

**SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT AND PSYCHOLOGICAL
ABSENTEEISM OF SECONDARY SCHOOL
STUDENTS IN MAKETE
DISTRICT, TANZANIA**

A Thesis
Presented to the
College of Higher Degrees and Research
Kampala International University
Kampala, Uganda.

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of
Education in Educational Management and Administration

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December, 2012



DECLARATION A.

"This thesis is my original work and has not been presented for a degree or any other academic award in any University or institution of learning".

Asukile!

ASUKILE A MBOGELA

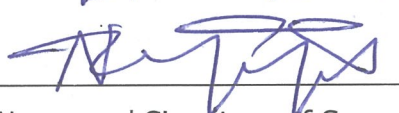
Name and Signature of Candidate

8th DECEMBER, 2012

Date

DECLARATION B

"I confirm that the work reported in this thesis was carried out by the candidate under my supervision".

Dr. Tuli Seje

Name and Signature of Supervisor

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Date

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

First and foremost thanks to almighty God, the very merciful one for His grace to the researcher and enable him to successfully complete this important study.

The researcher would like to acknowledge with sincere thanks to Dr.Ijeoma Anumaka (supervisor), Dr.Tindi Seje, Dr.Sarah Kyolaba, Dr.Kayindu Vicent, Dr.Kibuuka Mohamed and the entire Management of the College of Higher Degrees and Research (CHDR) for their excellent contribution to this study.

The researcher extends sincere thanks to the management, staff, and secondary school students of Makete district, Tanzania for the information and support that rendered him during the study.

The researcher also acknowledges the support and motivation from his beloved Ngavo (his mother), Upendo (his wife) and his children, Jaqueline, Shedrack and Elia. May the almighty God be with them.

ABSTRACT

This study explored school environment and psychological absenteeism of secondary school students in Makete District, Tanzania. The purpose of the study was to test the null hypothesis, validate the theory, identify gaps and generate new knowledge. The objectives of the study were to determine the profile of students, to determine the level of school environment, to determine the level of psychological absenteeism of students, to determine the significant difference in the level of the two variables according to the profile of students and to determine the significant relationship between the two variables. The study was descriptive survey research design and correlational. In this study, 298 respondents were involved. The findings of the study indicated that 93.6% of the students were in the age of under 20 years and 6.4% were in the age of 20-39 years. 50.3% of students were male and 49.7% were female students. About 61.45% of the students were in the low family income level, while 23.2% were in the middle family income level and only 15.4% were in the high income level category. The level of secondary school environment is poor with average mean of 1.78. The level of psychological absenteeism of students is high with average mean of 1.80. The teenagers had a higher psychological absenteeism than the students with the age of above 20 years. The correlation between school environment and psychological absenteeism of students in Makete district, Tanzania is strong (0.67). The researcher recommended that teachers, Non-Governmental Organizations and the Ministry of Education should work hand in hand with the community in order to improve school environment and reduce psychological absenteeism of students.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Preliminaries	Page
Declaration A	i
Declaration B	ii
Dedication	iii
Acknowledgement	iv
Abstract	v
List of Tables	viii
List of Figures	ix
 Chapter	 Page
One THE PROBLEM AND ITS SCOPE	1
Back ground of the study	1
Statement of the problem	4
Purpose of the Study	5
Research Objectives	6
Research Questions	7
Hypothes	7
Scope of the Study	8
Significance of the Study	9
Operational Definitions of Key Terms	10
Two REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE	11
Concepts, Ideas and Opinion from Authors or Experts	11
Theoretical perspective	18
Related Studies	19
Three METHODOLOGY	28
Research Design	28
Research population	28

Sample size	28
Sampling procedures	29
Research instruments	30
Validity and reliability of instrument	31
Data gathering procedures	31
Data analysis	32
Ethical Consideration	33
Limitation of the Study	33
Four DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION	35
Five FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION	48
Findings	48
Conclusion	50
Recommendation	51
References	53
Appendices	59
Appendix I Transmittal letter	59
Appendix II Clearance from ethics committee	60
Appendix III Acceptance letter	61
Appendix IV Questionnaire	62
Appendix V Sloven's formula for sample determination	65
Appendix VI Validity of instrument	66
Researcher's curriculum vitae	67

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
1. Distribution of samples	29
2. Profile of Secondary School Students in Makete District, Tanzania	35
3. Level of Secondary School Environment in Makete District, Tanzania	38
4. Level of Psychological Absenteeism of Secondary School Students in Makete District, Tanzania	40
5. Significant Difference in the Level of School Environment and the Level of Psychological Absenteeism of Secondary School Student in Makete District, Tanzania According to their Profile Characteristics	43
6. Significant Relationship between the Level of School Environment and the Level of Psychological Absenteeism of Secondary School Students in Makete District, Tanzania	47

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
1. Tinto's Model of Student Retention	18

CHAPTER ONE

THE PROBLEM AND ITS SCOPE

Back ground of the Study

Tanzania is among the developing countries in the world. Since its political independence in the year 1961, Tanzania has been putting effort into expansion of education system to improve the standards of living of the Tanzanians. The number of places at secondary schools is set to increase dramatically under the secondary education development program (SEDP) (Ministry of Education and Vocational Training, 2004).

Overall, the objective of SEDP I was to improve access with equity and quality delivery of secondary education in Tanzania. Review of SEDP I implementation has shown that the Programme was most successful in improving access and equity. The number of secondary schools has increased more than tripled between 2004 and 2009 to serve different underserved communities and so has the number of enrollees.

Despite these successes, there have been a number of challenges, including the following: Poor performance in secondary education examinations, with most students getting marginal pass of Division IV or failing completely, acute shortages of teachers, especially in the sciences and mathematics, with many students not able to do these subjects at all, inequalities in learning environments among different schools resulting in inequalities of learning outcomes, with girls doing poorly in both participation rates and pass rates, especially in science and mathematics subjects, and community secondary schools doing consistently poorly (Ministry of Education and Vocational Training, 2010).

The political commitment to improve school environment in rural areas is yet to be demonstrated through implementation. During the first year of SEDP, it was proposed to build 1,456 class rooms in existing schools (in areas that already have schools) and only 458 class rooms in new schools in underserved areas (Mungai, 2004). So while some areas got new schools, the increase of supply in served areas was three times as high.

School environment refers to all aspects that make an impact to the school. A school does not exist in isolation. It works with the overall environment (Moorhead and Ricky 1989).

In this study, school environment refers to all aspects of a school that have an impact to the students including social integration, academic integration, teaching/learning facilities and social services.

The lower transition rate is from form I to form II, with the form II national examinations acting as a barrier to progression. Majority of students perform badly because of poor learning environment especially in rural areas. In Mara and Lindi regions in 2004 almost two-third of female students had poor retention rate at school (Ministry of Education and Vocational Training, 2004).

According to the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (2010) insufficient infrastructure, including many construction projects that started under SEDP I, are not completed. However poor teaching approaches in the classroom, as it is teacher-centered, with students relying heavily on the teacher and old notes; and classroom time often being the result of psychological absenteeism of students.

Boy & Pine (1988) went on defining the term psychological absenteeism as a phenomenon where one's mind is lost in deep troubling and thought, limiting his/her concentration. A person may report for work, but the quality and quantity of performance is such that he can be regarded only as fraction of a man.

In this study psychological absenteeism refers to poor attention (failure to apply mind) to a thing as well as some form of effort. In learning organizations, psychological absenteeism is often called poor school engagement of a student. Engagement in this study was divided into three components namely, emotional, cognitive, and behavioural engagement. A student may report at school, but fail to engage in various school activities such as learning, which in turn lead him/her to poor performance. In fact psychological absenteeism is something that is not wanted in any learning organizations for the effectiveness of its students.

According to Rajan (2001), the problem of poor attention of the students is still acute in the rural areas. The provision of boarding facilities, class rooms, and health services is poor in most of the secondary schools from rural areas known as community or ward secondary schools in Tanzania.

However, the psychological absenteeism of secondary school students in Makete district, Tanzania still exists. According to the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (2010), the results of form IV national examination of 2010 were poor in such a way that 50% of the students got division zero. This motivated the researcher to carry out the study in order to investigate if school environment is a factor for

psychological absenteeism of secondary school students in Makete district, Tanzania.

Statement of the Problem

The problem of psychological absenteeism in Tanzania is very high. This is indicated by poor performance of students in the national examinations, high number of truants, high number of dropouts as well as indiscipline of students.

President, Jakaya Kikwete, in his monthly address to the nation on June 8, 2007 said that a total number of 7,734 students abandoned secondary school in 2006. This is greater number compared to 6,912 students who abandoned school in the year, 2005

According to the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training (2010), the results of form IV national examination of 2010 were poorer than the previous years. The results indicate that about 80% of the candidates got division four and zero.

