

**ABSENTEEISM AND PUPILS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN
PRIMARY SCHOOLS: A CASE STUDY OF KIBUNGO
PRIMARY SCHOOL, NYAMAREBE SUB-COUNTY
IBANDA DISTRICT UGANDA**

BY

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DECLARATION

I Biryomumasho Deus, here by swear that this piece of work is completely my original work and has never been presented to any institution for any academic award.

Signature.....

Biryomumasho Deus

Date

APPROVAL

This research report has been done under my guidance as a university supervisor.

Signature 

Mr. Kibuuka Muhammad

Date 13th / 10 / 2008

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my beloved wife Kobuyonjo Sylvia, my Parents, brothers, sister, sons, daughters and friends who supported me financially and spiritually to this level of education. Without your contributions this research would not have been done.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

DECLARATION.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
APPROVAL	ii
DEDICATION.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT.....	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS	v
ABSTRACT.....	ix
CHAPTER ONE	1
INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY.....	1
1.0 Introduction.....	1
1.0 Back Ground of the Study	1
2.2 Problem Statement	3
2.3 Purpose of the Study	4
2.4 Objectives.....	4
2.5 Research Questions.....	4
2. 6 Scope of the Study	5
2.7 Significance of the Study	5
CHAPTER TWO	6
LITERATURE REVIEW	6
2.0 Introduction.....	6
2.3 Conceptual Frame Work	6
2.3 Causes of Absenteeism in Schools.....	7
2.3 Effects of Absenteeism on performance.....	10
CHAPTER THREE	13
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	13
3.0 Introduction.....	13
3.1 Design	13
3.2 Research Environment	13
3.3 Population of the Study.....	14
3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Techniques	14
3.5 Research Instruments	14

3.6 Method of Data Analysis.....	15
CHAPTER FOUR.....	16
DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION	16
4.0 Introduction.....	16
4.1 Description of Respondents	16
4.1.1 Description of pupils by parents' Job Type.....	16
4.1.2 Description of Respondents by Parent's Education Level	17
4.2 The Rate of Absenteeism in Kibanga primary School.....	18
4.3 Causes of Absenteeism in Kibanga Primary School.....	20
4.5 Possible Measures to Control Absenteeism.....	30
CHAPTER FIVE	33
SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION.....	33
5.0 Introduction.....	33
5.1 Summary of Findings	33
5.2 Conclusion.....	34
5.3 Recommendations	35
5.4 Areas for Further Research.....	36
REFERENCES	37
APPENDICES	A
APPENDIX A: INTRODUCTORY LETTER	A
APPENDIX B: ACCEPTANCE LETTER.....	B
APPENDIX C: QUESTIONNAIRES FOR TEACHERS	C
APPENDIX D: PUPILS' QUESTIONNAIRE.....	E
TERM I: PUPILS' ATTENDANCE AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE KIBUNGO P/S	F
TERM II: PUPILS' ATTENDANCE AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN KIBUNGO P/S	G
TERM III: PUPILS' ATTENDANCE AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE SHEET.....	H

LIST OF TABLES

<i>Table 4.1 Description of Respondents by Parents Job Type</i>	17
<i>Table 4:2 Descriptions of Respondents by Parent's Education Level</i>	18
<i>Table 4:3 the Rate of Absenteeism by Pupils</i>	18
<i>Table 4:4: Description of the Rate and Level of Attendance and Performance</i>	19
<i>Table 4:5 Annual Averages</i>	20
<i>Table 4:6 Reasons Why Some pupils Miss Class</i>	20
<i>Table 4:7 Teachers Views About the Causes of Absenteeism in primary Schools</i>	22
<i>Table 4:8: The Extent to Which Parents Occupation is Responsible for pupils Absenteeism</i>	23
<i>Table 4.9 Chi- Square Test; the Relationship Between parents Job & pupils Absenteeism</i>	24
<i>Table 4:10 Reasons for Missing class * parents occupation cross tabulation</i>	24
<i>Table 4.12 Chi – Square Test: Pupils absenteeism & parent's education.</i>	25
<i>Table 4:13 Reason for Mission School and parents Education Level Cross Tabulation</i>	26
<i>Table 4:14: Chi – square tests, parent's education level and reason for absenteeism</i>	
<i>4.4 The Effect of Absenteeism on Pupils Academic Performance</i>	27
<i>Table 4:15: correlation Between Attendance and Pupils Academic Scores</i>	28
<i>Table 4:16 Correlation Between Attendance and performance Based on Annual Averages</i>	29
<i>Table 4:17: The Rate of Absenteeism in Schools</i>	31
<i>Table 4:18: Teachers who Make Regular Roll Calls in the School</i>	31
<i>Table 4:19: Teachers who Always Mind About Pupils who are Absent</i>	32

ACRONIMS

MOES	Ministry of Education and Sports.
PLE	primary leaving examinations.
UNEB	Uganda National Examinations Board.

ABSTRACT

This study set out to examine the effect of absenteeism on pupils' academic performance in Kibungo Primary School, Nyamalebe Sub-county Ibanda District. The study followed a descriptive survey design, using both quantitative and qualitative data. Teachers and primary six pupils were the main respondents of this study. Convenience sampling was used to select Kibungo primary school, primary six and the teachers who answered the questionnaire while random sampling was used to select the 20 pupils. Two sets of questionnaires were developed, one for pupils and another for teachers. Class attendance registers for the year 2007 were also used to collect data on attendance and absenteeism levels, while reports and mark lists were used to collect data on pupils' academic performance. SPSS data processor was used in processing the data. Frequency counts and relative frequencies were used to analyze the data from the questionnaires. The Pearson's Chi-square and the Linear Correlation Coefficient were the statistical techniques used to analyze data.

The findings indicate that 70% of pupils parents were farmers and 15% were traders, which increased the possibility of absenteeism the school, 65% were of low education level with o-level and below, 60% of the pupils always miss class and on average pupils in this school attended 39 days in term one & 44 days in term two, missed 21 days in term one (39/60) and 16 days in term two & three (44/60). The mean performance in term one was 44% and about 51% in term two & three. The most important causes of absenteeism are illness (55%) fees problems (25%) and work given at home by parents (15%) as per pupils but to teachers, a number of factors are responsible, most of which originate from home. There was a significant relationship between parents' job and level of education and pupils' absenteeism, with a chi-square value of 0.05 and 0.03 respectively, more pupils (8/11) form parents with less education and farmers, are likely to miss class due to illness, fees problems and work give by parents. Attendance significantly affect pupil's academic performance in term one ($r = 0.917$ and $p = 0.000$). Attendance in term one significantly affect performance in term tow ($P = 0.04$ & $r = 0.41$) and term three ($P = 0.002$ & $r = 0.586$) while attendance in term three was not significant.

