

**ASSESSMENT OF CAUSES OF TEACHER ABSENTEEISM IN PUBLIC  
PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN MOROGORO MUNICIPALITY, TANZANIA**

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**A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTERS OF EDUCATION IN  
ADMINISTRATION, PLANNING AND POLICY STUDIES OF THE OPEN  
UNIVERSITY OF TANZANIA**

**2017**

**CERTIFICATION**

The undersigned certifies that has read and hereby recommends for acceptance by the Open University of Tanzania a dissertation entitled: “*Assessment of Causes of Teacher Absenteeism in Public Primary Schools in Morogoro Municipality, Tanzania,*” in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Degree of Masters of Education in Administration, Planning and Policy Studies of the Open University of Tanzania.

.....

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**Date**

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I, **Asina Mageni**, do hereby declare that, this dissertation is my own original work and that it has not been presented, and will not be presented to any other university, for a similar or any other degree award.

.....

**Signature**

.....

**Date**

## **DEDICATION**

To my husband Mr. Florian Everest, my daughter Viola and my son Anthony, for giving me another reason to keep refining my knowledge, skills and competences.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work would not have been concluded without the support of different people. It is not possible to mention all of them by names, hence I am going to name just a small number of them. First and foremost, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor Dr. Hyasinta Kessy of the Faculty of Education, the Open University of Tanzania (OUT) for her guidance and persistent encouragement throughout the duration of this study.

Secondly, I would like to extend my sincere thanks to teachers of selected primary schools in Morogoro municipality for participating in this study wholeheartedly. Likewise, I would like to acknowledge the assistance given to me by the Morogoro Municipal Education Officer and the head-teachers of selected schools in getting the research permit and accessing the school records, respectively.

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**ABSTRACT**

The aim of this study was to investigate on the causes of teacher absenteeism in public primary schools in Morogoro municipality, Tanzania. The study was guided by three specific objectives including: to examine the causes of teacher absenteeism in public primary schools, to determine the rate of teacher absenteeism in public primary schools, and to assess measures taken to reduce teacher absenteeism. The study employed a causal-comparative research design. A sample of 57 respondents who were selected randomly from eight schools in the municipality. Data were collected using checklists, questionnaires and key informant interviews. Quantitative data was analysed through Excel computer software into percentages. On the other hand, qualitative data was analysed through qualitative content analysis method. The study has revealed that teacher absenteeism is caused by family and social responsibilities, bad work conditions, poor health and accidents. Also, the rate of teacher absenteeism in the selected primary schools was 15 percent. It was also been revealed that measures to reduce teacher absenteeism include reprimands, warnings, counselling, transfers or dismissals. It is concluded that teacher absenteeism in the investigated schools is caused by teachers attending non-job responsibilities and poor work or health conditions. The study recommends that the government should formulate a policy on incentive mechanisms for awarding frequently attending teachers.

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**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS**

CWT	Chama cha Walimu Tanzania, i.e. Tanzania Teachers' Union
LGAs	Local Government Authorities
PO-RALG	President's Office - Regional Administration and Local Governments
PPS(s)	Public Primary School(s)
TSC	Teachers' Service Commission
TSD	Teachers' Service Department
TZS	Tanzanian Shillings



## CHAPTER ONE

### BACKGROUND AND STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

#### 1.1. Introduction

This chapter comprises of several sections including: background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, significance of the study, limitations of the study and delimitations of the study. The chapter concludes by conceptual framework of the study and definitions of key terms.

#### 1.2 Background to the Study

This study aimed at investigating on the causes of teacher absenteeism in public primary schools (PPSs) in Morogoro municipality. Teacher absenteeism is said to be one of the most prevalent educational problems affecting various countries (section 1.2.1). The problem is worth investigating because teacher absenteeism is reported to cause several effects particularly on students' performance as well as the economy of the corresponding country (section 1.2.2).

#### 1.2.1 Prevalence of Teacher Absenteeism

Teacher absenteeism is a global problem affecting many countries. However, rates of absenteeism among teachers in developing countries are said to be higher than those of their counterparts in developed countries and other workers in developing countries (Chaudhury *et al.*, 2006). For example, Eswaran and Singh (2008) found out that in India out of 1140 teachers in sampled schools in three states 21 percent of teachers were not present in their school. Of these, only 9.1 per cent were not in their school due to personal reasons. Table 1.1 gives a further example of the extent of the problem of teacher absenteeism in selected countries around the world.

**Table 1.1: Teacher Absenteeism Rates in Selected Countries**

<b>Country</b>	<b>Teacher absenteeism (%)</b>
Bangladesh	16
Ecuador	14
India	25
Indonesia	19
Peru	11
Uganda	27
<i>Unweighted average</i>	<i>19</i>

Source: Chaudhury *et al.*, (2006).

Elsewhere in Africa, the problem of teacher absenteeism exists in varying proportions. For example, one study found out that in Uganda only six percent of schools were reported not having the issue of teacher absenteeism. Moreover, teacher absenteeism appeared to be frequent in about 40 percent of schools in that country. In addition, this rate was found to be associated with head-teachers' absenteeism which was also high (Teachers' Initiative in Sub-Saharan Africa, 2013). On the other hand, in Kenya a study by Uwezo (2012) found out that on average one in ten teachers were absent from school at any one time and as many as one in ten schools have a daily teacher attendance rate of less than 70 percent.

Tanzania is no exception to this widespread global educational challenge. This is because teacher absenteeism is said to be rampant in the country impacting heavily on our meagre financial and human resources. In one survey carried out in the country it was found out that on a given day the rate of total teacher absenteeism primary schools in Tanzania can be higher than 30 percent and absence without leave alone can account for as high as 10 percent of the teachers' population as shown in Table 1.2.

**Table 1.2: Teacher Absenteeism Rates in Tanzania**

Location	Reason					Total
	Illness	Duty	Leave	Other authorised	Unauthorised	
Rural	8.5	16.9	1.7	3.4	1.7	32.2
Urban	4.9	4.9	0	10.9	10.9	31.6

Source: Bennell & Akyeampong (2007).

It is claimed that administrative records of teachers' attendance may not be accurate. For example, a teacher may come to school but have to leave early to deal with a family emergency, such an absence may not be recorded into the log book. Therefore, in the countries with the highest teacher absenteeism rates, administrative records may be an especially poor guide to actual teacher attendance (Rogers & Vegas, 2009). However, such records are still being used by different studies because, amongst other things, they represent the official data of the problem.

### 1.2.2 Effects of Teacher Absenteeism

Teacher absenteeism is important socio-economically because of the effects it can have on the corresponding society. Teacher absenteeism has negative effects in many ways but two main reasons can be cited here. Firstly, it leads to financial losses of employers for paying absent teachers and, sometimes, substitute teachers (Bennell & Akyeampong, 2007). Secondly, teacher absenteeism leads to loss of instructional time for pupils. Since amount of direct instructional time is one of the most important factors in student learning, absenteeism poses a serious threat to overall student achievement, *i.e.*, the higher the teachers' absenteeism rate, the lower the students' achievement. In other words, teacher absenteeism can be detrimental to student's education and levels of individual attainment (Brown & Arnell, 2012; Chapman,

1994). Teacher absenteeism affects quality education in many ways. Firstly, it reduces the ability of teachers to cover prescribed teaching syllabus. Secondly, when teachers are absent from schools often it leads to poor academic performance by student which can result in high dropout rates (Al-Hassan, 2009). This is because if parents perceive that teachers' lack of attendance leads to poor quality instruction, parents may perceive the opportunity cost of schooling to be higher than having the child work at home (Chapman, 1994).

Thirdly, teacher absenteeism affects enrolment and retention because many parents see it as a disincentive to sending their children to school (Al-Hassan, 2009). It is no wonder Habyarimana *et al.* (2005) found that in a sample of students who remained with the same teacher over the two years shocks to teacher inputs associated with a five percent increase in the absence rate reduced learning by four to eight percent of the average gains during the year. Teacher absenteeism is costly too, which could lead to wastage in the school system. For instance, the cost of un-authorized teacher absenteeism in Nigerian secondary schools between 1997 and 1999, i.e. two academic sessions of 1997/98 - 98/99 was found relatively high when the dwindling financial allocation to education is put in mind. The analysis showed that the total cost of absenteeism for the period was US \$800,018 and the yearly average cost was US\$400,009. This did not include the un-quantified cost, especially to students in form of lessons not taught, going by the aggregate number of days (256,237) teachers were absent (Adeyemi & Akpotu, 2009). Another example for effects of teachers' absenteeism is from a study carried out in Uganda where teachers' wage bill was found to account for 70 percent of the annual expenditure of primary education sub-

sector. However, the study found out that 20 percent of the teachers in primary schools are usually absent from their work places for various reasons. This coupled with perpetual late coming and shirking on the job, constituted a minimum loss/wastage of 20 percent of the total wage bill (Okurut, 2012).