According to Azzah (2012), students who sat for the form four national examinations in Tanzania in 2011 were 426,314, while 450,324 students were registered to start form one in 2008. This indicates that 24,010 (5.3%) students did not sit for the national examination. The Tanzanian education does not assist students into developing the cognitive value (the process of acquiring knowledge by the use of reasoning, intuition, or perception). The popular teaching method in use is examination oriented which do not leave room for students to develop cognitive mind that enable them acquire knowledge by reasoning. Students depend entirely on teachers, their minds cannot think independently. They are being spoon-fed, trained to answer questions to

enable them respond to an imminent national exam since they are shaped to be dependent. This is an indicator that the problem of psychological absenteeism of secondary school students in Tanzania currently exists.

If poor psychological absenteeism of students will continue, it will result into increase of poor performance of students, high number of undisciplined students, increase of truancy, increase of dropouts, increase of illiterate people and underdevelopment of the country in general.

The possible causes of psychological absenteeism of students in secondary schools in Makete district, Tanzania are poor school environment, low family income, poor policy of the country, poor management and administration of the schools, lack of freedom of the students and boredom from lack of relevant teaching methods. However, institutional and individual attributes as well as family attributes probably are the major causes for psychological absenteeism of secondary school students.

This study investigated if school environment is a factor for psychological absenteeism among secondary school students in Makete district, Tanzania. Morgan (2006) concluded that school environment means the school setting related to the physical plant, the fairness and adequacy of disciplinary procedures and students health including the availability of physical and mental health supports as well as services.

Purpose of the Study

1. To test the null hypotheses (Ho) that:

Ho#1: There is no significant difference in the level of school environment and the level of psychological absenteeism of

secondary school students according to gender, age, family income level and education level in Makete District, Tanzania.

Ho#2: There is no significant relationship between the level of school environment and the level of psychological absenteeism of secondary school students in Makete district, Tanzania.

2. To validate the theory: Tinto's Model of Student Retention.
3. To identify the gaps in the literature.
4. To generate new knowledge.

Research Objectives

General Objective

To correlate the level of school environment and the level of psychological absenteeism of secondary school students in Makete District, Tanzania.

Specific Objectives

1. To determine the profile of secondary school students in terms of age, gender, education level and family income level in Makete District, Tanzania.
2. To determine the level of secondary school environment in Makete District, Tanzania.
3. To determine the level of psychological absenteeism of secondary school students in Makete District, Tanzania.
4. To establish whether there is a significant difference in the level of school environment and the level of psychological absenteeism of secondary school students according to gender, age, family income level and education level in Makete District, Tanzania.

5. To establish whether there is a significant relationship between the level of secondary school environment and the level of psychological absenteeism of secondary school students in Makete District, Tanzania.

Research Questions

1. What is the profile of secondary school students in terms of gender, age, family income level and education level in Makete District, Tanzania?
2. What is the level of secondary school environment in Makete District, Tanzania?
3. What is the level of psychological absenteeism of secondary school students in Makete District, Tanzania?
4. Is there a significant difference in the level of school environment and the level of psychological absenteeism of secondary school students according to gender, age, family income level and education level in Makete District, Tanzania?
5. Is there a significant relationship between the level of secondary school environment and the level of psychological absenteeism of secondary school students in Makete District, Tanzania.?

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference in the level of school environment and the level of psychological absenteeism of secondary school students according to gender, age, family income level and education level in Makete District, Tanzania.

2. There is no significant relationship between the level of school environment and the level of psychological absenteeism of secondary school students in Makete District, Tanzania.

Scope of the Study

Geographical Scope

This study was conducted in Makete district, Tanzania. The area was selected simply because it was easy for the researcher to reach there. However the area had all characteristics required for this study.

Theoretical Scope

This study was carried out under the theoretical perspective of Tinto's Model of Student Retention. The Model of Student Retention was formulated by Vincent Tinto in 1975 and it states that "Whether a student persists or drops out is quite strongly predicted by their degree of academic integration, and social integration".

Content Scope

This study was handled by the researcher through the investigation of the relationship between the level of secondary school environment and the level of psychological absenteeism of students in Makete district, Tanzania. The researcher studied only the aspects of school environment such as academic integration, social integration (teacher-student interaction, student-student interaction), social services (water, health services, transport and security) as well as teaching and learning facilities (classrooms, books, and teaching aids).

On the other hand, the researcher found out the level of psychological absenteeism of students according to their age, gender, education level, and family income level. This helped the researcher to get

the link between the school environment and psychological absenteeism of secondary school students in Makete district, Tanzania.

Time Scope

This study took almost a year to be accomplished. The duration of this study was from January, 2012 to December, 2012.

Significance of the Study

The findings of this study will be beneficial to the **teachers and school administrators** in a developing country like Tanzania and therefore, will provide a lot of lessons on how to improve school environment through proper planning and decision making.

Through this study, the **Ministry of Education and Vocational Training of Tanzania** will get a base of finding new knowledge on how to improve school environment and reduce the psychological absenteeism of students.

The findings and recommendations from this particular study will also be useful to **other researchers, Non-Governmental Organizations and Parents** in finding knowledge related to the school environment and psychological absenteeism of students. However, they will not rely on haphazard personal experiences or subjective expert judgment but base their decisions and actions on concrete knowledge of school environment and solve the problem of psychological absenteeism of secondary school students.

The researcher hopes that the study will form a basis for **further research** on the school environment and psychological absenteeism of students not only in secondary schools, but also in **primary schools**,

colleges and Universities. This will lead people to the generation of the new ideas for the better and motivating school environment in order to solve the problem of psychological absenteeism of students in Makete district, Tanzania and the rest of the world and Africa in particular.

Operational Definitions of Key Terms

School Environment refers to all aspects that have impacts to the students in their respective schools. The aspects of the school environment include social integration, academic integration, teaching and learning facilities, and social services. These aspects comprise a child's environment while in school.

Psychological Absenteeism refers to poor attention (failure to apply mind) to a thing as well as some form of effort. In learning organizations, psychological absenteeism is often called poor school engagement of a student. Engagement in this study was divided into three components namely, emotional, cognitive, and behavioural engagement. A student may report at school, but fail to engage in various school activities such as learning activities, which in turn lead him/her to poor performance.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Concepts, Ideas and Opinion from Authors or Experts

School Environment

The concept of environment, as applied to educational setting, refers to the atmosphere, ambience, tone, or climate that pervades the particular setting. Research on classroom environments has focused historically on its psychosocial dimensions – those aspects of the environment that focus on human behaviour in origin or outcome. There is also a link between classroom environment and student cognitive and affective outcomes (Boy & Pine, 1988).

According to Morgan (2006) school environment means the school setting related to the physical plant, the fairness and adequacy of disciplinary procedures, the academic environment, and students health including the availability of physical and mental health supports as well as services as supported by researchers and an assessment of validity.

Berry (2002) suggests that managing school environment is a necessary and essential educational investment. The 1997 renovation of the Charles Young Hill Top Academy in the District of Columbia is a classic illustration on how an improved school environment contributes to higher levels of educational success. This case illustrates the connection between environmental quality, comfort, health and well being, positive attitude and behavior and higher levels of educational performance.

The aspects of the school environment include social integration, academic integration, teaching and learning facilities, and social services. These aspects are discussed as follows.

Social Integration

According to Ninja (2012) Social integration is when the student can succeed in interacting in peers, without being negatively influenced. The big reason that this is important to a strong persistence is that humans are strong at enduring a moment of great, incredulous adversity and pain, but are very vulnerable when they must endure a lesser, albeit, longer adversity. This is because we, as humans, are always willing to adapt for the better outcome, but this ultimately makes us believe that such realities are acceptable.

Recent research has shown that working-class students are less socially integrated than middle-class students at University (Rubin, 2012). In the emerging world of social networking applications on the internet, social integration is a term that can be considered when members are being transparent in all of their various works, personal, faith and local community interactions.

Tinto (1975) defines social integration as how a student interacts with friends and stuff. It probably does not matter whether a student fit with the dominant social crowd, only whether or not she/he has a group of friends she/he fits with.

Academic Integration

According to Tinto (1975) academic integration involves grade or mark performance, personal development, academic self-esteem, enjoying subject, identification with academic norms and values and identification with one's role as a student.

Academic integration is when the student, regardless of his talents/skills, accepts courses that are at his level, and can succeed in

them, without losing confidence. However, when a soldier enters his first battle, or a man having to temporarily live in a desolate area for a day, would not be so discouraged. Relating to the student example, the student of course, will not be discouraged by one bad grade, but once more and more happen, he begins to lose his confidence and standards (Ninja, 2012)

Teaching/Learning Facilities

Lawanson & Ged (2011) define teaching/learning facilities as those things that enable the teacher to do his/her work very well and helping the learners to learn effectively. The chalkboard for example, facilitates the imparting of information on the learner. School facilities also include school building like classrooms, assembly halls, laboratories, workshops and libraries. They also include teaching aids, chairs, tables, devices such as modern educational hardware and software in the form of magnetic tapes, films, and transparent stripes. School facilities are all the things that are needed for effective teaching – learning process to take place. They are designed to enhance the process of teaching. The absence of school facilities implies the non-existence of any set up that may be referred to as school.

