

PRINCIPALS' ROLE IN ADDRESSING UNEXCUSED TEACHER
ABSENTEEISM IN ADULT LEARNING CENTRES IN THE
JOHANNESBURG SOUTH DISTRICT

BY

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Mini dissertation submitted in part fulfilment of the requirements for the
degree of:

MASTER'S IN EDUCATION

In the subject

ADULT EDUCATION

at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

SUPERVISOR: DR EM NKOANA

JUNE 2022

DECLARATION

I Ronnie Risimati Maceke (Student no:47519711) hereby declare that the research study: PRINCIPAL'S ROLE IN ADDRESSING UNEXCUSEDTEACHER ABSENTEEISM IN ADULT LEARNING CENTRES IN THE JOHANNESBURG SOUTH DISTRICT is my own work and that I did acknowledge all the sources used by using the correct referencing method.

Signature: _____ Date: 30 JUNE 2022

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My deepest gratitude goes to my wife Eunice and my children Tshembho, Tlakuso, Xilavelo and Muhluri. Without their love and support I would not have the drive to pursue my dreams. I would also like to acknowledge my brothers Stanley, Solly, Caswel and Abel. Special thanks go to my mother Tsatsawani Maceke and my late father Elon Mzamani Maceke (may your soul rest in peace) for instilling the love of education to all your children.

To the principal of Thamsanqa Secondary School, Mr Maleba A W and all my colleagues, thank you for encouraging me to soldier on with my educational endeavours. Many thanks go to the CEO of Gauteng Community Education, Mr Clifford Wee and his staff members, as well as to all Centre Managers and educators who participated in this research study.

To my good friend Elspeth R.A Gura for her unwavering support.

To all staff members under the Department of Adult Basic Education at UNISA, thank you for your support.

Finally, special thanks go to my supervisor, Dr. EM. Nkoana for his unwavering mentorship, guidance and motivation throughout this project. He challenged me to dig deep and bring out the best work that I could.

Inkomu

Giya Nyavani

ABSTRACT

This study was carried out with the aim of exploring the principals' role in managing unexcused teacher absenteeism in Adult Community Education and Training (ACET) centres. In order to achieve this, the study investigated the causes of unexcused teacher absenteeism as well as the impact it has on learners, teachers, and the functioning of the ACET Centres. A literature review was carried out in order to understand the position of policy and academic literature on this topic.

The study employed an explorative research design and a qualitative research approach. Semi-structured interviews were used to obtain primary data from twenty-five teachers and five principals selected from five ACET centres. Observations and document reviews were also carried out at the centres. The data was analysed using qualitative content analysis in order to derive themes which formed the basis of a discussion on the objectives.

The educators and principals highlighted sickness, family emergencies and bereavement as the main causes of unexcused absenteeism. The study also showed evidence of gaps in the principals' and educators' knowledge of the Leave Policy for Educators, leading to inadequate planning, communication and management. Further evidence suggested that some educators abuse the provisions of the Leave Policy in order to attend to personal business.

The study recommends that in order to combat the challenge of unexcused teacher absenteeism, ACET centres be sufficiently resourced in order to ease the burden on the educators. Furthermore, the department should provide leadership training to equip principals to effectively manage their relationships with educators, create a supportive professional environment for educators, as well as to administer and monitor leave and absenteeism. In addition, the Department should equip educators to understand the Leave Policy for Educators. ACET principals should also take responsibility through providing workshops aimed at educating their staff on the Leave Policy.

ACCRONYMS

ABET - Adult Basic Education and Training

ACET - Adult Community Education and Training

ANA - Annual National Assessment

CAPS - Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement

CGB - Centre Governing Body

CMT - Centre Management Team

HRM - Human Resource Management

KEY WORDS

Role

Absenteeism

Excused absenteeism

Unexcused absenteeism

ACET centre

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CHAPTER 1 – OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1 Background

Since the inception of a new democratic government in 1994, there have been concerns regarding a decline in the culture of teaching and learning in South African schools. This decline is attributed to a number of factors including the long-lasting effects of the discriminatory former Bantu education system, poor school management, lack of effective leadership and governance, inadequate staffing, underqualified educators, continuing disparities and inequities, lack of support from relevant stakeholders, as well as wider socio-economic problems such as the impact of HIV/AIDS, the breakdown in parental structures, poverty, crime, vandalism, disrespect, and learner and teacher absenteeism (Badat & Sayed, 2020:130; Bush & Glover, 2016:213; World Education News and Reviews, 2017). These factors have led to South Africa's poor ranking on international education scales. For example, in 2015 The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) ranked South Africa 75 out of 76 countries (The Economist, 2017). Based on a test written by 580 000 students in 57 countries, the study found that 27% of pupils who had attended school for six years could not read, compared with 4% in Tanzania and 19% in Zimbabwe.

As part of efforts to improve the country's educational system, renewed focus was placed on adult education with an aim to provide educational opportunities to especially the black population which had been disadvantaged under the apartheid rule. As such, the rights to adult basic education are provided for in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996. Section 29(1) of the Bill of Rights provides for the following rights:

- (a) a basic education
- (b) further education, which the state, through reasonable measures, must make progressively available and accessible

Additionally, key legislation on adult education has been introduced over time including the Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) Act 52 of 2000, the Continuing Education and Training (CET) Act 16 of 2006, the Adult Education and Training (AET) Act of 2010,

and the Further Education and Training College Amendment (FETCA) Act 1 of 2013. Various other legislative and policy reforms have taken place over time. These have resulted in the operation of Adult Community Education and Training (ACET) Centres which provide education and training services to individuals above the age of 16, under the purview of the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET). These efforts are however poorly resourced as they receive state funding of less than 1% of the national and provincial educational budgets (Aitchison & Land, 2019:145). This results in ACET centres having to rely on the infrastructure of primary and secondary schools across the country. Most of these state centres usually have inadequate full time adult educators, assisted by part-time staff comprising teachers from private primary and secondary schools, as well as other unqualified individuals. The operation of these centres is met with various challenges which threaten adult learners' educational outcomes. One of these challenges is teacher absenteeism.

Teacher absenteeism is a matter of significant concern in South Africa's education system. McKenzie et al. (2014) highlight that effective teaching time is lost both in cases where a teacher is absent from school and when a teacher is present at school but not conducting the scheduled class. In either case, teacher absenteeism can disturb a school's operations and can have a negative impact on learning and teaching due to lost instructional time (Employment of Educators' Act, 76 of 1998). This leads to poor educational outcomes.

Teacher absence may be due to various reasons and may fall under one of two categories: excused or unexcused absenteeism. Excused absenteeism comprises planned situations in which an employee is absent from work with the employer's prior knowledge, or less planned situations that necessitate the employee's absence and are justifiable. Unexcused absenteeism is unjustified absence from work. This occurs in situations where an employee does not have an official or planned reason or does not provide advance notice of their absence. This research seeks to investigate principal's role in addressing unexcused teacher absenteeism in ACET centres.

1.2 Rationale of the study

Various studies have highlighted the history and progression of the discourse on adult education in South Africa. This literature includes the disparities founded in the apartheid era which resulted in the educational disadvantages that are currently faced by especially black people, the efforts made to address these disparities post the 1976 Soweto revolt, the constitutional and legislative efforts made post 1994, as well as the current landscape of adult education. In addition to highlighting the efforts and progress made, literature also discusses various policy, operational, leadership and infrastructural challenges facing adult education. These include resource challenges, curriculum inadequacies, lack of reach, enrolment and completion disparities, and the overall poor outcomes resulting from these efforts. However, very little published literature exists that explore the challenge of unexcused teacher absenteeism in ACET centres or the leadership roles necessary for principals to deal with this challenge.

This research study is expected to contribute to an understanding of the causes and impact of unexcused teacher absenteeism in ACET centres. Furthermore, it will explore the roles of school principals with a view to highlight ways in which school leadership and teachers can cooperate for improved school management, particularly in line with the issue of unexcused teacher absenteeism.

1.3 Statement of the problem

The success of adult education relies in part on a full complement of qualified and dedicated educators. This helps to ensure that all learners receive appropriate instruction in a timely manner, for the best possible educational outcomes. Unexcused teacher absenteeism is increasingly becoming a challenge in ACET centres, which has been observed by the researcher in Johannesburg South District of the Gauteng Province. This problem has reached alarming proportions to an extent that it is affecting the standard of teaching and learning. The impact of unexcused teacher absenteeism at ACET centres has become a major concern to principals, learners, officials of the department of education, and the local community which continually extend invitations to various stakeholders to intervene. This is due to the realisation that continuing under the current

conditions has a negative impact on the learners' efforts and the adult education system as a whole.

This study seeks to investigate principal's role in addressing unexcused teacher absenteeism in adult learning centres in the Johannesburg South District. To do this, the researcher carried out open-ended interviews, observations and document analysis in order to gain a full understanding of the phenomenon and use this understanding to propose appropriate recommendations for improvement.

1.4 Research questions

What is the role of school principals in addressing unexcused teacher absenteeism in adult learning centres?

The research question is sub-divided into the following sub-questions:

- What are the causes of unexcused absenteeism by teachers at ACET centres?
- Which impact does unexcused teacher absenteeism have on teaching and learning?
- How could the principals manage unexcused teacher absenteeism?

1.5 Aim and objectives of the study

The aim of this study is to determine the role of school principals in addressing unexcused teacher absenteeism in adult learning centres.

This aim will be realised through the following objectives:

- To investigate the causes of unexcused teacher absenteeism at ACET learning centres.
- To determine the impact of unexcused teacher absenteeism in teaching and learning.
- To ascertain the role of school principals in managing unexcused teacher absenteeism in adult learning centres.

1.6 Chapter outline

This study consists of six chapters:

Chapter 1 provided an introduction and general orientation to the report, followed by the rationale of the study, statement of the problem, research question, aim and objectives of the study.

Chapter 2 detailed available literature on teacher absenteeism in the South African context, the causes of unexcused teacher absenteeism, impact of unexcused teacher absenteeism, as well as the roles of principals in managing this phenomenon. The chapter further presented the theoretical framework that guided the study.

Chapter 3 detailed the research approach, research design, data collection processes, population and sampling, as well as data analysis and interpretation. It also discussed the validity, reliability and ethical considerations employed in the study.

Chapter 4 detailed the process and outcomes of data analysis. The analytical strategy and themes derived from the data were also presented.

Chapter 5 discussed the information derived from the data analysis process and presented the study findings. This discussion was based on the objectives of the study and was supported by a literature control.

Chapter 6 proposed recommendations for the Department of Higher Education and ACET centre principals.

CHAPTER 2 - LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the background of the research and provided a rationale for the study through detailing the challenges faced by principals, teachers, learners and the entire educational system as a result of unexcused teacher absenteeism. This chapter explored existing literature on the national perspectives on teacher absenteeism, the causes of unexcused teacher absenteeism, the impact of unexcused teacher absenteeism, the role of a principal with regard to unexcused teacher absenteeism as well as the relationship between the principal and teachers with regard to unexcused teacher absenteeism. While the aim of this study was to determine the role of school principals in addressing unexcused teacher absenteeism in adult learning schools, the researcher realised the importance of determining the perspectives on the phenomenon, its causes and effects, as well as the principals' roles in managing it.

2.2 Theoretical frame work

Anfara and Mertz (2014) define a theoretical framework as an empirical theory of social research and psychological processes that can be applied in understanding the phenomena being studied. Theories provide a useful framework for deriving explanations on the relationships that exist amongst the different phenomena being studied, and provide insights that lead to the discovery of new relationships (Tudge, Mokrava, Hatfield & Karnik, 2009). In this study, the researcher used critical theory as the basis for conducting the study on principals' role in addressing unexcused teacher absenteeism.

Critical theory is a school of thought that encourages an individual to engage reflection and critic on society and culture through applying knowledge from the social sciences and the humanities. It attempts to critique and change society, as opposed to understanding and explaining it. One of the key concepts developed by Paulo Freire (1970) was conscientisation. This is the process through which an individual, group or society develop critical awareness of a social reality through reflection and action. This is opposed to the tendency to understand and accept prevailing social conditions. According to the Freire

Institute (2021) critical theory uses critical learning to attempt to uncover and solve societal problems. Critical theory will enable the researcher to view and question the dominant status of unexcused absenteeism and attempt to offer solutions to replace the current status quo with systems that enhance the professional conduct of educators.

2.3 Definition of teacher absenteeism

Absenteeism is a widely researched phenomenon in human resource management (HRM) and organisational behaviour (Patton & Johns, 2012:224). Vast research has been carried out since the 1950s in efforts to understand the causes and determinants of absenteeism and to minimise its impact on organisational productivity and profitability (Gosselin, Lemyre, & Corneil, 2012:77). Despite these efforts, absenteeism remains a significant problem facing many organisations (Edwards, 2014:305). This problem is no different in the education sector.