### **1.3 Statement of the Problem**

The United Nations (UN) global sustainable development goal number four aims at ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promoting lifelong learning opportunities for all by year 2030 (UN, 2015). To achieve this goal, primary education in developing countries needs to be expanded and improved requiring at least teachers who are present in the classroom and motivated to teach (Rogers & Vegas, 2009). However, Tanzania faces a challenge of having an inadequate number of teachers (Betweli, 2013). This problem has been further compounded by prevalence of teacher absenteeism in some areas of the country (Mfaume & Bilinga, 2017; Mabagala, 2016; Betweli, 2013; Bennell & Akyeampong, 2007). Therefore, teacher absenteeism poses a threat to Tanzania's chances of achieving the UN goal on inclusive and equitable quality education by year 2030.

A review of literature for studies conducted in Tanzania shows that the majority of investigators of teacher absenteeism have typically examined it indirectly from the general perspective of teacher misconducts (e.g. Mfaume & Bilinga, 2017; Mabagala, 2016; Betweli, 2013) or as an indicator of job dissatisfaction/low motivation (e.g. Ingiaimo, 2012; Ngimbudzi, 2009; Bennell & Akyeampong, 2007). As a result, there is scarcity of in-depth information on teacher absenteeism in Tanzania from studies focused on the problem and its associated issues. This study

aims to fill this knowledge gap so that a deep understanding of the problem is acquired. Such information might contribute to the important on-going debate on effective management of teachers particularly in reducing their absenteeism rates to enhance quality education.

#### **1.4. Objectives of the Study**

This study was guided by the following general and specific objectives.

##### **1.4.1 General Objective**

To investigate on the causes of teacher absenteeism in public primary schools in Morogoro municipality, Tanzania.

##### **1.4.2 Specific Objectives of the study**

1. To examine the causes of teacher absenteeism in public primary schools in Morogoro municipality.
2. To determine the rate of teacher absenteeism in public primary schools in Morogoro municipality.
3. To assess measures taken to reduce absenteeism among primary school teachers in Morogoro municipality.

#### **1.5 Research Questions**

1. What are the causes of teacher absenteeism in public primary schools in Morogoro municipality?
2. What is the rate of teacher absenteeism in public primary schools in Morogoro municipality?

3. What measures are taken to reduce absenteeism among primary school teachers in Morogoro municipality?

### **1.6 Significance of the Study**

The study has exposed issues on teacher absenteeism and its management to education administrators in the study area who might use such information to reduce incidences of the behaviour. Specifically, the rates of causes of teacher absenteeism found out in this study are expected to alert head-teachers and education officers on the extent of the problem. In addition, the suggested measures to curb teacher absenteeism might also be tried out or adopted by either the government or individual education administrators to control the problem. Knowledge generated by this study might be helpful for better management of teachers as the most important human resource to enhance quality education. As a result, the information might be important to the ministry responsible for educational management, owners of schools, education administrators, teachers, parents and the whole society.

### **1.7 Limitations of the Study**

The use of checklists in data collection limited the extent of details on absenteeism that could be collected since it could only collect information in a summarised form. However, this study still applied this instrument in data collection since it enabled the researcher to collect focused information on number of teachers absent/present very easily. The use of questionnaires with predominantly close-ended questions meant that the researcher could not get an in-depth understanding of the causes of teacher absenteeism. Still, this instrument was used because afforded the researcher with the ability to collect information from many teachers in a relatively shorter time

than that could be used if other instruments were employed. The use of interview guide results to data that cannot be generalised to a wider population out of the case because its respondents were not randomly selected and the respondents constituted a very small proportion of the sample. However, the study still applied the method because the investigation aimed at getting an in-depth understanding of the extent of the problem of teacher absenteeism in schools. In addition, the nature of the investigation of management of absenteeism did not need statistical analysis or generalisations since it was qualitative in nature.

### **1.8 Delimitation of the Study**

The scope of this study can be described in terms of the study site, ownership of the schools, respondents, and categories of teacher absenteeism to be studied. The study was conducted in Morogoro municipality. It involved eight public primary schools selected from the municipality. The respondents included 48 primary school teachers, eight head-teachers, and a TSC official. It investigated the causes, rate, and management of teacher absenteeism with and without leave.

### **1.9 Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual framework for this study describes the relationship between the different variables corresponding to objectives of this study. The variables can be grouped into three categories: pressures to avoid attending work variables, inability to attend variables and teacher absenteeism variables. The framework is derived from modification of the Process Model for employee attendance put forward by Steers & Rhodes (1978).

### **1.9.1 Pressures to avoid Attending Work Variables**

According to Steers and Rhodes (1978), pressures to attend pertains to other factors that can be identified which serve to enhance attendance motivation, probably in an additive fashion. These pressures may be economic, social, or personal in nature. Pressures to avoid attending work variables are the reverse for the aforementioned variables. Variables relating to such pressures influence independent variables particularly those associated with satisfaction with work environment (section 1.9.2). As a result, they were not observed in this study. Examples of variables relating to pressures to avoid attending work are the prevailing good economic/employment market conditions in the country, lack of or poor incentive/reward system used to enhance teacher attendance.

Another important pressure to avoid attending work is non-strict work attendance policies. Teachers will attend work in order to comply with the laws of the land. If such policies are not strict enough to deter absenteeism, they might avoid attending work since there will be no or insignificant consequences. For Tanzanian PPS teachers, this involves adherence to policy frameworks governing teachers' service management such as: Teachers' Professional Code of Ethics and Conduct, Public Servants' Professional Code of Ethics and Conduct, Standing Orders for Public Servants, and TSC Act of 2015. Other frameworks are: Public Regulation Act of 2002, ministry circulars, and school by-laws.

### **1.9.2 Dissatisfaction with Work Conditions Variables**

When a teacher is not satisfied with the work environment and the different responsibilities and tasks associated with his/her job, it is expected that he/she will

demonstrate a weak desire to come to work unless he/she is forced by certain factors to do so. In other words, factors associated with dissatisfaction with work conditions and pressures to attend to work influence teacher's *attendance motivation* (Steers & Rhodes, 1978). Therefore, variables associated with teacher's dissatisfaction with work environment were independent variables for this study. In this study, guided by a causal-comparative research design, such variables were not manipulated but were traced retrospectively by observing their effect on teacher attendance. The variables include: poor teacher-school management relations, poor co-worker relations, poor job prospects, limited opportunities for professional development, and poor remuneration.

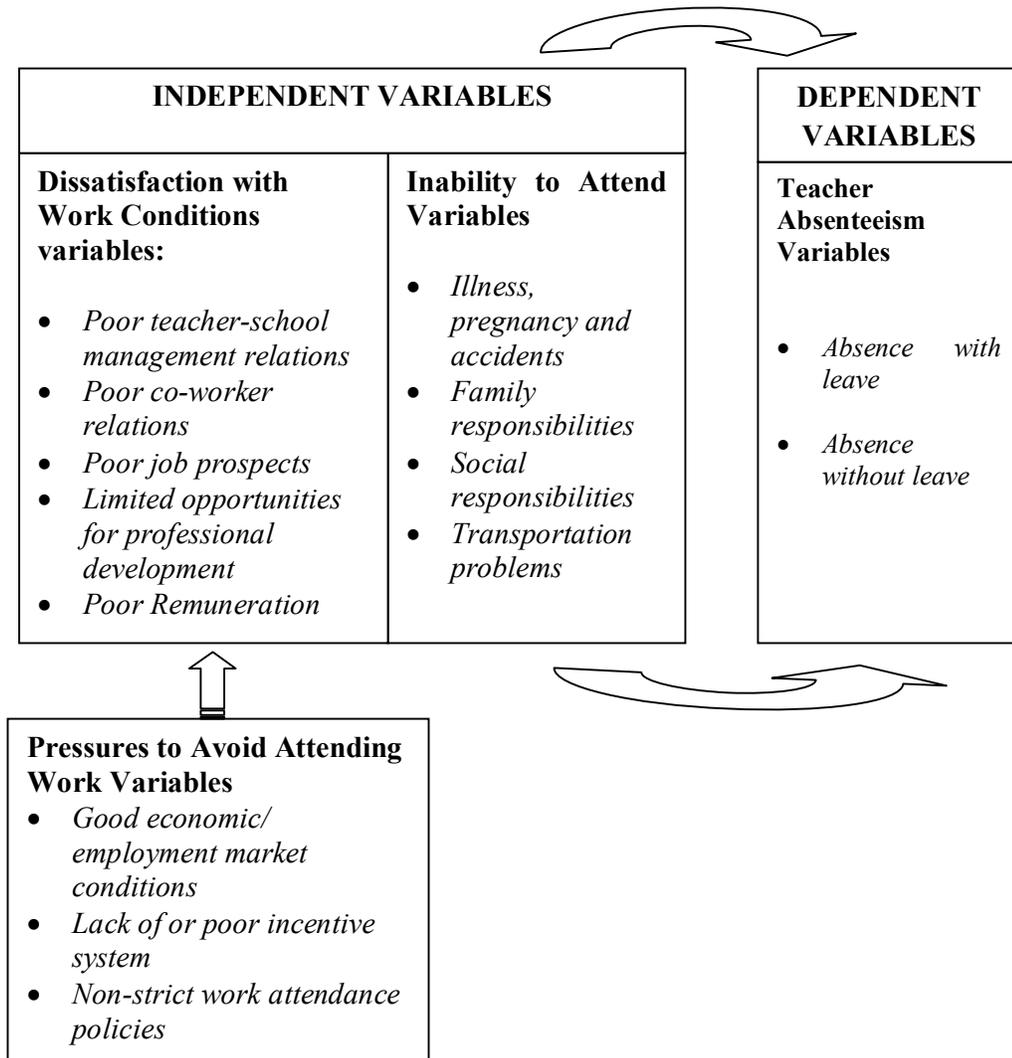
### **1.9.3 Inability to Attend Work Variables**

If a person wants to come to work and has a high attendance motivation, there are many instances where such attendance is not possible. For example, when the individual does not have behavioural discretion or choice he/she will not attend work (Steers & Rhodes, 1978). Therefore, variables pertaining to inability to attend to work are independent variables for this study. However, such variables were not controlled in this study since they were traced back by observing absenteeism. Examples of such variables include: illness, accidents, family responsibilities, social responsibilities and transport problems.

