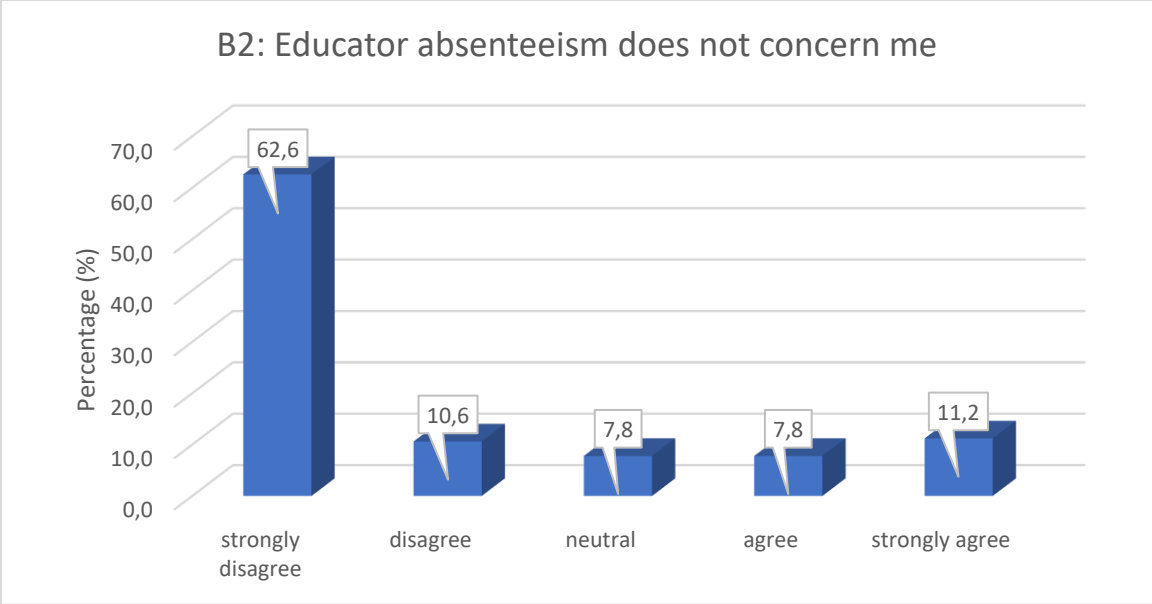


Figure: B2: Educator absenteeism does not concern me

Figure B2 depicts views of educators on whether educator absenteeism is a concern. About 19,0% of the respondents agreed that educator absenteeism does not concern them while 73,2% disagreed and 7,8% were neutral. The results suggest that majority of the respondents (73,2%) view absenteeism as something that affects them, and they feel that absenteeism should be a concern of everyone at school and something should be done to improve the situation. Perhaps the school management must intervene and speak to those who feel that the problem has nothing to do with them so that the absenteeism problem can be given proper attention by everyone at school and eventually be brought to manageable levels.

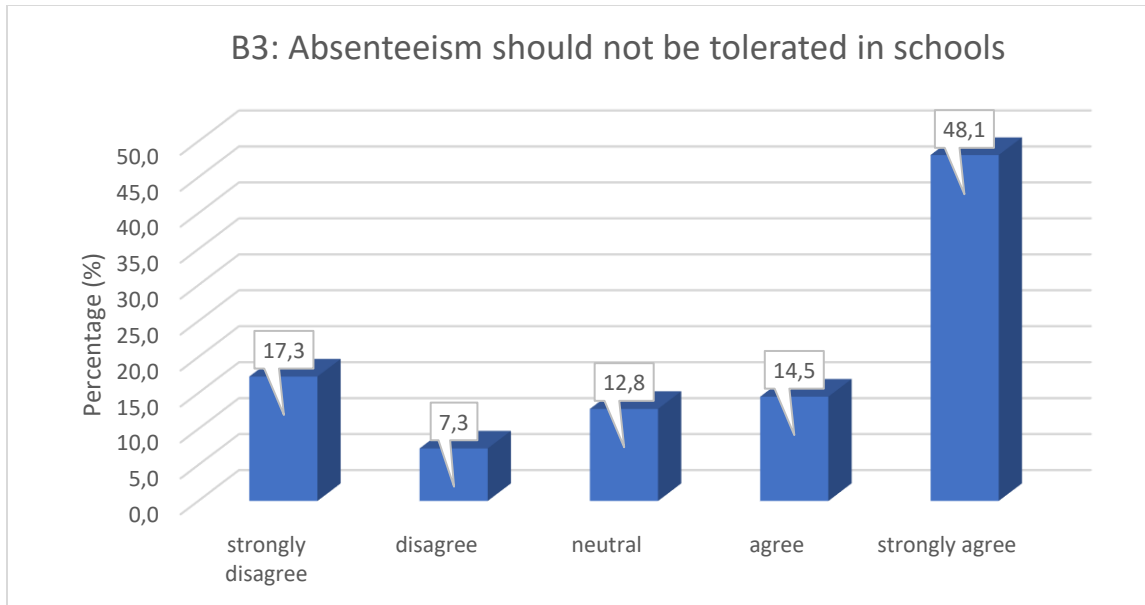


Figure: B3: Absenteeism should not be tolerated in schools

Figure B3 illustrates the views of educators regarding tolerance of absenteeism in schools. Of the respondents, 62,6% agreed that absenteeism should not be tolerated in schools, while 24,6% disagreed and 12, 8% were neutral. This result shows that majority of educators are concerned about absenteeism. According to principals 3, 4, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14 to show intolerance, disciplinary measures must be applied consistently and promptly because if that is not happening, more educators will also follow suit. Currently, teachers are not always disciplined even though the offence warrants discipline. Consistent application of disciplinary measures could serve as a deterrent. (Interview October 2018) The above view has been supported by Cook (2013 :42), when he argued to absenteeism has a negative impact on productivity and general functioning of organisations. On the contrary, principals 1, 2, 5, 8 and 9 did not agree to the above statement arguing that absenteeism should be dealt with case by case. They indicated that other educators have valid reasons for their absence, and they do not abuse their leave (Interview October 2018).

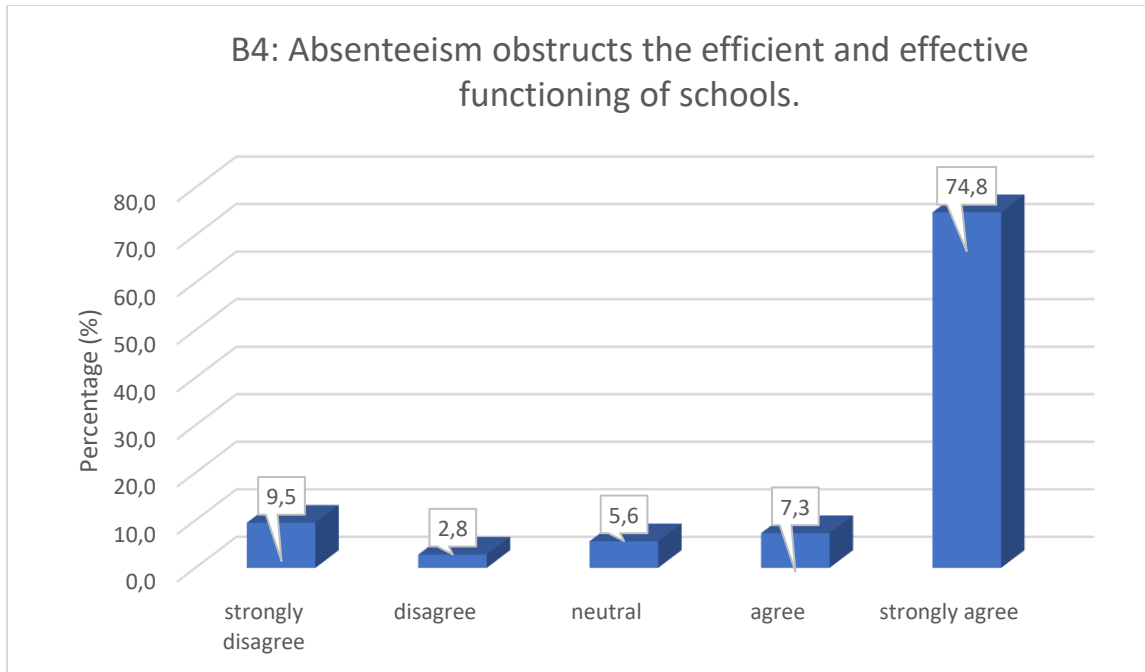


Figure: B4: absenteeism obstructs the efficient and effective functioning of schools

Figure B4 indicates respondents' views on whether absenteeism obstructs the efficient and effective functioning of schools. Of the respondents, 82,1% agreed while 12,3% disagreed and 5,6% were neutral. This result suggest that absenteeism has a serious effect in the daily functioning of the school. According to principal 3, 4, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14, absenteeism derails long and short-term plans of the school. For instance, school management must reallocate functions and postpone important events. Teachers who are supposed to go on training can no longer do so (Interview October 2018). This is supported by Mkwazazi (1997:3) who argues that educator absenteeism disrupts schooling and obstructs the efficient and effective functioning of schools. However, principal 1, 2, 5, 8 and 9 indicated that absenteeism is not rife at their schools, and nothing is obstructing the efficient and effective functioning of their schools (Interview October 2018).