According to Dietsel, Wegge and Schmidt (2014:355), absenteeism is defined as a full-time employee's paid days off from scheduled work. Bierla, Huver and Richard (2013:1537) define absenteeism as failure by an employee to report for scheduled work. This agrees with Cikeš, Ribari and Crnjar's (2018:1) who define absenteeism as excused or unexcused temporary absence from work for various reasons. This definition is expanded by Cucchiella, Gastaldia and Ranieri (2014:1159) who regard absenteeism as the singular or habitual failure of an employee to report for duty or to remain at work as scheduled due to personal interests and a poor sense of duty. These definitions hold true for educators and non-educators alike. Based on these definitions and for the purposes of this research, teacher absenteeism is regarded as a teacher's unscheduled absence from work. Teacher absenteeism encompasses teachers who are away from the school or who are in the school but not attending to their scheduled teaching duties (Mthombeni, 2018:21). Two categories of teacher absenteeism are excused absenteeism and unexcused absenteeism.

2.2.1 Excused absenteeism

Excused absenteeism is defined as planned behaviours which prevent an employee from reporting for duty and which the employer has advance knowledge of, such as study or

planned vacation leave; as well as less planned but justifiable situations including personal or family emergencies and absence due to illness (Mothibeli, 2017:26). According to Hackett and Guion (cited in Stoica and Wamsiedel, 2012:20), this may also be referred to as involuntary absenteeism, which is absenteeism due to factors outside the employee's control such as illness or personal challenges.

In most cases, this type of absenteeism allows the principal to make arrangements for the teacher's absence beforehand. This enables the principal to allocate resources towards covering for the teacher's absence, thereby avoiding disruption or loss of instructional time for learners (Mogobe, 2011:17).

2.2.2 Unexcused absenteeism

Unexcused teacher absenteeism is when an employee is absent from duty without an official or recognised reason (Mothibeli, 2017:17). According to Hackett and Guion (cited in Stoica and Wamsiedel, 2012:20), this may also be referred to as unjustified and illegitimate absence from duty, and includes missing work without providing advance notice or an explanation for the absence. The employee has direct control over this type of absence and it is frequently used for personal aims (Mogobe, 2011:17). In such cases, it is referred to as voluntary absenteeism (Hassan, Wright & Yuki, 2014:345). This type of absenteeism often leads to disruptions in operations because the principal does not have opportunity to plan in advance.

It is worth pointing out that sometimes teachers are absent from work without prior approval due to circumstances beyond their control. These may include sickness, family emergencies, bereavement, accidents and other circumstances. While the teacher may not have provided advance notice, these absences can be deemed as having occurred due to recognised reasons.

2.3 National perspective on teacher absenteeism

The employment of educators in South Africa is guided in part by provisions of the Employment of Educators Act, 76 of 1998. Section 4(5)(e) of the Act provides the core

duty of a teacher as being to engage in class teaching. According to Section 3(2)(a), teachers are required to perform their duties at the school for seven hours a day, unless for special reasons and having obtained the principal's prior permission to be away from duty. As such, any unauthorised deviation from this responsibility constitutes unexcused teacher absenteeism. Provisions for various types of excused leave are detailed in the Personnel Administrative Measures (PAM), Notice no. 22 of 1999 published in the Government Gazette No. 19767, and the Leave Policy for Educators (2002:21). However, these are sometimes manipulated to enable unexcused teacher absenteeism. Mthombeni (2010:26) highlights that in some cases, teachers exhaust all available leave provisions (with or without prior authorisation) even in cases where no justifiable reason exists. Mogobe (2011:19) attributes part of this challenge to poor management of absenteeism.

According to Mothibeli (2013:38), South Africa has the highest rate of absenteeism in the Southern African Development Community (SADC). Mgaga (2013) indicates that in a 2012 one-day visit to 451 schools by politicians, 1000 teachers were absent from duty, most of whom were principals. A study by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC, 2010) revealed that on average, a teacher is absent from duty between 20-24 days a year, of which only 6 days are due to official school business. This means that of the 20 to 24 days of absence in a year, 70 to 75% of the absence is due to unofficial / personal reasons.

Various statistics indicate that approximately 10% to 12% of teachers (about 39 000 – 40 000) are not in school on any given day (HSRC, 2010; Reddy et al., 2010; Spaul, 2013). These statistics agree with provincial studies which showed on average 10% teacher absenteeism rates in the Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal, 9.4% in Gauteng and 7.2% in the Free State (Fengu, 2012:1). Spaul (2013) also highlights that absenteeism rates vary according to a school's poverty levels, with the poorest 60% of schools having twice the levels of absenteeism as the wealthiest 20% of schools in some provinces. This agrees with Mthombeni (2010:4) who highlighted little or no teaching after mid-morning on Fridays, the day before a public holiday, on a pay day or during the last week of the school term in many under-resourced or previously disadvantaged schools.

A study by Pitts (2010:52) highlighted Friday as the most common day on which teacher absenteeism was recorded, with the most common reason for absence being sick leave and personal leave. This is supported by Spaul (2013) who cited the main reason offered for unexcused teacher absenteeism as sickness. Mothibeli (2013:37) highlights that 77% of teacher leave instances are for one or two days of (discretionary) sick leave. This type of absence does not require production of a medical certificate (Rhodes University, n.d). This means that teachers are able to take 1 or 2 days of “sick leave” for personal reasons, without the need to produce evidence or the possibility of recourse by the school. This high rate of discretionary sick leave implies abuse of leave privileges provided for under employment legislation, and this loophole is believed to have contributed to the increasing challenge of unexcused teacher absenteeism. This can be assumed to be a significant issue in ACET centres due to resource and operational constraints which may negatively affect staff management and accountability.

The highlighted statistics are based on studies carried out in regular schools. Efforts to obtain national or provincial statistics on teacher absenteeism in ACET centres are met with some challenges. This is mainly due to the data compilation and supply challenges within the Department of Education (Department of Higher Education and Training, n.d: 65). In the absence of reliable data and statistics on teacher absenteeism in ACET centres, and based on the researcher’s observations and on the fact that most of the teachers who work in ACET centres are also employed in primary and secondary private schools, this study assumes that teacher absenteeism is also a significant challenge in ACET centres

2.4 Causes of unexcused teacher absenteeism

Absenteeism is regarded as a complex phenomenon which results from multiple and often inter-related factors (Nguyen, Groth & Johnson, 2013:623). Various reasons have been cited as causing unexcused teacher absenteeism, broadly categorised as personal factors and situational / institutional factors.

2.4.1 Personal factors

Personal factors which may contribute to unexcused teacher absenteeism include the employee's personality, age or sex, as well as their sense of worth (Wambua, 2015:1). Other factors include family health challenges, compassionate leave and other family responsibilities (Komoni, 2015:12). In some cases, absenteeism is due to ill-discipline arising from deterioration in the culture of teaching, or the individual's general lack of commitment or lack of clarity regarding policies and codes of conduct (Amtaika, 2013:113). Rosenblatt, Shapira-Lishchinsky and Shirom (2010:250) regards teacher absenteeism as an indication of teachers' negative work attitudes, resulting from a lack of morale.

Stress is also regarded as a significant contributor to teacher absenteeism. Ervasti et al. (2011:469) regard teaching as a very demanding job which requires high attention levels from the teacher in order to carry out his/her responsibilities efficiently. This may be exacerbated by the requirements in most schools for teachers to carry out administrative work in addition to their instructional duties (Khalabai, 2010:38). Some of the stressors leading to teacher absenteeism, as highlighted by Van Deventer and Kruger (2012:53) are:

- Large classes in a system that has poor systems and support for disciplining learners
- Large amounts of teaching responsibilities, administrative work, training and other responsibilities which make for an unbearable workload
- Poor school maintenance
- Overcrowded classrooms and inadequate resources
- Bureaucracy, unnecessary procedures, fruitless meetings and conflicting roles and responsibilities which waste time

Another contributor to increased teacher stress, anxiety and depression are the repeated curriculum changes introduced into the education system since 2000. These changes include the introduction of the Annual National Assessment (ANA) and the Curriculum

Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS). Such changes result in increased workloads which lead to burnout, exhaustion and stress, thereby contributing to increased teacher absenteeism (Mampane, 2013:36).

Additionally, unexcused teacher absenteeism may be due to stressors resulting from the attitude and behaviour of learners. There are increasing cases of learner violence against teachers in South Africa, which leads to demoralisation and teachers' concern for their safety and security within and outside school premises.

Furthermore, some absence is due to challenges faced by teachers including the costs of travelling to work. These may be high due to poor or unavailable public transport services or the geographic distance between their homes and places of work (Mthombeni, 2018:1). Additionally, some teachers may be engaged in secondary employment in order to supplement their income. This is due to the low economic incentives and inadequate resources common in many underprivileged schools (Mashaba & Maile, 2013:178). Another factor that contributes to absenteeism is the impact of HIV and AIDS. HIV infection amongst educators is high, leading to absenteeism due to ill health as well as other challenges such as stigmatisation and discrimination (Moyo & Perumal, 2020:2). Alcohol abuse is also a significant factor for teacher absenteeism. Mampane (2013:103) highlights studies that showed alcohol abuse as a way of dealing with financial, workload and other stresses amongst educators. This usually leads to absenteeism at the start of the working week, normally on Mondays.

2.4.2 Situational / Institutional factors

Adult education has received a lot of focus as evidenced by various legislative provisions such as constitutional provisions for the right to education as well as key legislation including but not limited to the Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) Act 52 of 2000, the Continuing Education and Training (CET) Act 16 of 2006, the Adult Education and Training (AET) Act of 2010, and the Further Education and Training College Amendment (FETCA) Act 1 of 2013. However, these efforts are poorly resourced, with ACET centres often receiving state funding of less than 1% of the national and provincial educational

budgets (Aitchison & Land, 2019:145). This results in ACET centres having to rely on the infrastructure of primary and secondary schools across the country. Additionally, most of these state centres usually have inadequate full time adult educators, assisted by part-time staff comprising teachers from private primary and secondary schools, as well as other unqualified individuals. These infrastructural, resource and training challenges present administrative and motivational challenges which are conducive for teacher absenteeism.

According to Wambua (2015:1), factors such as the nature of the job contribute to absenteeism. When teachers find their job to be repetitive and boring this may lead to stress and job resentment. Teachers may also suffer from low motivation due to factors such as poor infrastructural facilities, overcrowded classrooms, inadequate staffing leading to too many non-academic responsibilities, inadequate training for dealing with multi-lingual, multi-cultural and multi-ability classes, lack of incentives and the declining social status of the teaching profession (Narayan & Mooij, 2010:2). This is supported by Mashaba and Maile (2013:175) who highlight that a lack of infrastructure and resources in township and rural schools contributes to teacher absenteeism.

Other factors include poor leadership styles by the principals as well as poor supervision and monitoring policies (Mothibeli, 2017:35). Mampane (2013:28) suggests that the quality of internal and external supervision affects the work and competency of teachers. Inadequate or poor management can afford ill-disciplined teachers the opportunity to frequently absent themselves from work. Poor management of absenteeism is specifically linked to the abuse of a sick leave (Mogobe, 2011:2). This may be exacerbated by poor training and guidance necessary to equip authorities in a school with effective management of absenteeism (Mogobe, 2011:19). According to Gold and Roth (2013:42), poor relationships between teachers, their colleagues and school authorities can contribute to low self-esteem, anxiety and exhaustion, which ultimately lead to absenteeism.

Teachers' ability to carry out their jobs may also affect attendance by students. Mampane (2013:28) highlights studies which show a correlation between the ability and effort of teachers, and their rate of absenteeism. The studies suggest higher absenteeism from teachers who face challenges in teaching, as well as from teachers whose students perform poorly. This absenteeism is due to increased frustration and discouragement.

The majority of the literature that was consulted agrees that unexcused teacher absenteeism is a serious concern in the broader South African education sector (Amtaika, 2013:113; Fengu, 2012; HRSC, 2010; McKenzie et al., 2014). Various reasons have been cited on a personal level, ranging from poor work ethic, health or substance-abuse issues, family challenges and socio-economic. On a broader scale, most institutional factors contributing to unexcused teacher absenteeism have their basis on poor resourcing; including poor infrastructure, high teacher-learner ratio, work pressure resulting from inadequate staffing as well as the poor remuneration, all of which contribute to low motivation. The combination of this poor motivation with low job satisfaction and other stresses associated with the profession result in increased unexcused teacher absenteeism.

Despite the wide range of literature highlighting the causes of unexcused teacher absenteeism in the broader education sector, there is very little evidence of studies which investigate this phenomenon in specific reference to ACET centres. The available literature on adult education presents the various challenges faced by ACET teachers, as indicated below. Due to ACET centres receiving limited governmental financial support, the infrastructural and material resources in most centres are inadequate. The conditions of service in most ACET centres are also unfavourable. Most teachers have temporary year-by-year contracts which preclude them from benefits such as study bursaries or pension, regardless of their length of service (Aitchison & Land, 2019:143). Additionally, different ACET centres impose different caps in the number of hours that teachers can teach, and most centres do not provide for overtime pay. There is also inadequate training and staffing for ACET centres, resulting in a reliance on primary and secondary private school teachers as well as unqualified staff. This lack of training, coupled with inadequate

curriculum provision results in the teachers facing difficulties in the execution of their duties.