### **1.9.4 Teacher Absenteeism Variables**

Teachers with low attendance motivation and/or unable to come to work will not attend work on a given day (Steers and Rhodes, 1978). Therefore, teacher absenteeism variables are dependent variables for this study. Such variables were

directly observed in this study to trace their causes retrospectively. They included all incidences of teachers' absence with or without leave in one or all three days of data collection in a selected school.



**Figure 1.1: Conceptual Framework**

Source: Modified From Steers & Rhodes, (1978).

### 1.10. Definitions of Key Terms

Three key terms namely teacher absenteeism; causes and public primary schools were selected to be defined in this dissertation. Their selection was based on their

importance in understanding the aim of this study in the context in intended by the researcher.

### **1.10.1 Teacher Absenteeism**

According to Casio (2003), work absenteeism is “any failure of an employee to report for or to remain at work as scheduled, regardless of reason.” As a result, teacher absenteeism could be defined as any failure of a teacher to report for or to remain at work as scheduled, regardless of reason. This is the meaning of the term ‘teacher absenteeism’ adopted by this study. The definition was adopted because it recognises both authorised and un-authorised absenteeism. In addition, it regards the failure to remain at work after reporting in a given day as a form of absenteeism too. Therefore, the definition was adopted because it is comprehensive in its explanation of the term.

### **1.10.2 Cause(s)**

According to the Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary the word ‘cause’ can be defined as, amongst other definitions, “the person or thing that makes something happen” or “a reason for having particular feelings or behaving in a particular way” (Hornby, 2010). As a result, in this study ‘causes of teacher absenteeism’ mean people, things or reasons that make teachers absent themselves from work. This is how the term has been applied in this study. This definition has been selected because it fits well with the context in which the term has been applied in this study.

### **1.10.3 Public Primary Schools**

Public Primary Schools (PPSs) involve all primary schools which are owned and supervised by the Tanzanian government. Such schools offer formal primary

education for pupils in a seven year education cycle. PPSs provide education that is compulsory in terms of both enrolment and attendance (MoEVT, 1995). This definition was adopted by this study because it gives a concise meaning of the term in the Tanzanian context in which it was applied in this study.

### **1.11 Organisation of the Dissertation**

This dissertation is organized into five main chapters. Chapter one consists of the background information and statement of the problem. It gives the background of the study by exploring the prevalence of the problem of teacher absenteeism at the local, regional and global level and its socio-economic effects. This is followed by the statement of the problem, purpose of the study and objectives of the study. Other sections are significance of the study; limitations of the study; and delimitation of the study. The chapter also includes a section on the conceptual framework for this study derived from Steers and Rhodes' Process Model. This is followed by definitions of key terms; and the chapter ends with the organisation of the study (this section).

Chapter Two starts with a discussion on Steers and Rhodes' Process Model as the theoretical framework guiding this study. Thereafter, literature review on teacher absenteeism is presented by discussing issues addressed by previous related studies conducted in Tanzania and elsewhere around the world. Finally, the chapter concludes with a presentation of a knowledge gap intended to be addressed by this study. Chapter Three presents research methodology for this study. It includes sections on context of the study; study approach; research design;; target population; and sample and sampling techniques. Other sections are data collection instruments; data collection procedure; data analysis procedure; validity and reliability; and

ethical issues consideration. Chapter Four of this dissertation deals with data presentation, analysis and discussion. The rates of absenteeism are presented in tabular form. On the other hand, it presents the themes, sub-themes and ultimately, categories of teachers' descriptions presented as quotations. The findings of this study are discussed through highlighting the main issues revealed by the study and discussing them against Steers and Rhodes' Process Model.

Chapter Five presents a summary of the study. It also presents conclusions drawn from this study's findings. The dissertation concludes with a theme on study recommendations. It presents recommendations for: policy, action, and further studies. Besides the main chapters described above, this dissertation also contain preliminary pages, a section for references and appendices. Preliminary pages precede the main chapter pages and are written in Roman numbers. They include the title page, certification; copyright; declaration; and acknowledgements. Other preliminary pages are dedication; abbreviations and acronyms; abstract; and table of contents. In addition, there are preliminary pages for lists of tables, figures; and appendices.

The reference section presents published and unpublished documents cited in different sections of the dissertation. The appendices come after the main chapters. They include attachments of the research instruments used *i.e* a checklist, an interview guide and a questionnaire. Other appendices are a scanned copy of the research clearance from Directory of Postgraduate Studies, the Open University of Tanzania (OUT) and a permission letter to collect data from Morogoro municipal director's office.

## CHAPTER TWO

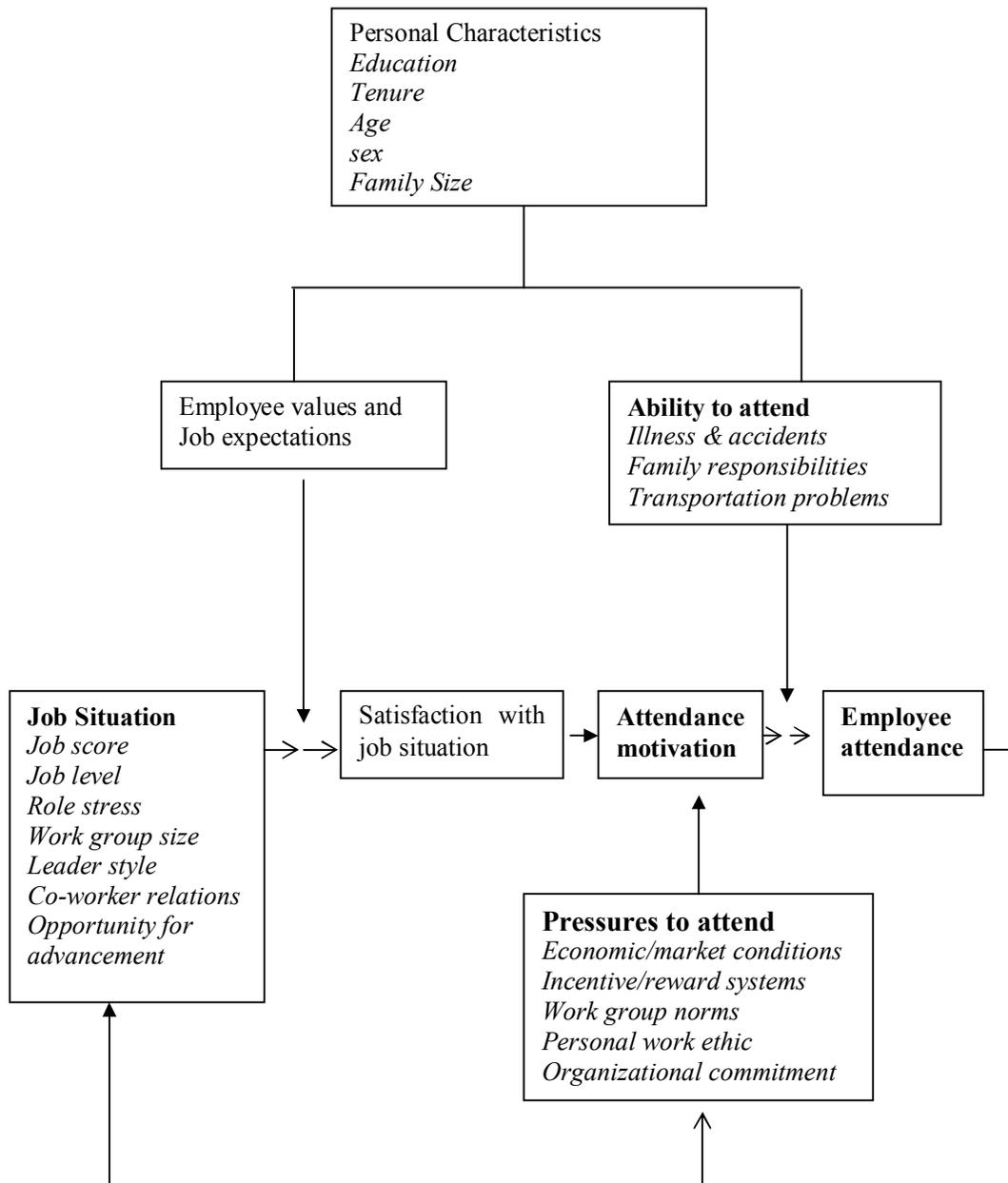
### 2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter presents a process model as a theoretical framework for the study which is followed by a review of literature for related studies done in Tanzania, Africa and beyond. The discussion focuses on rates, causes and management of teacher absenteeism and associated issues. The knowledge gap intended to be addressed by the study is also described in this chapter. Finally, the chapter ends with a summary on reviewed literature.