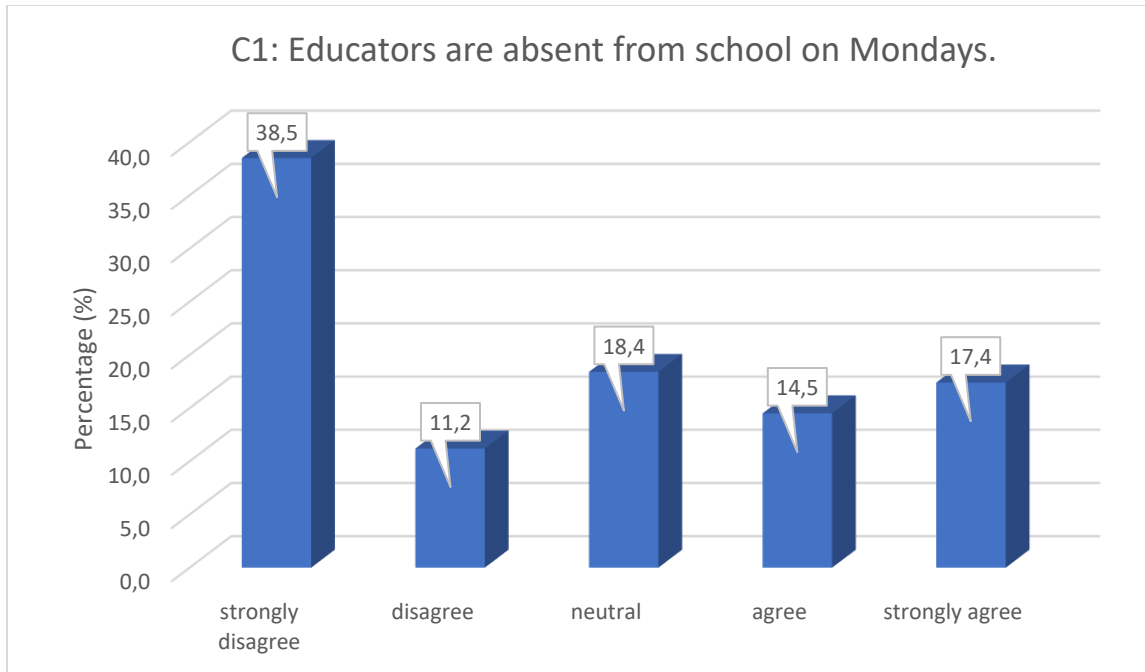


Figure: C1: Educators are absent from school on Mondays.

Figure C1 depicts the views of respondents on educators' absence from school on Mondays. Of the respondents, 31,9% agreed that educators are absent from school on Mondays, while 49,7% disagreed and 18,4% were neutral. The results indicate that absenteeism on Mondays is a concern and if not adequately addressed it could escalate. This view is supported by the 2017-2018 District Audit Report (see Table 4.1) which shows that on average 7% of educators are absent from school on Mondays. Studies conducted by Clotfelter, Ladd and Vigdor (2009:28) reveal that when educators are regularly absent from the classroom, the opportunities for students to learn are curtailed. Authors further argue that a disappointment in this instance is that educators who are absent from their classrooms are normally replaced by less experienced or less qualified educators and this, in turn, negatively affects the overall performance of the school. The DBE Absenteeism Audit Report for 2017 and 2018 bears testimony to the serious nature of absenteeism particularly on Mondays. This is supported by studies conducted by Msosa (2020:2) which revealed that educator absenteeism is a major contributing factor to learner underperformance and appears to be more prevalent on Mondays and Fridays.

Table 4.1: 2017

A quarterly Audit Report compiled by the Lejweleputswa District office during 2017 regarding absenteeism on Mondays reflected as follows:

School	Total number of educators per school	Number of absentees per school per term 1	Number of absentees per school per term 2	Number of absentees per school per term 3	Number of absentees per school per term 4
1	32	3 9,4%	4 12,5%	3 9,4%	1 3,1%
2	38	2 5,3%	2 5,3%	2 5,3%	2 2,6%
3	39	1 2,6%	3 7,7%	3 7,7%	3 7,7%
4	40	3 7,5%	2 5%	4 10%	2 5%
5	28	4 14,3%	2 7,1%	2 7,1%	3 10,7%
6	33	5 15,2%	3 3%	1 3%	4 12,1%
	210	18 8,6%	15 7,1%	15 7,1%	15 7,1%

2017 Educator's absenteeism percentage per Mondays per quarter is as follows:

Term 1 8,6%

Term 2 7,1%

Term 3 7,1%

Term 4 7,1%

Source: Free State Department of Education Audit Report 2019

Table 1 shows that in 2017 on average 7% of educators are absent from school on Mondays per quarter. This figure is consistent throughout the second to the fourth term. This is a common trend in schools which participated in this study and should be a course for concern among schools in this district.

Table 4.2: 2018

A quarterly audit report compiled by the Lejweleputswa District office during 2018 regarding absenteeism on Mondays reflected as follows:

School	Number of Educators per school	Number of absenteeism per school per term 1	Number of absenteeism per school per term 2	Number of absenteeism per school per term 3	Number of absenteeism per school per term 4
1	40	2 5%	4 10,0%	3 7,5%	1 2,5%
2	32	4 12,5%	2 6,3%	4 12,5%	3 9,4%
3	28	1 3,6%	4 14,3%	5 17,9%	4 14,3%
4	42	2 4,8%	2 4,8%	6 14,3%	2 4,8%
5	37	3 8,1%	3 8,1%	3 8,1%	5 13,5%
6	39	4 10,3%	3 7,7%	2 5,1%	3 7,7%
	218	16 7,3%	18 8,3%	25 11,5%	18 8,3%

Term 1 7,3%

Term 2 8,3%

Term 3 11,5%

Term 4 8,3%

Source: Free State Department of Education Audit Report 2019

Table 2 shows a slight increase (8%) in the number of absent educators compared to the same period (7%) in 2017. The third term saw much higher increase (11.5%) than other terms. This is a worrying trend as the third term is regarded as a busy period for both learners and educators.

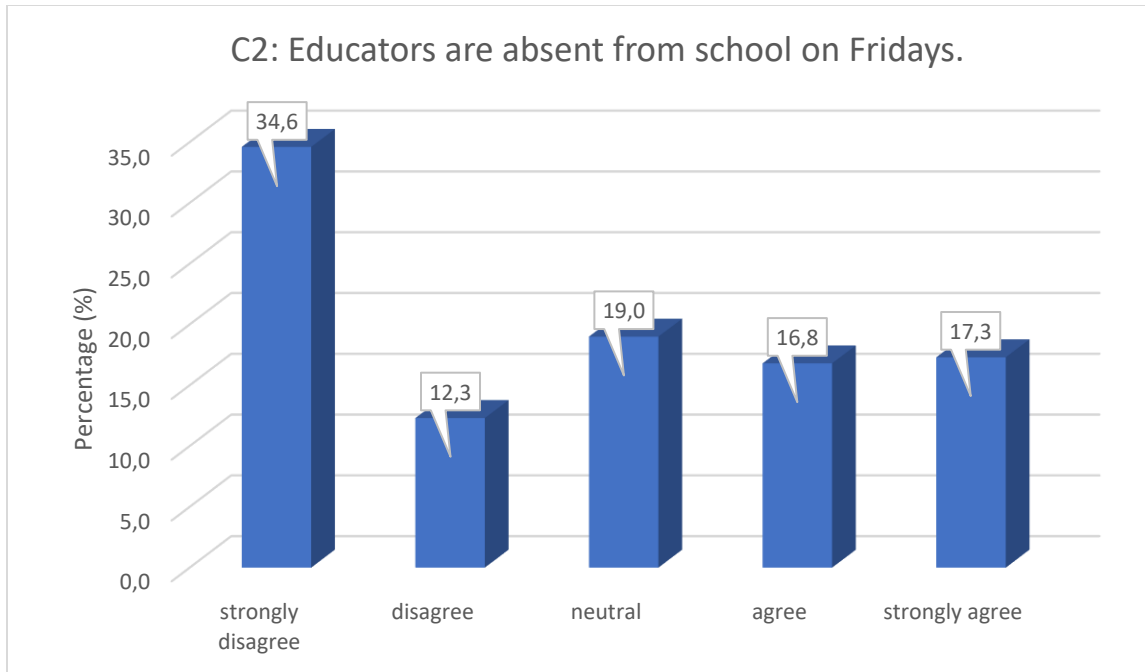


Figure: C2: Educators are absent from school on Fridays.

Figure C2 depicts the opinions of educators regarding the absence of educators on Fridays. Of the respondents, 34,1% agreed that educators are absent from school on Fridays, while 46,9% disagreed with the statement and 19% were neutral. The results show similar sentiment as expressed by respondents in Figure C1 and it is a concern. The Free State Department Absenteeism Audit Report points to the serious nature of the problem. For two consecutive years (2017 and 2018) on average 10% of educators are not in school on Fridays per quarter (see Table 4.3 and Table 4.4 on the next page). The same trends can be noticed on Mondays as well (see Figure C1). This is supported by studies conducted by Msosa (2020:2) which revealed that educator absenteeism is a major contributing factor to learner underperformance and appears to be more prevalent on Mondays and Fridays. This calls for school's management and the DBE to take serious steps to remedy the situation.

Table 4.3: 2017

A quarterly Audit report compiled by the Lejweleputswa Education District office during 2017 regarding educator's absenteeism on Fridays reflected as follows:

School	Number of educators per school	Number of absenteeism per school per term 1	Number of absenteeism per school per term 2	Number of absenteeism per school per term 3	Number of absenteeism per school per term 4
1	26	2 7,7%	1 3,8%	2 7,7%	4 5,4%
2	39	5 12,9%	3 7,7%	2 5,1%	6 15,4%
3	33	4 12,1%	4 12,1%	5 15,2%	3 9,1%
4	42	2 4,8%	5 11,9%	3 7,1%	4 9,5%
5	28	3 10,7%	2 7,1%	4 14,3%	3 10,7%
6	36	5 13,9%	2 5,6%	4 11,1%	2 5,6%
	204	21 10,3%	17 8,3%	20 9,8%	22 10,8%

2017 Educator's absenteeism percentage per Friday per quarter is as follows.

Term 1 10,3%

Term 2 8,3%

Term 3 9,8%

Term 4 10,8%

Source: Absenteeism Audit Report: Department of Education (FS) 2019

The above table shows the number of absent educators per Friday per term during 2017 academic year. In addition, it shows for the first and the fourth term the numbers are relatively high compared to the second and third terms.

Table 4.4: 2018

A quarterly audit report compiled by the Lejweleputswa District office during 2018 regarding educator's absenteeism on Fridays reflected as follows:

School	Total number of educators per school	Number of absentees per school per term 1	Number of absentees per school per term 2	Number of absentees per school per term 3	Number of absentees per school per term 4
1	32	3 9,6%	4 12,5%	6 18,8%	4 12,5%
2	42	5 11,9%	5 11,9%	3 7,1%	2 4,8%
3	35	2 5,7%	6 17,1%	2 5,7%	1 2,9%
4	29	1 3,4%	3 10,3%	4 13,8%	1 3,4%
5	30	1 3,3%	3 10,0%	4 13,3%	4 13,3%
6	36	4 11,1%	2 5,6%	5 13,9%	5 13,9%
	204	16 7,8%	23 11,3%	24 11,8%	17 8,3%

2018 Educator's absenteeism percentage per Friday per quarter is as follows:

Term 1 7,8%

Term 2 11,3%

Term 3 11,8%

Term 4 8,3%

Source: Absenteeism Audit Report: Department of Education (FS) 2019

During the 2018 academic year, a slight drop in numbers during the first and fourth term can be witnessed. However, in term 2 and three higher increase compared to the same period in 2017 can be seen. The same trend can be witnessed when compared to numbers for Mondays (Table 1 and Table 2). This is an indication that there is little improvement.