While these challenges are significant and some associations can be established between the challenges faced by ACET teachers and the causes for unexcused teacher absenteeism in the broader education sector, there is need for a study which establishes whether these ACET challenges directly contribute to unexcused teacher absenteeism in these centres. This study endeavours to address that gap in literature.

2.5 Impact of unexcused teacher absenteeism in teaching and learning

Unexcused teacher absenteeism poses a challenge for effective school management and places a strain on resources, thereby disrupting learning activities. According to Pitts (2010:98), teacher absenteeism results in financial and educational costs to schools due to lost opportunities for students. Some of the resultant challenges include poor performance of teachers and learners and low educational outcomes of pupils. In most cases, ACET centres face resource challenges that prevent them from hiring substitute teachers, resulting in the cancelation of classes (HSRC, 2017:5). The syllabus gaps and other disruptions resulting from teacher absenteeism are difficult to recover from, meaning that learners receive a low quality education. This leads to lower learner achievement and reduced test scores (Duflo, Hanna & Ryan, 2012:1252). In cases where schools are in a position to employ substitute teachers, these teachers face challenges such as unavailable, insufficient or vague lesson plans provided by the regular (absent) teachers, inadequate opportunity to understand the students' learning styles, and inadequate classroom management training. This usually results in substitute teachers trying to keep students busy as opposed to engaging in serious curriculum instruction. Students' achievement is also hampered by the fact that these replacement teachers are usually less experienced or less qualified than the regular teachers (Mampane, 2013:28).

Pattillo (2012:14) regards teacher absenteeism as "quiet corruption" due to its significant effect on instructional time and the resultant impact on education. Teacher absenteeism results in lost teaching and learning time which affects student performance. It may also

incite learner misbehaviour and contribute to learner absenteeism (Reddy et al., 2010:24). A study by Duflo et al. (2012:1246) found that increased teacher absenteeism leads to poor performance by students and a decline in student attendance.

A study carried out in South Africa by Mampane (2013:120-122) also highlighted the following effects of unexcused teacher absenteeism:

Learner absenteeism

The majority of previously disadvantaged and other under-resourced schools cannot afford to substitute an absent teacher. This is exacerbated by instances of unexcused absenteeism where the principal is not given prior notice. This usually leaves the learners without oversight, resulting in an increase in learner absenteeism.

Reduced learner discipline

Unsupervised learners may become undisciplined, leading to noise, disruption, disorder and in some cases, fighting amongst themselves.

Chaos and disruption

The resultant chaos and disruption hinder teaching and learning. Furthermore, repeated instances of teacher absenteeism create a general culture of ill-discipline, chaos, and disruption in the school.

Teacher frustrations

Present teachers often have to attend to the absent teachers' classes and aid the school management in instilling discipline. This increases their own workloads and may result in feelings of misuse and abuse. Furthermore, committed teachers become frustrated by the deteriorating culture of the school.

Poor teacher-to-teacher relationships

These challenges and frustrations result in strained relationships amongst the staff. Present teachers resent the absent teachers and regard them as neglecting their duties at the expense of others. This promotes conflicts amongst teachers.

Various studies agree that unexcused teacher absenteeism has detrimental effects on the school's operations and on learning outcomes. While these effects of unexcused teacher absenteeism have been strongly argued in literature, they have been observed through studies conducted in the broader education sector. While it can be assumed that these effects hold for ACET centres based on the common challenges identified between regular schools and ACET centres, this study endeavours to establish direct evidence for the impact of unexcused teacher absenteeism in ACET centres.

2.6 The role of the principal in managing teacher absenteeism

There are a number of duties that a school principal has to carry out on a daily basis including managing operations, ensuring adherence to school rules, maintaining partnership with relevant stakeholders and accounting to the education department as the employer. The advent of the South African Schools Act, 84 of 1996 (SASA) places a greater responsibility on principals to carry out functions which ensure the success of the school (Naidoo, 2019:1). These functions include the leadership, managerial and administrative functions of driving the vision and ensuring institutional development, managing the school's human, physical, and financial resources and administering the day-to-day operational responsibilities (Kowalski, 2010:23). These multi-faceted roles place a challenge and a demand on principals to cultivate their leadership and other skills to effectively execute their various duties (Chubb, 2014). This is done in order to realise the principal's ultimate goal of providing teachers and students with continuous development opportunities.

According to Naidoo and Petersen (2015:5), these functions can only be effectively carried out through engaging with teachers while maintaining the leadership responsibilities of the school. Kiboss and Jemiryott (2014:493) highlight that most administrative challenges within schools are linked to conflicts between teachers' needs and motives, and the school's organisational requirements. This raises a need for principals to engage leadership qualities that address the needs of teachers for optimal performance.

One of these qualities is exemplary leadership. Principals have a duty to be present at the school. Studies have shown that teacher absenteeism is higher in schools where the principals are often absent (Bipath, 2019:2). This is because frequent absenteeism from the principal may lead to poor administrative processes, as well as poor motivation and discipline on the part of the teachers.

Other studies have shown that the principal's ability or failure to motivate teachers can influence the rates of teacher absenteeism. Schools in which teachers are encouraged to develop intellectually and to contribute to the school's operations tend to have a better climate and improved attendance (Bipath, 2019:2). Carter (2010:13) presents evidence that indicates high morale in schools in which teachers have the freedom to plan their work and to participate in curriculum and teacher welfare decisions. This results in job satisfaction and increased commitment to the school, which translates to reduced absenteeism. Reddy et al. (2010) also highlight a responsibility on principals to ensure conducive working conditions and leave administration systems, in order to maintain low absenteeism rates.

The principal's leadership style has an effect on issues related to unexcused teacher absenteeism. The principal's leadership needs to clearly define the school's goals and to directly influence and motivate the staff to work towards achieving those goals (Bush, Kiggundu & Moorosi, 2010:35). This includes going beyond performing management duties, and requires principals to establish and encourage an environment of superior teaching and learning.

Principals need to cultivate a culture of strong accountability, discipline, order, good management systems, a culture of learning, adequate content knowledge on the teacher's part, teaching and support material, full curriculum coverage, good learner performance, low repetition and low dropout rates (Spaull, 2013). This requires strategic thinking and planning which aid the effectiveness of existing administrative structures which are intended to avoid or reduce unexcused teacher absenteeism (Naidoo,

2019:12). Principals also have a responsibility to encourage participative decision-making, solidarity and harmony among the teaching staff, as this aids in achieving the school's goals(November, Alexander, & Van Wyk, 2010:790).

2.7 The relationship between the principal and teachers in managing teacher absenteeism

As the principal's role continues to evolve in the South African education context, leadership is increasingly becoming an important factor for the effective running of schools. According to Kouzes and Posner (2006:19), "when leadership is a relationship founded on trust and confidence, people take risks, make changes, keep organisations and movements alive. Through that relationship, leaders turn their constituents into leaders themselves". The nature of the relationship between the principal and the teachers is therefore important in determining the level to which the school's goals are met.

One of the principals' roles is to cultivate healthy relationships with the teachers. According to Hoadley, Christie and Ward (2009:143), well-run schools have a well-developed culture of social relations and professional exchanges among staff. This includes establishing and developing a culture of participative decision-making and harmonious interchange (November, Alexander, & Van Wyk, 2010:790).

Gold and Roth (2013) highlight a direct relationship between the associations between teachers and authority, and the levels of teacher self-esteem and anxiety. Poor relationships can lower teachers' self-esteem and increase their levels of anxiety, thereby adversely affecting their attendance. Additionally, challenges associated with conflicting teacher and organisational needs, poor motivation, low morale, poor developmental opportunities for teachers, poor discipline and other similar factors which contribute to unexcused teacher absenteeism can be addressed in an environment in which the principal and teacher have a cordial working relationship.

The available literature asserts that changes such as the introduction of the SASA are positive steps towards reducing bureaucracy and equipping principals to effectively

manage their schools. However, there is limited literature on what effect the increased autonomy has had on improving operations, particularly in ACET centres. Additionally, there is need to investigate how well current policy supports principals' efforts at effectively managing their centres, particularly in line with unexcused teacher absenteeism. In addition to exploring these issues, this study will also address the question of how well ACET centre principals have been equipped for their expanded roles of staff management through training.

2.8 Conclusion

Teacher absenteeism is a significant challenge in the South African educational system. This literature review highlighted the national perspective on teacher absenteeism through providing the legislative provisions for excused absenteeism as well as statistics on the levels of absenteeism in South African schools. The causes and impact of unexcused teacher absenteeism were also detailed, followed by a discussion on the principals' role in managing unexcused teacher absenteeism. This role included considerations for the relationship between principals and teachers and its effect on unexcused teacher absenteeism. Additionally, the literature reviews identified gaps in literature which this study endeavoured to address.

The next chapter details the research approach, research design, instrumentation and data collection processes, population and sampling procedures, as well as the data analysis, validity, reliability and ethical consideration.

CHAPTER 3 – RESEACH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed available literature on teacher absenteeism in the South African context, the causes of unexcused teacher absenteeism, impact of unexcused teacher absenteeism, as well as the roles of principals in managing this phenomenon. This chapter presents the research methodology. According to MacMillan and Schumacher (2010:8), research methodology entails the processes of instrumentation and data collection, population and sampling, as well as data analysis and interpretation. This chapter therefore detailed the research approach, research design, instrumentation and data collection processes, population and sampling procedures, as well as the data analysis, validity, reliability and ethical considerations employed in this study.

3.2 Research approach

This study was carried out using the qualitative approach. According to Yilmaz (2013:312), qualitative research is a process of studying people, processes and social cases and phenomena in their natural environments through interpretative and inductive reasoning, in order to identify and describe people's interpretations of their worlds.

Qualitative research has the following characteristics:

- It is an iterative (back and forth) process through which the researcher can generate and analyse evidence by studying the phenomenon in its natural environment (Aspers & Corte, 2019:155).
- The researcher in qualitative analysis is the primary instrument of data collection and employs several data collection techniques such as interviews, observations, feedback forms, diaries, letters, emails, as well as audio and video recordings (Islam & Faruque, 2016:20).
- It regards the participant as an expert whose opinions and perspectives are critical to the study. It therefore seeks to understand the participant's viewpoint by including subjective and outlier responses in the analysis process (Maudsley, 2011:95).

- Qualitative research grants the researcher access to the participant's world and enables the researcher to develop theories as the research progresses. This helps to develop a holistic understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (Daniel, 2016:92).

The rationale behind the choice of the qualitative approach was based on its strengths. Qualitative research was suitable for this study because the study required explanations as opposed to numeric quantities, cause and effect, or correlations (Sullivan & Sargeant, 2011:449). This approach equipped the researcher with an understanding of theories and other issues that affect educators and principals (de Lacey, Peterson & McMillan, 2015:620). It was therefore effective in assisting the researcher to gain an understanding of the role of school principals in addressing unexcused teacher absenteeism. The qualitative approach was implemented through explorative, descriptive, and contextual research designs. These ensured that evidence that met the research purpose was obtained.

The explorative research design was implemented in this study. It aided the researcher in exploring the research questions and developing a better understanding of the phenomenon, without intending to conclusively solve the problem. This allowed the researcher to make necessary adjustments based on new data and insights, as the research progressed (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012:14). This research design ensured a flexible and open-ended approach that helped in the process of gaining new information and enabling the researcher to develop a clearer understanding of the phenomenon under study (Akhtar, 2016:73; Thomas & Hodges, 2010:44). This was important in assisting the researcher to gain an understanding of the causes and impact of unexcused teacher absenteeism as well as principals' roles in managing it.

The exploratory design is suitable for studies into problems that are not clearly defined and for which little or no previous research exists. In this study, the researcher highlighted the observed challenge of unexcused teacher absenteeism in ACET centres. While literature discusses the extent of the challenges of unexcused teacher absenteeism in the

broader education sector, there is a notable gap in determining the factors around unexcused teacher absenteeism specifically in ACET centres. The exploratory research design was important in assisting the researcher to gain an understanding of the causes and impact of unexcused teacher absenteeism specific to ACET centres, as well as principals' role in managing it.

3.3 Population and sampling

A population is defined as the entire collection of participants from which a researcher intends to gain understanding or to draw an inference (Litt, 2012:2). For this research, the population comprised of approximately 200 educators from 10 adult learning centres in Johannesburg South District, Gauteng Province. Investigating the entire population would not have been possible due to logistical and financial constraints. Furthermore, selecting participants from all 10 ACET centres would have presented logistical and financial challenges for the researcher. As a result, the researcher selected five ACET centres for this study due the fact that they were easily accessible to the researcher.

3.3.1 Permission to conduct the research study

Prior to carrying out the study, the researcher sought and received permission from the Department of Higher Education (Appendix A and Appendix B). Following this, the researcher approached the selected centres to request permission to carry out the research, as well as information on available staff (a sample letter is included in Appendix C). Using this information, the researcher contacted potential participants through the schools' authorities (a sample letter is included in Appendix D). The choice of potential participants was based on the inclusion criteria below:

- Participants who had been leading or teaching at the school for at least one year.
- Participants who were capable, available and who consented to participate in the study with a full understanding of what the study entailed.