Peretemode (2001) concludes that teaching/learning facilities are those things of education which enables a skillful teacher to achieve a level of instructional effectiveness that far exceeds what is possible when they are not provided. The successful implementation of any educational programme depends mostly on the quality of available school facilities that are to be provided for such programme. The type of atmosphere

required for effective learning is that consisting of better school buildings, more and better teaching facilities.

Lawanson & Gede (2011) explains that the quality of education that our children get bears direct relevance to the availability or the lack of physical facilities and overall atmosphere where the learning takes place. Also in the words of Peretemode (2001) there is a wise saying "Excellent school facilities and dedicated teachers are basic ingredients of good educational programme". The desire for education attainment is on the high side, the consumers of education therefore expect the attainment of standard and quality education that will give them a sense of belonging, fulfillment and satisfaction.

Social Services

Social services are a range of public services provided by many national or regional government organization for its residents, including such things as healthcare, public housing, and social security. But not all public services are social services (Wales, 2012).

Social services refers to benefits and facilities such as education, food subsidies, health care, and subsidized housing provided by a government to improve the life and living conditions of the children, disabled, the elderly, and the poor in the national community. Any of professional activities or methods concerned with providing social services like investigatory and treatment services or material aid to disadvantaged, distressed, or vulnerable persons or groups (Webster, 1993).

Psychological Absenteeism

Boy & Pine (1988) define psychological absenteeism as a phenomenon where one's mind is lost in deep troubling and thought, limiting concentration. A person may report for work, but the quality and quantity of his performance is such can be regarded as fraction of a man

Marks (2000) conceptualized "a psychological process" as engagement specifically, the attention, interest, and investment and effort students expend in the work of learning." Connell and colleagues noted that engagement includes student behavior, emotions, and thought processes during the school day, (Connell & Wellborn, 1994; Skinner, Zimmer Gembeck & Connell, 1996).

Fredricks and colleagues also published a comprehensive article that synthesizes the research in school engagement and put this body of research into a theoretical framework consisting of three types of engagement: behavioral engagement, cognitive engagement and emotional engagement (Fredricks , 2004).

The division of engagement is not intended to imply a definitive separation, instead, the division merely aids in understanding that engagement and psychological absenteeism as a whole multi-dimensional construct. In fact, Fredricks (2004) discusses that these components are highly correlated with each other.

For decades, educators and educational researchers have been interested in the effects of school environment on psychological absenteeism of students. Researchers like Berry (2002), Fredricks, et al (2004) and Mark (2000) have conceptualized psychological absenteeism a variety of ways, with little consistency in methods and theory. Researchers

have used a multitude of terms to describe what they think is important to study when it comes psychological absenteeism.

In this study psychological absenteeism was divided into three aspects namely, behavioral engagement, cognitive engagement and emotional engagement. These aspects are explained as follows:

Emotional Engagement

According to Fredricks (2004) emotional engagement in general, includes interests, values and emotion such as affective reactions in the classroom, attitudes towards school and teachers, identification with school, feelings of belonging, and appreciation of success in school. The antitheses of positive feelings are also emotional engagement items.

Lippman (2008) explains that emotional engagement consists of relationships with teachers, peers, and academics. This is how a student feel when with colleagues, teachers or when he/she interacts with academics at school.

Blumenfeld & Paris (2004) concludes that emotional engagement encompasses students' feelings of connection to (or disconnection from) their school. This is how students feel about where they are in school, the ways and workings of the school, and the people within the school. This dimension, focusing largely on students' internal lives not frequently expressed explicitly in observable behavior and actions, can be described as engagement of the heart.

Cognitive engagement

In Fredricks (2004) cognitive Engagement is defined as motivation, effort and strategy use. This includes a psychological investment in

learning, a desire to go beyond the requirements and a preference for challenge such as flexibility in problem solving, preference for hard work, investment in learning beyond just behavioral engagement, mental effort, and desire to master a task.

Cognitive engagement consists of an investment in learning and a willingness to go beyond the basic requirements to master difficult skills. (Lippman, 2008)

Blumenfeld & Paris (2004) explains that cognitive engagement captures students' effort, investment in work, and strategies for learning. That is the work students do and the ways students go about their work. This dimension, focusing primarily on engagement during instructional time and with instruction-related activities, can be described as engagement of the mind.

Behavioral engagement

Behavioural engagement emphasizes students' actions and participation in school-based activities, social and extracurricular activities, and interactions with other students. This dimension, with its focus on student actions, interactions, and participation within the school community, can be described as engagement in the life of the school. (Blumenfeld & Paris, 2004)

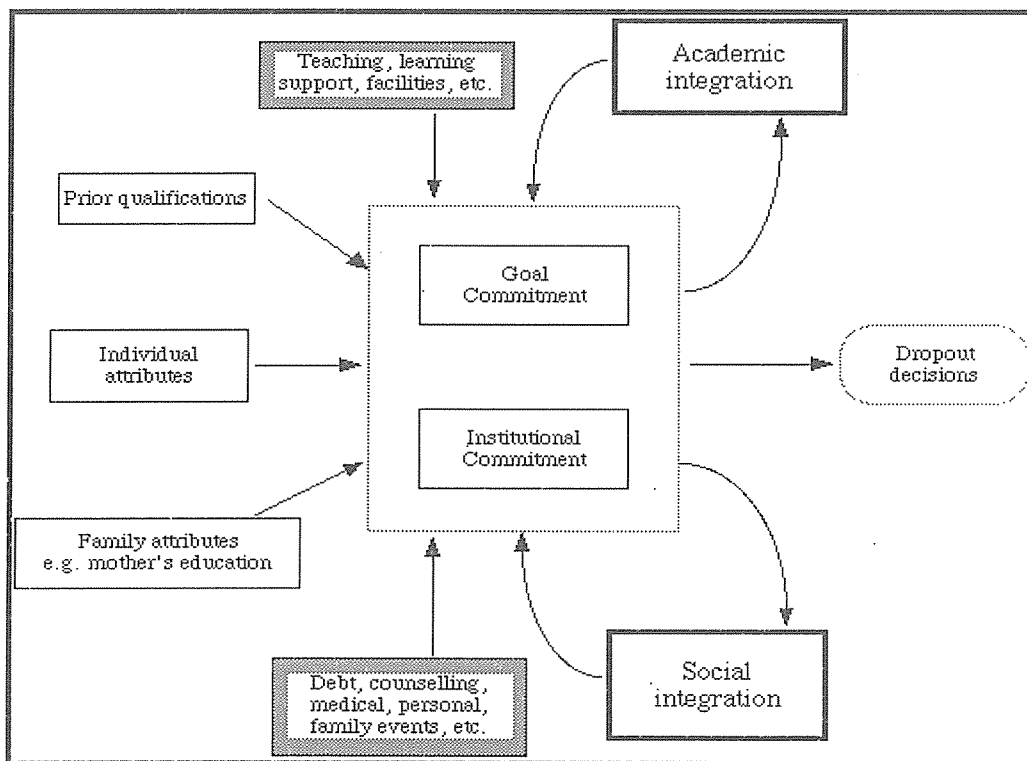
Fredricks (2004) defined behavioral engagement as doing school work and following rules such as persistence, concentration, attention, asking questions, contributing to class discussion, following rules, studying, completing homework, and participating in school-related activities.

Lippman (2008) noted that behavioral engagement includes participation in school related activities, involvement in academic and learning tasks, positive conduct, and the absence of disruptive behaviors.

Theoretical Perspective

This study was carried out under the theoretical perspective of Tinto's Model of Student Retention. Tinto's Model of Student Retention was formulated by Vincent Tinto in 1975. Tinto's Model of Student Retention states that "Whether a student persists or drops out is quite strongly predicted by their degree of academic integration, and social integration".

Figure 1: Tinto's Model of Student Retention



Source: Tinto, V. (1975) Dropout from Higher Education

Tinto was studying on the integration of the University students with their University environment. The nature of academic integration, social integration, teaching/learning facilities, social services like health services, family attributes and individual attributes, were found to have greater contribution to the student's enjoyment at the University. To persist or drop out was a result of such integration.

This study is closely related to the Tinto's model of students Retention, because the researcher investigated if school environment (social integration, academic integration, teaching/learning facilities and social services) contributes to psychological absenteeism of secondary school students in Makete district, Tanzania.

Related Studies

Social Integration

Balagopalan & Subrahmanian (2003) found that children are discriminated and pushed out of schools in Rwanda. Discriminatory practices pushing children out of school include: verbal abuse from teachers, children humiliation when using home language rather than language of instruction at school, increased corporal punishment and low quality of education given to these children.

Mugisha (2006), in his research on school enrolment among non-slum, Slum and Rural Children in Kenya, found that low retention rate in slum areas is attributed to poor quality primary schooling, limited access to secondary schools, increased vulnerability to risky behavior such as sexual activity, alcohol, drugs, difficult home environments and increased child labour. The schools that serve the slums communities are mainly non formal and are generally characterized by staff shortages, clouded

classrooms and lack of resources. But schools situated outside the slum communities are in most cases unaffordable to slum dwellers and schooling access is at times problematic.