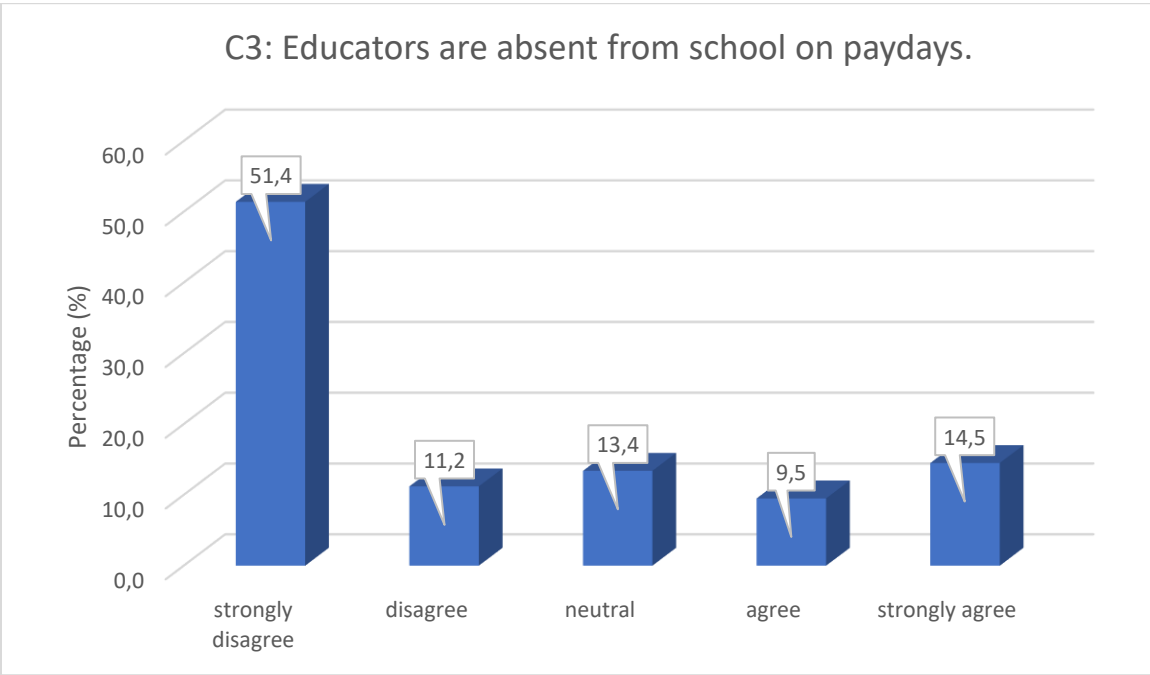


Figure: C3: Educators are absent from school on paydays.

Figure C3 illustrates the views of educators on the absence of educators on paydays. Of the respondents, 24% agreed that educators are absent from school on paydays while 62,6% disagreed and 13, 4% were neutral. The results suggest that school management is not doing enough to deal with educators’ absence on paydays. This is supported by the results of the 2017-2018 District Audit Report which indicates that on average 9% educators do not show up on payday per quarter (see Table 4.5 and 4.6).

Table 4.5: 2017

A quarterly audit report compiled by the district office during 2017 regarding educator’s absenteeism on paydays reflected as follows:

School	Total number of educators per school	Number of absentees per school per term 1	Number of absentees per school per term 2	Number of absentees per school per term 3	Number of absentees per school per term 4
1	44	3 6,8%	4 9,1%	3 6,8%	4 9,1%
2	32	5 15,6%	1 3,1%	5 15,6%	2 6,3%
3	29	6 20,7%	5 17,2%	1 3,4%	1 3,4%
4	38	1 2,6%	2 5,3%	2 5,3%	3 7,9%
5	35	2 5,7%	3 8,6%	3 8,6%	5 14,3%
6	37	3 8,1%	4 10,8%	4 10,8%	2 5,4%
	215	20 9,3%	19 8,8%	18 8,4%	17 7,9%

2017 Educator's absenteeism percentage on paydays per quarter is as follows:

Term 1 9,3%

Term 2 9,3%

Term 3 8,4%

Term 4 7,9%

Source: Absenteeism Audit Report: Lejweleputswa District Department of Education (FS)

Table 4.6: 2018

Table 4.5 illustrates absenteeism of educators on paydays in 2017. Like reports on Fridays and Mondays, the same trend or number of educators could be witnessed in this regard. For instance, on average 9% of educators are absent from school per quarter. This is a worrying trend, and it should be addressed.

A quarterly Audit Report compiled by Lejweleputswa District office during 2018 regarding educator's absenteeism on paydays reflected as follows:

School	Number of educators per school	Number of absenteeism per school per term 1	Number of absenteeism per school per term 2	Number of absenteeism per school per term 3	Number of absenteeism per school per term 4
1	42	2 4,8%	2 4,8%	4 9,5%	3 7,1%
2	28	5 17,6%	3 10,7%	1 3,6%	5 17,6%
3	33	3 9,1%	1 3,0%	3 9,1%	1 3,0%
4	38	4 10,5%	4 10,5%	4 10,5%	3 7,9%
5	34	4 11,8%	3 8,8%	5 14,7%	4 11,8%
6	40	1 2,5%	5 12,5%	2 5,0%	2 5,0%
	215	19 8,8%	18 8,4%	19 8,8%	18 8,4%

2018 Educator’s absenteeism percentage per paydays per quarter is as follows:

- Term 1 8,8%**
- Term 2 8,4%**
- Term 3 9,3%**
- Term 4 8,4%**

Source: Free State Department of Education Audit Report 2018

Table 4.6 depicts the number of educators who are absent from school during the 2018 academic year. An insignificant drop of less than a percentage can be seen in the number of educators who do not come to school in 2018 compared to the same period in 2017. It is important to note that same percentage of absentees during Mondays, Fridays and paydays can be picked up from the figures.

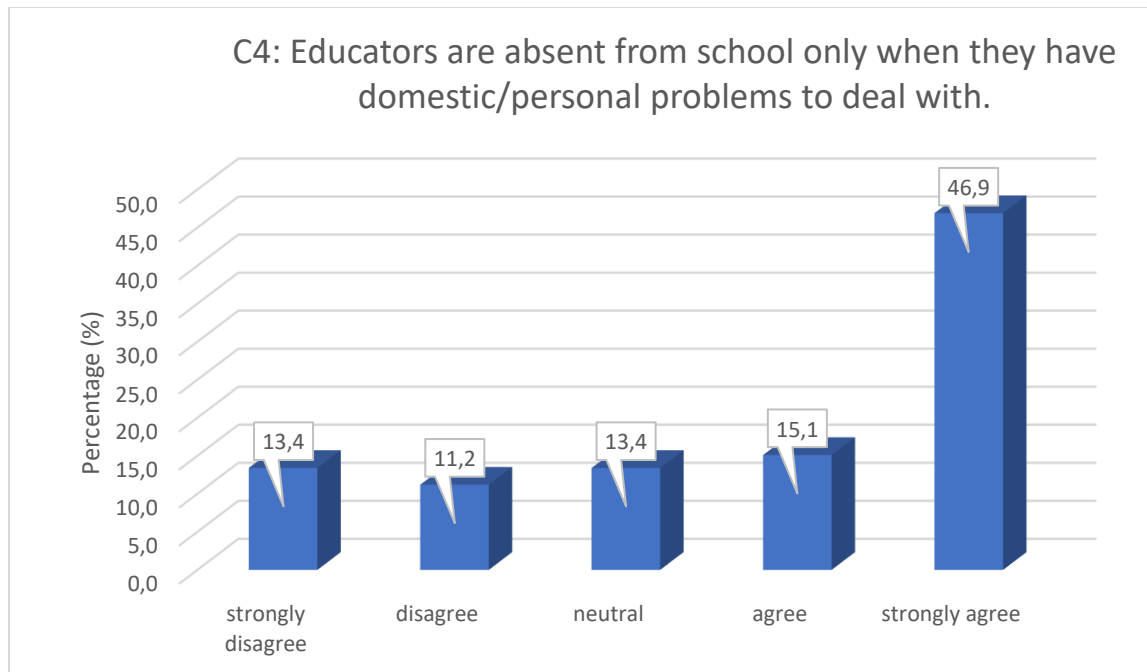


Figure: C4: Educators are absent from school only when they have domestic/personal problems to deal with.

Figure C4 shows educators' absence from school on days when they have personal problems. Of the respondents, 62,0% agreed that educators are absent from school only when they have domestic/personal problems to deal with, while 24,6% disagreed and 13,4% were neutral. The results show that personal issues also cause absenteeism. This assertion is supported by principal 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9 who indicate that according to their leave records, educators are mostly absent when they have personal problems (Interview October 2018). Perhaps the school management could invite wellness officers to assist educators on how to deal with their personal issues. However, principals 3, 4, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14 indicate that their teachers are absent for various reasons not predominately because they have personal problems to deal with. For example, they are absent because they are experiencing health challenges and death in the family. (Interview October 2018). According to Reddy et al. (2010:21), the whole notion of educators taking leave should still be comprehensively and methodically studied in South Africa as very little is known about the degree, nature and forms of leave taken by educators.