3.3.2 Purposive sampling technique

Sampling is the process of selecting a portion of the population whose attributes are used to make inferences about the entire population (Litt, 2012:2). The sampling process

should ensure that the selection of participants is carried out without bias, and that the resultant sample is representative of the population (McGivern, 2013:237). Since a known and non-zero chance of selection for each member of the population could not be guaranteed in this study, non-probability sampling was used. This technique allowed the researcher to have some control over the sample selection and chances of selection could not be determined (McGivern, 2013:256). In line with the qualitative approach, purposive sampling was employed as described below.

Purposive sampling is a technique through which participants are selected based on predetermined criteria that is relevant to the research and that ensures that the research question is answered (Hussey, 2012:4). Using this technique, a deliberate selection of participants who had valuable information regarding unexcused teacher absenteeism was made in order to discover insights regarding the phenomenon (Patton, 2015:264). This selection was based on the researcher's judgment to identify educators in the selected schools who possessed the relevant information. The specific sampling technique was typical case sampling. This is a sampling method used to investigate cases that are not unusual (Palys, 2012:3). In this study, the researcher wanted to develop an understanding of the factors surrounding unexcused teacher absenteeism, which is a common phenomenon in adult learning centres. During the initial stages of participant selection, the researcher determined each participant's knowledge and willingness to engage in the study. Participants who seemed not to have the requisite knowledge or who seemed unwilling to provide information were excluded from the study.

In determining the appropriate sample size, the researcher considered practical factors such as the population size and the resources required to conduct the research. This consideration also took into account the fact that there are no numerical or statistical rules guiding the determination of sample sizes in qualitative research (Baker & Edwards, 2012:5). Furthermore, qualitative studies commonly utilise smaller samples that enable the development of a deep understanding of varied perspectives on a phenomenon (Gentles, Charles, Ploeg & McKibbon, 2015:1782). This research used a sample size that was adequate for providing an in-depth understanding of the factors surrounding

unexcused teacher absenteeism. This was a total of 30 participants comprising the principals and five teachers from each of five ACET centres. The inclusion criteria for the potential participants was based on their experience as adult educators or managers in ACET environment as well as their availability and consent to participate in the study with full understanding of what the study entailed. The researcher interviewed all the participants.

3.4 Instrumentation and data collection techniques

Data collection describes the techniques employed by a researcher in collecting field notes that are relevant to answering the research purpose (Sullivan & Sargeant, 2011:450). This process involves the use of various tools and techniques, depending on the aims of the research. In this study the following techniques were utilised.

3.4.1 Semi-structured interviews

The researcher used semi-structured interviews facilitated by open-ended questions and contained in an interview guide. According to Brinkmann (2012:2), a semi-structured interview is a conversation with one respondent at a time that allows for the participant to provide spontaneous narratives and descriptions. It uses pre-determined questions while allowing room for the deeper probing into new themes that may emerge (McGrath, Palmgren & Liljedahl, 2019:1003). The use of semi-structured interviews ensured flexibility for the researcher to seek clarity and depth from themes that emerged from participants' responses. This method was important in ensuring that the researcher understood the factors surrounding unexcused teacher absenteeism.

The interviews comprised open-ended questions. Open-ended questions are questions that hold similar meaning but allow participants the freedom to provide unique responses (Weller et al., 2018:2). These types of questions do not pre-determine participants' responses but allow them the flexibility to define their thoughts, emotions and perceptions according to their own interpretation of their world (Yilmaz, 2013:313). These questions were used to allow the participants to develop their own interpretation of the questions and encourage freedom of expression.

The interview questions were based on an interview guide. An interview guide is a document that summarises the content that should be covered by a researcher during the interview (Morgan & Guevara, 2012:2). The interview guide comprised a flexible list of questions that the researcher used to keep track of the interview, and which allowed the researcher to change the structure of the questions as the need arose (Turner, 2010:755). The researcher used the interview guide to stay on track, manage time and ensure that all the relevant points were addressed. Additionally, the interview guide allowed the researcher the flexibility to explore additional questions that were relevant to forming an understanding of the factors surrounding unexcused teacher absenteeism (sample interview guides are included in Appendix E and F).

For this study, all the interviews were recorded in audio format with permission from the participants. The interviews were conducted in the ACET centre offices. All interviews were one-on-one and were conducted outside of instructional hours to prevent educators from missing on contact times and to avoid the interview sessions from being disturbed. The duration of each interview was approximately 20-30 minutes. Each participant was given the option of providing their names or remaining anonymous.

3.4.2 Observation

The researcher undertook to observe the operational processes in the schools using qualitative observational research. This is a data collection method that assumes that behaviour is purposeful, and hence attempts to document the research participants' experiences in their natural settings (McKechnie, 2012a:2). It aids in the progressive study of social processes by providing descriptions that help in developing a deeper understanding of the phenomena under study (McKechnie, 2012a:2). This is due to the fact that observation takes place in natural settings without using pre-determined categories of response. This method was useful as it provided insight into the actual processes taking place in the schools.

The researcher developed an observation schedule that assisted in determining the aspects which should be observed at the schools. An observation schedule is a form that outlines the behaviour and situational features that are to be observed and recorded during observation (McKechnie, 2012b:2). This schedule followed the qualitative format, allowed for flexible data collection guidelines, provided a list of topics of interest, and provided space for recording details of new themes that emerged during observation. The researcher visited the participating schools for one hour once a week over a period of three months. In order to ensure trustworthy data, the observation process was unobtrusive and therefore non-reactive. The observations were recorded in the form of field notes, which captured written descriptions of what was observed and any documents that were gathered during observation (a sample observation schedule is included in Appendix G).

The weaknesses common to observational research such as difficulties in capturing infrequently occurring acts were overcome through the use of interviews. The other weakness which relates to difficulties in the transferability of findings to other settings did not affect this study, due to the fact that the study was qualitative.

3.4.3 Document analysis

Another data collection method used in this study was document analysis. Document analysis is the use of systematic procedures to analyse documentary evidence and answer specific research questions. Document analysis requires the researcher to examine and interpret data to elicit meaning, gain an understanding and develop empirical knowledge on the subject (Corbin and Strauss, 2008:76). Documents that were analysed included open and confidential records. Bowen (2009:30) highlights five benefits of documents as providing supplementary data:

- Providing background and content of research
- Suggesting additional questions to be asked or situations to be observed
- Providing supplementary research data which can be valuable additions to a for knowledge
- Providing a means of tracking change and development

- Verifying findings from data sources

The researcher used this data collection technique to obtain data on teacher absenteeism from the selected ACET centres. A total number of 5 Leave Policy files were reviewed and analysed. These documents helped to determine the availability and quality of Leave Policy information in these ACET centres, as well as its accessibility to the educators. All the five ACET centres that participated in this study provided the researcher with access to the documents.

3.5 Data analysis

Qualitative content analysis is the process of interpreting collected data, identifying repeated themes and gaining an understanding of the phenomenon being investigated (Nassaji, 2015:130; Sargeant, 2012:1). This study followed the following data analysis steps as described by (van den Hoonaard & van den Hoonaard, 2012:2):

- Iterative data collection and analysis - the process of collecting and analysing data was iterative. Insights gained from early interviews were considered as potential codes for developing themes.
- Memoing – the researcher took note of personal, conceptual, or theoretical ideas or reflections that come to mind during data collection and analysis. These were embedded in the interview scripts and observation field notes. These included the researcher's insights, questions stemming from the data or links to literature that assisted in interpreting the data.
- Coding – the researcher found common themes in sentences and paragraphs and developed codes to differentiate the common themes. This process relied on thematic analysis processes.
- Initial write-up – the researcher wrote up the data soon after coding. This helped in providing insights that were not readily evident during the coding process. Where necessary, the researcher revisited the data to recode for concepts that developed during the initial write-up.
- Conceptualisation – the researcher developed concepts or related the data to existing concepts.

The coding stage made use of thematic analysis. This is a process of segmenting, categorising, summarising and reconstructing qualitative data in order to capture important concepts (Ayres, 2012:2). In using this method, the researcher searched for repeated statements, phrases, words as well as patterns in the interview transcripts and observation field notes (Firmin, 2012:2). The identified patterns were categorised according to codes. All data bearing the same codes from all the interviews and field notes were grouped into common themes.

3.6 Trustworthiness of the study

3.6.1 Validity

The design used in this study took into consideration the concepts of validity. Validity is the extent of a construct's capability to measure what it is intended to measure (Wiid & Diggines, 2013:74). It measures the research design's ability to investigate the phenomenon, produce accurate and unambiguous results and answer the research problem (McGivern, 2013:82). For this study, a possible threat to validity arose from social interaction amongst the educators, which could have influenced their responses (Bhandari, 2020). This threat to validity was addressed by holding the follow up interviews within a short time frame.

3.6.2 Reliability

Reliability is the extent to which a study produces the same results each time it is conducted under the same conditions (Wiid & Diggines, 2013:80). In qualitative research, reliability is threatened by the flexible, less standardised and less structured data collection techniques as well as the possibility of adapting the data gathering tools during data collection (McGivern, 2013:87). The threat to reliability was managed through careful implementation of the research design and uniformity of the data collection tools. Modifications to the data collection tools was avoided unless necessary. In designing the data collection tools, the researcher also ensured sound wording of the questions.

3.7 Bias

Bias refers to the attitudes and opinions formed by the researcher before the research results are compiled (McGivern, 2013:418). These attitudes and opinions may stem from previous experiences, work or study. They may potentially distort the data analysis and interpretation processes. This may be due to the researcher placing undue focus on or exercising prejudice against specific areas of the research process or the collected data, resulting in a distortion of research results (Smith & Noble, 2014:2).

In order to prevent bias, the researcher made efforts to be open-minded and to guard against making preconceived or prejudiced interpretations of the collected data or participants' responses (Pannuci & Wilkins, 2010:622). Furthermore, the researcher examined all existing ideas and attitudes regarding unexcused teacher absenteeism. Additionally, the researcher ensured that the design of the data collection tools was based on the literature review and was not influenced by his own views. Furthermore, the researcher followed the outlined data analysis process and allowed themes to form from the participants' responses, without making early conclusions.

3.8 Research Ethics

Research ethics are professional guidelines that govern the researcher's conduct as far as the dignity of participants and the integrity of published results are concerned (Akaranga & Makau, 2016:2). Various ethical standards guided the actions of the researcher in this study:

3.8.1 Informed consent and the right to withdraw

Informed consent is the ethical requirement for researchers to advise the participants of the purpose, processes, and risks of the research and to obtain participants' voluntary consent based on the provision of sufficient information (Sobočan, Bertotti & Strom-Gottfried, 2018:807; Vanclay, Baines & Taylor, 2013:246). Accordingly, all participants in this study were provided with information that was relevant to the study and that assisted them in deciding whether to participate in the study. This included information on the purpose of the study, the research processes, the potential risks of participation,

confidentiality information and the participant's rights. The researcher also informed the participants of their absolute right to leave the study at any time, without consequences. Furthermore, the participants were provided with consent forms which they signed to show their willingness to participate (a sample consent form is included with the letter in Appendix D).

3.8.2 Protection from Harm

The researcher has an obligation to minimise the participants' exposure to harm. This means that participants in a study should not be exposed to harm unless they have been provided with full details of the potential harm, and they have given informed consent to their participation (SAGE, 2017a:2).

The following risk management steps were taken to protect the researcher and participants from possible exposure to COVID-19:

Interviews

- Prior to the interviews, the researcher informed participants about the risk management steps to be observed during the interviews. This communication included a request for participants to wear masks and wash their hands thoroughly before attending the interview.
- The interviews took place in a well-ventilated space.
- The researcher set up two desks and chairs for each interview. These surfaces were sanitised using disinfectant before and after each interview.
- Sanitising hand rub dispensers were placed on both desks. These were wiped using disinfectant before and after each interview.
- The researcher and participant were seated at least 2 meters from each other.
- The researcher and participant were required to wear masks and/or face shields for the full duration of the interview.
- Facial tissue and a disposal bin were provided to aid those who may suffer from a runny nose or from coughing during the interview.

Observations

- The researcher wore a face mask during the observations.
- The researcher maintained a distance of at least 2 meters from the participants.
- The researcher sanitised his hands regularly and avoided unnecessary contact with surfaces.

3.8.3 Anonymity and Confidentiality

Anonymity is the omission of non-essential identification information that may expose the identity of participants (Yip, Han & Sng, 2016:686). This may include names and other information which may make it possible for the identity of participants to be discovered. This study ensured the anonymity of all participants through the exclusion of names from the transcripts, safe-keeping of the recordings, transcripts and field notes, as well as granting access to the academic supervisor only (SAGE, 2017b:2).

It is the responsibility of the researcher to ensure that information disclosed in confidence is protected (Vanclay et al., 2013:247). The consideration for confidentiality placed a limit on how the researcher used the information that was gathered during the research process. The participants' identity and personal information were not disclosed in the transcripts nor in any conversations.

3.9 Limitation and Delimitation of the Study

Participants in this study were staff of five adult learning centres in Johannesburg South. They represented some of the staff of adult learning centres but cannot be deemed to be representative of all such staff. While the results of this study are applicable to adult learning centres to some extent, they cannot be generalised for all such institutions.