The researcher concluded that the major causes of absenteeism in rural schools are illness, fees problems & work given by parents at home. Parent's job type and level of education impact significantly absenteeism. There is a high rate of absenteeism in Kibanga Primary school and the general performance is just fair. Absenteeism has a significant (negative) impact on pupil's academic performance mainly in term one, but if we take the annual basis, it is not a significant.

The research recommends that all schools should ensure that they make regular roll calls at least twice a day, in morning and afternoon to provide data for action, reason for missing class should be recorded. Measures like adult literacy, health care and poverty eradication programs can help reduce absenteeism and the MOES should also come out with a policy on absenteeism.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.0 Introduction

This chapter handles the back ground to the study, with respect to the causes and effects of absenteeism and its assumed impact on pupils' academic performance. It also handles the statement of the problem and the purpose of the study. The specific objectives that guided this study are also outlined here. The research questions, scope of the study as well as the significance of the study are also stated here.

1.0 Back Ground of the Study

Regular school attendance is critical to learning and is important to a student's success in school. It is also a mark of a mature sense of responsibility and understanding. Each student should realize that one cannot recreate the original classroom setting and experience once it has gone. It is actually true that *time lost can never be found*. Thus missing a class on the side of a learner, means losing some thing which is hard to recover.

The more a student stays away from school, the more difficult it becomes for him to feel that he is a vital part of the school. When returning, the student's classes are often discussing new and different subject matter and there is a double burden of current and back lessons to prepare. Often times a student loses heart, is unnecessarily absent again, becomes swamped with work, drops a subject from his program or may leaves school altogether (<http://www.florence.k12.wi.us/Districtnew/District>). This means that

absenteeism has far reaching consequences not only on learners' academic performance, but also on their entire academic program.

To many scholars, absenteeism is a symptom of poor academic performance. Normally learners who are irregular in class find difficulty to fully understand what is required of them. As a symptom, absenteeism refers to the reasons that a person may be absent from school (truancy) or work (absenteeism). Sometimes people are too sick to come in. And in some cases, they are making excuses. Both physical and psychological disorders can stop a pupil from attending school or their work.

The responsibility for regular school attendance of pupils belongs to many people. School personnel, designated social service and law enforcement officials, parents or guardians, students, all have a part to play in this responsibility. However, the major portion of the responsibility for regular school attendance must fall on the shoulders of the parents or guardians and the students.

A number of factors can help to explain why some pupils miss classes regularly. Such factors include Illness, observance of religious holidays, death of an immediate family member, family emergency, circumstances which cause reasonable concern to the parent/guardian) among others. Some pupils can miss class when it is not their own cause, while others miss when they have so wished. For pupils who are bellow ten years, their parents are obliged to see to it that their children attend all the required days of schooling whenever possible.

The consequences of high absenteeism are very direct. Pupils, who do not come to school regularly, miss out on the social and educational benefits that come with attending school. Although it is assumed that high levels of absenteeism can impact negatively on learners' academic performance, there is no single study in Uganda that has come out to show with researched evidence, the relationship between the two variables.

Despite absence of such data to explain its impact on pupils' academic performance, absenteeism remains a big problem in schools especially in rural areas. Learning is a relatively permanent change in behavior as a result of experience. These behaviors are learnt gradually through schools (Neil, 1989)

2.2 Problem Statement

Studies that aim at increasing in this century, by critically examining all the factors that can affect learners' academic achievement. Absenteeism or learners' level of attendance is one of the factors are expected to impact on performance. Absenteeism thus is expected to be a promoter of poor academic performance especially in most rural schools, where most parents have low education levels and are peasants who tend to use their children as labour for domestic production. Schools in rural areas are having a big problem of pupils irregularity. Too much absenteeism results into negative attitude of pupils towards education hence poor performance especially in Primary Leaving Examinations (PLE). It is also true that the more a student stays away from school, the

more difficult it becomes for him to feel that he is a vital part of the school. When returning, the student's classes are often discussing new and different subject matter and there is a double burden of current and back lessons to prepare. By time, a student loses heart, is unnecessarily absent again, becomes surrounded with work, drops a subject from his program or leaves school altogether. There is therefore a need to find out the causes of the problem of absenteeism especially in rural primary schools, examine its impact on pupils' academic performance and provide solutions to avert the situation. This study therefore wanted to examine the impact absenteeism has on pupils' academic performance in Kibungo Primary School, Nyamalebe Sub-county Ibanda District.

2.3 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine the effect of absenteeism on pupils' academic performance in Kibungo Primary School, Nyamalebe Sub-county Ibanda District.

2.4 Objectives

1. To find out the causes of absenteeism in primary schools.
2. To determine how absenteeism affects pupils' academic performance.
3. To determine the possible measures to control absenteeism schools.

2.5 Research Questions

1. What are the causes of absenteeism in primary schools?
2. What is the impact of absenteeism on pupils' academic performance?
3. What measures can be employed to reduce absenteeism in primary schools?

2.6 Scope of the Study

This study covered primary Six Pupils' attendance and absenteeism for a period of one year (2007). It also compared their academic performance for the same period. It was specifically conducted in Kibungo Primary School, Nyamalebe Sub-county Ibanda District. It looked at the causes of absenteeism, the impact of absenteeism and solutions to cure absenteeism.

2.7 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study are important first of all to teachers in trying to improve academic performance of pupils by looking at all the possible factors that affect it like attendance levels.

The findings can also help school administrators in improving their school effectiveness and putting up measures to uplift school performance. The study will also provide literature for future researchers on the same topic and will act as a basis for future researchers.

The findings are also important to the Ministry of Education and Sports in formulating policies intended to reduce absenteeism in schools and showing what actions to take in order to improve pupils' academic performance. It is also helpful to the researcher in fulfilling one of the requirements to complete the course and gaining more experience in research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 *Introduction*

This chapter shows the available literature on absenteeism. It specifically shows the conceptual framework, the causes of absenteeism in primary schools and the effects of Absenteeism on pupil's academic performance and measures to control absenteeism in school.