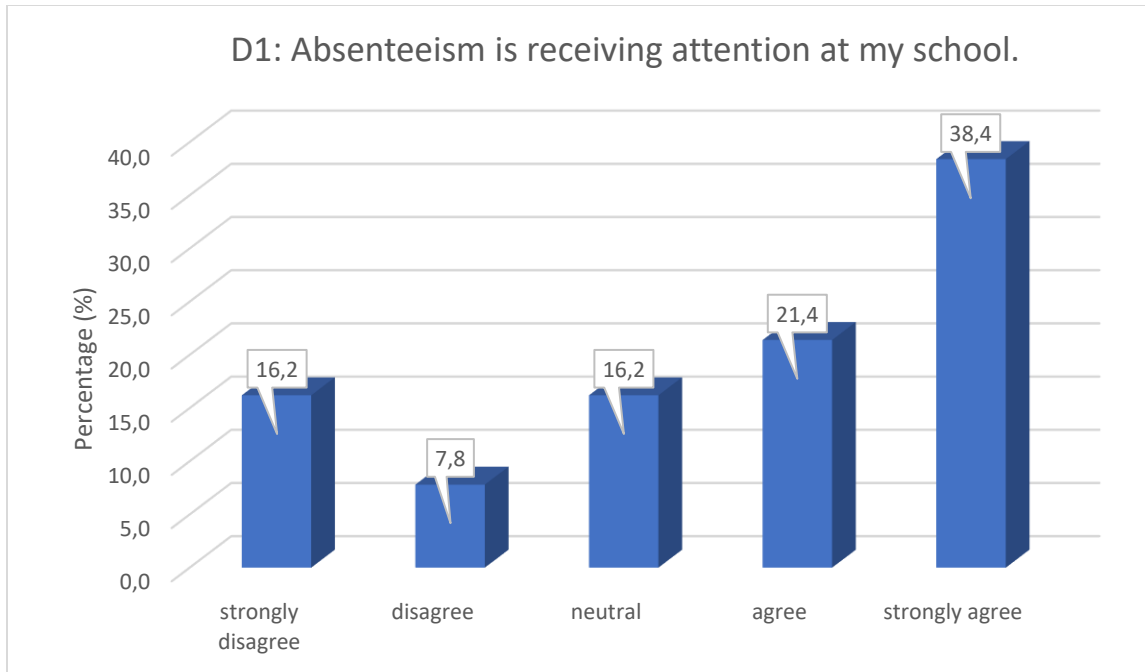


Figure: D1: Absenteeism is receiving attention at my school

Figure D1 illustrates the views of respondents on whether absenteeism is receiving attention in their respective schools. Of the respondents, 59,8% agreed with the statement, while 24% disagreed and 16,2% were neutral. The results show that educators believe that management of school is putting measures in place to minimise or control absenteeism. Principals 3, 4, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14 indicate that they have in addition to instituting disciplinary measures introduced other measures to deal the scourge of absenteeism in their schools. For example, they have delegate responsibilities to subject heads to monitor teacher absenteeism through leave and attendance registers. These subject heads will then weekly report to principals. These reports are sent to the district on a weekly basis so that it can be captured on PERSAL and on the SA-SAMS” (Interview October 2018). Viyalatha and Brindha (2014: 33) report the measures for controlling absenteeism should include adopting a well-defined recruitment procedure to be introduced. However, principal 1, 2, 5, 8 and 9 we have effective processes to manage absenteeism at our school (Interview October 2018).

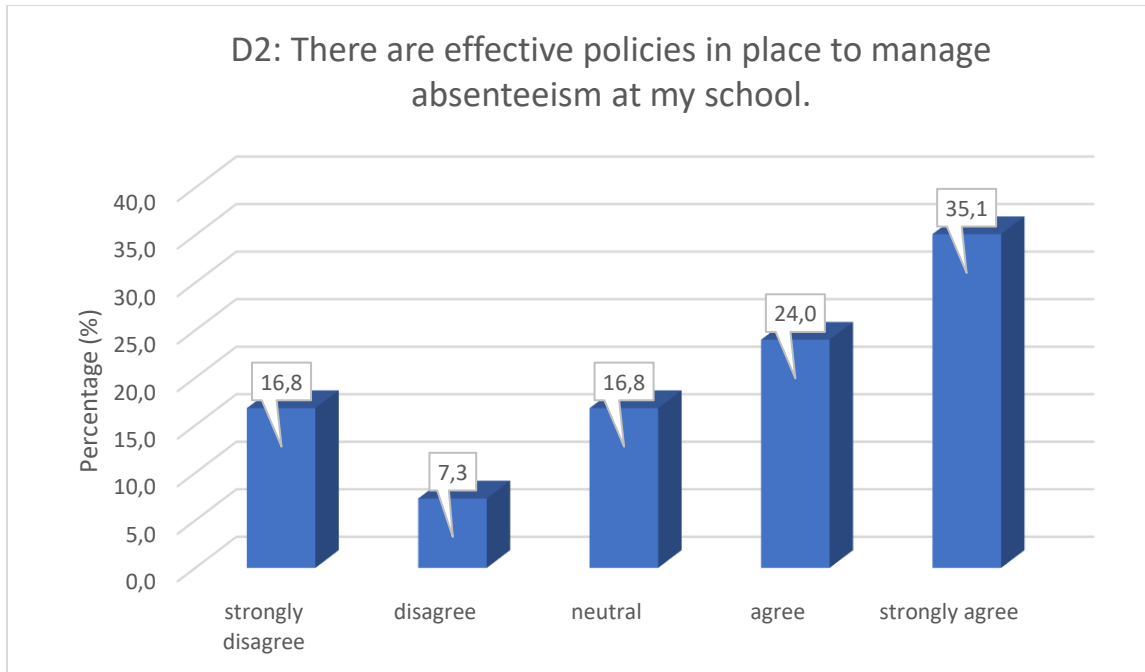


Figure: D2: There are effective policies in place to manage absenteeism at my school

Figure D2 depicts the views of educators regarding the effectiveness of current policies on absenteeism. Of the respondents 59,1% agreed that effective policies in place to manage absenteeism at their school, while 24,1% disagreed and 16.8% were neutral. The results suggest that educators believe that current policies and procedures are adequate and working to manage absenteeism at school. In contrast to views expressed by educators, principals 3, 4, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14 indicate that their experience is that educators find ways to abuse policies and it becomes difficult to manage absenteeism. For instance, they will extend their weekend by not coming to school on Mondays without producing any medical certificate because they know that they are not required to do so (Interview October 2018). This is supported by studies conducted by Human Science Research Council which found that educators tend to abuse sick leave by being absent from work for one or two days without producing a medical certificate (HSRC 2014:87). However, principals 1, 2, 5, 8 and 9 reported that current policies are adequate in dealing with absenteeism (Interview October 2018).

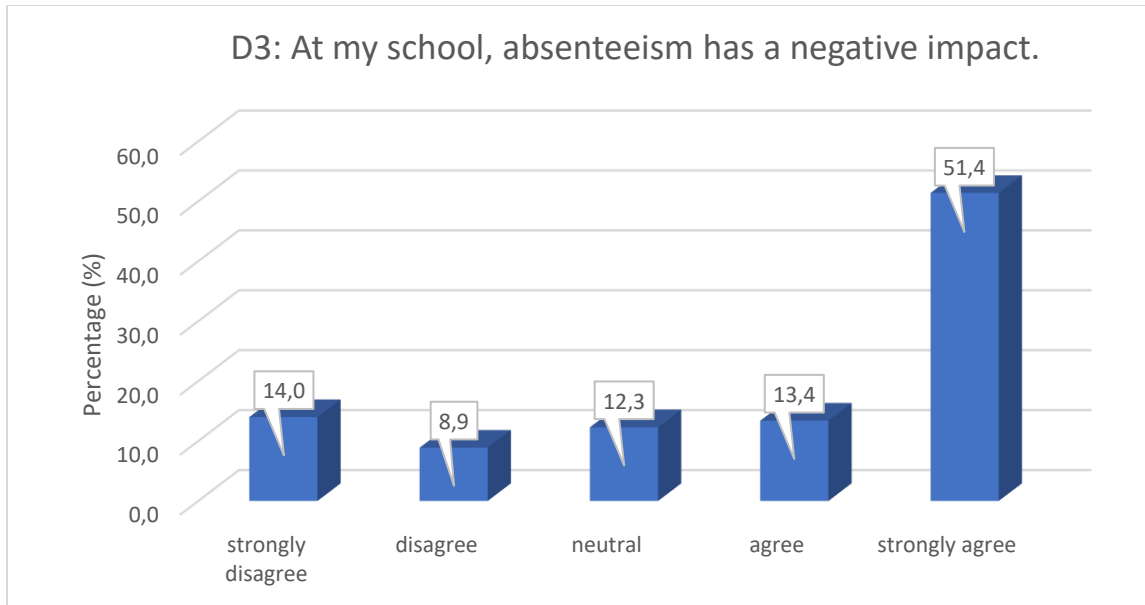


Figure: D3: At my school, absenteeism has a negative impact.

Figure D3 depicts the views of educators regarding the negative effect of absenteeism in their school. Of the respondents, 64,8 % agreed with the statement, while 22,9% disagreed and 12, 3% were neutral. The results suggest educators are concerned about the negative effect of absenteeism in their school. Perhaps school management should put additional measures in place to deal with absenteeism. Principal 3, 4, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14 indicated that as educators they are negatively affected by absenteeism. For example, it becomes a burden for educators to do additional work and it also learners are also affected. In addition, it is physically straining for educators and their overall performance is affected (Interview October 2018). Principal 1, 2, 5, 8 and 9 indicated that absenteeism does not have negative impact at their school because it is well managed through various programmes available at the school (Interview October 2018).

The above view is supported by Lambert, Camp, Edwards, and Saylor (2006: 36) who claim that absenteeism has harmful effect on those employees who are good attenders as they are shuffled around to fill in the positions of absent employees. Authors further state that organisations suffer the detrimental effects and consequences of employee

absenteeism. Management spend valuable time to modify employee assignments to respond to absences.