3.10 Conclusion

This chapter presented the research methodology used in this study. Details of the research approach and research design were provided, as well as the population and sampling, instrumentation, data collection techniques and the data analyses techniques used. Furthermore, technical and quality issues such as validity, reliability, bias and

ethical considerations were presented. The limitations and delimitations of the study were also explained. The next chapter details the data analysis process.

CHAPTER 4 – DATA PRESENTATION

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the research approach, research design, and the processes involved in data collection, population and sampling, data analysis and interpretation. It also discussed the validity, reliability, and ethical considerations employed in the study. This chapter details the process and outcome of the data analysis.

4.2 Description of participants

The researcher used purposive sampling to select thirty (30) participants comprising a Principal and five (5) educators from each of five (5) ACET centres as indicated in the table below. Description of participants is crucial because it enhances better understanding of the research study and valid conclusion done. Their age ranged from 30-60 years and teaching experience from 1-12 years. The participants were selected for this research study due to their consent, experience, availability and full understanding of what the study entails. The participant's information contributed in understanding the causes of unexcused teacher absenteeism, the impact of unexcused teacher absenteeism and the principal's role in dealing with unexcused teacher absenteeism in ACET centres. However, one of the recordings from Centre B and one from Centre D were damaged and could not be retrieved.

Table 4.1 Description of the participants

CENTRE	PSEUDONYM	POSITION	GENDER	AGE GROUP	EXPERIENCE
A	PA	Principal	Male	50-55	11 years
	A1	Teacher	Male	50-55	10 years
	A2	Teacher	Female	35-40	12 years
	A3	Teacher	Female	35-40	8 years
	A4	Teacher	Female	45-50	7 years
	A5	Teacher	Female	50-55	9 years
B	PB	Principal	Female	35-45	10 years
	B1	Teacher	Male	55-60	12 years

	B2	Teacher	Female	40-55	7 years
	B3	Teacher	Male	30-35	3 years
	B4	Teacher	Female	50-55	7 years
	B5	Teacher	Female	30-35	1 year
C	PC	Principal	Female	40-45	12 years
	C1	Teacher	Male	40-45	7 years
	C2	Teacher	Male	30-35	8 years
	C3	Teacher	Male	30-35	5 years
	C4	Teacher	Female	35-40	6 years
	C5	Teacher	Female	40-45	1 year
D	PD	Principal	Male	50-55	12 years
	D1	Teacher	Male	45-50	14years
	D2	Teacher	Female	50-55	6 years
	D3	Teacher	Female	45-55	8 years
	D4	Teacher	Male	50-55	6 years
	D5	Teacher	Female	35-40	8 years
E	PE	Principal	Male	50-55	13 years
	E1	Teacher	Female	35-40	10 years
	E2	Teacher	Male	40-45	8 years
	E3	Teacher	Female	45-55	11 years
	E4	Teacher	Female	50-55	7 years
	E5	Teacher	Male	50--55	12 years

Most of the participants were of a mature age and had more than 5 years' experience. This assisted in ensuring that the collected data was based on a mature perspective and long-term personal experience. Male and female educators were sufficiently represented, which assisted in preventing gender-related biases

4.3 Analytical strategy

The data for this study was collected through semi-structured interviews, observations, and document review. All the interviews were recorded and transcribed following the themes that were developed from participants' responses. Observations were also carried

out on the operational processes of the various ACET centres with an aim to document the participants' experiences in their natural settings. These were recorded on an observational schedule. The researcher also carried out document analysis by examining the centres' files on the educators' leave policy and documenting notes.

4.4 Presentation of the themes and literature control

The study produced data in the form of themes derived from the educators, principals, observations, and document analysis. These themes were also guided by the questions posed in the semi-structured questionnaire. The themes that emerged were:

4.4.1 Themes derived from educators

Theme 1: Varied levels of understanding of the leave policy for educators.

Some of the participants expressed confidence in their knowledge of the leave policy as well as an expectation that their colleagues had adequate knowledge. However, most of the educators displayed partial understanding concerning specific types of leave, e.g. study leave and maternity leave. A significant number of participants highlighted that they did not have a clear understanding of the specifications of the leave policy for educators, and they believed that their colleagues also lacked an understanding of the policy.

A1: "No because we don't have any. They just read. The other time they came to the centre and just read it for us, we did not get any copy of it. So it's difficult when somebody will come and just explain something that you don't even have with you"

C1: "I think I only understand maternity leave and a sick leave. No other leave I understand"

C2: "No, I don't have a clear understanding, but I only know that there is a leave policy for educators"

D2: "I don't think there's an understanding if I am to be honest"

E1: “Yes, I think other teachers do have an understanding of the leave policy because I don’t think they can just absent themselves from school based on the fact that their money will be deducted”

E3: “Eish I don’t even have an idea what you’re talking about because most of the time, even the union people, they don’t come to us and tell us what is leave policy for educators or whatever. Most of the time they will just refer you to a circular. You are supposed to check this and that, and you don’t even know where is that circular, where are you supposed to find it. I don’t want to lie; I have no idea. Most of the teachers, I think have no idea, are just like me. You will find that you have been at the school for more than 10 years and they just refer you to a circular that they gave you when you started working 10 years ago. So most of them have no idea”

Furthermore, low levels of understanding are evident from some of the responses that indicated that some educators do not believe that there is such a thing as unexcused absenteeism, arguing that their reasons for not being at work would be genuine.

A1: “I’m not sure whether there is unexcused absenteeism because if you are absent it means that you have some sort of a challenge, it cannot be unexcused. I mean you cannot sit at home not doing anything, you are sitting at home because there is something that you had to do”

A2: “It doesn’t affect. As I said we always notify each other if we are not going to attend for duty”

Theme 2: A lack of consensus on the adequacy of the efforts made by the school, District or the Employer towards ensuring an understanding of the Leave Policy for Educators.

Some of the educators highlighted that the authorities hardly or never organised workshops aimed at ensuring their understanding of the Leave Policy for Educators, while others stated that regular workshops were held.

A1: “They did it once, they never came back. [Tjo!] I think it was more than 8 years ago”

A2: *“They give us a workshop once and then from there we always understand and know what to be done”*

A3: *“We hold meetings every beginning of the term”*

A4: *“Usually it is once a year”*

A5: *“Yes, the school does do that... At the beginning of each and every year or sometimes they also do it each and every term”*

B2: *“No. They rely on us to explain to other colleagues”*

B5: *“I think it was long, long, long back if I’m not mistaken. It is also not done timeously. The last time when I think I had one it was around 2012. It has been a long time, such that educators who are new don’t know or understand the leave policy”*

D2: *“I didn’t attend any workshops or other programmes for a long time, I don’t remember, actually”*

E1: *“In my school so far, yes there has never been any kind of workshop that has been organised concerning the leave policy”*

Theme 3: Varying opinions regarding adherence to provisions of the Leave Policy for Educators.

The majority of participants considered themselves as strictly adhering to provisions of the Leave Policy for Educators, including those who expressed a lack of understanding of the policy. However, a few did highlight that they cannot adhere to a policy that they did not have an understanding of. The majority of the participants regarded themselves as never taking unexcused absenteeism.

“Yes” [common response to whether the educator adheres to provisions of the Leave Policy for Educators when planning for their absence from duty].

A2: *“When I am sick I always bring doctors’ notes to fill a leave form. When attending funeral I provide a death certificate”*

A3: *“None” [in response to personal causes of unexcused absenteeism]*

A4: *“Not applicable” [in response to personal causes of unexcused absenteeism]*

A5: *“For me personally I don’t have any unexcused absenteeism because whenever I am absent I give reasons and provide evidence as to why I am absent from school or from work”*

D2: *“Yes, I’m following that. I do report to my senior. Maybe I don’t follow the leave policy but I report to my senior, unaware”*

E2: *“Since I dont know anyone I cant say yes, so it’s a no”*

E5: *“No. Because I don’t know it, because I’ve never sign anything”*

Theme 4: Varying causes of unexcused absenteeism.

The participants highlighted various health, family, and operational challenges as causing unexcused absenteeism amongst their colleagues.

A1: *“I think on this one what I can call unexcused is, let’s say some of us they work twice because remember that we are contract employees, so some people would want to make some extra cash because you know that your job is not secured. So, some people would work here and there. So, you find out that in some other schools other than where they are working there are meetings there. They don’t know that you are working somewhere so they will drag and drag and drag their meetings. When that meeting is out it’s already 5 o’clock. Where are you going at 5 o’clock? We are knocking off at 6 o’clock for an example, so you don’t have a choice but to be absent”*

A5: *"I believe especially with us here in adult centres the main reason maybe for so much unexcused absenteeism has to do with how we are operating. Most of our centres are operating in the afternoon so as a result you find that some teachers do extra jobs in the morning and by the time they have to report for duty in the centres in the afternoon, they become lazy, they are tired, and as a result that makes them to absent themselves from school"*

B2: *"Main ones are mismanagement of centres or satellites because when the management itself [...] when he or she doesn't have enough information or was not trained to manage the staff members it becomes a problem because some of the staff members won't be aware of the consequences or how to even start applying for leave and etc"*

B3: *"Sickness, family matters, emergencies and family issues"*

B4: *"If I am sick or a family member is sick. Family members injured, get COVID 19, death, attending school meeting"*

B5: *"As far as I have been here I have seen that some go for unexcused teacher absenteeism because they are afraid of the content part. What I am saying is that they are not well-versed with the content part. When they check the timetable and realise that there is this subject coming, they say I don't want to go there, I am sick". I know it and it happens. I have seen it"*

C1: *"Maybe the person is sick or the person has a family responsibility"*

C2: *"It can be illness... maybe death in the family"*

C4: *"One of them may be sickness, bereavement and emergency"*

A few of the participants highlighted the fact that some educators abuse legitimate types of leave in order to cover up for their unexcused absenteeism.

E1: *“Some of these excuses can be minor because when a teacher absent himself or herself from school maybe a day or 2 they then now go to doctors for doctor’s letter to say that they were absent and now it becomes a habit, so they end up now repeating one and the same statement over and over again because of these doctors’ certificate for absenteeism”*

Theme 5: Significant effect of unexcused absenteeism on learners, other educators, and the centres’ educational processes

Most participants agreed that unexcused teacher absenteeism has significant effects on learners, teachers, and operational processes of the ABET centres.

A1: *“It does affect them. It’s a bigger problem because unlike at high school whereby another teacher will babysit the kids of another class if the teacher is not there, here if you are teaching Business Economics for an example, if you are not there, the learners will wait outside and even the supervisor will see that you are not there. You cannot babysit the adults”*

A5: *“Oh it does affect them a lot because if ever the teacher is absent more regularly this, affects the lessons for the learners. They fall behind with their work and as a result they end up not attending on a regular basis as well. This also affect the other educators because remember we are sharing these learners. So if ever one of the educators is not there all the time or is absent regularly, then it means that the learners then tend to absent themselves. This also affect other educators who are always at work and also increases our failure rate at school because remember, if other learners are not attending regularly it means that they are not studying and when they are assessed they don’t do very well.”*

B2: *“It leads to learners dropping out because of non-attendance. It does because when one is not there, there will be a class which needs attendance and teaching will be strenuous because other educators will have to take his or her responsibility”.*

B5: *“The first thing is that the learners will end up not coming to school because they no longer have trust on their teacher or lecturer. And also, performance-wise, the results are going to drop”*

C3: *“It affects learners’ coverage of curriculum, so the learners’ knowledge is impaired”*

C4: *“The learners will be affected negatively... teaching and learning will be greatly affected”.*

C5: *“Sometimes even the teachers, their timetable or teaching and learning is affected and sometimes you have to fill in for the teacher that is absent. This affect the results. It is severe”.*

E1: *“Yes, it does affect the overall process in the school because it affects the planning for the day or for a week”.*

E4: *“And for other educators, it’s a pity because they have to take care of the classes where educators are absent... so it put pressure”*

Theme 6: Importance of the principal and his/her relationship with the educators in managing unexcused teacher absenteeism

Most educators believed that it is the principal’s responsibility to ensure that the educators have adequate knowledge regarding the requirements of the leave policy and to hold educators accountable for adhering to it.

A2: *“Is to motivate teachers not to be absent”*

A3: *“I think the principal must call the teachers in and ask what was the problem causing them to be absent”*

A5: *“The principal’s role is just to make sure that whenever an educator is not around he is able to tell why the educator is absent and the principal must ensure that the educators does provide written evidence as to why they are absent from work”*

B5: *“The principal’s role in addressing teacher absenteeism, first of all she or he has to make them aware of the policy”*

D4: *“First of all, thePrincipal should make it clear and make all educators aware of the leave policy”*

E2: *“I think they need to be strict. They have to make sure that if a teacher is absent they provide a sick note from the doctor. They need to be strict by demanding a letter from the doctor or any other evidence to support their absenteeism problem, they need to let the principal believe what they are saying”*

Theme 7: The effect of the quality of the relationship between the teachers and the educators on unexcused teacher absenteeism.

Most participants highlighted that the principals generally have a good relationship with the educators, and this had a positive effect on reducing unexcused teacher absenteeism.