#### 2.2 The Process Model for Employee Attendance

The theoretical framework for this study was the process model for employee attendance. It was proposed by Richard Steers and Susan Rhodes as a result of a comprehensive literature review on studies on worker absenteeism/ employee attendance. It attempts to examine in a systematic and comprehensive fashion the various influences on employee attendance behaviour. Briefly, the model suggests that an employee's attendance is largely a function of two important variables: an employee's *motivation to attend* and an employee's *ability to attend* (Figure 2.1).



**Figure 2.1: Process Model for Employee Attendance**

Source: Steers & Rhodes, (1978).

### 2.2.1 Attendance Motivation

Employee's attendance motivation or motivation to come to work represents the primary influence on actual attendance, assuming one has the ability to attend. The

major influences on attendance motivation are determined largely by a combination of: an employee's affective responses to the job situation and various internal and external pressures to attend. When an employee enjoys the work environment and the tasks that characterize his or her job situation, it is expected that employee to have a strong desire to come to work. The job situation consists of those variables that characterize the nature of the job and the surrounding work environment. Included in the job situation are such variables as job scope, job level, role stress and work group size. Other variables are leader style; co-worker relations; and opportunities for advancement (Steers & Rhodes, 1978). Pressures to attend pertains to other factors that can be identified which serve to enhance attendance motivation, probably in an additive fashion. They collectively represent the second major influence on the desire to come to work. These pressures may be economic, social, or personal in nature. Specifically, at least five major pressures can be identified: economic and market conditions; incentives/reward system; work group norms, personal work ethic and organizational commitment (Steers & Rhodes, 1978).

### **2.2.2 Ability to Attend**

An employee's ability to attend or come to work represents the secondary influence on actual attendance, assuming one has the motivation for attending. That is, even if a person wants to come to work and has a high attendance motivation, there are many instances where such attendance is not possible. For example, when the individual does not have behavioural discretion or choice he/she will not attend work. At least three such unavoidable limitations on attendance behaviour can be identified: illness and accidents, family responsibilities, and transport problems (Steers & Rhodes, 1978).

### **2.2.3 Cyclic Nature of the Model**

The process model is cyclical in nature, i.e. act of attendance or absenteeism often influences the subsequent job situation and subsequent pressures to attend in a cyclical fashion. For example, a superior attendance record is often used in organizations as one indicator of noteworthy job performance and readiness for promotion. Conversely, a high rate of absenteeism may adversely affect an employee's relationship with his or her supervisor and co-workers and result in changes in leadership style and co-worker relations. Also, widespread absenteeism may cause changes in company incentive/reward systems, including absence control policies (Steers & Rhodes, 1978).

This model was selected as a theoretical framework for this study as it hypothesizes the problem of work absenteeism comprehensively, particularly in its recognition of importance of both motivational factors and ability to attend at work place. Since this study was on teacher absenteeism, it was deemed relevant to use a model on work absenteeism to guide the study.

### **2.3 Factors Associated with Teacher Absenteeism**

As discussed in the process model, there are various factors associated with teacher absenteeism. Under this theme, the following factors were selected for discussion: economic factors, health-related factors, poor work conditions, and doing non-professional work as discussed in sections 2.3.1 to 2.3.5 of this chapter. This theme was selected because it relates to information sought in objectives one (rates of absenteeism) and two (causes of absenteeism).

### **2.3.1 Economic Factors**

Various economic factors were found to be associated with teacher absenteeism in the literature reviewed. Such factors include, but are not limited to, poor remuneration, delays in salary payments, and lack of transport money. This section presents a discussion on how such factors might lead to teacher absenteeism. Several studies conducted in Tanzania and other African countries such as Uganda and Ghana found out that economic factors particularly poor remuneration is one of the leading causes of teacher absenteeism (Teacher Initiative in Sub-Saharan Africa, 2013; Okurut 2012; Betweli, 2010; & Al-Hassan, 2009). Specifically, teacher absenteeism can be attributed to low income due to low salaries. In some countries, e.g. Somalia, pay scales are so low that teachers must have supplemental employment in order to live (Chapman, 1994).

For example, it was found out that teachers use official hours to engage in private activities to supplement their meagre income (Betweli, 2010). Similarly, one study found out that teachers in rural areas can for instance engage heavily in farming activities during work hours (Bennell & Akyeampong, 2007). Irregular pay-days were also found to contribute more in teacher absenteeism particularly in rural areas. This is because in order for teachers to receive their pay, they are required to report to an urban area or the district to receive their pay. When it is not paid on time they spend days waiting (Bennell & Akyeampong, 2007; Ingiaino, 2012). On the other hand, the high cost of transport contributes to teacher absenteeism in urban schools where teachers might live long distances from school and have to pay for their transport cost daily. Similarly it can be high for rural schools when there is no decent

accommodation for teachers in the villages as a result many teachers live in nearby towns (Bennell & Akyeampong, 2007).

### 2.3.2 Teachers' Health

Another main cause of teacher absenteeism in majority of studies conducted in different countries around the world is reported to be health-related conditions such as illness and pregnancy. These problems contribute significantly to the total rate of teacher absenteeism in an investigated community (Table 2.1). As it can be seen from the table, the contributions can be as 60 percent in an area ravaged with serious health problems such as HIV/AIDS. This is because when teachers fall sick they often stay at home after seeking medical attention (Habyarimana *et al.*, 2005).

**Table 2.1: Contributions of Health-Related Causes to Teacher Absenteeism**

SN	Contribution (%)	Country	Study
1	60	Zambia	Habyarimana <i>et al.</i> (2005)
2	48	Ghana	Al-Hassan (2009)
3	34	Uganda	Okurut (2012)
4	15 – 26	Tanzania	Bennell & Akyeampong (2007).

Source: Extracted From the Studies Cited in the Table.

Although teachers with some health problems might still attend work, some problems affect the ability of the teacher to guide the learning process. For example, a study on voice-related teacher absenteeism carried in United States found out that in the prior two weeks to data collection, 3.35 percent of female teachers were reported absent due to voice problems. Moreover, the same study reports that during their entire careers, approximately one-third of teachers missed work at least once due to voice problems (Medeiros *et al.*, 2011).

It can be concluded that health-related conditions can affect teachers' attendance to schools or their teaching. The high rates such causes of absenteeism imply that it has a huge effect on students' attainment. Therefore, it is important for such kind of a cause of absenteeism to be investigated in a given area to find out its magnitude.

### **2.3.3 Poor Work Conditions**

Poor work conditions are associated with increased teacher absenteeism rates in different areas (Ngimbudzi, 2009). Such conditions include poor quality or inadequate school infrastructure such as teachers' offices, classrooms, furniture and toilets. In rural areas where decent accommodation is a challenge, lack of teacher housing forces teachers to leave far away from the school. In addition, locations of some schools are such that there is no restaurant or food delivery services in the school vicinity. As a result lack of staff lunch might cause some teachers to skip work (Okurut, 2012; Al-Hassan, 2009; Alcazar *et al.*, 2006).

### **2.3.4 Participation in Non-Professional Work**

Absenteeism has also been attributed to teachers' engagement in non-professional work. Non-professional work involving teachers include but not limited to election duty, preparation of voters list, survey for people below poverty line and out of school children, campaign against literacy and diseases (Eswaran & Singh, 2008).

## **2.4 Management of Teacher Attendance**

Teacher absenteeism is a challenge that needs to be contained in order to ensure provision of quality education. This theme presents a discussion on management of teacher absenteeism in Tanzania. It is divided into three sections: rules of conduct;

disciplinary procedures and action; and non-disciplinary interventions. This theme was selected because it relates to information sought in objectives three (reduction of teacher absenteeism).

#### **2.4.1 Rules of Conduct**

Head-teachers and their deputies are required to ensure that teachers report for duty in time and do not leave their offices before the official closing time. As a result, all PPSs are supposed to maintain attendance registers that shall be signed by all teachers daily on working days. In addition, a special register to record the time teachers spend outside the office before the official closing time is supposed to be maintained by the school (URT, 2009).

Teachers may be absent from work due to different reasons after being granted a leave. There are various types of leaves which are available to teachers upon application. Teachers are expected to observe procedures for application for such leaves as stipulated in public service regulations. Such leaves include annual leave, sick leave, maternity leave and paternity leave. Others are study leave, compassionate leave and special leave (Thungu *et al.*, 2008). However, according to Casio (2003) if a teacher is on any type of leave during a term of studies then that particular teacher is absent though it would not be considered as a misconduct in this case. Examples of different types of leaves applicable to Tanzanian PPS teachers are presented in Table 2.2.