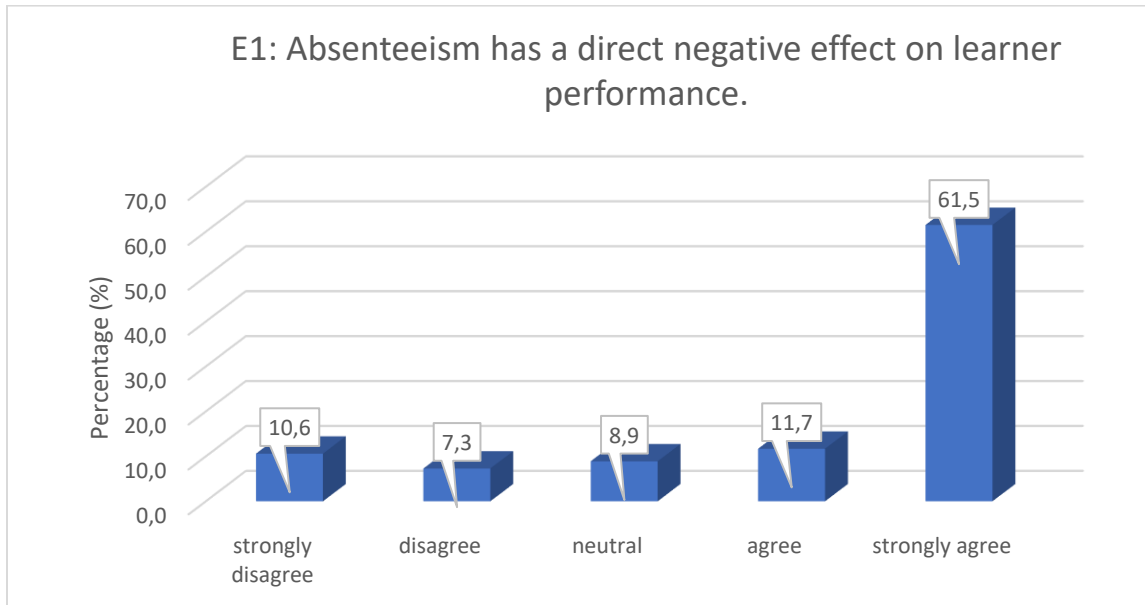


Figure: E1: Absenteeism has a direct negative effect on learner performance

Figure E1 shows the views of educators regarding the negative effect of absenteeism on learner performance the respondents 73,2% agreed that absenteeism has a direct negative effect on learner performance, while 17,9% disagreed and 8, 9% of the respondents were neutral. The results indicate the concern of educators about the serious effect of absenteeism on learner performance, and this is also seen as a huge challenge to the department as well as school management because they are ultimately responsible for learner performance.” In their studies, Mashaba and Maile (2013:1) found that there is a positive correlation between educator absenteeism and learner performance. Authors further state that educator absenteeism contributes to decreasing educational standards and academic underachievement of learners.

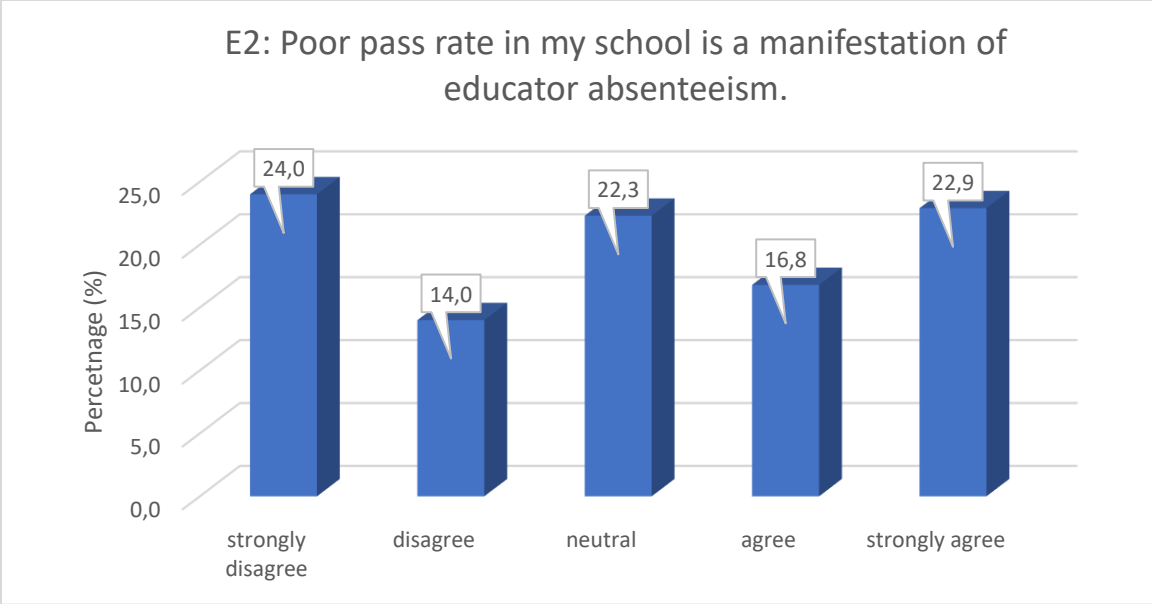


Figure E2: Poor pass rate in my school is a manifestation of educator absenteeism

Figure E2 depicts the views of educators on whether educator absenteeism manifests in poor pass rate. Of the respondents 39,7% agreed that poor pass rate at their school is a manifestation of educator absenteeism, while 38% disagreed and 22, 3% were neutral. Although results suggest a split on views of respondents, responses from interviews by principals indicate that there is a correlation between poor pass rate and educator’s absenteeism. Principals 3, 4, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14 state that much effort goes into doing the work of the absent educator and as a result, educators who are present at school neglect their own work. Principals indicate that they have noted a drop-in student pass rate and that students do not master their work when assessments are done at the end of the academic year” (Principal Interview October 2018). The preceding view has been supported by Clotfelter, Ladd and Vigdor (2009: 28), when they state that when educators are regularly absent from the classroom, the opportunities for learners to learn are reduced. Principal 1, 2, 5, 8 and 9 argued that pass rates in their schools have no link with absenteeism since it is not a problem at our schools (Interview October 2018).

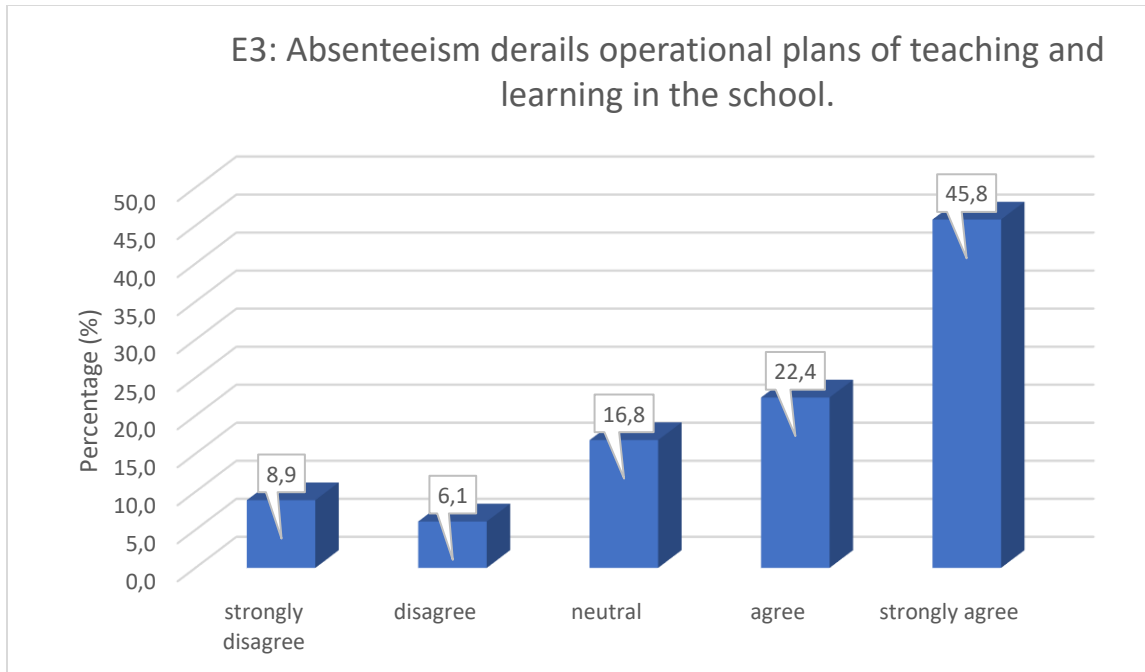


Figure: E3: absenteeism derails operational plans of teaching and learning in the school

Figure E3 shows the views of educators on whether absenteeism derails operational plans of teaching and learning in the school. Of the respondents, 68.2% agreed that absenteeism derails operational plans of teaching and learning in the school, while 15% disagreed and 16,8% were neutral. The results suggest that absenteeism interferes with operational plans of teaching and learning. This view is echoed by principal 3, 4, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14 who state that educators who are not attending their classes owing to absenteeism derails the good operational plans of educating learners and learning and teaching process is delayed at the school” (Interview October 2018). However, principal 1, 2, 5, 8 and 9 indicated that teaching and learning is running smoothly in their schools (Interview October 2018).

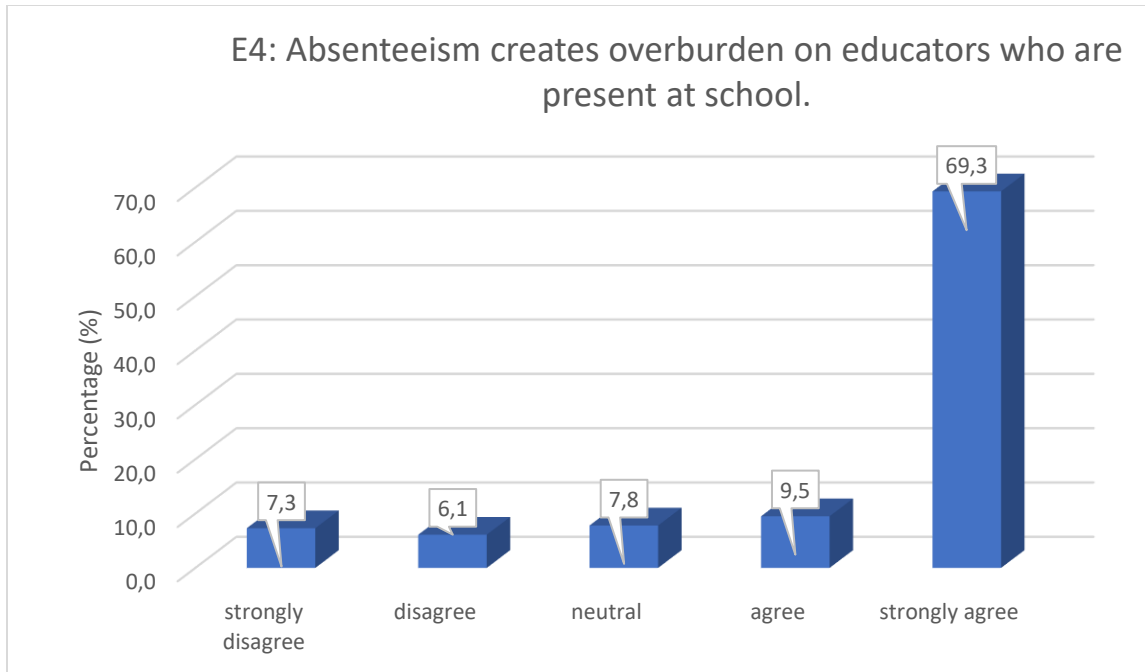


Figure: E4: Absenteeism creates overburden on educators who are present at school.