2.3 *Conceptual Frame Work*

Absenteeism is a failure by a learner to be within the school program at a given time. It may be intended or un intended. According to Osier et al (2002) suggests that truancy is a form of absenteeism which is self – exclusion on the part of the learner. This therefore means that if a learner deliberately excludes himself or her self from the school program at any given time, this is truancy, on the other hand absenteeism is non attendance to any school program but with authority from the school, fore example if a learner is permitted to go home for school fees or other requirements, for a given public holiday, permission when some one is sick and so on,

In many countries, truancy being absent without authorizations a breach of the law or rules and regulations and therefore a parent can be taken in courts of law to explain the matter and may be punished accordingly .Both cases (although the two words are some times used interchangeably) are caused by a number of factors, but for truancy, it is criminal that may lead to a fine.

In Britain, if a child of school fails to attend regularly at the school, then the parent is guilty of an offence according to British education Act, as amended in 2000, since 2001, there has been an aggravated offence where a parent who knowing that his child is fairly to attend regularly at school, fails without reasonable justification to cause him to attend, this can result, in a fine, parenting order or up to three months imprisonment. Schools are required. Schools are required to take the register twice a day, at the start of the day and once in afternoon. One can be required absent half a day. Data is report by the schools to the ministry concerned and actions taken. Absenteeism cases are recorded as authorized absence and un authorized absence. It is common that in developing countries like Uganda. Un authorized absences are the most common in the view of the above conceptualization in this study absenteeism was used to refer absence from school with or without authorization from the school. This is because most schools do not have records on reason for non attendance of the learners. In most cases it is taken to be obvious that once a learner is absent from school, then it is unauthorized, although in actual sense some do not attend with authority from school.

2.3 *Causes of Absenteeism in Schools*

Learners may fail to attend schools due to a number of factors; such factors may be intended others not intended. Some learners are absent with school authorization others without. There are learners who absent themselves for a day, half a day, a week or months .If absenteeism is prolonged for example for a week or months, then it is condemned and take to be caused by parents (Smyth, 1999).

Research shows that pupils and teachers have different perceptions on the reasons causing un authorized absenteeism (Truancy)

Among the reasons mentioned by pupils include boredom, dislike of teachers, wanting to avoid tests, being bullied and so on (Smyth, 1999) Smyth also showed that Secondly school pupils give reasons like boredom, problems with lessons and teachers, fear of returning after long absence etc. Teachers attribute truancy to parents putting a low value to education, thus most primary truancy is regarded as punctually motivated, teachers also feel that most parents are disorganized in their lifestyle, and give inadequate care or parenting their children so they are not bothered or do not take care to see whether their children have gone to school or not and also to see what they have learnt on a particular day. This gives children a go ahead to absent themselves like not leaving their homes or leaving the home but failing to reach schools and diverting to her activities of peer groups. They return home when hours of the school end, and since parents will not ask what they learnt, they are very comfortable to continue with the act.

Other causes of absenteeism according to Smyth, are school factors, which teachers tend to neglect, for example poor curriculum of the school, poor teaching styles, poor school attitudes racial harassment, bullying and peer pressure, among others. Other causes for unauthorized absenteeism as given by schools and pupils include family holidays extended absence to visit relatives abroad or up country, religious reasons, caring responsibilities like teenage parent, transient lifestyles, prolonged sickness, family problems.

According to Woodward and Fergusson (2000) a number of childhood pathologies case absenteeism in schools. Poverty is Salem & Oregon 2008: Increasing student attendance, strategies from research & practice, North West regional educational laboratory, Oregon school boards association.

Poverty is also a potential causer of truancy (Zhang, 2003). Poverty disenables children to get the required scholastic material and pocket money. When they look at others who have, they admire and hate to come to school till they will get what they see other learners have. Other causes proposed by researchers are running away (de Man, 200) disaffection and young attending (Ball & Cannolly, 2000) Alcoholism (Wichstrom, 1998) disturbed adolescent development (Ball & Cannolly 1999) Parenting styles (Mc Neal, 1999). Pre – court sentencing information (Ball & Cannolly, 1999) gang membership (Fritish et al, 1999), gang membership (Fritish et al, 1999) drug use (Lloyd, 1998). Early Conduct disorders (Fergusson & Horwood, 1998) exclusion from school (Bratby, 1998) health factors (Michaud et al, 1998) and attitudes (Lewis 1995), aspects of a dverse behaviour and lower levels of self esteem and self academic concepts, as well as less favorable attitudes to parents and teachers (Reid,1999) and curriculum arrangements in the compulsory phase of schooling (O'Keefe et al, 1993).

According to Salem & Oregon, (2008) previous researches focused on the connection between deprivations, social class, parental attitudes and social economic factors. Reid (1999) reported a clear link between non- attendance and a number of social indices, which include pupils at risk, pupils home backgrounds fairly life styles, disruptive

behavior, young Reid Ken 2004: Views of Head & Teachers on attendance issues in primary school, the research in Education.

Many pupils begin their history of none- attendance a in primary schools (Reid, 1999) but reported that persisted absence reduces at upper levels of education. Unfortunately much less research has been undertaken on pupils attendance, in primary school than in secondary schools (Reid 2004, in Reid 20002. For example Kinder, Kenali et al, 1999) reports that behavior and exclusion are important factors. Reid (2004) gives teachers frustration as a cause of absenteeism in schools.

As a family patterns of child rearing in the world become increasingly complete, possibly due to modernization and globalization, with for example more single parents families and divorce rates soaring, an increase number of primary pupils and their parents, increased employment of women and industrialization, absenteeism cases have increased (Reid 2004).

There is therefore need for more support to improve attendance, so as to attain the goals of education. Problems like behavioral difficulties are increasingly growing up among younger age pupils globally, yet many primary schools world wide cannot afford to handle such complications. According to a report, most absences among poor children arise from illness (81%).

2.3 *Effects of Absenteeism on performance*

It is assured that the more days a learner is off from school, the more problems that learner may get, as far as academic achievements concerned. The Scottish council for

research in education study (SCRE, 1995) reported a clear possible link between attendance and performance at every stage of schooling, from the infant and primary stages to the later years of secondary education.