A1: *“It’s very good. Our supervisor is a sympathetic person. He knows that when you are saying “I am not coming because of this and that” or “I am not coming to work because I am sick” he will even call you to check how you are doing”*

A2: *“Because our principal is always friendly and he doesn’t allow us to do something which is uncalled for”*

B2: *“I would say it’s a fair relationship and professional because at the end of the day we are professional teachers and we have to maintain a professional relationship”*

Many participants regarded the quality of the relationship as having an effect on unexcused absenteeism.

B2: *“Yes, it does, a lot, it does. Because if some of the educators are not happy with others, at times you have those excuses just to avoid. And if they think [khuti] they are not attended to if they report matters, obviously, they will find themselves trying to seek attention or help”*

B3: *“Yeah I think it does because if the relationship is professional or good the absenteeism is lower”*

B4: *“Yes all teachers show respect and professionalism, does report and are never unexcused”*

B5: *“Yeah at first when you are having a bad relationship with a principal sometimes you have a certain mind”*

C4: *“Yah to a certain extent it can go to that way because if the principal is very lenient, other educators can take things for granted that they can be absent for a couple of days, and the principal won't say that much”*

D5: *“Of course the relationship between the Principal and the teachers will have an impact on absenteeism of teachers. If the Principal, for example, befriends some of the staff members that will lead to favouritism, whereby the Principal can even approve the leave that is not supposed to be approved ,so it does have an impact”*

E5: *“It reduce because like you don't have any problem connected to school because you are scared or... As long as there is a good relationship between the teachers and the principal it makes it so easier for the staff to always be there at school”*

Theme 8: In instances where they exist, stakeholders i.e. Centre Management Teams (CMTs) and Centre Governing Bodies (CGBs) offer advisory or administrative support in managing unexcused absenteeism

While some participants highlighted that the role of stakeholders has in recent times been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, in cases where stakeholders exist, they assist with holding discussions with the centre's administration or the non-compliant educators.

B3: *"Maybe they talk to those particular teachers who are absent in most cases and maybe find out how to address those issues "*

B4: *"Yes the CMT. They used to sit down with the teacher and listen the problem and give them advice on the impact of absenteeism"*

"Yes, there are. They can organise workshops to remind educators about the job description"

C1: *"Yes. Maybe they can speak to that teacher and ask the reasons why he absent himself or herself from school, and maybe give a warning or something like that"*

E1: *"Yah there is the CGB and the centre management team. Like I've said before they follow the protocols, they sit down and talk to the concerned teacher and they try to educate the teacher and show him the wrongs of absenteeism without giving the report"*

Theme 9: The need to conscientise educators to the negative effects of unexcused absenteeism and to implement strict consequences for unexcused teacher absenteeism.

The majority of participants were of the opinion that Principals should ensure that educators are adequately informed regarding the requirements of the Leave Policy for Educators, and that non-compliant Educators should face consequences such as verbal warnings, written warnings and salary deduction

A1: *"I think if they can implement what they call no work no pay. If people know that the money will be deducted if they are not coming to school, they will be pushed to come to work."*

A2: *"Is to make sure that if there is a teacher who is absent the money should be deducted from the salary"*

A5: *“I believe that they need to be programmed or some issues they need to be addressed to them just to show them how important it is for them not to absent them from school and show them reasons [khuti] such behaviour affects the learners in a negative way. I think that they need to implement serious regulations and also making sure that such educators written warning forms are given to them.”*

B3: *“I think to make sure that the policy is understood by the educators and maybe to be put in teachers’ files”*

B5: *“Empower people first, tell them what are the consequences, what are the things that are expected of them. Then by that, if somebody doesn’t abide by the rules, then action has to be taken against such an educator”*

C5: *“I think no work no pay. If you are absent maybe they should deduct those days.”*

D5: *“The school or the principal as the CEO of the school must take drastic measures against those educators... So, the principal must give them a verbal warning... Then if they persist in their behaviour or if they continue to be absent, he must give them a written warnings and then take the matter to the District and they can take it from there”*

E5: *“I think by addressing or developing the thing called a leave policy so that we can be able to know and to understand this”*

4.4.2 Themes derived from the Principals

Theme 1: High levels of understanding of the leave policy for educators among the principals and educators

All participants highlighted that they and the educators in their centres have adequate knowledge regarding the Leave Policy for Educators.

PA: *“Yes sir I do, even though not yet fully but I understand that when sometimes I have to be absent at my work then there is a leave form that I have to sign, yes”*

PC: "I believe they do, yes, even though not fully but yah same like I've said, when a teacher is sick or absent for certain days then it should be always a sick leave letter that you need to sign"

Theme 2: Significant efforts have been made by the school, District or the Employer towards ensuring an understanding of the Leave Policy for Educators.

The majority of participants highlighted that significant efforts have been made to inform educators about the Leave Policy.

PA: "The answer is yes. It doesn't happen very often but we do have some information in a form of pamphlets that sometimes indicate on the leave policy for educators in the sector"

PB: "Yes, they have done that"

PD: "Yes sometimes. It can be twice a year"

Theme 3: The Leave Policy for Educators is effective in managing unexcused teacher absenteeism.

The participants regard the Leave Policy for Educators as being effective in managing unexcused teacher absenteeism.

PA: "There is no obvious challenge in as far as maintaining or implementing the leave policy because it is straight forward. As I said, educators are aware of the policy itself and they understand the content of the policy"

PC: "Yes, I believe that if a teacher is absent he or she don't just have to be absent without a reason, it's whereby he or she must fill out a leave form because you know the leave policy of educators"

PE: "I think yes they are effective because we can be able to understand how many teachers were not there in March or April or whatever month and the reasons why through those leave policy forms"

Theme 4: Varying causes of unexcused absenteeism including ill-health, family challenges, as well as the abuse of legitimate types of leave in order to cover up for unexcused absenteeism

Various health and family challenges were cited as causing unexcused absenteeism, with an indication that some educators abuse of legitimate types of leave in order to cover up for unexcused absenteeism.

PA: "Some of us you find that the child is sick I have to take the child to hospital, maybe my wife or my husband"

PB: "So, in our school I think it is sickness especially this COVID 19 issue. And then also we've got teachers who are not paid for three or four months so you end up not coming to school due to financial challenges"

PC: "Family matters, for example one of the family members passes on or maybe I should go and fetch the child from school or there's a meeting at school"

PD: "To attend to family responsibility"

PE: "Yah sometimes they can say something that you see is not the truth, maybe you are told that I didn't come to school because I went to UNISA, knowing that we start working at 3 o'clock. They can go to UNISA during the day as long as they know that at 3 o'clock they must be at school, so sometimes you can see that they don't tell the truth"

Theme 5 Significant effect of unexcused absenteeism on learners, other educators and the centre's educational processes

The participants highlighted significant effects of unexcused teacher absenteeism on learners, other educators and the centres' educational processes.

PA: "Is affecting us so much as the school because we are teaching adults here not the young ones. If someone is sitting in the class and there is no teacher, tomorrow, he or she won't come to school and that can cause dropout and failing."

PB: *“Obviously it will affect learners because on that particular day maybe they might not study.”*

PC: *“Of course it affects learners big time. Learners feel dissapointed and we deal with adults so you can imagine a situation of someone who left other responsibility from his home, coming here find out that the teacher is not there, of course it affect them big time.”*

PD: *“Sometimes it also affects teachers because you have to do extra work for the teacher that is absent”*

PE: *“And then with us as teachers of course when one of us is not there the learners will roam around like asking where, what time, so they disturb others as well as the office. So of course it affect the whole process”*

Theme 6: The principal’s responsibility in managing unexcused teacher absenteeism

The principal has a responsibility to educate teachers on the leave policy and encourage them to report for duty.

PB: *“As a site manager I used to discuss these issues of absenteeism with these guys and then after discussing I see some changes here and there even though it’s not the big change”*

PD: *“Is not easy to manage them because they sometimes do things intentionally but what I do is to follow the protocol for them to fill in the leave form and to give us something that we can see that they were not there, a letter of absenteeism of course, maybe the doctor’s letter or a proof that I wasn’t here because of one, two, three”*

PE: *“My role and authority in managing the staff; we hold meetings, regular meetings where among other things or items that are discussed normally we mention the importance of teacher attending their classes”.*

Theme 7: The effect of the relationship between the principals and educators

The participants highlighted that they maintain professional relationships with educators.

PA: "My professional relationship with my colleagues as teachers is professional".

PB: "I think I'm a keen leader or someone who have to check whether they are delivering what they are here for or not. But we are in good relationship so far; we help each other"

PC: "I think it's a good relationship. We do have an understanding; we're not always fighting but we know that we are professionals"

PD: "I think up to so far it's good, we dont have a lot of problems that affect teaching and learning"

The relationship between the principal and educators has an effect on teacher absenteeism.

PB: "I believe that because if any teacher happen to be absent they know that they are responsible for the absenteeism, they've got to provide the reasons for their absenteeism"

PC: "Yes I believe that because it is easy sometimes to, for instance, you talk to a teacher, it's easy again to advise him/her in the normal absenteeism"

PD: "I can say yes because when people know that you are good, they can just not come to school because they know that you will understand, so I think sometimes this good relationship does have a negative effect"

PE: "Yes I do because they do change. If maybe say an educator was normally absenting herself or himself, say 3 days in a week then at least they change now. Sometimes maybe once in a month and that shows a change of course"

Theme 8: Stakeholders offer advisory support in managing unexcused absenteeism

Principals and the CMTs and CGBs discuss solutions for unexcused absenteeism.

PA: "They are there. We do have a CMT And yah we discuss these issues of absenteeism when we meet and see how best we can try to eliminate the high rate of absenteeism in our centres"

PB: "Yes, we do have CMTs and they actually assist. Like when we are in a meeting, that's when they discuss issues like teacher absenteeism, because that is where they report"

PD: "Yeah we do have the CMT which is the centre managers and normally if something like this happen regularly, we sit down as a team and see what we can do"

PE: "In cases where there are issues raised by the unexcused teacher absenteeism we do have CMT... and our regular meetings that we attend is a platform where we always discuss and attend to issues that can be brought forward to us by learners or other colleagues"

4.4.3 Themes derived from the observations

Attendance was above average and in most cases, there was good record-keeping for attendance. In some of the centres at least one of the teachers was absent on each of the observation days. In a significant number of instances teachers would arrive late or in cases where they got to school on time, they would sometimes start classes late. There seemed to be no system for monitoring punctuality and sometimes teachers did not record the fact that they were late.

In some centres, unattended learners displayed discipline and studied on their own, while in other centres there was evidence of ill-discipline amongst unattended learners. In cases where unattended learners were given work by the other educators, they showed signs of focusing on the work.

The relationships among the educators, as well as between the principal and the educators seemed to be professional in most centres, with easy interaction observed in most of the centres.

4.4.4 Themes derived from the document review

In all the centres, the Leave Policy for Educators was available at the administration office and accessible to teachers upon request.

4.5 Conclusion

This chapter presented the themes derived from the semi-structured interviews, observations and document review. These were derived from common occurrences in the data and themes from the semi-structured interviews were supported with direct quotations from the participants. The next chapter discusses the findings of the study.

CHAPTER 5 – DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the process and outcomes of data analysis. The analytical strategy and the themes derived from the data were presented. This chapter discusses the information derived from the data analysis process and present findings. This discussion is based on the objectives of the study and supported by a literature control.

5.2 The causes of unexcused teacher absenteeism at ACET learning centres

5.2.1 Lack of knowledge on the Leave Policy for Educators

The study highlighted significant gaps in the educators' knowledge of the Leave Policy for Educators. The educators' responses exposed only partial knowledge regarding the provisions of the Leave Policy. Despite this limited knowledge most educators believe that they strictly adhered to the Leave Policy on the basis that they always communicated their absence. While all educators acknowledged the importance of communicating their absence, an alarming discovery was the belief by some educators that there is no such thing as unexcused teacher absenteeism, arguing that the causes for non-attendance are always important to the educator. The principals displayed higher levels of knowledge of the Leave Policy than the educators. However, they also admitted to some gaps in their knowledge. This is supported by Amtaika (2013:113) who highlights lack of clarity regarding policies and codes of conduct as contributing to unexcused teacher absenteeism.

This lack of knowledge is caused by inadequate efforts by the Centres and the Employer to ensure that all educators have the requisite knowledge regarding absenteeism. A significant number of educators have not been provided with training on the Leave Policy for Educators and their limited knowledge is derived from discussions with colleagues who have more work experience. This informal source of information may contribute to the misconceptions held by some educators due to the broken telephone effect.

A surprising finding was the contradictions by educators from the same centres regarding the frequency with which training on the Leave Policy was provided. Responses on the frequency of training for the same centre would vary from once a term to never. This may be due to educators not being able to differentiate between properly structured training workshops and passing references made to the Leave Policy for Educators. This contradiction in the frequency of training was also noted between the principals and educators, with all principals highlighting that frequent training was provided while most of the educators have never received training.

5.2.2 Personal factors

The educators and principals highlighted sickness, family emergencies, and bereavement as the main causes of unexcused absenteeism. This is supported by Komoni (2015:12) who highlights family health challenges, compassionate leave, and other family responsibilities as causing unexcused absenteeism.