Figure E4 illustrates the views of respondents on whether absenteeism creates an overburden to educators present at school. Of the respondents, 78,8% agreed that absenteeism creates overburden on educators who are present at school, while 13,4% disagreed with the statement and 7,8% of the respondents were neutral. The results suggest that educators are overworked. In addition, this could create tension and animosity between school management and educators. Principals 3, 4,6,7, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14 indicated that educators are overburdened, and they can hardly cope with extra workload. This is evidenced by poor performance in their own work (Interview October 2018). However, principal 1, 2, 5, 8 and 9 contended that “since absenteeism is not a problem at our school, we do not have to overburden teachers with extra work because majority of our educators are always at work” (Interview October 2018).

4.2.3 Section C: Open-ended research questions

Finally, participants faced the five open-ended questions. The five open-ended questions desired to establish some of the reasons for opinions expressed in response to the close-ended questions, thereby enriching some of the views expressed in numbers.

4.2.3.1 In your opinion, what should the Provincial Department of Education do to minimise absenteeism at your school?

This question sought to establish the views on the role of the Provincial Department of Education in minimising educator absenteeism.

Majority of participants suggest that the Free State Provincial Department of Education should introduce workshops on educator absenteeism, they believe that will assist educators to know and understand the effect of absenteeism on learners and educators. In addition, they indicate that the DBE should also find out what is the contributing factors to the high rate of absenteeism in schools.

4.2.3.2 In your opinion, what should the school management do to minimize absenteeism at your school?

This question sought to establish the views on the role of the school management in minimising educator absenteeism.

Most participants indicate that it is the responsibility of the school management to find out the root cause of educator absenteeism. They suggest that studying the pattern of absenteeism could be one way of finding out the causes of absenteeism. In addition, participants indicate that more active involvement of wellness officers will assist educators in dealing with their personal problems. They believe that such wellness will assist educators who are dealing with domestic issues of a psychological nature.

4.2.3.3 In your opinion, what are the factors that contributes to educator absenteeism in your school

This question sought to establish the views on factors that contributes to educator absenteeism.

Majority of participants indicate that their working environment is not conducive for teaching and learning and this has affected staff morale. By conducive environment

participants refer to availability of teaching resources such as teaching aids and equipment. Participants have also indicated that they teach in overcrowded classrooms, and this affects the quality of teaching as they are unable to reach all learners. In addition, participants indicated that they do not receive adequate support from management of their school.

4.2.3.4 If educators are absent from work would you agree that the basic principle of “no work no pay” should be applied?

The questions sought to establish the views on whether the principle of no work no pay should be applied to deal with the scourge of absenteeism.

Majority of participants indicate that no work no pay could be a feasible proposal provided that it is applied fairly without any fear or favour. They state that leave policy should be followed to the latter in this regard and school management should not allow any abuse of leave policy. For instance, habitual absence should be punished with no work no pay.

4.2.3.5 What is your overall experience and opinion on the phenomenon of absenteeism in your school?

This question desired to establish some of the reasons for opinions expressed in response to the close-ended question. The questions sought to ascertain participants overall experience with absenteeism.

Participants indicated that their experience on absenteeism has been negative. For instance, learners write examination without syllabus being completed. Participants further indicated that they are physically exhausted owing to work overload. This has led to a decline in their overall performance and the performance of the learners at their schools. In addition, participants indicated that they have missed opportunities for personal development offered by the DBE, i.e. workshops because that must stand in for other educators.

4.3 CONCLUSION

The chapter presented the findings obtained after analysing the data collected from Lejweleputswa District schools which responded to questionnaires, open-ended questions, and interview questions. The discussion of data analysis and interpretation in this chapter significantly contributed to answering the research questions which sought to investigate the absenteeism of educators in Lejweleputswa District schools since it was established that educator absenteeism was a problem at Lejweleputswa District.

The findings on this chapter revealed that educators are dealing with personal issues during working hours. Other findings are a poor pass rate at school which is caused by educator absenteeism, which in turn also creates a vicious cycle of overburdening other educators who are always present at school. What is further revealed by the findings is that educators' absenteeism is also taking place on Mondays, Fridays and during paydays, and that has been revealed by the District Quarterly Audit Report during 2017 and 2018. The findings also revealed that school management team is not doing enough to deal with educators who are not reporting on Mondays, Fridays and during paydays.

The views of the participants expressed during open-ended questions are as follows; the introduction of workshops on educator absenteeism, the DBE should find out what the contributing factors to the high rate of absenteeism in schools is. Moreover, the school management needs to find out the root cause of educator absenteeism as well as absenteeism pattern to be studied in order to arrive at the causes of absenteeism, the introduction of more active involvement of wellness process to assist educators with their personal problems and others, working environment which is not conducive for teaching and learning, overcrowded classrooms, lack of support from management at school, the introduction of no work no pay for habitual absences and a decline in the overall performance of educators and learners at school owing to educator absenteeism. In the next chapter findings, conclusions and recommendations are discussed.

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The previous chapter presented the data analysis and interpretation. In this chapter findings, conclusions and recommendations related to absenteeism of educators in the Lejweleputswa District schools in the Free State Province are presented. In addition, suggestions for further research are also provided.

5.2 SYNTHESIS OF CHAPTERS:

Chapter one set the tone for the entire study. It provided justification and importance of undertaking this study. This chapter provided for background and rationale for the study, research problem, research questions, research objectives, synopsis of research design and methodology, sampling, data analysis, and limitations of the study.

Chapter two provided a review of literature on educator absenteeism, contextualisation of absenteeism, classification of absenteeism, employee and employer relationship, conceptual framework on absenteeism, educator absenteeism in developing and developed countries, legislative and policy framework. It further provided discussion on reasons, causes and costs of educator absenteeism. Lastly, focus was also on the impact of educator absenteeism and strategies and measures to control or reduce educator absenteeism.

Chapter three presented philosophical perspectives, research design, methodology and research methods used in this study. This included data collection methods, sampling, and data analysis. The chapter further provided a brief explanation of research ethics and limitations of this study.

Chapter four presented data analysis and interpretation of the research.

Chapter five interprets the findings, conclusions and recommendations were made in this chapter.

5.3 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

The findings of this study are based on the main research questions which are contained in chapter 1. The following research objectives were also identified in chapter 1, flowing from the main research question as follows:

- To determine the theoretical framework that underpins educator absenteeism.
- To determine how absenteeism is managed in Lejweleputswa District schools.
- To establish factors that lead to absenteeism of educators in Lejweleputswa District schools.
- To determine the effect of absenteeism on functioning of schools in Lejweleputswa District.
- To explore the strategies that can be put in place to deal with absenteeism in Lejweleputswa District schools.

Objective 1: Theoretical framework on absenteeism

Literature review in chapter 2 of this study has revealed that educator absenteeism is a global phenomenon. However, it is more prevalent in developing countries compared to developed countries. For instance, educator absenteeism rates are very high in countries such as Uganda and Nigeria with absenteeism rates of about 30%- 40%. Although educator absenteeism rates of 8 - 10% in South Africa are far less to those of the countries, they are still regarded as very high by world standards.

According to Msosa (2020:3), absenteeism should not only be limited to absence from work, but it should include absence from the classroom. For example, an educator who is present at the workplace but not in the classroom as scheduled should be regarded as absent from work. Another example is when an educator is schooled to be in class but is busy with non-work-related activities such as union meeting should also be regarded as absent from work.

Furthermore, literature has demonstrated that educator absenteeism has far reaching financial or cost implication for public institutions. For example, in 2012 the Free State Education Department lost R16 million owing to educator absenteeism. It is reported that about 24 000 educators were reported to be on sick leave during that period (“Liesel in Free State News 07-13 September).

Literature shows that various policy and legislative measures are in place to regulate educator absenteeism. These include Employment of Educators Act of 1998, Basic Conditions of Employment Act of 1997, Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, and National Education Policy Act of 1996. These measures have not been effective in dealing with high rates educator absenteeism in South Africa. According to HSRC report on educator absenteeism in South Africa (2014:87), educators tend to abuse sick leave by being absent from work for 1 or 2 days without producing a medical certificate. This is a worrying factor for the DBE and other stakeholders in the education sector.

According to Badubi (2017:1164), an autocratic leadership style can cause educators to resent their jobs and ultimately the educator will develop attitude and not come to work. Literature has also shown that educator absenteeism is linked to leadership style in schools. In addition, support for educators is very critical in motivating educators to come to work; this is more prevalent in countries such as Ghana (Mothibeli 2017:35).

Objective 2: How is absenteeism managed in Lejweleputswa schools?

Although various legislative measures and policies are available to school management on how to deal with educator absenteeism, absenteeism remains a challenge in Lejweleputswa District schools. Employment of Educators Act of 1998 is one of the pieces of legislation available to management in dealing with educator absenteeism. Section 14(1)(a) provides that permanently appointed educators are deemed to be discharged if they are absent for a consecutive period of 14 days without the permission of the employer”.

The findings of the research show that in Lejweleputswa public schools' management has delegated some of the responsibility to monitor attendance of educators as a way of managing absenteeism. Subject heads are tasked with the responsibility to monitor educators' attendance daily, and they report to management of the school. Once received by management these records are sent to the Lejweleputswa District office to be captured on PERSAL and on SA-SAMS. Despite this initiative, absenteeism remains a problem. This is indicated by 66% of educators who agree that absenteeism is a problem at their school. This is supported by views expressed by principals 3, 4, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14 who lament that absenteeism is a problem at their school because educators who are always absent find it difficult to complete the syllabus and management must intervene (see Figure B1 in chapter four).