Colclough (2000) conducted a study in Guinea on gender Inequalities in Primary Schooling: The Role of Poverty and Adverse Cultural Practice. He found that boys undertaking initiation ceremonies had primary schooling disrupted, with ceremonies taking place in terms time, absenteeism lasting up to one month, while for girls it was often considered 'shameful' for them to return to school. Nekatibeb, T (2002), found that communities in Ethiopia accept these girls as adult, but teachers or schools continue to consider them as children and this may create tension. Initiation ceremonies thus affect girls and boys access differently in different contexts.

Kitundu (2008) found that children from Makete district-Tanzania drop out of school as early as from form two and form three and others fail to report to their schools. Since 1999, when Tanzania Home Economic Association (TAHEA) commenced its support to orphans in Makete district, a total number of 2,502 children have been reached, out of which 1,480 are primary schools while 115 are in secondary schools. 80 children were selected to join secondary schools; seven children have died while 12 have moved out of the region.

Irin (2007) conducted a study on factors for absenteeism of students in Tanzania. She found that absenteeism for girls is caused by pregnancy, teenage marriage, child labour or truancy. This indicates that poor retention of students in Tanzania is a serious problem.

Academic Integration

Kratli (2001) conducted a study on culture, education and nomadic pastoral livelihood in Turkana and Karamoja. He found that low engagement rate for nomadic or pastoralist children were linked to a range of factors including: marriage for girls, lack of interest in education, lack of curriculum relevance, environmental conditions, school distances, child labour and inflexibility of the formal schooling system to adopt to the needs of nomadic children.

Sommers (2005), in research of the education provision in a refugee community in South Sudan (Kakuma) found that low student attendance, low teacher retention, lack of incentives for education and gendered practices pushed girls out from school.

A research report from the University of Zambia (2003) cited in Smith (2003) found that in the Southern province, do not prepared lesson plans, schemes of work, do not mark pupils' books consistently and do not determine satisfactory goals for teaching. Classroom practices and lack of resources have an impact on attention of students. The quality of the teaching and learning experience for children in school are linked to the learning outcomes of children. Moreover, teaching and learning can influence children's experiences of schooling, their motivations and the move towards school engagement

Jackson (2000) in his research on equal access to education in Burundi found that in the first two years of using French as the language of instruction, students understand it better than English language. Kane (2004) found that Moroccan Berber children who are taught in a classical Arabic which is not in daily use but is only able to speculate on the

connection between language and high absenteeism rates. Language strongly influences school attainment and performance.

Liu (2004) conducted a study on basic education in China's rural areas. He found that youngsters achieving at an early age are frequently selected by teachers for preferential treatment in order to pass the exams, with others notified that they have little hope of achieving that ultimate goals which is only meant for the few.

Teaching/Learning Facilities

Reardon (2002) in his research on interactive whiteboards in school: Effective uses in England found that with the use of whiteboards, teachers develop many creative ways to capture students' attention and imagination. However, students in the technology-enhanced sections reported more enthusiasm and interest in the course than did the students in traditional sections, and, perhaps as a result, the student attendance rate in the experimental sections was much higher than in the control sections.

Berry (2002), in Washington DC, in his case study of Charles Young, elementary school students and teachers comfort found the most important aspects of any school environment. If students are comfortable, then learning becomes much easier. Being comfortable is a combination of several different factors such as adequate usable spaces, noise control, lighting, temperature and climate control and sanitation. The quality of the school environment influences the retention of both teachers and students. Researchers increasingly show that there is a clear link between environmental quality of schools and educational success.

Colclough (2000) conducted a research on gender inequalities in primary schooling in Ethiopia. He found that lack of latrines led to psychological absenteeism of female students during menstruation and of subsequent poor performance. Lack of school facilities and resources like text books, desk, and blackboards have been noted to influence poor attention of students. The availability of sanitary facilities is important for female attention particularly as girls get older and start menstruation.

Benjamin (2007) in his study on implementation of the universal primary education policy and its effectiveness in Tanzania found that there is a low retention rate among enrolled children- girls compared to boys in Tanzania. Only 65.3 percent of the enrolled children completed primary cycle. Unfavorable environment including dilapidated school buildings, unmotivated and poorly trained teachers, and poor management of schools contribute to low retention of school children.

Social Services

Sadker & Sadker (2003) found that, American children living in poor families are among the poorest in all industrial nations. They are not able to access schools with better learning environment. Most of the parents of the poor children work but they don't earn enough to provide their families with basic necessities- adequate food, shelter, child care and health care. Children with little vice and no votes are among the first to lose services. Nearly 11million children under 18 have no medical coverage. When children are poor, they are more likely to have psychological absenteeism at school and be involved in violent crime, early sexual activity and drugs.

Mfum_Mensah (2002) conducted a study on the impact of non formal primary education programs in Ghana. He found that distance from home to school is an important factor for education access particularly for rural population in Ghana. Researches by Colclough (2000) in Ethiopia and Guinea found that, the greater is the distance from home to school, the less likely it is the child will attend the school.

Oluoch (2006) conducted a study on policy choices in secondary education in Africa: A case study of Tanzania mainland. He found that water shortages in rural areas affect teachers posted in rural areas, students enrolled in those schools and the construction of community secondary schools. Students spend almost 8 hours in schools without even drinking water. There is an alternative to the problem by constructing reservoir in schools as part of the school costs.

Psychological Absenteeism

Emotional Engagement

Fredricks (2004) found that most schools in Africa look at student responses to specific questions on these dimensions of engagement. This helps schools focus on groups of questions connected to important areas of engagement. Schools can choose to focus on one or more of these dimensions of engagement, depending on the goals that the school is setting for improvement.

Blumenfeld & Paris (2004) conducted a study on school engagement in Malesia and found that schools focused on improving academic programs, opportunities, and instruction may look more closely at Cognitive/Intellectual/Academic Engagement. Schools focused on strengthening students' feelings of connection to the school community and providing strong support networks may emphasize Emotional

Engagement. Schools can also examine all three dimensions in efforts to improve in the widest range of areas

Cognitive Engagement

Willms (2002) conducted a study on vulnerable children in Canada. He found that the core set of risk factors, including poverty, poor temperament, cognitive problems, learning disabilities and physical and mental handicaps that are evident in many children when they enter school. Children who display behaviour problems or cognitive deficits during the early years of schooling are vulnerable, in the sense that without concerted and prolonged intervention their chances of succeeding at school or leading healthy and productive lives are diminished. By the middle school grades, many of these children display a low commitment to educational activities, a disaffection towards school, poor social bonding, and poor peer relations. These characteristics continue into the secondary school years, which place these children at a very high risk of conduct disorders, low achievement, and early school withdrawal.

Werner & Smith (1992) in their study on high risk children from birth to adulthood in Newsland found that low student engagement in during the secondary school years is simply the consequence of family-related risk factors, such as poverty, low parental education or poor cognitive ability. Many children who grow up in poor families, or have behaviour problems and cognitive difficulties during their primary school years, prove to be remarkably resilient. They graduate from high school and lead happy and productive lives.

Lee & Smith (1993) conducted a study on the effects of school restructuring on the achievement and engagement of middle-grade

students. They found that the school environment in Africa has a strong effect on children's participation and sense of belonging.

Behavioural Engagement

Offord & Waters (1983) in United States found that youths who have behavioural problems tend to be disaffected from school. Longitudinal studies that have followed young people with behavioural problems into adulthood have found that nearly one-half of them continue to suffer from psychological and social difficulties as adults.

Offord & Bennett (1994) conducted a study on long-term outcomes and intervention effectiveness in United Kingdom. They found that engagement is closely tied to students' economic success and long-term health and wellbeing, and as such deserves to be treated alongside academic achievement as an important schooling outcome. Moreover, engagement is not an unalterable trait of individuals, stemming solely from students' genetic make-up or their experiences at home. Rather, it entails attitudes and behaviours that can be affected by teachers and parents, and shaped by school policy and practice

Summary of Gaps Identified in Literature

In this study, the researcher came across with many related studies on school environment and psychological absenteeism of students. Examples of these studies are: Health School Environment and Enhanced Education Performance (Berry, 2002), School Environment (Fredricks, et al, 2004) and Student Engagement in Instructional Activity (Marks, 2000). The researcher of this study noted that most of the studies were carried out of Makete district, Tanzania.

Few researches carried out in Makete district, Tanzania were conducted mainly looking at the reasons for physical absenteeism, but not psychological absenteeism of secondary school students and primary school students. Many studies were mostly interested in the social and income-level of students' families as they wanted to support the orphans and students with Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS) in Makete district-Tanzania. Examples of these researches are: Orfans and Education Success in Makete District (Kitundu, 2008) and Factors for Drop Out of Students in Tanzania (Irin, 2007).

However, the researcher in this study investigated if the school environment is a factor for psychological absenteeism of students in Makete district, Tanzania.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This research used descriptive survey design. The descriptive design was both comparative and correlational. The descriptive comparative design was used to compare the level of school environment and psychological absenteeism of students according to the profile variables –gender, age, family income level, and educational level. The descriptive correlational design helped to test whether school environment and psychological absenteeism of secondary school student in Makete district, Tanzania are correlated.