According to Smyth, the occasional days a child misses have little or no impact on a pupil however there is a strong connection between higher levels of absenteeism and a child life chances. Smyth also reports that only 8% of truants achieve 5A – C in exams & around a third achieves no passes whatever. Possibly those who truant perform poor not because they have natural disabilities but because they have natural disabilities but because, a child who normally truants is more likely to offend than those who do not truant (YYB Youth survey 2007). In the same report pupils who normally truant are more likely than those who do not, to take drugs (58% V 34%) to be regular smokers and to usually drink (also in DOH survey 2001) .There is also a strong relationship between pupils reporting family behavior problems and their QOH involvement in truancy. Exclusion, substance abuse and anti – social behavior (Youth risk survey 2007).

Evans (1965) observed that several factors which affect pupil's academic performance include subject content, the teacher, the method used to approach a certain topic, classroom environment, personal and Psychological factors and the level / rate of a pupil's presence in class. Children are compelled to learn a subject if they are regular in class & so follow & understand properly what steps are being taken in that subject . But if they are irregular, they fail to catch up with the teacher and the rest of the class. So they end up hating the subject taking it to be difficult and hence perform poorly (David J.Fein,

Lee Christina Schofield: Do welfare paper presented at the Annual meeting of the National and Association for welfare – research & Statistics, August 1999).

Efforts to improve health may do more to reduce absenteeism .Absenteeism rates are lower compared to truancy. This is because most pupils miss school because of illness problems (Fein Et al, 1999). Schools should make more efforts to monitor attendance information.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter shows the general methodology followed in conducting this study. It shows the design, research environment, population of the study, sample size and sampling frame, research instruments and method of data analysis.

3.1 Design

This study followed a descriptive survey design, using both quantitative and qualitative data. This design was found relevant in describing the relation ship between pupils' attendance or absenteeism levels and their academic performance.

3.2 Research Environment

The study was carried out in Kibungo Primary School, Nyamalebe Sub-county Ibanda District. This area is typically rural with many peasant parents and learners. Schools in this area are a little bit scattered and most pupils have to travel up to three Kilometers to reach their respective schools. Most parents here are farmers with both crops and animals being produced. The place has some fertile soils which facilitate agriculture. The area has some specific rainy and dry seasons. During rainy seasons most people are busy in their gardens cultivating and planting, while during dry seasons, people are busy harvesting. So absenteeism in such a setting is high due to the nature of the parents and economic activities.

3.3 Population of the Study

Teachers and pupils were the main respondents of this study. Primary six pupils were specifically used to answer the questionnaires, while all the teachers accessed were used to answer the questionnaires. The teachers also included all the administrators.

3.4 Sample Size and Sampling Techniques

Convenience sampling was used to select one school with in the area of study and this was Kibungo primary School. This was so because the researcher is a teacher in the same school, so he is well versed with it and it would be easy to access important information like attendance records and school reports for the three terms in question. Selection of teachers was also done in the same way, where, all teachers accessed were used to answer the questionnaire. Random sampling was used to select 20 pupils from class six, but convenience sampling was used to select the class.

3.5 Research Instruments

The researcher made a questionnaire that was used to collect data. Two sets of questionnaires were developed, one for pupils and another for teachers. The questionnaire for pupils was closed ended while that of teachers contained questions which were closed ended and open ended. Questionnaires were basically used to collect data on the various causes of absenteeism, the inter relation ship between these factors and possible ways to deal with absenteeism. Class attendance registers for the year 2007 were also used to collect data on attendance and absenteeism levels, while reports and mark lists were used to collect data on pupils' academic performance. Two sheets were developed by the researcher, on which the number of days attended by each learner

per week were recorded and their respective academic scores for the three terms. These were later tabulated in respect to the required information.

3.6 Method of Data Analysis

Data was coded and entered into the computer. SPSS data processor was used in processing the data. Frequency counts and relative frequencies were used to analyze the data from the questionnaires. There was some cross tabulation of some variables to determine the inter dependence within, that facilitated conclusions. The Pearson's Chi-square and the Linear Correlation Coefficient were used to determine the relationship between absenteeism and academic performance. The number of days attended and academic scores in each term were used in this correlation. Conclusions were made mainly basing on the results or the value of this correlation.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

4.0 *Introduction*

In this chapter, the researcher presents the data collected from the field. Analysis and interpretation is done. It shows the description of respondents, the rate and causes of absenteeism in primary schools, the effect of absenteeism in primary schools, the effect of absenteeism on pupil's academic performance and possible measures to control absenteeism in primary schools.

4.1 *Description of Respondents*

Data on different aspects of this study was collected differently, as found convenient by the researcher, and analysis was also done in this angle. The researcher tried to investigate about the causes of absenteeism from the pupils and from the teachers, using two sets of questionnaires respectively, the researcher used school registers to collect data on the rate of attendance in school and used mark lists to collect data on performance. Samples in all these collections differed accordingly and different analysis tools were used, as found fit for each type of data, as presented in subsequent subsections of this section.

4.1.1 *Description of pupils by parents' Job Type*

Parents' job type is none of the factors that the researcher thought cause absenteeism in primary schools. Since the researcher areas of study was a rural schools, he expected that parent who are farmers may have pupils who are always absent in particular seasons of the year. The researcher

thus found it fit to describe their respondents by their parent job type Table 4.1 shows the descriptions of respondents (Pupils) by their parent's job type.

Table 4.1 *Description of Respondents by Parents Job Type*

Parents'/Guardian Occupation					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Farmer	14	70.0	70.0	70.0
	Teacher	1	5.0	5.0	75.0
	trader	3	15.0	15.0	90.0
	Driver	2	10.0	10.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.1 shows that the total number of pupils who responded to this questionnaire was 20. About 14 (70%) of the pupils parent were farmers and a few (15%) were traders .This possibly increased the researchers expectations that such parents can easily have pupils who are commonly absent, because they have been assigned work in the garden.

4.1.2 Description of Respondents by Parent's Education Level

Parent's education level is also expected to be factors that affect the rate of absenteeism in school. Parents who are more educated are expected to encourage their children to go to school regularly than those who are not or less educated. Table 4.2 shows the description of respondents (Pupils by their parent's level of education.

Table 4:2 Descriptions of Respondents by Parent's Education Level

Parents/Guardian Education Level

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Diploma	1	5.0	5.0	5.0
	Certificate	3	15.0	15.0	20.0
	A-level	3	15.0	15.0	35.0
	O-level	13	65.0	65.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.2 shows that majority of the Parents (65%) were of low education levels (i.e. O-level and below) .Only one parent had a diploma .This also increases belief that schools with such parents are have a high rate of absenteeism.