Results of this research revealed that management of schools have put measures in place to deal with the scourge of absenteeism in their schools. This is illustrated by 59.8% of participants who indicate that absenteeism is receiving attention in their schools. This is supported by views expressed by principals 3,4,6,7,10,11,12,13 and 14 interviewed by the researcher. They indicate that experience the problem of educator absenteeism in their school. To deal with this problem, they use leave and attendance register (see Figure D2 in chapter four). One of the findings of the research show that educators believed that although measures not adequate, school management did something when the measures to control the absenteeism were introduced.

Another finding of this research shows that disciplinary measures are not applied consistently and promptly by management of schools. This is illustrated by 62.6% of educators who indicate that absenteeism should not be tolerated in schools. In support of the views expressed by educators, the principals 3, 4, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14 interviewed by the researcher indicate that if disciplinary measures are not applied consistently to deal with absenteeism, others will follow suit and learners will continue to suffer (see Figure B3 in chapter four). In response to open-ended question on what should be done to minimise absenteeism in schools, majority of participants suggested that school management should come with a way of managing absenteeism, study the pattern

or trends of absenteeism in their schools. This will assist in identifying the root cause of the problem (see open ended question 3.2 on page 93).

Findings of this research has revealed that although policies to deal with absenteeism are in place, educators find loopholes to abuse them, and it becomes very difficult to manage absenteeism when that happens (see Figure D3). This is supported research conducted by HSRC (2014:87) which showed that indeed teachers tend to abuse their sick leave.

Objective 3: What factors contribute to educator absenteeism?

Findings of this research revealed absenteeism for reasons related to personal/domestic issue does not cut across all schools but isolated to certain schools. For instance, for principals 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 8 and 9, educators are mostly absent from school when they have domestic issues to deal with. This is supported by their records (see Figure C4 in chapter four). This research has also revealed that the services of employee wellness officers are not effectively utilised by schools to assist educators with domestic or personal problems as revealed by participants in their response to open-ended question 3.2 which asked participants to suggest what school management could do to minimise absenteeism at their school (see page 93 of chapter 4). On the contrary, half of the principals (3,4,10,11,12,13 and 14) who were interviewed by the researcher indicated that reasons for absenteeism are different in their schools. This means absenteeism because of personal issues is not a dominant factor in their schools.

The findings of the research revealed that educators are overburdened with work and can no longer cope. This is evidenced by decline in their overall performance with their own work as expected because they must do the work of absent educators, and this has the potential of causing tension and animosity between school management and educators who feel that they are not fairly treated by the authority. This is supported by principals 3, 4, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14 who were interviewed by the researcher (see Figure E4 in chapter four).

Findings of this research has revealed that owing to absenteeism, educators are negatively affected and physically strained and this has affected their performance in class. This was indicated by principals interviewed by the researcher regarding negative impact of absenteeism in their schools. The findings of this research have revealed that the working environment for educators is not conducive for teaching and learning and this has affected staff morale. Availability of teaching resources such as teaching aids and equipment has been cited by participants as critical. In addition, the results of the research have revealed that teaching in overcrowded classrooms affects the quality of teaching as educators are unable to reach all learners. The issue of adequate support from management has also been raised by participants (see participants responses on open-ended question 3.3).

Objective 4: What is the effect of absenteeism on functioning of schools in Lejweleputswa District

The findings of this research revealed that absenteeism has a negative effect on the daily functioning of the school. As a result, school management must reschedule and reallocate work of educators who are absent. The above view is supported by interview principals 3, 4, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14 who indicated that absenteeism derails long and short-term plans of the school. For instance, school management must reallocate functions and postpone important events. In addition, teachers who are supposed to go on training can no longer do so (see Figure B4 in chapter 4 of this study). In addition, principals 3, 4, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14 indicate that educators who are not attending their classes derail operational plans and the teaching and learning processes (see Figure E3). These findings are supported by Mkwanazi (1997:3) who argues that educator absenteeism disrupts schooling and obstructs the efficient and effective functioning of the schools. Although absenteeism has come under immense scrutiny in South Africa, it seems as if the effects thereof are not given the proper attention they deserve.

The findings of the research revealed that there is a direct correlation between educator absenteeism and learner pass rate. This is supported by responses of principals 3, 4, 6, 7, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 14 who stated that they have they spent most of their time doing the

work of absent teachers while their own work is neglected. This has manifested in drop-in student pass rate; student do not master the content when they are assessed at the end of the year (see Figure E2 in chapter four of this study).

The findings of this research have revealed that it has become a norm for educators to be absent from school on Mondays. These findings are corroborated by official DBE District Audit Report for 2017-18. The Audit Report also indicated on average between 7% and 8 % of educators were absent from school per quarter (see Figure C1 Table 4.1 and 4.2 of chapter four of this study). The findings of this study resonate with those of Msosa (2020:2) when he revealed that in many instances (77%), educators are absent on Mondays.

The results of the study have also revealed that educator absenteeism is also prevalent on Fridays. These findings are corroborated by official DBE Audit Report for 2017-18. The Audit Report shows that on Fridays 10% of educators were absent from school per quarter. This shows an increase of about 2% compared to average absenteeism reported for Mondays (see Figure C2 table 4.3 and 4.4). The findings of this research have revealed that it has become a norm for educators to be absent from school on paydays. These findings are corroborated by official DBE District Audit Report for 2017-18. The report shows that 9% of educators were absent from school absenteeism per quarter (see Figure C3 Table 4.5 and 4.6 of chapter four of this study).

Objective 5: What strategies are in place to deal with absenteeism in schools?

The findings of this research have shown that management of schools have introduced initiatives (use of leave and attendance register as monitoring tools) to manage absenteeism in their schools. This is done through delegation of some of the responsibilities to subject heads of departments. However, it appears these measures are not adequate to effectively deal with the scourge of absenteeism. This is evident in responses provided by educators when they state that their working environment is not conducive for teaching and learning. In addition, educators indicated that employee assistance officers should be effectively used to assist them to deal with personal

problems. Furthermore, the results of this research have shown that disciplinary measures are not applied consistently by management of schools to mitigate effect of absenteeism. Therefore, educators are not deterred to continue abusing their sick leave. The findings of this study have demonstrated that there is no simple solution in dealing with absenteeism. Perhaps, the best way to curb absenteeism is to address contextual factors applicable to the specific school or district and support and monitoring of educators.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the identified findings of the research, the following recommendations can be made:

The findings of this research have shown that the use of attendance registers and monitoring of sick leave has not improved teacher attendance in schools. The researcher suggests that a monitoring team consisting of district officials and officials from provincial DBE could be endowed with authority to carry out responsibilities of monitoring teacher presence and ensuring teaching and learning is taking place. Particular attention should be paid to absenteeism on Mondays, Fridays, and paydays. The monitoring team should also ensure that disciplinary measures are applied consistently and promptly by school management.

Work overload and overcrowded classrooms, unconducive teaching and learning environment is highlighted in the findings as factors that contribute to educator absenteeism. To this end, teacher assistants could be appointed by the schools to relieve overburdened teachers. Secondly, the school management and district office can assist with providing teachers with required teaching materials. In addition, more infrastructure can be provided to deal with overcrowding of learners in classroom. In the short term, mobile classes can be sourced.

It has proved to be a challenge to resolve a matter without finding out the root causes and measuring it. To this end, school management and district office need to measure the

extent of the problem and identify causes accurately. Leave records and attendance registers and records kept by the district office can give some indication on problem areas and patterns and trends can be identified.

As shown by the findings of this research, the wellness of educators is critical in dealing with the scourge of absenteeism. To address absenteeism related to domestic problems, the study recommends that wellness offices from the district should be actively involved in assisting teachers who are struggling with personal problems.

As revealed by the findings of this research, educators tend to abuse the privilege of personal leave. The number of days for this leave should be limited and carefully monitored. To minimise absenteeism, teachers should be required to provide justifiable reasons for their absence or medical certificate in cases of sick leave. Otherwise, it should be recorded as leave without pay and deductions should be made to the salary of the educator. As a long-term measure to minimise absenteeism, school management together with district office should provide incentives to motivate educators to come to work. This can take the form of personal development workshops or courses.

5.5 CONCLUSION

The result of this research has demonstrated that educator absenteeism is a challenge that warranted investigation. Various reasons for educator absenteeism have been identified in this study. However, other studies can interrogate this topic even further and identify other issues that the study could not reveal. It is also important to note that the findings presented on this study should not be generalised to other districts which were not part of this study.

This research has suggested certain causes of educator absenteeism are because of lack of low staff morale and poor working conditions. It is clear to all respondents including educators and school management that the abuse of leave privileges is not because of lack of knowledge because majority of educators who participated in this study have been in the field of education for more than a decade and cannot therefore claim ignorance.

The use of official audit report to prove the extent of absenteeism has proved to be invaluable for this research. It is crucial in any research endeavour that information received from respondents be corroborated with official reports to arrive at accurate conclusions.

This research has proved that absenteeism has far reaching implication beyond overloading the teacher but including poor learner performance, disruptions in school management in the short and long-term. Therefore, the solution in minimising the scourge of absenteeism lies with all stakeholders in the education sector. Each one of them should play a role to encourage teachers and motivating them to attend school.

This will hopefully not only discourage absenteeism but improve learner performance and instil a sense of commitment and professional ethos.

5.6 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Schools covered in this study fall under the Lejweleputswa District which is in the Free State Province. Future studies should be extended to other districts to establish how far wide is the problem of educator absenteeism. Future studies can interrogate the following issues:

- Mismanagement and abuse of privileges such as sick leave.
- The extent of absenteeism as a result of domestic-related problems.
- The effect of absenteeism on learner performance.