Research Population

The target population of this study was the students from secondary schools found in Makete district, Tanzania. There were over 1161 students distributed in 5 secondary schools. Students were used because they had all required information about school environment and psychological absenteeism of students.

Sample Size

Given the target population of 1161 students from 5 secondary schools in Makete district, Tanzania, a sample size of 298 students was selected. The number of sample size was arrived at using Sloven's formula (See appendix V).

A sample size of 298 students was distributed to all 5 secondary schools. Table 1 shows the respondents of the study with the following categories: school, gender, target population and sample size.

Table 1

Distribution of samples

School	Male	Female	Total population	Total sample size
Mang'oto	135	166	301	77
Ukwama	52	46	98	25
Ipelele	189	163	352	90
Usililo	150	140	290	75
Ipepo	79	41	120	31
Total	605	556	1161	298

Source: Makete District Secondary Education Office

Sampling procedures

Random sampling techniques were used to select the respondents. The simple and stratified forms of random selection were used in choosing the respondents or cases to be included in the study.

The simple random sampling was used due to the large population in each selected secondary school. Before simple random techniques to be used the researcher used stratified random technique to divide the population into groups according to their gender. The simple random techniques were used to get the required number of the sample.

The number was written on a piece of paper that identified elements of population to be sampled. The pieces of papers with numbers were placed in a container, mixed with unnumbered piece of papers. The researcher requested the population to pick the piece of papers randomly. Those who picked the piece of papers with a number were the sample for the study.

On the other hand the five Secondary schools were selected by using purposive sampling techniques. This is because the 5 selected secondary schools had all characteristics necessary for the study.

Research Instruments

The researcher used questionnaire as an instrument for collecting data for the study. This was appropriate because the sample was too large to speak to every individual and it offered the respondents the chance to respond to reasons for psychological absenteeism of students.

The questionnaire adopted from Krystina A Finlay, PhD was used in which the respondents had to answer all questions from section A, B and C. The items in section A sought to elicit information from the students about their profile, that is age, gender, education level and family income level. The items from section B determined the level of secondary school environment in Makete district, Tanzania. These consisted of options referring to *social integration* (4 items), *academic integration* (4 items), *social services* (6 items) and *teaching/learning facilities* (6 items). However items in section C (15 items) determined the level of psychological absenteeism of students in Makete district, Tanzania. The items consisted of the options referring to *emotional engagement* (5 items), *cognitive engagement* (5 items) and *behavioural engagement* (5 items) – see appendix IV.

The response modes of the questionnaire were indicated as: strongly agree (4); agree (3); disagree (2); strongly disagree (1). The interpretation of the responses was indicated as: strongly agree (very good); agree (good); disagree (poor); strongly disagree (very poor). In this study poor engagement/participation of secondary school students at

school was interpreted as high level of psychological absenteeism while good engagement/participation was interpreted as low level of psychological absenteeism of students.

Validity and Reliability of Instrument

Validity of Instrument

Validity of instrument of 0.957 was determined by the formula:

$$CVI = \frac{RQ}{TQ} \quad (\text{By Amin, 2005})$$

Legends: CVI = Content Validity Index

RQ = Relevant Questions

TQ = Total number of Questions

(See appendix VI)

Reliability of Instrument

Reliability is the dependability or trust worthiness of the research or degree to which an instrument consistently measures what it is supposed to measure (Amin, 2005). In this study the researcher used a standardized instrument (questionnaire).

Data Gathering Procedures

Before data collection, the researcher got the letter from the College of Higher Degrees and Research which allowed the researcher to go to the field of study. The researcher also appointed two researcher's assistants in order to get a help from them. After getting researcher's assistants, the researcher determined the sample selection criterion, and asked the permission from the Makete District Secondary Education Officer to continue with data collection.

During data collection, the researcher distributed the questionnaires by the help of the researcher assistants. The data was collected through the distributed questionnaires and were collected back by the help of researcher assistants.

After data collection, the researcher checked the questionnaires, organized the data, edited them, coded them, entered data into the computer and then made a summary.

Data Analysis Procedure

Quantitative data from the questionnaires was coded and analyzed. Frequencies and percentage distribution were used to determine the profile of students, while means were used to determine the level of school environment and the level of psychological absenteeism of students in Makete district, Tanzania.

The following mean ranges were used to arrive at the mean of the individual interpretation on the level of school environment and the level psychological absenteeism of secondary school students:

Mean Range	Response Mode	Interpretation
3.26-4.00	Strongly agree	Very good
2.51-3.25	Agree	Good
1.76-2.50	Disagree	Poor
1.00-1.75	Strong disagree	Very poor

The T-test (t) and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) (F) were used to compare the level of school environment and the level of psychological absenteeism of students according to their profile characteristics (age,

gender, education level and family income level), in which the level of significance to accept or reject the hypothesis was 0.05 (Amin, 2005).

Pearson's linear correlation coefficient (r) was used to get the direction and strength of the relationship between the level of the school environment and the level of psychological absenteeism of students in Makete district, Tanzania. According to Amin, (2005) the level of significance to accept or reject the null hypothesis was 0.05.

Ethical Consideration

The researcher ensured confidentiality of the information provided by the respondents. All respondents were respected regardless of their gender, age, academic level, culture, race as well as nationality. The following activities were followed by the researcher in implementing ethical consideration.

1. The respondents were coded instead of reflecting the names.
2. Solicited permission through a written request to the Makete District Executive Director..
3. Requested the respondents to sign in the *Informed Consent Form*.
4. Acknowledged the authors quoted in this study.
5. Presented the findings in a generalized manner.

Limitations of the Study

In view of the following threats to validity, the researcher claimed an allowable 5% margin of error or 0.05 level of significance. Measures were also indicated in order to minimize if not to eradicate the threats to the validity of the findings of this study.

1. *Extraneous variables* which were beyond the researcher's control such as respondents' dishonesty and personal biases.
2. *Attrition/Mortality*: Not all questionnaires were completely answered due to circumstances on the part of the respondents such as sickness and refusal/withdrawal to participate. In anticipation to this, the researcher reserved ten more respondents by exceeding the minimum sample size of 298.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Profile of the Students

The first objective in this study was to determine the profile of the respondents. The respondents of this study were described in terms of age, gender, educational level and family income level. Table 2 indicates the frequency distribution table which illustrates the profile characteristics of the secondary school students in Makete district, Tanzania.

Table 2

Profile of Secondary School Students in Makete District, Tanzania

Categories	Frequencies	Percentage
Age (item 1)		
Under 20	279	93.6
20 – 39	19	6.4
Total	298	100
Gender (item 2)		
Male	150	50.3
Female	148	49.7
Total	298	100
Education level (item 3)		
Form I	98	32.9
Form II	100	33.6
Form III	58	19.5
Form IV	42	14.0
Total	298	100
Family level (item 4)		
Low	183	61.4
Middle	69	23.2
High	46	15.4
Total	298	100

Source: *Primary data*

The results showed that 93.6% of the students were in the age of under 20 years. While only 6.4% of the students were in the age of 20-39

years. These results indicate that students with age of less than 20 years dominate in Makete district, Tanzania. The students with age of less than 20 years old dominate probably because the Tanzanians with age of above 20 years old are in advanced level of secondary school, colleges or Universities.

On the other hand 50.3% of the students were found to be male, while 49.7% were female students. This indicates that the number of male students is higher than the number of female students. This is probably because female students get pregnancies or drop out of school.

The same result was found by Benjamin (2007) in his study on implementation of the universal primary education policy and its effectiveness in Tanzania. He found that there is a low retention rate among enrolled children- girls compared to boys in Tanzania. Only 65.3 percent of the enrolled children completed primary cycle. Unfavorable environment including dilapidated school buildings, unmotivated and poorly trained teachers, and poor management of schools contribute to low retention of school children.

The overall number of the students indicated that 33.6% were in form II, followed closely by form I who had 32.9%. The form III students were only 19.5% followed by form IV who had 14.0%. This is an indicator that students from the low levels of education dominate in Makete district, Tanzania. This is probably due to truancy, absenteeism or drop out of school.

The family income level is another profile characteristic of secondary school students in this particular study. About 61.4% of the students were found to be in the low family income level, while 23.2% of

the students were in the middle family income level. In these findings, only 15.4% of the students were found to be in the high income level category. These results show that majority of the students in Makete district, Tanzania come from low family income. This is probably because the government does not support the parents especially in the villages with proper ways to improve their income.

The results are in agreement with Cook & Ezenne (2011) who found that many students from rural areas in Jamaica are from low family income and therefore the domino effect of the financial constraints is: insufficient number of uniforms, lack of lunch money, and lack of funds for transportation to school. Students felt that it was not important to attend school on Fridays based on the activities that took place. Acute water shortage and poor transportation were prominent in both the adults and children. The causal factors for absenteeism do not find their genesis in the family only, but also in the schools, the communities, and the students; the combination of these factors accentuates absenteeism at the primary school in the rural areas of Jamaica.