4.2 The Rate of Absenteeism in Kibanga primary School

In this particular aspect, the researcher used both questions and school registers to collect the relevant data, Using a questionnaires pupils were asked whether they sometimes miss class. Their responses are shown in table 4.3.

Table 4:3 the Rate of Absenteeism by Pupils

some Times Miss Class

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	yes	12	60.0	60.0	60.0
	no	8	40.0	40.0	100.0
	Total	20	100.0	100.0	

The table shows that 12(60%) of the pupils always miss class (or are absent for some days in a term. This implied that the rate of absenteeism in Kibanga Primary school is high. In addition,

the researcher also described the rate of absenteeism and the level of performance using school registers and mark lists. This is indicated in table 4.4.

Table 4:4: Description of the Rate and Level of Attendance and Performance

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Number of Days AttendedTerm1	39.1538	7.82658	26
Number of Days AttendedTerm2	44.5385	5.94798	26
Number of Days AttendedTerm3	44.1923	5.67816	26
Average Scores in Term1	42.6154	11.13581	26
Average ScoresTerm2	49.6154	8.63054	26
Average ScoresTerm3	52.1154	10.48934	26

Table 4:4 shows the mean attendance and performance of pupils for the three terms in 2007. It shows that an average pupil attended 39 days in term one and 44 days in term two and term three. This implies that in term one, pupils on average missed 21 days (39/60) and 16 days in term two and three. Generally, this is a high rate of absenteeism. The average performance in this school is also indicated for the three terms in 2007. It can also be seen that the performance was below average in term one (44%) and slightly average in term two & three. It can thus be said that the performance in term one was due to poor attendance.

On annual basis, a pupil in this school (Kibanga primary) attends at least 48 days each term and the average score annually is 43% which is also below average. This is indicated in table 4.5.

Table 4:5 Annual Averages

Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Annual Average Performance	42.6282	3.98701	26
Average Annual Attendance	48.4872	7.09756	26

4:3 Causes of Absenteeism in Kibanga Primary School

According to Smith (1999) the factors responsible for absenteeism in schools are sometimes motivated by parents, others by the school (environment & teachers) and others by the pupils themselves. He also asserts that some absenteeism's are intended, others are not. In this study, both pupils and teachers were asked to mention the possible causes of absenteeism in their schools separately when pupils were ask why they miss class some times; they gave the following responses as summarized in table 4.6.

Table 4:6 Reasons Why Some pupils Miss Class

Reason for Missing Class

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid fees problems	5	25.0	25.0	25.0
Illness	11	55.0	55.0	80.0
Work given by Parents	3	15.0	15.0	95.0
Do not want to study some times	1	5.0	5.0	100.0
Total	20	100.0	100.0	

The table indicates that most pupils (11 or 55%) miss class due to illness, Five (25%) due to fees problems and three (15%) due to work given by parents. This shows that most pupils miss class

un intention or due to factors beyond their control, like illness and fees problems. However some miss due to work given by their parents / guardians or because they simply do not want. It can therefore be said that according to pupil's opinions, illness and fees problems are the major causes of absenteeism and they account for about 55% and 25% respectively. According to teachers, a number of factors are responsible for pupils' absenteeism in schools. Teachers' views about the causes of absenteeism in primary schools were summarized and presented in table 4:7.

Table 4:7 Teachers Views About the Causes of Absenteeism in primary Schools

		Strongly Agree	Agree	Neu tral	Disa gree	Strongly disagree	Total
Students Come to School un prepared (th lack books, papers,Pencils)	Count %	14 70.0%	1 5.0%	4 20.0%	1 5.0%		20 100.0%
Students do not have Social Skills for Scl Environment like Communication,	Count %	14 70.0%	2 10.0%	1 5.0%	1 5.0%	1 5.0%	20 100.0%
Students donot have Basic Skills to enab them Learn	Count %	14 70.0%	1 5.0%	3 15.0%	1 5.0%		20 100.0%
Students Have Behavioural Problems tha interfere with learning	Count %	14 70.0%	1 5.0%	3 15.0%	2 ****		20 100.0%
Students have Health problems or are off Sick	Count %	14 70.0%	1 5.0%	1 5.0%	2 10.0%	2 10.0%	20 100.0%
Students are not motivated	Count %	14 70.0%	1 5.0%	2 10.0%	1 5.0%	2 10.0%	20 100.0%
Students donot feel Safe and Secure at School	Count %	14 70.0%			4 20.0%	2 10.0%	20 100.0%
Parents not Taking Responsibility to Get Kids to School	Count %	14 70.0%	1 5.0%	4 20.0%	1 5.0%		20 100.0%
Parents are not Involved Enough In Scho Programs	Count %	14 70.0%	1 5.0%	4 20.0%	1 5.0%		20 100.0%
Parents are not Involved Enough With th Childrens' Academics	Count %	14 70.0%	4 20.0%	2 10.0%			20 100.0%
Negative events in a child's Home Life	Count %	14 70.0%		2 10.0%	4 ****		20 100.0%
Schools donot have a good Method of Communicating With the Home	Count %	14 70.0%	1 5.0%	3 15.0%		2 10.0%	20 100.0%
Parents donot feel Welcomed or Confort at School	Count %	14 70.0%			2 10.0%	4 20.0%	20 100.0%
Parents donot Know How to Help their Children to succeed at School	Count %	14 70.0%	1 5.0%	3 15.0%	2 ****		20 100.0%
Parents donot know about PTO meetings other events at School	Count %	14 70.0%	1 5.0%		2 ****	3 15.0%	20 100.0%
Parents have too many Personal Problem be concerned about School Attendance	Count %	14 70.0%	1 5.0%	1 5.0%	1 5.0%	2 10.0%	20 100.0%
Absenteesm is a serious problem in Your School	Count %	14 70.0%	5 25.0%	1 5.0%			20 100.0%
You Make regular Rolcalls in Your Schoo	Count %	14 70.0%	4 20.0%		2 10.0%		20 100.0%

Table 4:7 shows different views of teachers about the causes of absenteeism in primary schools.

Fore example out of the 14 teachers who responded to this questionnaire, six teachers (30%)

believe that parents are not involved enough in school programmes, that is why absenteeism is a serious problem, and so on.

Table 4:7 also shows the general fact that most of the views given by teachers indicate that parental factors are more concerned with the problems of absenteeism.