**Table 2.2: Examples of Leaves**

SN	Type of Leave	Granted to	Duration	Standing Order
1	Annual leave	All teachers	28 days	H. 4 (1-2)
2	Leave of absence	Any teacher in need of attending a private matter	Less than 28 days	H. 4 (3)
3	Maternity leave	A delivered female teacher	At least 84 days	H. 12 (1-3)
4	Paternity leave	A male teacher who is a father to a newly born child	At least five days	H. 13
5	Special leave of absence	A teacher participating in a sporting event or attending teachers' association (CWT) conferences	Not specified	H. 14 (1-2)
		A teacher attending burial of a near relative	14 days	H. 14 (3)
6	Sick leave	A sick teacher	Up to six months (full pay) plus a further six months (half pay).	K. 11 (1) & K. 13 (2)
7	Convalescent leave	A teacher recuperating from an illness	Up to six months (full pay) plus a further six months (half pay).	K. 12 (1) & K. 13 (2)

Source: Modified From URT, (2009).

The aforementioned measures were introduced to ensure that teachers adhere to professional ethics. The teaching profession, like many other professions, is governed by a code of conduct and ethics. This is a document that spells out the moral obligations which their members should operate (Thungu *et al.*, 2008). In the case of Tanzanian teachers, most of ethics relate to disciplinary conduct rather than pedagogy (Mhando, 2012). Any behaviour that breaches the code of conduct is considered as misconduct (Thungu *et al.*, 2008). According to the Standing Orders for Tanzanian public servants (URT, 2009), PPS teachers inclusive, misconduct refers to:

*“Any act done without reasonable excuse by a public servant which amounts to a failure to perform in a proper manner any duty imposed upon him as such, or which contravenes any enactment relating to the public service, or which is otherwise prejudicial to the efficient conduct of the public service or tends or tends to bring the public service into dispute”*

Teachers’ Service Commission (TSC) is responsible for maintaining and administering the teachers’ service in Tanzania. It is also responsible for prescribing code of ethics and conduct of teachers’ service for Tanzanian teachers. In addition, it is responsible with appointing, promoting and disciplining teachers (URT, 2015). Despite the aforementioned measures to ensure teachers attend at their work places and do the actual teaching, several studies have found that teachers still engage themselves with different types of misconducts — the most prevalent of which being absenteeism (Mfaume & Bilinga, 2017; Mabagala, 2016; Betweli, 2013). Therefore, sometimes disciplinary actions need to be taken to address the problem of teacher absenteeism, as explained in section 2.4.2 of this chapter.

#### **2.4.2 Disciplinary Procedures and Actions**

One of the ways of managing teacher absenteeism in Tanzania is through imposing disciplinary measures on absentees. The government of the United Republic of Tanzania (URT) reacted to the prevalence of teacher absenteeism in the country by issuing circular letter no. 15 of 2011 which emphasizes on teachers attendance in classrooms and doing the actual teaching. In the circular, both Local Government Authorities (LGAs) and schools were urged to implement the circular and punish the absentees (URT, 2011). It is argued that the aforementioned circular, based on its suggestion on managing absenteeism through punishments, was focused on management of absenteeism without leave. As a result, teachers might find a way of

skipping work using authorised means particularly by faking an excuse for being granted leave thereby escaping punishments, e.g. by feigning sickness. The procedures for controlling offences related to absenteeism without leave in Tanzania are stipulated in Standing Orders (URT, 2009). In such procedures:

- Absence from duty for more than five days without leave or reasonable cause warrant formal proceedings.
- Being late for duty without leave or reasonable cause; absence from work place during working hours without leave; or absence from duty without leave warrant summary proceedings.

In Tanzania, a head-teacher can issue a reprimand or warning to a teacher found absent from duty (URT, 2009). However, the powers of disciplinary control of PPS teachers are exercised by the Teachers Service Commission (TSC). According to TSC Act no. 25 of 2015, the commission is authorised to perform various functions relating to teachers service. Its functions relating to controlling teacher absenteeism are to discipline teachers and determine appeals from decisions of disciplinary authorities (URT, 2015).

For example, when a teacher is absent from duty without leave or reasonable cause for a period exceeding five days, that teacher *may* be charged with the disciplinary offence of being absent without leave and punished by dismissal. However, the dismissal of a teacher is done only after the disciplinary procedures have been concluded and the accused teacher is found guilty of being absent without leave (URT, 2009).

### **2.4.3 Non-Disciplinary Interventions**

Despite the aforementioned disciplinary measures to control teacher absenteeism, education stakeholders can also reduce teacher absenteeism through non-disciplinary interventions. Such interventions include giving incentives to teachers, decentralising authority over teachers, and strengthening school-level supervision.

#### **2.4.3.1 Incentives to Teachers**

Non-disciplinary strategies to reduce teacher absenteeism can be aimed at providing incentives or rewards to teachers. Such strategies involve programmes which simultaneously tackle variables affecting teacher attendance. This is done by providing incentives/rewards to teachers in order to improve their satisfaction particularly with their salary (Guerrero *et al.*, 2012). Incentives structures affect who chooses to enter and remain in the teaching profession, as well as how well teachers do their day-to-day work in the classroom (Rogers & Vegas, 2009). It is known that raising salaries represents a comprehensive solution to low salaries. It should be noted that increasing allowances and benefits provides a more focused means of rewarding teachers for good attendance. However, for focused rewards to work requires that the ministry to have accurate and timely information on teachers' attendance practices. Long delays between the pairing of an action and a reward for that action tend to dissipate the impact of the reward (Chapman, 1994). Besides these direct interventions on teacher absenteeism, there are different strategies on indirect intervention of the problem. These include programmes on enhancing teacher attendance at schools, as described below.

### **2.4.3.2 Programmes Enhancing Teacher Attendance**

Besides the aforementioned strategies for directly enhancing teacher attendance there are indirect strategies for the same. For example, since economic reasons are known to cause absenteeism helping teachers reduce financial stress through effective workplace financial education programmes could be one of the solutions to the problem (Kim & Garman, 2003). A study by Guerrero *et al.* (2012) came up with suggestions on indirect interventions against teacher absenteeism. They include programmes aimed at enhancing teacher attendance indirectly such as:

- Programmes aimed at increasing parental and community participation, hoping this will raise teacher attendance;
- Programmes providing incentives to teachers for increases in student achievement (output-based incentive programmes);
- Programmes offering incentives scholarships for students, hoping they (and their parents) would demand teacher attendance at school; and
- Programmes tracking students by achievement, hoping that the homogenous composition of the class would have an effect on teacher effort (including attendance).

However, some of these suggestions would not be appropriate for schools in centralised education systems such as that of Tanzania unless some adjustments are made. Such adjustments to improve running of schools would include, amongst others, decentralising authority over teachers as discussed in the next sub-section.

### **2.4.3.3 Decentralising Authority over Teachers**

In some countries, including Tanzania, teacher employment issues and management of PPSs are too centralised making it difficult for communities to have an influence on what is going on at schools. As a result, governments should formulate policies that devolve authority over school management to communities (Rogers & Vegas, 2009). One approach would be to increase local control, for example, by giving local institutions like school committees new powers to hire and fire teachers (Chaudhury *et al.*, 2006). Alternatively, Chapman (1994) suggests that the government should decentralise authority over teachers by empowering the local PPSs and community to address the problem of teacher absenteeism directly by:

- Teachers monitoring their own behaviour;
- The head-teacher or his/her deputies monitoring teacher attendance and be empowered to sanction teachers who persistently miss class; and
- The community demanding teachers' diligence to their duties.

### **2.4.3.4 Strengthening School-Level Supervision**

If poor governance and low levels of accountability undermine teachers' incentives to attend school, those same factors are likely to reduce the accuracy of official attendance records. In environments with weak institutional capacity and accountability mechanisms such records is not likely to be a priority (Rogers & Vegas, 2009). As a result, according to Chapman (1994), another strategy for managing teacher absenteeism is by the government strengthening school-level supervision by: Clarifying head-teachers job descriptions to include enforcement of teacher attendance policies;

- Creating incentives and sanctions that can be applied at the school level (e.g. withholding salary, levelling fine etc.); and
- Providing head-teachers with better training on their responsibilities and authority to enforce teacher attendance; strategies for working with chronically absent teachers; and resources available to aid them in addressing absenteeism.

## **2.5 Knowledge Gap**

Majority of teacher absenteeism related studies carried out in Tanzania investigated on it as a component of a comprehensive educational problem — teacher misconducts (e.g. Mfaume & Bilinga, 2017; Mabagala, 2016; Betweli, 2013). Alternatively, it has been investigated as an effect or indicator of level of job satisfaction and motivation in some studies (e.g. Ingiaimo, 2012; Ngimbudzi, 2009; Bennell & Akyeampong, 2007). As a result, there is scarcity of in-depth information on the causes and management of teacher absenteeism in Tanzania. This is the knowledge gap that this study aimed to address.

## **2.6 Chapter Summary**

This chapter presents a discussion on causes of absenteeism namely economic, health factors and work conditions. Also, it discusses about the rules of conduct regarding work attendance. In addition, disciplinary procedures and actions established to control teacher absenteeism in Tanzania are presented. Furthermore, non-disciplinary ways of reducing teacher absenteeism are discussed. The chapter ends with a description of the knowledge gap intended to be addressed by this study.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the absenteeism rate of primary school teachers in Morogoro Municipality. Research methodology is divided into the following sections: research design; research approach; area of the study; and target population. Other sections are instruments; data collection procedures; validity and reliability; and ethical issues consideration.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

The research design for this study was causal comparative research. Justification for selection of causal comparative research design is to trace causes of absenteeism retrospectively without manipulating the variables because they have already done the damage – teacher absenteeism. Therefore, the design was used for investigating the most plausible relationship between causal variables and teacher absenteeism. In such a scenario this is the best design (Omari, 2011).