The Level of School Environment

The second objective of this study was to determine the level of secondary school environment. The researcher of this study used the means to find out the level of school environment. The items used to find the level of school environment were in four categories namely, social integration (the first four items), academic integration (four items), teaching/learning facilities (six items) and social services (six items). Table 3 shows items indicating the level of the secondary school environment as responded by the students.

Table 3

Level of Secondary School Environment in Makete District, Tanzania

Item	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
Social Integration			
You feel accepted by teachers and students	1.872	poor	1
Decisions about the running of the school usually are made by teachers and students.	1.839	poor	2
Most teachers are friendly to students	1.755	poor	3
You receive encouragement from colleagues and other members around the school.	1.735	Very poor	4
Academic Integration			
You enjoy subjects found in this school.	1.990	poor	1
You are comfortable with the language used as a medium of instruction.	1.909	poor	2
You always get good grades in this school.	1.832	poor	3
The school mission statement and goals are well understood by students.	1.681	Very poor	4
Teaching/Learning Facilities			
The school has adequate, attractive and conducive classrooms.	1.849	poor	1
Always teachers use teaching aids.	1.789	poor	2
The school has adequate laboratory equipments.	1.688	Very poor	3
Video equipment, tapes, and films are readily available and accessible.	1.628	Very poor	4
The school or department library includes an adequate section of books and periodicals.	1.624	Very poor	5
The supply of equipment and resources like computer is adequate.	1.547	Very poor	6
Social Services			
Power (electricity) is available all the time.	2.054	poor	1
There is good communication network in your school.	1.923	poor	2
Water is adequate and available when needed.	1.886	poor	3
The security service at this school is ok.	1.809		4
The school provides you better health services.	1.664	Very poor	5
You are comfortable with the transport from home to school.	1.513	Very poor	6
Average mean	1.787	Poor	

Source: Primary data

The average mean of the level of secondary school environment in Makete district Tanzania was 1.787 as indicated in table 3 in this particular study. These results indicate that the level of the secondary school environment in Makete district, Tanzania is poor. However transport from home to school and supply of resources like computers were the poorest aspect of the school environment of secondary schools in Makete district, Tanzania.

The supply of equipment and resources like computers was the poorest of all with the mean of 1.547. The supply of books and periodicals was also rated very poor with the mean of 1.624.

These results support the work of Paraide et al (2010) who found that 95 percent of school resources in Papua New Guinea were insufficient. The data showed that desks and textbooks were shared by three or four students. The classrooms had few class readers and wall charts, and most of the schools had few library books. Most of these materials were in need of urgent replacement.

Poor school environment in Makete district, Tanzania probably is because the government does not provide enough funds to the schools for buying school resources. Another reason might be the parents and the entire community is not well sensitized so that to participate in supporting the school with facilities required.

The Level of Psychological Absenteeism

The third objective of this study was to determine the level of psychological absenteeism of secondary school students in Makete district, Tanzania. Psychological absenteeism of secondary school students was

divided into three aspects of engagement/participation, namely, emotional engagement, cognitive engagement and behavioural engagement.

In this study poor engagement/participation of secondary school students at school was interpreted as high level of psychological absenteeism while good engagement/participation was interpreted as low level of psychological absenteeism of students. Table 4 indicates the level of psychological absenteeism of secondary school students in Makete district, Tanzania.

Table 4

Level of Psychological Absenteeism of Secondary Schools Students in Makete District, Tanzania

Item	Mean	Interpretation	Rank
Emotional Engagement			
You enjoy the work you do in class.	1.883	poor	1
You are happy to be at your school.	1.852	poor	2
You like most of your teachers at school.	1.809	poor	3
Your classroom is a fun place to be.	1.779	poor	4
There is an adult at school that you can talk to about your problems.	1.752	Very poor	5
Cognitive Engagement			
You are getting a good education at your school.	1.865	poor	1
When you read a book, you understand what it is about.	1.799	poor	2
You check your schoolwork for mistakes	1.779	poor	3
You learn a lot from your classes.	1.778	poor	4
You talk with people outside of school about what you are learning in class.	1.725	Very poor	5
Behavioral Engagement			
You have never thought of dropping out.	1.835	poor	1
You never skip (cut) classes during school.	1.808	poor	2
You follow the rules at school.	1.792	poor	3
You never get trouble at this school.	1.781	poor	4
When you are in class, you never pretend you are working.	1.765	poor	5
Average mean	1.800	Poor	8

Source: *Primary data*

The calculated average mean for the psychological absenteeism of students was 1.8000. These results indicate that engagement of secondary school students in Makete district, Tanzania is poor, meaning that there is a high psychological absenteeism of secondary school students in Makete district, Tanzania.

These results are in consistence with that of Azzah (2012), who found that Tanzanian education does not assist students into developing the cognitive value (the process of acquiring knowledge by the use of reasoning, intuition, or perception). The popular teaching method in use is examination oriented which do not leave room for students to develop cognitive mind that enable them acquire knowledge by reasoning. Students depend entirely on teachers, their minds cannot think independently. They are being spoon-fed, trained to answer questions to enable them respond to an imminent national exam since they are shaped to be dependent.

The same results was found by Benjamin (2007) in his study on implementation of the universal primary education policy and its effectiveness in Tanzania who found that there is a low retention rate among enrolled children- girls compared to boys in Tanzania. Only 65.3 percent of the enrolled children completed primary cycle. Unfavorable environment including dilapidated school buildings, unmotivated and poorly trained teachers, and poor management of schools contribute to low retention of school children.

The reason for high psychological absenteeism of secondary school students in Mketete district, Tanzania are probably poor social integration,

poor academic integration, inadequate teaching/learning facilities and poor social services.

Difference between the Level of School Environment and the Level of Psychological Absenteeism of Students According to their Profile Characteristics

The fourth objective of this study was to establish whether there is a significant difference in the level of school environment and level of psychological absenteeism among secondary school students according to gender, age, family income level and education level.

The T-test (t) was used to compare gender of students with the level of school environment as well as the level of psychological absenteeism. The T-test (t) was used to compare gender of students with the level of school environment as well as the level of psychological absenteeism because gender has only two categories namely, male and female.

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) (F) was used to compare age, education level and family income level with the level of school environment and the level of psychological absenteeism of secondary school students in Makete district, Tanzania. ANOVA was used because age, education level and family income level have more than one category.

Table 5 indicates the significant difference in the level of school environment and level of psychological absenteeism of secondary school students according to gender, age, family income level and education level.

Table 5

Significant Difference in the Level of School Environment and the Level of Psychological Absenteeism of Secondary Schools Students in Makete District, Tanzania According to their Profile Characteristics

Category	Age	Mean	F	Sig	Interpretation	Decision on Ho
School environment	Under 20	1.747	19	0.002	Different	Rejected
	20-39	2.375				
Psychological absenteeism	Under 20	1.768	11	0.015	Different	Rejected
	20-39	2.273				
Category	Gender	Mean	t	Sig	Interpretation	Decision on Ho
School environment	Male	1.854	1.6	0.125	No difference	Accepted
	Female	1.718				
Psychological absenteeism	Male	1.877	1.9	0.092	No difference	Accepted
	Female	1.722				
Category	Education level	Mean	F	Sig	Interpretation	Decision on Ho
School environment	Form I	1.702	15	0.000	Different	Rejected
	Form II	1.575				
	Form III	1.996				
	Form IV	2.203				
Psychological absenteeism	Form I	1.626	31	0.000	Different	Rejected
	Form II	1.517				
	Form III	2.263				
	Form IV	2.241				
Category	Family income level	Mean		Sig	Interpretation	Decision on Ho
School environment	Low	1.632	34	0.000	Different	Rejected
	Middle	1.788				
	High	2.090				
Psychological absenteeism	Low	1.604	40	0.000	Different	Rejected
	Middle	1.861				
	High	2.580				

Source: Primary data

In comparing the level of school environment and age of the students, the researcher found that the calculated significant level was 0.002. Since the calculated significant level was less than the rejection level 0.05, the null hypothesis was rejected and the research hypothesis was accepted. Therefore, it is inferred that there is a significant difference between the level of school environment and the age of secondary school students in Makete district Tanzania as indicated in table 5.

The students of age less than 20 years were more affected by the level of school environment having a mean of 1.747 than the students with the age of above 20 years who had a mean of 2.375. Table 5 also indicates that students with the age of less than 20 years had (teenagers) a higher psychological absenteeism having a mean of 1.768 than the students with the age of above 20 years who had a mean of 2.273. This is probably because teenagers are not mature enough to handle problems related to poor school environment.

The T-test analysis as indicated in table 5 showed that there were no significant difference between the level of school environment and the level of psychological absenteeism according to gender of students. The researcher noted that the significant level for the school environment was 0.125 while the significant level for psychological absenteeism was 0.092. The two significant levels were greater than the rejection level of 0.05 and therefore the null hypothesis which stated that, there is no significant difference between the level of school environment and the level of psychological absenteeism according to gender was accepted. This means that both male and female students were equally affected by the level of

school environment. This is probably because female students need more facilities like sanitary materials than male students.

The analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to find the significant difference between the level of school environment and the level of psychological absenteeism according to education level of the students. The results showed that the significance level was 0.000 to all aspects of school environment (social integration, academic integration, teaching/learning facilities and social services). Since the significance level (0.000) is less than the rejection level (0.05), the null hypothesis was rejected and this infers that there is a significant difference between the level of school environment and the education level of secondary school students in Makete district Tanzania. This means that students from the low levels of education (form I and form II) are more affected by the level of school environment having a mean of 1.702 for form I and 1.575 for form II than the students from the high levels of education (form III and form IV) who had a mean of 1.996 for form III and 2.203 for form IV. This might be because students from the low levels of education are newer to the school environment than students from high levels of education.

On the other hand, table 5 indicates that students from the lower levels of education (form I and form II) had a higher psychological absenteeism rate having a mean of 1.626 for form I and 1.517 for form II than students from the higher levels of education (form III and form IV) who had a mean of 2.263 for form III and 2.241 for form IV. This might be because students from the low levels of education are newer to the school environment than students from high levels of education.

The family income level of the students in Makete district Tanzania was found to have a significant level of 0.000. Since this significant level is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis was rejected and the research hypothesis was accepted. This indicates that there is a significant relationship between the level of school environment and the level of psychological absenteeism according to the family income level of the students in Makete district Tanzania. Students from the low family income level had higher psychological absenteeism having the mean of 1.604 than students from high family income who had a mean of 2.580 as shown in table 5. This is probably because students from high family income level are more supported by their parents with school facilities than students from low family income level.

These results support the work of Paraide P, et al (2010) who found that, Low income, subsistence farming as the only form of income, and having other siblings in school were the major contributing factors to parents' difficulties in paying their children's school fees. Female students' withdrawal from school were the result of inability to pay school fees, poor parental support, outside influence, adolescence issues, involvement in household activities, and peer pressure.

Relationship between the Level of School Environment and Level of Psychological Absenteeism of Students

The fifth objective of this study was to establish whether there is a significant relationship between the levels of secondary school environment and the level of psychological absenteeism of secondary school students. Pearson Linear Correlation Coefficient value was used to determine the relationship between the level of school environment and

the level of psychological absenteeism of secondary school students in Makete district Tanzania as indicated in table 6.

Table 6

Significant Relationship between the Level of School Environment and Level of Psychological Absenteeism of Secondary Schools Students in Makete District, Tanzania

Variables correlated	r-value	Sig	Interpretation	Decision on Ho
School Environment versus Psychological Absenteeism	0.674	0.000	Significant related	Rejected

Source: *Primary data*

The Pearson Linear Correlation Coefficient value was found to be 0.674 as shown in table 6. Since this value is between -1 and +1, the null hypothesis was rejected and the research hypothesis was accepted. The inference was that there is a strong significant correlation between the level of the school environment and the level of the psychological absenteeism of secondary school students in Makete district Tanzania.

These results support the research which was done by Mugisha (2006), Kenya, who noted that low retention rate in slum areas, is attributed by poor quality primary schooling and limited access to secondary schools. The schools that serve the slums communities are mainly non formal and are generally characterized by staff shortages, clouded classrooms and lack of resources. But schools situated outside the slum communities are in most cases unaffordable to slum dwellers and schooling access is at times problematic.

CHAPTER FIVE

FINDINGS, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This chapter focused on the findings, conclusion and recommendation of the study depending on the data that was presented in chapter four. The major findings were discussed in this chapter reflecting the objectives, research question and hypothesis of the study. Then conclusion was drawn to the findings of the study and recommendations were given as per the study requirements.

Findings

The first research question in this study asked about the profile of secondary school students in terms of gender, age, family income level and education level. The results showed that 93.6% of the students were in the age of under 20 years and 6.4% were in the age of 20-39 years. In terms of gender, 50.3% of the students were found to be male, while 49.7% were female students. Regarding the education level of the students, 33.6% were form II, followed by form I (32.9 %). The form III students were only 19.5% followed by form IV (14.0%). About 61.45% of the students were in the low family income level, while 23.2% were in the middle family income level and only 15.4% were found to be in the high income level category.

The second question in this study asked about the level of secondary school environment. The results indicated that the average mean of the level of secondary school environment in Makete district Tanzania was 1.787. The meaning of these results is that the level of the secondary school environment in Makete district Tanzania is poor. Students reported that social integration, academic integration,

teaching/learning facilities and social services were poor in Makete district, Tanzania.

The third research question in this study asked about the level of psychological absenteeism of secondary school students. The average mean for the psychological absenteeism of students was 1.800. These results indicate that there is a high psychological absenteeism of secondary school students in Makete district, Tanzania.

In this study, the fourth research question asked about the significant difference in the level of school environment and the level of psychological absenteeism among secondary school students according to gender, age, family income level and education level. The students of age less than 20 years were more affected by the level of school environment having a mean of 1.747 than the students with the age of above 20 years who had a mean of 2.375. The findings also indicate teenagers had a higher psychological absenteeism than the students with the age of above 20 years.

However both male and female students were equally affected by the level of school environment as indicted in table 5. On the other hand, table 5 indicates that students from the lower levels of education (form I and form II) had a higher psychological absenteeism rate than students from the higher levels of education (form III and form IV). In fact students from the low family income level had higher psychological absenteeism having than students from high family income level as shown in table 5.

The fifth question in this study asked about the significant relationship between the level of secondary school environment and the

level of psychological absenteeism of secondary school students. The findings indicated that there was a correlation between the level of school environment and the level of psychological absenteeism of secondary school students as indicated in table 6. The Pearson Linear Correlation Coefficient value of 0.6735 indicates the strong correlation between school environment and psychological absenteeism of students in Makete district, Tanzania.

Conclusion

In this chapter, the researcher drew the conclusions basing on the purpose of the study. Following the findings of the study, the null hypothesis which states there is no significant relationship between the level of school environment and the level of psychological absenteeism of secondary school students was rejected. This infers that, there is a significant relationship between the level of school environment and the level of psychological absenteeism of secondary school students. Poor school environment is a result of high psychological absenteeism of students in Makete district, Tanzania.

Regarding the gaps of the study, the researcher noted that most of the studies on school environment and psychological absenteeism of students like Health School Environment and Enhanced Education Performance (Berry, 2002), School Environment (Fredricks, et al, 2004) and Student Engagement in Instructional Activity (Marks, 2000) were carried out of Makete district, Tanzania.

Tinto's Model of Student Retention which states that "Whether a student persists or drops out is quite strongly predicted by their degree of academic integration, and social integration" was validated. The findings

indicate that academic integration, social integration, teaching/learning facilities and social services are among of the aspects of school environment which contribute to psychological absenteeism of students.

The findings of this study revealed that the level of secondary school environment in Makete district, Tanzania is poor while the level of psychological absenteeism of secondary school students is high.

Recommendation

From the study findings the researcher has the following recommendations:

Students from low family income level should be sponsored by the government or non-governmental organization in order to reduce their psychological absenteeism at school. However, parents with low income level should be helped in entering the job market and thus increasing their income-earning power and allowing them to have financial capacity to provide for their children.

Teachers should make sure that they prepare and use attractive teaching/learning materials in order to catch the attention of the students in their daily school activities. It is also important for teachers to use a variety of teaching methods when teaching.

The school administrators need to make sure that all necessary school facilities for both male and female students are adequate at school. They should also make sure that school environment is friendly and attractive to students.

The Ministry of Education and Vocational Training must take leadership in coordinating government sectors that provide services related both directly and indirectly to the delivery of education. A range of

agencies and entities need to collaborate in order to reduce or eliminate the problem of psychological absenteeism of students. These include turn road councils, which are responsible for roads maintenance and utility companies, which are responsible for the supply of water and electricity.

The researcher of this study did not cover all the factors that cause psychological absenteeism to secondary school students. Instead the researcher looked only at school environment as a factor for psychological absenteeism of secondary school students in Makete district, Tanzania.

Suggestions for Further Research

Other researchers are invited to conduct their studies on psychological absenteeism of students not only in secondary schools, but also in primary schools and higher learning institutions. It is recommended that they should look for other factors that cause psychological absenteeism of students and suggest on how to overcome them.

The following are the suggested areas of study for those who are interested to conduct their studies on psychological absenteeism of students:

1. Information Communication Technology (ICT) and Psychological Absenteeism of Students in Tanzania
2. Social cultural factors and psychological absenteeism of students in Tanzania
3. School managerial skills and psychological absenteeism of students in Tanzania

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APPENDICES
APPENDIX I
TRANSMITTAL LETTER



**KAMPALA
INTERNATIONAL
UNIVERSITY**

Ggaba Road - Kansanga
P. O. Box 20000, Kampala, Uganda
Tel: +256- 414- 266813 / +256- 772 322563
Fax: +256- 414- 501974
E- mail: admin@kiu.ac.ug
Website: www.kiu.ac.ug

**OFFICE OF THE HEAD OF DEPARTMENT, EDUCATION, OPEN AND
DISTANCE LEARNING
COLLEGE OF HIGHER DEGREES AND RESEARCH (CHDR)**

Date: 27th, April, 2012

**RE: REQUEST ASUKILE A. MBOGELA MED/34489/113/DF TO
CONDUCT RESEARCH IN YOUR ORGANIZATION**

The above mentioned is a bonafide student of Kampala International University pursuing Masters in Educational Management and Administration.