Due to this factor, more analysis was done of the parental factors. Using SPSS computer package, parental factors were cross tabulated with other factors to test the extent to which each of them is responsible for absenteeism. For example parents occupation was cross tabulated with the rate of absenteeism, results are shown in table 4.8.

Table 4:8: The Extent to Which Parents Occupation is Responsible for pupils Absenteeism

Crosstab

Count		Parents'/Guardian Occupation				Total
		Farmer	Teacher	trader	Driver	
some Times	yes	6	1	3	2	12
Miss Class	no	8	0	0	0	8
Total		14	1	3	2	20

It is evidenced in table 4:8 that parents who are farmers are more likely to miss class. Out of 14 pupils whose parents are farmers, six results indicate that parent's job type significantly affect pupil's absenteeism.

Table 4.9 Chi- Square Test; the Relationship Between parents Job & pupils Absenteeism

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	5.714 ^a	3	.126
Likelihood Ratio	7.799	3	.050
N of Valid Cases	20		

a. 6 cells (75.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .40.

A chi – square value of 0.05 was significant at 95% level of significance. It can therefore be said according to table 4.8 that pupils, whose parents/guardians are farmers, are more likely to have a high rate of absenteeism than those pupils whose parents are teachers or drivers.

In another analysis it is indicated that pupils whose parents are farmers are more likely to be absent due to fees problems (2/14), than pupils whose parents are teachers or drivers. It is also indicated that of the 11 pupils who miss class due to illness, eight have parents who are farmers.

This indicated that farmers are more likely to have their children miss class due to illness. So in general farmer's children tend to miss class more other than parents in other occupations. This analysis is indicated in table 4:10.

Table 4:10 Reasons for Missing class * parents occupation cross tabulation

Crosstab

Count		Parents'/Guardian Occupation				Total
		Farmer	Teacher	trader	Driver	
Reason for	fees problems	2	1	2	0	5
Missing	Illness	8	0	1	2	11
Class	Work given by Parents	3	0	0	0	3
	Do not want to study some times	1	0	0	0	1
Total		14	1	3	2	20

In another analysis, parent's education level was also tested with those pupils who tend to miss class. Results are indicated in table 4:11

Table 4:11 Parents education Level and pupils Absenteeism Cross Tabulation

Crosstab

Count		Parents/Guardian Education Level				Total
		Diploma	Certificate	A-level	O-level	
some Times	yes	0	3	3	6	12
Miss Class	no	1	0	0	7	8
Total		1	3	3	13	20

In general parents who are less educated, with O-Level or below, have more pupils (6/12) who miss class than parents who highly educated say at a diploma level or above (0/12) it can therefore be said that the higher the parents education level, the lower the rate so absenteeism and vice versa. This is also proved by a significant chi- square value of 0.05 indicated in table 4:12.

Table 4.12 Chi – Square Test: Pupils absenteeism & parent's education.

Chi-Square Tests

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	6.538 ^a	3	.088
Likelihood Ratio	8.976	3	.030
N of Valid Cases	20		

a. 6 cells (75.0%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .40.

This specific finding is the line with Reid (1999) who showed a clear link between pupils' absenteeism and some social factors like pupils home back ground and family life styles. Parents

who are educated can easily follow up their pupils schooling program .They always visit the schools to know the regularity and performance of their children unlike parents who are not educated, they tend to be careless about pupils academic programs, possibly because they are not used to education programs.

Parent's education level was also cross tabulated with other reasons pupils gave for missing class. This was done to see how these factors could be linked with parent's education level.

Results of this analysis are indicated in table 4:13.

Table 4:13 Reason for Missing School and parents Education Level Cross Tabulation

Crosstab

Count		Parents/Guardian Education Level				Total
		Diploma	Certificate	A-level	O-level	
Reason for	fees problems	0	0	3	2	5
Missing	Illness	0	3	0	8	11
Class	Work given by Parent	1	0	0	2	3
	Do not want to study some times	0	0	0	1	1
Total		1	3	3	13	20

Table 4:13 indicates that pupils who normally miss class due to fees problems are mainly of less educated families/Parents about five pupils from parents with A- Level and below tend to miss class, while none of pupils of parents who are educated can easily pay fees in time and always talk with school administrators so that their pupils are given some time allowance even if they have not yet completed fees, unlike those parents who are not well educated. The table also indicated that pupils of less educated parents are more likely to miss class due to illness than those of educated. About eight (8/11) pupils from less educated parents miss class due to illness. It is also seen that most pupils (2/3) who miss class due to work given by parents, are from less

educated parents it also implies that parents who are less educated tend to enroll in jobs like farming, where they use their children as workers . so such children tend to miss class because they are in the garden especially during rainy and harvesting periods.

The chic square test in table 4:14 also indicated a significant relationship between parents education level and absenteeism, with a Chi – Square value of 0.036.

Table 4:14: Chi – square tests, parent’s education level and reason for absenteeism

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	17.893(a)	9	.036
Likelihood Ratio	16.517	9	.057
N of Valid Cases	20		

a 15 cells (93.8%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .05.

4.4 The Effect of Absenteeism on Pupils Academic Performance

It is expected that if a learner over miss classes, he/she will not be able to understand what is taught in class .Therefore his/her academic performance will be negatively affected .To find out the relationship between attendance and performance, the Pearsons correlation co-efficient was used, using SPSS. The researcher computed the mean attendance for the learners using school registers. Academic score results from end of term examinations, were also used EXE II, Computer program was used to compute the mean scores for each pupil each term, These mean attendance and scores were then used in the analysis, to check for a significant person correlation. Results of this test are combined in table 4:15.