5.2.3 Situational / Institutional factors

Another reason for unexcused teacher absenteeism was the need for some educators to hold 2 jobs as necessitated by their socio-economic statuses. Most ACET centres start classes in the afternoon; hence in situations where the educator experiences unexpected delays in the morning job, reporting to the ACET centre for afternoon lessons may be a challenge. In some cases, fatigue from the strain of holding 2 jobs also results in the educator failing to report for duty. This is supported by Mashaba and Maile (2013:178) who highlighted the low economic incentives and inadequate resources common in many underprivileged schools as contributing to unexcused teacher absenteeism.

Inadequate consequences for unexcused teacher absenteeism also contribute to the challenge. Some centres do not hold offending teachers to account, resulting in educators abusing the system. This is also noted in the abuse of sick leave that was highlighted by a number of participants; where an educator who is absent for certain reasons produces a doctor's note in order to explain the unexcused absenteeism. Mothose (2017:35)

supports this point by directly linking poor management of absenteeism to abuse of sick leave.

An interesting point that was raised was the educator's lack of confidence in his/her ability to deliver certain learning content. It appears that in some cases where the educator felt that the upcoming content was beyond his/her training / competence, they would opt to absent themselves and use legitimate excuses such as sick leave. This lines up with Narayan & Mooij (2010:2) who highlighted inadequate training for dealing with multi-lingual, multi-cultural and multi-ability classes as contributing to unexcused teacher absenteeism. Mampane (2013:28) also suggests a correlation between the educator's ability and their rate of absenteeism.

5.3 The impact of unexcused teacher absenteeism on learners, other educators, and the centres' educational processes

The study highlighted various effects of unexcused absenteeism on learners. The fact that educators are trained to deliver specialised subjects means that the available educators may not have the competency to teach the subject assigned to the absent educator. This results in that class lagging behind the syllabus and has the overall effect of affecting the learners' grades. HSRC (2017:5) cites this challenge, stating that poor educational outcomes are a direct result of unexcused teacher absenteeism. The report further highlights the fact that most ACET centres cannot afford to hire substitute teachers to bridge the syllabus gaps.

An indirect effect of unexcused teacher absenteeism is learner absenteeism and dropout. Adults have various commitments and, in most cases, attending adult education classes is a sacrifice of time and other resources for them. The effect of unexcused teacher absenteeism in the long run is to demoralise learners after which they direct their time and other resources to other commitments. This is supported by Duflo et al. (2012:1246) who highlighted that learner misbehaviour and absenteeism are common occurrences in cases of unexcused teacher absenteeism.

Unexcused absenteeism also places a significant burden on the present educators. In some cases, other educators who are capable of teaching the affected subject have to shoulder that responsibility. In other cases, the present educators have to monitor the unattended class to ensure discipline and prevent the disruption of their classes. Mampane (2013:120-122) highlights this challenge, citing that it leads to teacher frustration and feelings of misuse and abuse. Furthermore, it negatively affects the relationships between educators, with resentment felt for the non-compliant educators.

Unexcused teacher absenteeism also affects the centre's operations, output and overall reputation. Smooth operations are disrupted when teachers absent themselves without prior planning and permission as the centre has to accommodate their absence. Furthermore, poor learner attendance and poor grades resulting from missed lessons translate to poor exam results, which in turn affect the centre's reputation. This is supported by Mampane (2013:120-122) who highlights chaos and disruption as one of the effects of unexcused teacher absenteeism.

5.4 The role of school principals in managing unexcused teacher absenteeism in ACET learning centres

In general, the principals in the centres had good professional relationships with the educators. This is demonstrated through supporting the educators, providing firm and disciplined leadership, displaying sympathy, and addressing the educators' challenges. Naidoo and Petersen (2015:5) regard good professional relationships between principals and educators as key to the successful running of education centres. The quality of these relationships is said to have a bearing on unexcused teacher absenteeism, since educators believe that having a professional supportive and accountable relationship with the principal reduces incidents of unexcused teacher absenteeism and an unpleasant relationship encourages absenteeism as educators will be avoiding the unpleasant environment. Furthermore, some educators are likely to behave in direct relation to the principal's demonstrated authority. Principals who demonstrate strict monitoring and leadership are likely to discourage unexcused absenteeism while the opposite is true for principals that do not command the same level of respect. This is supported by Kiboss

and Jemiryott (2014:493) who are of the view that most administrative challenges in educational institutions stem from conflicts between teachers' needs and motives and the school's organisational requirements, and this can be addressed by good leadership qualities on the part of the principal.

The responsibility for providing information and knowledge on the Leave Policy for Educators was placed on the principal's shoulders. The educators highlighted that the principals should ensure that they have adequate knowledge and are motivated to adhere to the policy. Bipath (2019:2) support this finding, highlighting that the principal's ability or failure to motivate teachers can have an effect on the rates of teacher absenteeism in that institution.

The principals are also responsible for holding non-compliant educators accountable through demanding evidence for the reasons for the absenteeism such as doctors' sick notes. This is supported by Spaul (2013) who highlights that principals need to maintain high accountability in their institutions. Principals also have a responsibility to administer the consequences of unexcused absenteeism such as verbal and written warnings, as well as informing the relevant authorities. The educators strongly feel that implementing the "no work-no pay" policy would greatly reduce instances of unexcused teacher absenteeism. The call for principals to hold non-compliant educators to account echoes the point made by Mampane (2013:28) who suggests that inadequate or poor management can enable ill-disciplined teachers to frequently absent themselves without permission.

This role should be carried out with assistance from Centre Management Teams (CMTs) and Centre Governing Bodies (CGBs) that offer advisory or administrative support in managing unexcused absenteeism. In some instances, they hold discussions with the non-compliant educators, organise educational workshops for educators or offer advice to the principal. Their role however has been hampered by the advent of the COVID 19 pandemic.

The principals believe in the adequacy of the Leave Policy in managing unexcused teacher absenteeism. Their application of the policy seems to only focus on administrative and record-keeping processes however; with no efforts to apply it in preventing unexcused absenteeism. This is demonstrated by their references to record-keeping and the fact that most educators do not have adequate knowledge of the policy.

5.5 Discussion on the observations

The observations showed evidence of professional, cordial relationships between principals and educators. Absenteeism and late coming seemed to be significant in the ACET centres, with at least one absent educator every day of the period under observation. Late coming was especially frequent across the centres under observation. Most of the ACET centres had records for recording attendance and the educators' arrival times. However, there was a lack of monitoring for this system and some educators would record false arrival times to make up for their late coming.

The effect of teacher absenteeism was evident in some of the centres. The present educators would have to monitor and occupy the learners in order to maintain discipline and focus. In instances where the present educators did not pay attention to the learners, some of the students displayed ill-discipline.

5.6 Discussion on the document review

All the centres had copies of the Leave policy for Educators in the administration office and they were accessible to educators upon request. However, the interviews with the educators pointed to the possibility that some of the educators did not know of the document's existence since the ones who expressed ignorance for the policy did not mention any attempts to educate themselves through the use of the file.

5.7 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the themes derived from the educator and principal interviews, observations and document review carried out at the centres. The next chapter concludes the study and proposes recommendations.

CHAPTER 6 – RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter discussed the information derived from the data analysis process and present findings. This discussion was based on the objectives of the study and was supported by a literature control. This chapter proposed recommendations for the Department of Higher Education and ACET centres.

6.2 Recommendations

The study highlighted that unexcused absenteeism is a significant challenge in ACET centres, as revealed by the interviews and observations. While this was linked to various factors, a significant contribution to this challenge was the lack of knowledge regarding the Leave Policy for Educators. In response to this finding, the researcher recommends targeted, formal efforts by the Employer towards informing educators on the policy. These should be carried out with regularity for example once a year in order to ensure that new educators are informed, and existing educators are kept up to date. ACET principals should also carry out workshops to educate their educators on the Leave Policy, since they are directly affected by unexcused absenteeism. Educators would benefit from having these workshops once or twice a year.

While some of the personal factors may be categorised as emergencies that cannot be avoided, indications are that in a lot of cases educators take advantage of loopholes in the administration of leave and the slack implementation of consequences. The researcher therefore recommends clear and consistent consequences for unexcused absenteeism. On the basis of the recommendations of a number of educators, the Department should consider implementing the “no-work-no-pay” policy. Once this is implemented by the Department, principals should be educated and equipped on its provisions, and should apply it whenever necessary, as a deterrent to further unexcused absenteeism.

The department should also address institutional factors that affect the moral or commitment of educators. Salary reviews should be considered in order for educators to afford to keep and commit to one job. ACET centres should also be sufficiently resourced in order to ease the burden on the educators. In addition, training workshops should be held for educators in order to upgrade their knowledge and adequacy.

The department should also provide leadership training in order to equip principals to effectively manage their relationships with educators, equip educators to understand the Leave Policy for Educators, adequately administer and monitor leave and absenteeism, as well as create a supportive professional environment for educators.

Principals should also endeavour to create a professional working environment and to adhere to provisions of the Leave Policy and other Department of Education policies. This will ensure an orderly working environment in which all educators observe rules and policies. This also presents a fair working environment in that no educators would take advantage of management loopholes, at the expense of the committed educators.

6.3 Conclusion

This study successfully explored the role of principals in managing unexcused teacher absenteeism in ACET centres. This was achieved through successfully realising the objectives to investigate the causes and the impact of unexcused teacher absenteeism, and to ascertain the principals' role in managing this challenge. The collected data highlighted various causes of unexcused teacher absenteeism which fell under personal factors and situational / institutional factors. Furthermore, it highlighted the loopholes exploited by teachers to absent themselves from duty. Significant effects of unexcused teacher absenteeism on learners, other teachers and the ACET centres were also highlighted through the study. It was especially evident that the challenge of unexcused teacher absenteeism has far-reaching effects on learners who sometimes end up performing poorly and/or dropping out of school, thus failing to realise their dream. The relationship between principals and teachers was also explored and its effects on unexcused teacher absenteeism investigated. This information was useful in coming up

with recommendations that may help to manage the challenge of unexcused teacher absenteeism.

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Appendix A: Request for Permission from the Department of Higher Education

The College Principal
Gauteng Community Education and Training College
100 Northern Parkway rd
Ormonde
2111
Tell: 010 9001150

Date: Date: 07 May 2021

Dear Mr Wee

I, Ronnie Risimati Maceke, am currently studying towards a Master's Degree under the supervision of Dr.E.M Nkoana, a senior lecturer in the Department of ABET and Youth Development the University of South Africa. I hereby request permission to conduct a study entitled "PRINCIPALS'ROLE IN ADDRESSING UNEXCUSED TEACHER ABSENTEEISM IN ADULT LEARNING CENTRES IN JOHANNESBURG SOUTH DISTRICT".

I intend conducting a qualitative study involving five ACET centres in the Johannesburg South District. This will involve conducting interviews with the principal and five teachers from each of the five ACET centres. Each interview will last for approximately 15 minutes, as well as carrying out non-intrusive observations for 1 hour per week, over a period of three months. The interviews will be conducted outside of instructional hours and at the convenience of the participants in order to avoid negatively impacting contact times. As part of the observations, I will also request to analyse policy documents and any other documents used in managing teacher absenteeism. This information will be used for research purposes only and will be kept in the strictest confidence. The research project has been approved by the Ethical Clearance Committee of the College of Education at the UNISA.

In line with research ethics, I guarantee participants' anonymity/confidentiality, and participation is voluntary, and can be terminated without any penalty, and/or giving prior notice, and/or giving any reason as to why. Furthermore, I will observe the following risk management steps to protect both myself and participants from possible exposure to COVID-19:

Interviews

- Prior to the interviews, I will inform participants about the risk management steps to be observed during the interviews. This communication will include a request for participants to wear masks and thoroughly wash their hands before attending the interview.
 - The interviews will take place in a well-ventilated space.
 - I will set up two desks and chairs for each interview. These surfaces will be sanitised using disinfectant before and after each interview.
 - Sanitising hand rub dispensers will be placed on both desks. These will be wiped using disinfectant before and after each interview.
 - I will be seated at least 2 meters from the participant.
 - Both the participant and I will be required to wear masks and/or face shields for the full duration of the interview.
- Facial tissue and a disposal bin will be provided to aid those who may suffer from a runny nose or coughing during the interview.

Observations

- I will wear a face mask during the observations.
- I will maintain a social distance of at least 2 meters from the participants.
- I will regularly sanitise my hands and avoid unnecessary contact with surfaces.

Should you have any queries, you are welcome to contact me on this number: 0836717105.

Email: macekeronnie@gmail.com

Thank you very much for helping me to reach my goal.



Yours faithfully

RONNIE RISIMATI MACEKE

Student number: 47519711

Signed:

Appendix B: Letter of Permission from the Department of Higher Education

	higher education & training Department: Higher Education and Training REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA		GAUTENG Community Education and Training CET COLLEGE
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To:	Mr Ronnie Maceke	UNISA Student
From:	Mr Clifford Wee	Principal: Gauteng CET College
Date:	12 May 2021	
SUBJECT:	REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH TRANSITION FROM PUBLIC ADULT LEARNING CENTRES TO COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTRES	

Dear Mr R.R Maceke

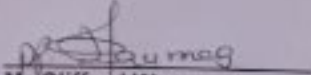
The above matter and your email dated 05 May 2021 refers.