He is currently conducting a research entitled **"School Environment and Psychological Absenteeism of Secondary School Students in Makete District, Tanzania."**

Your organization has been identified as a valuable source of information pertaining to his research project. The purpose of this letter is to request you to avail him with the pertinent information he may need.

Any information shared with him from your organization shall be treated with utmost confidentiality.

Any assistance rendered to him will be highly appreciated.

Yours truly,

Dr. Ssemugenyi Fred
**Head of Department,
Education, Open and Distance Learning (CHDR)**

NOTED BY:

Dr. Sofia Sol T. Gai
Principal-CHDR



APPENDIX II
CLEARANCE FROM ETHICS COMMITTEE

Date _____

Candidate's Data

Name _____

Reg. # _____

Course _____

Title of Study _____

Ethical Review Checklist

The study reviewed considered the following:

- ___ Physical Safety of Human Subjects
- ___ Psychological Safety
- ___ Emotional Security
- ___ Privacy
- ___ Written Request for Author of Standardized Instrument
- ___ Coding of Questionnaires/Anonymity/Confidentiality
- ___ Permission to Conduct the Study
- ___ Informed Consent
- ___ Citations/Authors Recognized

Results of Ethical Review

- ___ Approved
- ___ Conditional (to provide the Ethics Committee with corrections)
- ___ Disapproved/ Resubmit Proposal

Ethics Committee (Name and Signature)

Chairperson _____

Members _____

APPENDIX III

ACCEPTANCE LETTER

HALMASHAURI YA WILAYA YA MAKETE

Barua zote ziandikwe kwa Mkurugenzi Mtendaji wa Wilaya



Dir: + 255 026 2740016 DED
P.O. Box 6
Fax: + 255 026 2740103 DED
E-mail: maketecouncil@yahoo.co

HALMASHAURI (W)
S.L.P 6,
MAKETE

Ref. No: MK/DC/SE/36/ 10
ASUKILE A. MBOGELA,
KAMPALA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY,
P.O.BOX 20000,
KAMPALA – UGANDA.

27/062012

REF. ACCEPTANCE TO CONDUCT YOUR RESEARCH IN MAKETE DISTRICT

The heading above is concerned.

This is to inform you that my office has accepted your request to conduct research in the following Makete District Secondary schools: Ipelele, Ipepo, Mang'oto, Ukwama, and Usililo.

The research title allowed is "School Environment and Psychological Absenteeism of Secondary School Students in Makete District, Tanzania" and not otherwise.

I wish you success,

JACKOB A. MEENA

For. DISTRICT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
MKURUGENZI MTENDAJI (W)
MAKETE

APPENDIX IV

QUESTIONNAIRE

Dear respondent, the researcher is carrying out a research on **School Environment and Psychological Absenteeism of Secondary School Students in Makete District, Tanzania**. Please assist the researcher by answering the questionnaire by providing the most appropriate answer in your opinion by ticking, or writing a number of your answer in the given space as the case may be. Your responses will be kept confidential. In any case the questionnaire is anonymous.

Asukile A. Mbogela (Researcher)

SECTION A: PROFILE OF A STUDENT

- _____ 1. How old are you (years)?
(1) Under 20 (2) 20 – 39 (3) 40 – 59 (4) 60 and above
- _____ 2. What is your gender?
(1) Male (2) Female
- _____ 3. What is your education level?
(1) Form I (2) Form II (3) Form III (4) Form IV
- _____ 4. What is your family income level per year (in Tanzanian shillings)?
(1) Below 100,000 (2) 100,000-500,000 (3) 600,000 and above

SECTION B: SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

Please, your opinions are to range from 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = strongly agree.

Social integration

- _____ 5. Most teachers are pleasant and friendly to students.
- _____ 6. You receive encouragement from colleagues and other community members around the school.

_____7. Decisions about the running of the school usually are made by head of school, teachers and students.

_____8. You feel accepted by teachers and other students.

Academic integration

_____9. The school mission statement and its associated goals are well understood by school staff and students.

_____10. You always get good grades in this school.

_____11. You enjoys subjects found in this school.

_____12. You are comfortable with the language used as a medium of instruction.

Teaching/Learning Facilities

_____13. The school or department library includes an adequate section of books and periodicals.

_____14. The supply of equipment and resources like computer is adequate.

_____15. Video equipment, tapes, and films are readily available and accessible.

_____16. The school has adequate laboratory equipments.

_____17. The school has adequate, attractive and conducive classrooms.

_____18. Always teachers use teaching aids when teaching.

Social Services

_____19. You are comfortable with the transport from home to school.

_____20. The school provides you with better health services like toilets and clinic services.

_____21. Water is adequate and available when needed.

_____22. Power (electricity) is available all the time.

_____23. There is good communication network in your school.

_____24. The security service at this school is ok.

SECTION C: PSYCHOLOGICAL ABSENTEEISM

Please, your respective opinions are to range from 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Agree, 4 = strongly agree

Emotional Engagement

- _____25. You are happy to be at your school.
- _____26. You like most of your teachers at school.
- _____27. There is an adult at school that you can talk to about your problems.
- _____28. Your classroom is a fun place to be.
- _____29. You enjoy the work you do in class.

Cognitive Engagement

- _____30. You are getting a good education at your school.
- _____31. You learn a lot from your classes.
- _____32. When you read a book, you ask yourself questions to make sure you understand what it is about.
- _____33. You talk with people outside of school about what your learning in class.
- _____34. You check your schoolwork for mistakes.

Behavioral Engagement

- _____35. You have never thought of dropping out.
- _____36. When you are in class, you never pretend you are working.
- _____37. You follow the rules at school.
- _____38. You never skip (cut) classes during school.
- _____39. You never get trouble at this school.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR CO-OPERATION

Adapted from: 1. www.schoolengagement.org By Krystina A. Finlay, Ph.D.
2. http://cart.rmcdenver.com/instruments/school_level.pdf

APPENDIX V
SLOVEN'S FORMULA FOR SAMPLE DETERMINATION

Sloven's Formula states that:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + N(e^2)}$$

Where, n = the required sample size

N = known population size = 1161

e = the level of significance fixed at 0.05

Solution:

$$n = \frac{1161}{1+1161(0.05^2)}$$

$$n = \frac{1161}{3.9025}$$

$$n = 297.5016$$

Answer:

The required sample size for this study is approximately **298** respondents.

Source: Stephanie (2012). Accessed in the following website:

<http://www.statisticshowto.com/articles/how-to-use-slovins-formula>

APPENDIX VI

VALIDITY OF INSTRUMENT

According to Amin (2005) validity of instrument is determined by the formula:

$$CVI = \frac{RQ}{TQ}$$

Legends: CVI = Content Validity Index

RQ = Relevant Questions

TQ = Total number of Questions

$$CVI1 = \frac{36}{39} = 0.923$$

$$CVI2 = \frac{37}{39} = 0.949$$

$$CVI3 = \frac{39}{39} = 1.000$$

Therefore:

$$CVI = \frac{CVI1+CVI2+CVI3}{3}$$

$$CVI = \frac{0.923+0.949+1}{3}$$

Answer: CVI = 0.957

RESEARCHER'S CURRICULUM VITAE

Personal Profile

Sur name : Mbogela
Others names : Asukile Ambonisye
Date of birth : 28th June, 1977
Marital status : Married
Nationality : Tanzanian

Educational Back Ground

August 2011 – August 2013	Master of Education in Educational Management and Administration, Kampala International University, Uganda (In Progress)
September 2006 – November 2009	Bachelor of Education, University of Arusha, Tanzania
July 2004 – May 2006	Diploma in Education, Morogoro Teachers' College, Tanzania
July 2001 – May 2003	Advanced Certificate of Secondary Examination (ACSEE). Kierruu Teachers' College Centre, Tanzania
January 1993 – November 1996	Certificate of Secondary Education Examination (CSEE) Mwakavuta Secondary School, Tanzania.
January 1986 – November 1992	Primary School Education Examination (PSEE) Makwaranga Primary School, Tanzania

Work experience

June 2001–May 2006 : Teacher at Ikete Primary School, Tanzania
June 2006–February 2010: Teacher at Usililo Secondary School, Tanzania
March 2010 – To date : Teacher at Ukwama Secondary School, Tanzania

Other relevant data

Language spoken

Kimagoma, Kiswahili and English

Computers skills

Microsoft word and Internet

I certify that the above information is correct
Yours faithfully,

Asukile

ASUKILE A. MBOGELA

8th DECEMBER, 2012.