Table 4:15: correlation Between Attendance and Pupils Academic Scores

Correlations

		Number of Days Attended Term1	Number of Days Attended Term2	Number of Days Attended Term3	Average Scores in Term1	Average Scores Term2	Average Scores Term3
Number of Days AttendedTerm1	Pearson Correlation	1	-.197	.553**	.917**	.401*	.240
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.335	.003	.000	.043	.238
	N	26	26	26	26	26	26
Number of Days AttendedTerm2	Pearson Correlation	-.197	1	-.246	-.292	-.293	.362
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.335		.226	.148	.147	.069
	N	26	26	26	26	26	26
Number of Days AttendedTerm3	Pearson Correlation	.553**	-.246	1	.586**	.592**	-.083
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.003	.226		.002	.001	.687
	N	26	26	26	26	26	26
Average Scores in Term1	Pearson Correlation	.917**	-.292	.586**	1	.405*	.229
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.148	.002		.040	.261
	N	26	26	26	26	26	26
Average ScoresTerm2	Pearson Correlation	.401*	-.293	.592**	.405*	1	-.239
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.043	.147	.001	.040		.239
	N	26	26	26	26	26	26
Average ScoresTerm3	Pearson Correlation	.240	.362	-.083	.229	-.239	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.238	.069	.687	.261	.239	
	N	26	26	26	26	26	26

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

It is indicated in the table that attendance and academic performance are significantly correlated

.For example at a 0.01 level of significance the number of days attended by a pupil in term one

significantly correlated with a p- value of 000 and a correlation coefficient of 0.917 .This means that a pupils as the number of days attended by a pupil increase, academic performance also improves and vice- versa. The same analysis indicate that attendance in term one is significantly correlated with academic performance in term two ($P=0.04$ & $r=0.401$) where r, stands for the correlation coefficient. However attendance in term one was not found to be significantly correlated with performance in term three. Attendance in term two was not significantly correlated with attendance in term two, but attendance in term three was significantly correlated with performance in term three with $r= 0.586$ and one insignificant correlation in term three.

It was discovered in this study that a learners attendance in a previous term, significantly affect his/her performance in a proceeding term.

When annual averages were computed, for both annual attendance and performance and then a correlation was run, no signification correlation was found, as a suggested by correlation result sin table 4:16.

Table 4:16 Correlation Between Attendance and performance Based on Annual Averages

Correlations

		Annual Average Performance	Average Annual Attendance
Annual Average Performance	Pearson Correlation	1	.211
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.300
	N	26	26
Average Annual Attendance	Pearson Correlation	.211	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.300	
	N	26	26

Combining table 4.15 and 4.16, we can take a general analysis that attendance and performance are not significantly correlated, if we consider annual attendance averages and annual mean scores. But if we take terms individually, the attendance significantly affect performance especially attendance in term one and term three. It is also seen that attendance in term one significantly affects performance in term one and two but not term three. This implies that if a learner is regular in term one, he/she will get the introduction to important topics on which teachers build for the remaining terms so if one misses such, and then he /she may be significantly affected for the rest of the year.

In term two and term three, performance is significantly affected by some other factors attendance.

4.5 *Possible Measures to Control Absenteeism*

Absenteeism is a problem that impact negatively on learners academic careers. It should therefore be reduced to a smallest rate possible.

Therefore a number of ways advanced in literature that can help to control absenteeism in schools these include making regular roll calls and taking action about those learners who are regularly absent. This may include caution reprimanding and punishment of different kinds.

In this study, around 30% of the teachers showed that absenteeism a serious problem in their respective schools. This is indicated in table 4:17 .However only 20% of the teachers showed that they make regular roll calls. This means that most teachers to do not mind about pupils who are always absent .Since they do not have the records of who was absent, then they cannot take effective measures or take any action against absenteeism.

Table 4:17: The Rate of Absenteeism in Schools

Absenteesm is a serious problem in Your School

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	14	70.0	70.0	70.0
Strongly Agree	5	25.0	25.0	95.0
Agree	1	5.0	5.0	100.0
Total	20	100.0	100.0	

Table 4:18 shows the teachers who make roll calls in their school. It is also indicated that only 15% of the teachers do mind about pupils who are absent, through caution or punishments.

Table 4:18: Teachers who Make Regular Roll Calls in the School

You Make regular Rolcalls in Your School

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	14	70.0	70.0	70.0
Strongly Agree	4	20.0	20.0	90.0
Disagree	2	10.0	10.0	100.0
Total	20	100.0	100.0	

Table 4:19 also indicated that very few (15%) mind about pupils who are absent. So since those who are absent are not would nor punished, they do not try to reduce the act and yet others are not warned.

Table 4:19: Teachers who Always Mind About Pupils who are Absent

You always Mind About Pupils Who are absent, caution, Cane or Punish

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	14	70.0	70.0	70.0
Agree	3	15.0	15.0	85.0
Disagree	1	5.0	5.0	90.0
Strongly disagree	2	10.0	10.0	100.0
Total	20	100.0	100.0	

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.0 Introduction

This chapter shows summary of major findings conclusion on each finding and recommendation of the researcher based on findings .The areas recommended for further research are also indicated here.

5.1 Summary of Findings

This study's objectives were to find out the major causes of absenteeism in primary schools, the effect of absenteeism on pupils academic performance and the possible measures to reduce absenteeism in school in schools.

The major findings of the study are: one, 70% of pupils parents were farmers and 15% were traders, which increased the possibility of absenteeism the school. Also, 65% of pupils parents were of low education level with o-level and below and only one pupil had a parent with a diploma, which also increased the possibility of a high absenteeism rate. The absenteeism rate in the school was found to be 60% (i.e. 60% of the pupils always miss class) and on average pupils in this school attended 39 days in term one & 44 days in term two and three and so on average, pupils missed 21 days in term one (39/60) and 16 days in term two & three (44/600. Pupils academic performance in term one was not good (Mean = 44%) and fair in term two & three (Mean = 51%), and this is attributed to the high rate of absenteeism in the school.

On average annually, pupils miss 36 days (134/180 days for school a year) and their annual average score was. the most important causes of absenteeism are illness (55%) fees problems

(25%) and work given at home by parents (15%) according to pupils responses, But according to teachers, there are a number of factors responsible for absenteeism, Most of which originate from home, fore example lack of parents involvement in school program (30%) un prepared ness of pupils in terms of books, pencils etc (25%) parents not taking responsibility to send their pupils to school (25%)etc. There was a significant relationship between parents jobs and level of education and pupils absenteeism, with a chi- square value of 0.05 and 0.03 respectively more pupils (8/11) form parents with less education, are likely to miss class due to illness and due to fees problems and work give by parents almost the same trend was true with pupils with parents who are farmers.

On the other hand, it was discovered that attendance has a significant effect on pupil's academic, performance in term one with a person's correlation coefficient of 0.917 and a p- value of 0.000. Also attendance in term one significantly affect performance in term tow ($P=0.04$ & $r=0.41$) attendance in term two significantly affect performance in term three ($P=0.002$ & $r = 0.586$) and attendance in term three was not significant. the overall attendance (annual averages) and performance were not significantly correlated.