We wish to indicate as follows:

1. The request to conduct research in our institution of learning is hereby granted.
2. We hope and trust that your efforts would contribute towards the development of our sector.
3. You are requested to liaise with Ms Matlhodi Lebodi on 010 900 1159 regarding the Community Learning Centre to be visited and the date, in order to notify the Centre Manager of your intention to visit the institution as well as the purpose thereof.

We trust that you will find the above in order. However, should you wish to discuss anything further to do with this matter please feel free to contact us.

Warm regards,



Mr Clifford Wee
Principal

GAUTENG CET COLLEGE

2021-05-12

2ND FLOOR, 51 JICKLE, 194 NORWICH
WINDERMERE, JONHESBURG

REDMI NOTE 9
AI QUAD CAMERA



Appendix C: Request for Permission from the ACET centres

DEPARTMENT: ADULT BASIC EDUCATION

PO BOX 392

UNISA

0003

Date: 18 May 2021

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I am a student at the University of South Africa and am presently enrolled for the research module, which forms part of the structured master's degree in education. In order to complete the requirements for the module, I have to carry out a research project in my discipline of specialisation. This study is titled "PRINCIPALS' ROLE IN ADDRESSING UNEXCUSED TEACHER ABSENTEEISM IN ADULT LEARNING CENTRES IN JOHANNESBURG SOUTH DISTRICT".

I would like to request permission to conduct a qualitative study involving the principal and teachers at your school. This will involve conducting interviews with the principal and five teachers, each lasting approximately 15 minutes, as well as carrying out non-intrusive observations for 1 hour per week, over a period of three months. The interviews will be conducted outside of instructional hours and at the convenience of the participants in order to avoid impacting contact times. As part of the observations, I will also request to analyse policy documents and any other documents used in managing teacher absenteeism. This information will only be used for research purposes and will be kept in the strictest confidence. The research project has been approved by the Ethical Clearance Committee of the College of Education at UNISA.

In line with research ethics, I guarantee participants' anonymity/confidentiality; participation is voluntary and can be terminated without penalty. Furthermore, I will observe the following risk management steps to protect both myself and participants from possible exposure to COVID-19:

Interviews

- Prior to the interviews, I will inform participants about the risk management steps to be observed during the interviews. This communication will include a request for participants to wear masks and thoroughly wash their hands before attending the interview.
- The interviews will take place in a well-ventilated space.
- I will set up two desks and chairs for each interview. These surfaces will be sanitised using disinfectant before and after each interview.
- Sanitising hand rub dispensers will be placed on both desks. These will be wiped using disinfectant before and after each interview.
- I will be seated at least 2 meters from the participant.
- Both I and the participant will be required to wear masks and/or face shields for the full duration of the interview.
- Facial tissue and a disposal bin will be provided to aid those who may suffer from a runny nose or coughing during the interview.

Observations

- I will wear a face mask during the observations.
- I will maintain a distance of at least 2 meters from the participants.
- I will regularly sanitise my hands and avoid unnecessary contact with surfaces.

As such, may you kindly provide details of teachers who have been employed at the school for at least one year in the attached form. You are welcome to contact my academic supervisor, Dr. E.M Nkoana, at nkoanem@unisa.ac.za if you require more information on the M. Ed degree.

Thank you very much for helping me to reach my goal.

Yours faithfully

RONNIE RISIMATI MACEKE

Student number: 47519711

Signed:

Potential Participants' List

Name of School:

Name	Contact Number	Email Address

Signed (Principal):

Date:

Appendix D: Letter of Participation

DEPARTMENT: ADULT BASIC EDUCATION

PO BOX 392

UNISA

0003

Date: 18 May 2021

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

I am a student at the University of South Africa (UNISA) and am presently enrolled for the research module, which forms part of the structured master's degree in education. In order to complete the requirements for the module, I have to carry out a research project in my discipline of specialisation. This study is titled "PRINCIPALS' ROLE IN ADDRESSING UNEXCUSED TEACHER ABSENTEEISM IN ADULT LEARNING CENTRES IN JOHANNESBURG SOUTH DISTRICT".

I would like to invite you to participate in my research. This will involve conducting an interview which will last approximately 15 minutes. There is no compensation for participation, but it can help in managing unexcused teacher absenteeism. The research project has been approved by the Ethical Clearance Committee of the College of Education at UNISA. Kindly note that participation in this study is voluntary and can be terminated without a penalty. This means that you are free to participate or not to participate in the study and your decision will not affect you in any way now or in the future. If you agree to participate, you still have the right to withdraw from the study at any time.

In order to ensure my undivided attention during the interview and to capture all the valuable information, I would like to record the interview(s) on tape with your permission. After the interview(s), the audio recording(s) will be transcribed word-for-word. Following this, all information that may identify you personally will be removed from the transcripts so that no one will be able to link you to any of the information that you have shared during

the interview(s). Following this process, the audio-recording will be erased. This is in line with my guarantee for your anonymity/confidentiality.

In light of the current COVID-19 pandemic, I will observe the following risk management steps to protect both myself and participants from possible exposure to COVID-19:

- Participants are requested to wear masks and thoroughly wash their hands before attending the interview.
- The interviews will take place in a well-ventilated space.
- I will set up two desks and chairs for each interview. These surfaces will be sanitised using disinfectant before and after each interview.
- Sanitising hand rub dispensers will be placed on both desks. These will be wiped using disinfectant before and after each interview.
- I will be seated at least 2 meters from the participant.
- Both I and the participant will be required to wear masks and/or face shields for the full duration of the interview.
- Facial tissue and a disposal bin will be provided to aid those who may suffer from a runny nose or coughing during the interview.

Should you wish to participate in this study, kindly fill in the attached consent form and return it to the school's administration office by 12th November 2020. You are welcome to contact my academic supervisor, Dr. E.M Nkoana, at nkoanem@unisa.ac.za if you require more information on the M. Ed degree.

If you are in a position to do so, kindly provide your school's administration office with details of other educators in the District who have been employed for at least 1 year, and who may wish to participate in the study.

Thank you very much for helping me to reach my goal.

Yours faithfully

RONNIE RISIMATI MACEKE

Student number: 47519711

Signed:

Informed consent form

I _____, agree of my free will to participate in this research study titled “PRINCIPALS’ ROLE IN ADDRESSING UNEXCUSED TEACHER ABSENTEEISM IN ADULT LEARNING CENTRES IN JOHANNESBURG SOUTH DISTRICT”. I understand that the information that I will share will be used for research purposes only and that nowhere will my identity be made known in any research report or publication. I am also aware of the fact that I can withdraw at any time during the study without incurring any penalty. Furthermore, I am aware of and agree to the outlined COVID-19 risk management steps.

Signature of research participant

Date: _____

Appendix E: Interview guide – Principal

PRINCIPALS' ROLE IN ADDRESSING UNEXCUSED TEACHER ABSENTEEISM IN ADULT LEARNING CENTRES IN JOHANNESBURG SOUTH DISTRICT

School:

Participant Name: Pseudonym:

Date: Time:

1. Do you have a clear understanding of the Leave Policy for Educators?
2. Do the teachers have a clear understanding of the Leave Policy for Educators?
3. Has the school, District or the Employer organised workshops or other programmes aimed at ensuring an understanding of the Leave Policy for Educators?
4. How effective do you believe the Leave Policy for Educators is in managing unexcused teacher absenteeism, and what challenges, if any, do you face in implementing it?
5. How do you monitor teacher absence?
6. May you kindly provide the statistics of excused and unexcused teacher absenteeism over the past few years?
7. What are the main causes for unexcused teacher absenteeism in this school, and how do they rank?
8. How does unexcused teacher absenteeism affect learners, teachers, your office and the overall processes in this school?
9. Do you have a clear understanding of the South African Schools Act, 84 of 1996 (SASA)?
10. Has the District or the Employer organised workshops or other programmes aimed at ensuring your understanding of the SASA Act?
11. What do you regard as the extent of your role and authority in managing the staff, and specifically with regards to unexcused teacher absenteeism?
12. What contingency plans are in place to minimise the effects of unexcused teacher absenteeism (either based on legislation, the centre's policies or your initiative)?

13. How effective have these efforts been? Are statistics available?
14. How would you describe your professional relationship with the teachers?
15. Do you believe that this relationship has any impact in managing unexcused teacher absenteeism?

Appendix F: Interview guide – Teacher

PRINCIPALS' ROLE IN ADDRESSING UNEXCUSED TEACHER ABSENTEEISM IN ADULT LEARNING CENTRES IN JOHANNESBURG SOUTH DISTRICT

School:

Date:

Time:

Participant Name:

Pseudonym:

1. Do you have a clear understanding of the Leave Policy for Educators?
2. In your view, do the other teachers have a clear understanding of the Leave Policy for Educators?
3. Has the school, District or the Employer organised workshops or other programmes aimed at ensuring an understanding of the Leave Policy for Educators?
4. Do you adhere to provisions of the Leave Policy for Educators when planning for your absence from duty?
5. In your case, what are the main causes for unexcused teacher absenteeism, and how do they rank?
6. In your view, what are the main causes for unexcused teacher absenteeism amongst the other teachers, and how do they rank?
7. How does unexcused teacher absenteeism affect learners, teachers, and the overall processes in this school?
8. In your view, what is the Principal's role in managing teacher absenteeism?
9. How effective have the school's contingency plans for minimising the effects of unexcused teacher absenteeism been?
10. How is the professional relationship between the principal and the teachers?
11. Do you believe that this relationship has any impact in the rates of and the management of unexcused teacher absenteeism?
12. What actions can be taken by the school, District or the Employer to minimise the rate of unexcused teacher absenteeism?

Appendix G: Observation schedule

PRINCIPALS' ROLE IN ADDRESSING UNEXCUSED TEACHER ABSENTEEISM IN ADULT LEARNING CENTRES IN JOHANNESBURG SOUTH DISTRICT

School:

The following processes are the focal point of the observations:

Leave Policy:

Availability of policy file	
Accessibility of policy file to teachers	
Reflective Comments	

Staff attendance and punctuality:

	Week 1	Week 2
Staff compliment		
Attendance		
Management of late-coming or absence		
Reflective Comments		

Classroom instructional processes:

	Week 1	Week 2
The time taken for classes to settle into the day's activities		
Consistency of instructional processes		
Management of classes with absent teachers e.g. noise levels, occupation of students		
Subtle factors		
Reflective Comments		

Relational observations:

	Week 1	Week 2
Relationships amongst teachers		

Relationships between teachers and the principal		
Subtle factors		
Reflective Comments		

Appendix H: Ethics approval



UNISA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 2021/04/14

Ref: **2021/04/14/47519711/05/AM**

Name: Mr RR Maceke

Student No.:47519711

Dear Mr RR Maceke

Decision: Ethics Approval from
2021/04/14 to 2024/04/14

Researcher(s): Name: Mr RR Maceke
E-mail address: 47519711@mylife.unisa.ac.za
Telephone: 0836717105

Supervisor(s): Name: Dr EM Nkoana
E-mail address: nkoanem@unisa.ac.za
Telephone: 012 4294698

Title of research:

Principals' role in addressing unexcused teacher absenteeism in adult learning centres in the Johannesburg South District

Qualification: MEd Adult Education

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for the period 2021/04/14 to 2024/04/14.

*The **low risk** application was reviewed by the Ethics Review Committee on 2021/04/14 in compliance with the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.*

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to the relevant guidelines set out in the Unisa Covid-19 position statement on research ethics attached.
2. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.



University of South Africa
Pretter Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane
PO Box 392 UNISA 0003 South Africa
Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4150
www.unisa.ac.za

3. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee.
4. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
5. 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.
6. 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. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.
7. 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.
8. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date **2024/04/14**. Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

Note:

The reference number **2021/04/14/47519711/05/AM** should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.

Kind regards,



Prof AT Motlhabane
CHAIRPERSON: CEDU RERC
motlhat@unisa.ac.za



Prof PM Sebata
EXECUTIVE DEAN
Sebatpm@unisa.ac.za

Appendix I: Language editing certificate



STMbondvo editing services (Pty) Ltd
148 Aramburg (Mpumalanga) Cell: 060 346 7091 email: mhlekazist@gmail.com

Proof of editing

STMbondvo editing services
148 Aramburg
Mpumalanga
South Africa
Cell.: 0603467091

Date: 12 December 2021

This is to certify that I have edited the draft thesis of the following candidate:

Names and Surname: Ronnie Risimati Maceke

Student number: 47519711

Title: Principals' role in addressing unexcused teacher absenteeism in adult learning centres in Johannesburg South District.

Dr ST Maseko
Director
STMbondvo editing services

Confidentiality: *In editing academic documents, I understand that I have access to confidential data, that information contained in documents is confidential and for that, I agree not to divulge, publish, make known to unauthorized persons or to the public the data in documents.*