#### **3.3 Research Approach**

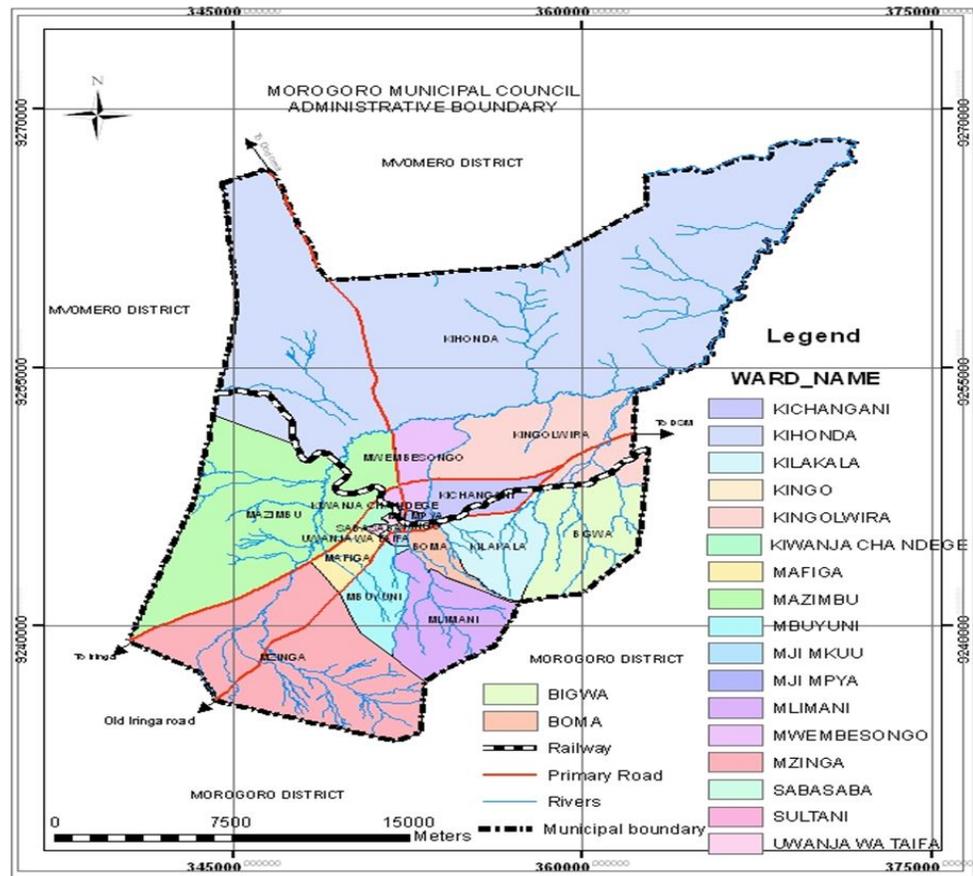
This study applied a mixed research approach. It is a procedure for collecting, analysing, and ‘mixing’ both quantitative and qualitative methods in a single study or a series of studies to understand a research problem. As a result, mixed research approach involves collecting both qualitative and quantitative data merging, integrating, linking, or embedding the two forms of data. In other words, data are ‘mixed’ in a mixed research approach. Such a process follows rigorous quantitative procedures as well as persuasive qualitative procedures (Creswell, 2012). The

rationale for using a mixed research approach in this study is it was anticipated that the combination of quantitative and qualitative approaches would provide a better understanding of the research problem than would either approach by itself.

### **3.4 Area of the Study**

This study was carried out in Morogoro Municipality in Morogoro region, Tanzania. It is found at latitude 06°50' and 7°30' South and longitude 37°30' and 37°60' East. Morogoro municipality is the administrative capital of Morogoro region. It has four divisions and 19 wards (Figure 3.1). The population of Morogoro municipality according to 2012 census is 315, 866 people (URT 2012). The society of Morogoro is made up of various Tanzanian tribes and a few foreigners. The socio-economic activities are employment in service providing institutions and processing industries. Others are economic sectors in the municipality are wholesale and retail trade (Mtana, 2013).

This area was chosen because it is a fast growing urban area with residents who engage in a wide range of economic activities such as the ones mentioned above. In addition, there are activities which teachers can engage with such as teaching in private schools and private tutoring (tuition) due to presence of many private primary and secondary schools in this area. Teachers' engagement with such activities could have an effect on teachers' attendance at their workplaces. Moreover, municipality's proximity to the national capital Dar es Salaam/Dodoma was expected to influence more teachers with different issues to make follow-up to the ministry physically compared to the counterparts in remote areas. Therefore, this area was ideal for investigating teacher absenteeism.



**Figure 3.1: A Map of Morogoro Municipality**

Source: Morogoro Municipal Cartography Unit, 2017.

### 3.5 Target Population

According to Kothari (2004), in research a population can be defined as “all the items under consideration in any field of inquiry.” The population for this study included all teachers in PPSs in Morogoro municipality. This population was selected because its members were deemed to have the information sought after by this study.

### **3.6 Sample and Sampling Techniques**

#### **3.6.1 Sample**

A sample refers to a smaller group or subset of the total population from which data is obtained in such a way that the knowledge gained is representative of the total population under study (Cohen *et al.*, 2007). The respondents to this study were teachers and head-teachers of PPSs in Morogoro municipality. For the case of teachers, a total of 48 teachers of PPSs were selected. In addition, eight head-teachers in charge of PPSs and one TSC official were also selected. That is, 57 respondents constituted the sample for this study. Therefore the sample size for this study was 57 respondents.

#### **3.6.2 Sampling Techniques**

A sampling technique is the process of selecting respondents to a study (Kothari, 2004). Due to its mixed research design nature, this study applied both random sampling and purposive sampling. Random sampling was applied in the selection of wards, PPSs and respondents to this study (sub-section 3.6.2.1). On the other hand, purposive sampling was used in selecting interviewees particularly head-teachers (sub-section 3.6.2.2). Lastly, a summary of the sampling technique is given (sub-section 3.6.2.3).

##### **3.6.2.1 Selection of Teachers**

The study was conducted in Morogoro municipality which has four divisions. The selection of wards and PPSs to provide respondents to this study was done through simple random sampling. Simple random sampling is a technique in which each member of the population under study has an equal chance of being selected and the

probability of a member of the population being selected is unaffected by the selection of other members of the population, i.e. each selection is entirely independent of the next (Cohen *et al.*, 2007). For the case of selection of wards, from each division two wards were randomly selected by drawing of cards from a hat. This resulted to selection of eight wards. Then from each ward selected, one PPS was randomly selected by drawing of cards from a hat to make a total of eight PPSs. This method was applied to give an equal chance to all divisions, wards and consequently PPSs in the municipality to be involved with the study.

Selection of teachers was done through systematic random sampling. This method involves selecting subjects from a population list in a systematic rather than a random fashion. For example, if from a population of, say, 2,000, a sample of 100 is required, then every 20<sup>th</sup> person can be selected (Cohen *et al.*, 2007). The technique involved selection of respondents from teachers' list in the selected PPS where the first, third, fifth, seventh, ninth and 11<sup>th</sup> teacher present in a given school on a given day was selected. The researcher then moved to another selected PPSs and repeated the procedure and so on until all selected PPSs were reached. As a result, a total of 48 teachers were selected as respondents to the study from the eight PPSs selected.

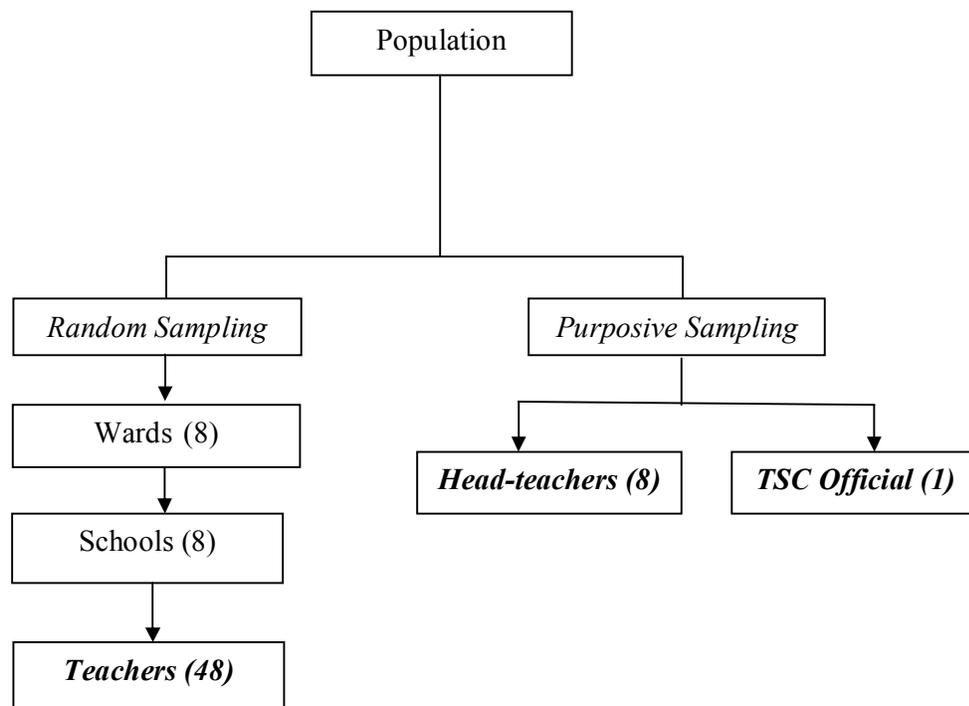
### **3.6.2.2 Selection of Key Informants**

The selection of key informants to be interviewed, *i.e.* head-teachers and the TSC official was done through purposive sampling. Purposive sampling involves researchers handpicking the cases to be included in the sample on the basis of their judgement of their typicality or possession of the particular characteristics being sought (Cohen *et al.*, 2007). In this study, head-teachers of selected PPSs were

purposively selected into the sample. As a result, eight head-teachers were selected into this study's sample. The rationale for selecting them was that they are individuals responsible for management of schools including taking care of disciplinary procedures.