About 30% of teachers believe that absenteeism is a serious problem in the school, but only 20% showed that they make regular roll calls and only 15 of the teachers do mind about pupils who are absent by cautioning or punishing them. Teachers suggested that the measures that can be used to prevent absenteeism include

4.2 Conclusion

Basing on the above findings, the researcher therefore concludes it at the major causes of absenteeism in rural schools are illness, fees problems & work given by parents at home.

Parent's job type and level of education impact significantly on the causes of absenteeism. There is a high rate of absenteeism in Kibanga Primary school and the general performance is just fair. Absenteeism has a significant (negative) impact on pupil's academic performance mainly in term one, but if we take the annual basis, attendance is not a significant factor that affects learners' performance. However this particular finding needs more investigations using big samples. Also most teachers do not make regular roll calls and don't mind about pupils who are absent which escalates the problems. Measures like making regular roll calls, and punishing both parents and pupils who are always absent, as well as having a policy on absenteeism, may be useful in reducing absenteeism problem in primary schools.

5.3 *Recommendations*

In view of the above findings, the research recommends that all schools should ensure that they make regular roll calls at least twice a day, in morning and afternoon. This will provide records of the rate of absenteeism in the school and there after take action.

Schools should also try to keep record on absenteeism. Any pupil who is not in class should be recorded and the reason for missing class should be recorded. This will help provide information on the basic reasons for absenteeism and there by provide measures like adult literacy and poverty eradication programs can also help reduce absenteeism and health care programs to improve children health will be important in solving the problem of absenteeism. The ministry of education and sports should also come out with a policy on absenteeism, but is should first sensitize parents about absenteeism.

5.4 Areas for Further Research

More research can be conducted on the social, economic and environmental factors and absenteeism. A similar study like this can also be conducted using larger samples and using powerful statistical tests.

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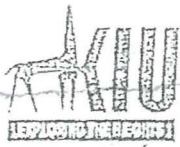
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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: INTRODUCTORY LETTER

Office of the Director

24th April 2008

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: INTRODUCTION LETTER FOR MS/MRS/MR. RIRMUMMAIASHA DEUS

REG. # DPE/13915/61/DU

The above named is our student in the Institute of Open and Distance Learning (IODL), pursuing a Diploma/Bachelors degree in Education.

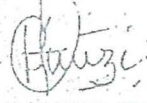
He/she wishes to carry out a research in your Organization on:

CAUSES OF ABSENTEEISM AND ITS
EFFECTS ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE
IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS. A CASE STUDY AT
KIBUNGO PRIMARY SCHOOL, NYAMAREBE, IBANDA DISTRICT

The research is a requirement for the Award of a Diploma/Bachelors degree in Education.

Any assistance accorded to him/her regarding research will be highly appreciated.

Yours Faithfully,


MUHWEZI JOSEPH
HEAD, IN-SERVICE

APPENDIX B: ACCEPTANCE LETTER

Kibungo P/S
Nyamarebe
IBANDA
3-07-2008.

To,
THE DIRECTOR OF STUDIES,
KAMPALA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY,
P.O. BOX 20000,
KANSANGA,
KAMPALA.

Dear Sir/Madam,

RE: RECOMMENDATION LETTER.

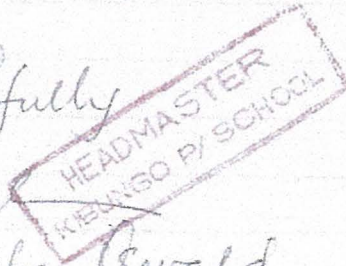
This is to certify that the bearer of this recommendation letter, on BIRYOMUMAISHO DEUS who is both my teacher here, and your student at the same time has successfully carried out his research data on "Causes of Absentism and its Effects on Academic Performance In Primary Schools" in the above mentioned school.

Consideration of his research results is of great acknowledgement to his toil and benefit.
I remain

Yours faithfully

Mugisha

Mugisha Oswald.



APPENDIX C: QUESTIONNAIRES FOR TEACHERS

1. a) Is absenteeism a serious problem in your school?

Yes ☐

No ☐

b) Do you make regular roll calls in your class?

Yes ☐

No ☐

c) What do you think are the most important causes of absenteeism?

Fees problems ☐

Health problems ☐

Too much work at home ☐

Some pupils hate studying ☐

2. a) do you always mind about pupils who are absent?

Yes ☐

No ☐

b) What do you do to those found absent in your class? Tick all that applies.

Caution them ☐

Cane them ☐

Leave them because it is not their cause ☐

Give them any other punishment ☐

c) In your own experience, suggest other possible measures to reduce absenteeism.

.....

.....

.....

Please rate the degree to which you believe each of the following is a possible cause of absenteeism and truancy in your school

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
Students come to school unprepared to do school work (e.g., they don't have books, papers, pencil; they haven't completed their homework).					
Students do not have the social skills necessary to be successful in a school environment (communication, cooperation, following rules, etc).					
Students do not have the basic skills that will enable them to learn (e.g., reading, writing)					
Students have behavioral and/or emotional problems that interfere with learning.					
Students have inadequate health care, and so are often absent or sick.					
Students are not motivated					
Students do not feel safe and secure at school					
Parents are not taking responsibility for getting their children to school.					
Parents are not involved enough with school in general.					
Parents are not involved enough with their child's academics (e.g., homework, preparedness).					
Negative events in the child's home life are interfering with learning.					
Teachers do not have a good method of communicating with the home.					
Students do not feel welcomed or comfortable at their child's school.					
Parents do not know how to help their child be more successful at school.					
Parents often do not know about PTO meetings, or other special events at their child's school					
Students have too many personal problems themselves and are concerned about school attendance.					

APPENDIX D: PUPILS' QUESTIONNAIRE

1. a) Do you some times miss class?

Yes ☐

No ☐

b) Why do you some times miss class?

Fees problems ☐

Illness ☐

Your parents give you work to do ☐

Some times you feel you do not want to study ☐

2. a) what is the occupation of your parent/guardian?

Farmer ☐

Teacher ☐

Trader ☐

Driver ☐

Not working ☐

Others specify.....

b) What is your parents'/guardian's level of education?

Degree and above ☐

Diploma level ☐

Certificate level ☐

A-level (s.6) ☐

O-level (s.4) ☐

Bellow S.4 ☐

TERM I: PUPILS' ATTENDANCE AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE SHEET

[illegible]

TERM II: PUPILS' ATTENDANCE AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE SHEET

[illegible]