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APPENDIX A: PERMISSION LETTER FROM DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Enquiries: KK Motshumi
Ref: Notification of research; PJ Tshekedi
Tel. 051 404 9221 / 079 503 4943
Email: K. Motshumi@fseducation.gov.za




The Acting District Director
Lejweleputswa District

Dear Ms Zonke

NOTIFICATION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH PROJECT IN YOUR DISTRICT BY PJ TSHEKEDI

1. The above mentioned candidate was granted permission to conduct research in your district as follows.
Topic: Absenteeism of educators in the Lejweleputswa district schools in the Free State Province (Department of Education)
Schools involved: Letsete and Thotagaula Secondary Schools, Mokgwabong and Bofihis Primary Schools, Lejweleputswa District.
Target Population: Principals and 19 Heads of Departments of schools indicated above.
Period: From date of signature to 30 September 2018. Please note the department does not allow any research to be conducted during the fourth term (quarter) of the academic year nor during normal school hours.
2. **Research benefits:** The research will assist the Free State Department of education to be able to see the level of absenteeism within the districts/province and it will also give strategies to combat absenteeism.
3. Logistical procedures were met, in particular ethical considerations for conducting research in the Free State Department of Education.
4. The Strategic Planning, Policy and Research Directorate will make the necessary arrangements for the researcher to present the findings and recommendations to the relevant officials in your district.

Yours sincerely


DR J. MASEKOLANYANE
CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER

DATE 2018/7/9.

APPENDIX B: UNISA ETHICS CLEARANCE LETTER



DEPARTMENT: PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT
RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 18 June 2018

Ref #: PAM/2018/017 (Tshekedi)
Name of applicant: Mr PJ Tshekedi
Student#: 36818615

Dear Mr Tshekedi:

Decision: Ethics Clearance Approval 18 June 2018 to 17 June 2021

Name: Mr PJ Tshekedi, student#: 36818615, tshekedi@unisa.ac.za,
tel: 057 391-7200
[Supervisor: Mr RP Motsoeneng, tel: 012 429-6312, motsoeng@unisa.ac.za]

Research project "Effect of absenteeism of educators on teaching and learning: case of Lejweleputswa District schools in the Free State province" **Qualification:** Master of Public Administration

Thank you for the application for **research ethics clearance** by the Department: Public Administration and Management: Research Ethics Review Committee, for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for the period **18 June 2018 to 17 June 2021**. If necessary to complete the research, you may apply for an **extension** of the period.

You are, though, required to submit the letter from the Department of Education (Free State province) in which permission is granted to you to do this research, to this Ethics Committee within **30 days** of the date of this letter.

The decision will be tabled at the next College RERC meeting for notification/ratification.

For full approval: The application was **expedited and reviewed** in compliance with the *Unisa Policy on Research Ethics* and the *Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment* by the RERC on 14 June 2018.

The proposed research may now commence with the proviso that:

- 1) The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the *Unisa Policy on Research Ethics*.



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- 2) Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study, as well as changes in the methodology, should be communicated in writing to this Ethics Review Committee.
- 3) The researcher will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
- 4) Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing, accompanied by a progress report.
- 5) The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study, among others, the **Protection of Personal Information Act 4/2013**; **Children's Act 36/2005** and **National Health Act 61/2003**.
- 6) Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data requires additional ethics clearance.
- 7) Field work activities **may not** continue after the expiry date given. Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

Kind regards



Ms C Alers
 Chairperson:
 Research Ethics Review Committee
alersc@unisa.ac.za



Prof MT Mogale
 Executive Dean: CEMS

APPENDIX C: PARTICIPATION INFORMATION SHEET



TO ALL PARTICIPANTS

PARTICIPANT INFORMATION SHEET

20 August 2018

Title: *The effect of absenteeism of educators in Lejweleputswa District Schools in the Free State Province*

Dear Prospective Participant

My name is PJ Tshakedi and my contact details are as follows: (057) 3917200/ 0823091592 or tshekedi@gmail.com I am doing a research towards Master's degree (MPA) at the University of South Africa. My supervisor is Mr RP Motsoeneng and his contact details are as follows: (012) 429 6312 or motsorp@unisa.ac.za He is an academic in the Department of Public Administration and Management. We are inviting you to participate in this study because you're an educator in one of the schools in the Lejweleputswa District.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE STUDY?

The research is conducted to determine how absenteeism can be managed in the Lejweleputswa District Schools in the Free State Province.

WHY AM I BEING INVITED TO PARTICIPATE?

You are chosen to participate in this study because you are an educator in one of the schools in the Lejweleputswa District.

WHAT IS THE NATURE OF MY PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY?

The study involves *interviews* (audio recording for management) and *questionnaires*. The nature of questions asked in the interview and questionnaire are related to educator



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absenteeism. However, the beginning requires you to provide a short demographical information.

INSTRUCTION FOR COMPLETION OF QUESTIONNAIRE

- Do not write your name or any personal information on this questionnaire.
- Please answer all questions from **Sections A to F**
- Please read each item under Section A thoughtfully and indicate your answer by marking with an **'X'** at the appropriate box. For **A2, A3, and A8** please give your answers in the space provided.
- For **Sections B to E**, please make your mark by circling the appropriate number using the given scale from 1 to 7.
- For **Section F**, please reply by commenting on the space provided for the open-ended questions.
- Please note that information you provide in these sections will remain confidential and will only be used for the purpose of the research.
- Please complete and submit the questionnaire to the person from whom received.

Thank you for taking time to read this information sheet and for participating in this study.

Regards

As signed

Mr PJ Tshekedi



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APPENDIX D: INTERVIEWS SCHEDULE

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:

Please elaborate your answer in case you give YES or NO in all questions from section 1-4

1. Is absenteeism a problem at your school?

2. How do you manage absenteeism at your school?

3. What interventions are made to manage educators' absenteeism at your school?

5 Do you think the learner performance at your school is influenced by the educator' absenteeism?

6 Do you think the current policies are adequate in addressing educator absenteeism?

7 Do domestic/personal problems have a bearing on educator absenteeism at your school?

8 What effect does educator absenteeism has on the functioning of the school?

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION AND PARTICIPATION IN THIS STUDY.

APPENDIX E: QUESTIONNAIRE

SECTION A: Demographic Information

Please Choose and tick () the appropriate box)

A.1 Indicate your gender in the box provided

Male	1
Female	2

A2 Indicate your age in the box provided

A3 Indicate your teaching experience in the box provided

A4 Indicate your highest qualification in the box provided.

Certificate	1
Diploma	2
Degree	3
Postgraduate degree	4

A5 Indicate the highest grade you teach in the box provided.

A6 Indicate your position at your school in the box provide

Principal	1
Deputy Principal	2
Head of Department	3
Educator	4

A7 Indicate your school's quintile in the box provided.

Quintile 1	1
Quintile 2	2
Quintile 3	3
Quintile 4	4
Quintile 5	5

A8 Indicate your school pass rate for the year 2017 in the box provided.

A9 Indicate the level of school in the box provided.

Primary	1
Secondary	2

For each statement below, please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with it. Kindly answer by putting an (X) on a relevant answer that you wish to select.

USE THE SCALE BELOW

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Strongly Disagree						Strongly Agree

SECTION B - Objective 1: Establish views and experiences of educators on absenteeism.

- B1. Educator absenteeism is a serious problem. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- B2. Educator absenteeism does not concern me. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- B3. Absenteeism should not be tolerated in schools. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- B4. Absenteeism obstruct the efficient functioning of school 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

SECTION C - Objective 2: Determining patterns of educator's absenteeism in schools.

- C1. Educators are absent from school on Mondays. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- C2. Educators are absent from school on Fridays. 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- C3. Educators are absent from school on paydays 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- C4. Educators are absent from school only when they have Domestic/personal problems to deal with 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

SECTION D -Objective 3: Determine the understanding of the impact of absenteeism amongst The educator

- D1. Absenteeism is receiving attention at my school 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- D2. There are effective policies in place to manage Absenteeism at my school 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- D3. At my school, absenteeism has a negative impact 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

SECTION E – Objective 4: Determine the relationship between absenteeism and learner performance.

E1.	Absenteeism have a direct negative effect on learner performance.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
E2.	Poor pass rate in my school is a manifestation of educator absenteeism.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
E3.	Absenteeism derail operational plans of teaching and learning in the school.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
E4.	Absenteeism creates overburden on educators who are present at school.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

SECTION F— Open-ended research questions

3.1 In your opinion, what should the provincial Department of Education do to minimise absenteeism at your school.

3.2 In your opinion, what should the school management do to minimise absenteeism at your school.

3.3 In your opinion, what are the factors that contribute to absenteeism of educators in your school.

3.4 if educators are absent from work, would you agree that the principle of “no work no pay should be applied. Explain briefly.

3.5 What is your overall experience and opinion on the phenomenon of absenteeism in your school?

APPENDIX F: CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT WITH STATISTICIAN

CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT WITH STATISTICIAN

CONFIDENTIALITY CLAUSE BETWEEN

RESEARCHER: Mr PJ Tsheledi

AND

STATISTICIAN: A M RAMBUDA

Research Title: Absenteeism of educators in the Lejweleputswa District schools in the Free State province.

The Unisa research code of ethics requires that confidentiality should be maintained throughout data collection, data analysis and reporting.

As a statistician, I understand that I have access to confidential information. By signing this statement, I am indicating my understanding of this responsibility and agree to the following:

- I understand that all information obtained or accessed by me in the course of my work is confidential. I agree not to divulge or otherwise make known to unauthorised persons any of this information, unless specifically authorised to do so.
- I understand that names and any other identifying information about study sites and participants are completely confidential.
- I agree to use the data solely for the purpose stipulated by the researcher.
- I agree to maintain the confidentiality of the data at all times and keep the data in secure, password protected location.
- I agree to shred all hard copies of data in my possession on completion of the project. All electronic copies will be permanently deleted from the hard drive of my computer upon completion of this project.

AWELANI MEWIN RAMBUDA 02/05/2020
Printed name and Surname (statistician) Date

A M Rambuda
Signature

Mr PJ Tsheledi 02/05/2020
(Researcher) Date

[Signature]
Signature

APPENDIX G: LANGUAGE EDITING CERTIFICATE

EDITING AND PROOFREADING CERTIFICATE

7542 Galangal Street

Lotus Gardens

Pretoria

0008

05 February 2022

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This certificate serves to confirm that I have language edited PJ Tshekedi's dissertation entitled, "ABSENTEEISM OF EDUCATORS IN THE LEJWELEPUTSWA DISTRICT SCHOOLS IN THE FREE STATE PROVINCE."

I found the work easy and intriguing to read. Much of my editing basically dealt with obstructionist technical aspects of language, which could have otherwise compromised smooth reading as well as the sense of the information being conveyed. I hope that the work will be found to be of an acceptable standard. I am a member of Professional Editors' Guild.

Hereunder are my contact details:



Jack Chokwe (Mr)

Contact numbers: 072 214 5489

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