### 3.6.2.3 Summary of Sampling Techniques

The sampling techniques for this study can be summarised as follows. A total of 48 teachers from eight PPSs in eight wards in Morogoro municipality were randomly selected as respondents to this study. In addition, eight head-teachers and one TSC official were purposively selected to constitute the sample. Therefore, the sample size for this study was 57 respondents. Figure 3.2 below summarises the sampling technique.



**Figure 3.2: Sampling Techniques Summary**

Source: Summarised From Sections 3.6.2.1 and 3.6.2.2.

### **3.7 Data Collection Instruments**

According to Creswell (2012) an instrument is a tool for measuring, observing, or documenting data. It contains specific questions and response possibilities that you establish or develop in advance of the study. Examples of instruments are survey questionnaires, standardized tests, and interview guides. Three types of instruments were used in this study – a checklist, an interview guide and a questionnaire. The checklist was used to collect data from school records, an interview guide was used in interviewing key informants and finally questionnaires were administered to teachers as described in sections 3.7.1, 3.7.2 and 3.7.3, respectively.

#### **3.7.1 Checklist**

A checklist is a form which is prepared prior to data collection that delineates the behaviour and/or situational features to be recorded during data collection (Tavakoli, 2012). That is to say, checklists are not questions but they cover broad aspects or issues that the researcher is interested in (Thungu *et al.*, 2008).

Checklists vary on a quantitative-qualitative continuum. More quantitative checklists use carefully and explicitly predefined categories of variables that can be counted and analysed statistically. More qualitative checklists act as flexible guidelines for data collection, listing topics of interest and providing space to record notes (Tavakoli, 2012). This study used the former type of checklists so as to enable the researcher to carry out statistical analysis of absenteeism data, e.g. determining rates of teacher absenteeism in PPSs. Checklists are criticized for narrowing researcher's view and making it difficult to clarify issues emerging during data collection (Thungu *et al.*, 2008). Still this study used the instrument because it allowed factual

information to be recorded immediately and easily (Tavakoli, 2012; Thungu *et al.*, 2008). Factual data collected through checklists in this study includes number of teachers posted at a school and number of teachers absent on a given day (Appendix A). In addition, it was designed to take advantage of triangulation whereby emerging issues were planned to be clarified during interviews with key informants.

### **3.7.2 Interview Guide**

An interview guide is a list of questions or issues that are to be explored in the course of an interview. It is prepared in order to make sure that basically the same information is obtained from a number of people by covering the same material. It provides topics or subject areas within which the interviewer is free to explore, probe, and ask questions that will clarify and highlight that particular topic (Kvale, 1996). In this study, the interview guide was made up of pre-written research topics corresponding to information sought from the study objectives. The questions included in the guide were open-ended designed to obtain information from head-teachers (Appendix B). An example of such a question was “In your opinion, what are actual causes of teacher absenteeism at your school?” Such questions permitted respondents to respond in their own terms in order to obtain in-depth information on teacher absenteeism in the study area.

### **3.7.3 Questionnaire**

A questionnaire consists of a number of questions printed or typed in a definite order on a form or set of forms (Kothari, 2004). The questionnaire is usually mailed to respondents or handed out individually to people who are expected to read and understand the questions and write down the reply in the space meant for the purpose

in the questionnaire itself on their own (Creswell, 2012; Kothari, 2004). In this study, though, the questionnaires were handed out to respondents in person by the researcher to increase chances of reaching the respondents as well as improving the response rate. The general form of a questionnaire can either be structured or unstructured questionnaire. Structured questionnaires are those questionnaires in which there are definite, concrete and pre-determined questions. In such questionnaires, the questions are presented with exactly the same wording and in the same order to all respondents (Kothari, 2004). This study used a structured questionnaire to ensure that all respondents replied to the same set of questions. This was designed to allow the researcher to carry out statistical analysis, e.g. determination of means and percentages.

The form of the majority of questions in this study was close-ended with 'Yes' or 'No' as responses. However, a few open-ended questions intended to solicit free responses were included to enhance the effectiveness of the questionnaire as a data collecting instrument (Thungu *et al.*, 2008). Structured questionnaires are criticized for not having ability to collect a wide range of data in respondent's own words. However, this study still applied the instrument because it is simple to administer and relatively inexpensive to analyse (Kothari, 2004). In addition, detailed information on this issue was expected to be obtained from key informant interviews conducted in the same study. In this study, the questionnaire had questions that focused on teacher absenteeism particularly its causes and management (Appendix C). The source of these questions was literature review on related studies and personal observations on attitude of teachers regarding absenteeism.

### **3.8 Data Collection Procedure**

Data collection procedures refer to techniques used by the researcher to gather important data or information (Thungu *et al.*, 2008). The task of data collection begins after a research problem has been defined and research design written (Kothari, 2004). Data were collected by the following methods: document review, survey, and key informant interviews. This triangulation of data collection methods was meant to enhance the accuracy or credibility of the findings. Triangulation is the process of corroborating evidence from different individuals (e.g., a principal and a student), types of data (e.g., observational field notes and interviews), or methods of data collection (e.g., documents and interviews) in descriptions and themes. In this way, it encourages the researcher to develop a report that is both accurate and credible (Creswell, 2012).

Schools were visited between May and July, 2017 without any prior information to them. This was done so as to capture magnitude of the challenge of teacher absenteeism without influencing teachers' attendance. In a selected school, a head-teacher or his/her deputy was given a copy of introduction letter from the municipal director's office introducing the researcher and the aim of the study before collecting data. Sections 3.8.1 to 3.8.3 of this chapter explain the procedure followed in detail.

#### **3.8.1 Document Review**

A document refers to a wide range of written, physical, and visual materials, including what other authors may term artifacts. Documents may be personal, such as autobiographies, diaries, and letters; official, such as files, reports, memoranda, or minutes; or documents of popular culture, such as books, films, and videos. As a

result, document analysis can be of written or non-written records. Examples of written or text-based artifacts include textbooks, novels, journals, meeting minutes and logs. Others are letters, e-mail messages and announcements etc. On the other hand, non-written records include photographs, audiotapes, videotapes, computer images, websites and virtual world settings (Tavakoli, 2012). The subject of document analysis for this study was written records particularly teacher attendance registers, log books, leave forms, and scholarship letters depending on the school. The rationale for selecting such documents is they were used to keep teacher absenteeism information at the time of data collection.

Data on the number of absent teachers and the associated reasons were collected through document review using a checklist which had items of information to be collected (Appendix A). Upon reaching a selected school and handing in introduction letter, the researcher explained the aim of the study to the head-teacher or his/her deputy in detail. This was followed by requesting him/her to provide the researcher with documents which are used to keep records on teacher attendance. Such documents included teachers' attendance register and leave of absence records. Data on attendance of teachers was extracted from the aforementioned documents. As a result, data on the total number of teachers, number of teachers present and absent in the school on that day as well as the two previous days were recorded in the checklist. Reasons for absenteeism were also recorded (Appendix A). Such data were collected in weekdays that were preceded by at least two consecutive work days i.e Wednesdays, Thursdays or Fridays which were not preceded by public holidays. This kind of data was collected only once from a given school.

### **3.8.2 Survey of Teachers**

Survey refers to the method of securing information concerning phenomena under study from all or a selected number of respondents of the concerned universe (Kothari, 2004). In this study, the researcher collected data from 48 selected teachers from eight PPSs in the municipality. This method was selected because it allowed the researcher to examine teacher absenteeism which existed in the population independent of her action (Kothari, 2004).

Survey was used a data collection method for the eight selected PPSs in the municipality. In this method a questionnaire was used as a data collection instrument. It was used in collecting data on frequency of different causes of absenteeism amongst teachers. It was also used to investigate management of absenteeism in schools (Appendix B). Therefore, respondents for questionnaires were teachers from the selected PPSs. Precisely, six teachers sampled from a selected PPS represented the rest of the teachers in that school in responding to the questionnaire (sub-section 3.6.2.1).

The questionnaires were administered to selected teachers by first providing a standard set of instructions on how to fill them. In addition, the researcher allowed enough time for teachers to complete all the items before collecting the questionnaires (Bradburn *et al.*, 2004). These two measures were meant to assist teachers in filling the questionnaires correctly and complete all the questions, respectively. The questionnaires, too, were administered only once to teachers of a particular school.

### **3.8.3 Key Informant Interviews**

Key informant interviews involve “interviewing a select group of individuals who are likely to provide needed information, ideas, and insights on a particular subject” (Kumar, 1989). Such informants are selected because they possess information or ideas that can be solicited by the investigator. Key informant interviews are basically qualitative interviews in which only a small number of informants are interviewed. Depending on the nature and scope of an inquiry, the investigator identifies appropriate groups from which the key informants are drawn and then selects a few individuals from each group (Kumar, 1989).

In research, an interview involves a conversation between two partners about a theme of mutual interest. It is a specific form of human interaction in which knowledge evolves through a dialogue (Kvale, 1996). The key informant interviews involved in-depth interview, otherwise known as unstructured interview, for collecting information from teachers and the TSC official. The method affords flexibility in both the sequence and kind of questions asked to a respondent (Kothari, 2004). In this study the advantage for applying this method was it offered the interviewer opportunity to get an in-depth perspective of the problem from the education administrators whose daily activities include managing absenteeism — head-teachers and the TSC official. In this study head-teachers the TSC official were interviewed as key informants. These interviews provided data and insight on teacher absenteeism that could not be obtained with other methods because information came directly from people knowledgeable with the information sought (Kumar, 1989). The key informant interviews for the head-teachers were conducted soon after quantitative data had been collected, using checklists and questionnaires, from the

particular school. After collecting such data from one school the researcher collected the same from the next selected school until all selected schools were reached. The TSC official was interviewed last. Interviewing head-teachers after administering questionnaires to teachers was designed to give the researcher at least a rough idea of the problem so that clarification for emerging issues could be sought. The interviews were used for collecting information on teacher absenteeism, its causes and disciplinary measures taken by education administrators to address the problem. The instrument used for collecting data was an interview guide (Appendix B).

Besides the research topics written in the guide, follow-up questions and probes were used to solicit more information from respondents. This included follow-up questions and probes like “You said that teacher absenteeism ...”, “can you explain what you mean by ....” and “what additional measures do you take ...” etc. These were aimed at deepening the responses to increase richness of data collected and to give cues to interviewee about the nature of response that is required (Kvale, 1996). As a result, in this study the interviewees were encouraged to speak freely about their experiences on dealing with teacher absenteeism, giving concrete examples to avoid superficial descriptions about their views on the problem of teacher absenteeism and its management. The interviews were recorded with a tape recorder. This was designed to enhance the validity of collected data. In addition, it also gave the interviewer more time to focus on the interview rather than writing. However, the researcher took notes on lists of major points and interesting quotes of the respondents in addition to the tapes to simplify the data transcription process (Kvale, 1996).

### **3.9 Data Analysis Procedure**

According to Kothari (2004) data analysis is the process that implies editing, coding, classification and tabulation of the collected data. It is a process which involves scrutinizing the acquired information and making inferences. Since the study involved both quantitative and qualitative data, there were two types of data analysis carried out in this study: quantitative data analysis and qualitative data analysis. The former involved all the data collected through checklists and most of data collected through questionnaires, except data for question 14. On the other hand, the latter involved data collected through key informant interviews and questionnaire data gathered through open-ended question, i.e, question 14. Sections 3.9.1 and 3.9.2 present explanation on how the two types of data were analysed in this study.

#### **3.9.1 Quantitative Data Analysis**

Quantitative data collected through checklists and close-ended questions of the questionnaire were the subject of quantitative data analysis. The data were analysed through Microsoft Excel<sup>®</sup> 2010 computer software where statistics particularly frequencies and percentages were obtained. The data were first coded then entered into Excel worksheets before inserting relevant formulas, as explained in sub-sections 3.9.1.1 and 3.9.1.2 of this section.

##### **3.9.1.1 Analysis of Checklist Data**

The data collected through checklists was used to calculate the rate of absenteeism at selected PPSs in Morogoro municipality. The rates obtained were of two types: the total rate of absenteeism (due to all causes) and the rate of absenteeism according to different causes. They were calculated for each day as well as all the three days

indicated in the checklist (Appendix A). From the data recorded in the checklists, the rate of teacher absenteeism for a given school for the three days was obtained. This was calculated as percentage of teachers absent using the following formula:

$$\text{Rate of teacher absenteeism (\%)} = \frac{(D1 + D2 + D3) \times 100}{T \times 3}$$

Where: D1, D2, D3 = number of teachers absent on day one, two and three respectively/

T = total number of teachers posted at school

For schools, ‘number of teachers absent’ on a given day denotes the total number of teachers absent on a given day regardless of the reason. The rate of absenteeism for the eight selected schools was determined by calculating the unweighted average (simple average) of the rates obtained above. The rates of the different causes of absenteeism were determined following a similar procedure by substituting the number of teachers absent in a school on a given day to just number of teachers absent in a school due to a given reason in the formula. In addition, ranges of the rates of teacher absenteeism were established from the calculated data.

### **3.9.1.2 Analysis of Questionnaire Data**

The data collected through questionnaires, except data for questions 14, were quantitative in nature. Such data were analysed through Microsoft Excel<sup>®</sup> 2010 computer software too. Firstly, the data was coded and entered into an Excel worksheet. Secondly, the relevant formulas were inserted into the software. Lastly, the software was run so as to obtain the values. As a result, the percentage of

surveyed teachers who agreed ('Yes') to have missed work due to each of the reasons listed in the questionnaire, for questions 1 to 13, was determined.

### **3.9.2 Qualitative Data Analysis**

In qualitative research, data analysis involves “organizing, accounting for and explaining the data; in short, making sense of data in terms of the participants’ definitions of the situation, noting patterns, themes, categories and regularities” (Cohen *et al.*, 2007). Data analysis was guided by qualitative content analysis method. The recorded tapes from key informant interviews and responses to question 14 of the questionnaire were the subject of qualitative content analysis. Content analysis refers to a strict and systematic set of procedures for the rigorous analysis, examination and verification of the contents of written data (Cohen *et al.*, 2007). In this study, the method was used to analyse the data transcribed from key informant interviews and that written in questionnaires as responses to question 14.

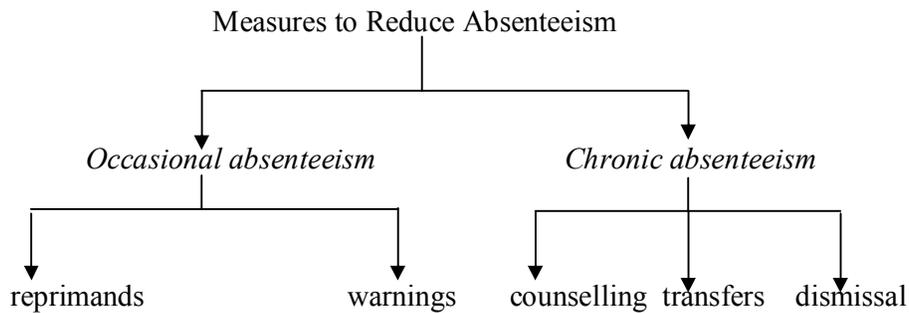
#### **3.9.2.1 Analysis of Interview Data**

Data from key informant interviews which were conducted as in-depth interviews were analysed through qualitative content analysis. This process was done in five key steps. The first step involved transcribing the tape recorded data word for word. This involved changing from oral to written language. In this process, care was taken to capture the actual words of the person being interviewed (Kvale, 1996). This was intended to ensure the validity of the collected data. However, since some interviewees’ command of English language was not good enough to sustain a conversation, the interviews were conducted in Kiswahili. The recorded Kiswahili interviews were later transcribed and then translated into English language. In the

second stage, the researcher started by reading and re-reading all the transcribed interviews in order to identify the overall meanings of what the respondents said. This was followed by coding. Coding is a process of sorting the data from the participants' responses and grouping them according to the things that they have in common.

First, open coding was done to allow the researcher to identify the key words that characterized the ideas. Open coding refers to the initial coding of the respondents to identify key concepts in the statements. From this initial coding preliminary categories which were based on the teachers' descriptions were developed. The open coding was followed by axial coding which involved making connections between the preliminary categories and developing new more abstract categories. In axial coding, the ideas and the key words were then compared to find similarities and differences. The views with similar properties were grouped together into qualitatively different categories of descriptions (Kimaryo, 2011).

In the last stage, from the categories above, different sub-themes and themes of teachers' descriptions were developed. From the themes or categories, the researcher identified the characterizing features in each category which would be used in describing and analysing them (Mtana, 2013). Data analysis can be summarised using a tree diagram to map the categories, sub-themes and themes under study. To clarify the process the diagram for analysis of objectives three is presented in this section (Figure 3.3).



**Figure 3.3: An Example of a Tree Diagram Used in Data Analysis**

Source: Modified From Mtana, (2013).

### 3.9.2.2 Analysis of Questionnaire Data

Question 14 of teachers' questionnaire was qualitative in nature. As a result, teachers' responses to the question were analysed through content analysis techniques. This involved starting from steps two of content analysis to the last one, as described earlier in sub-section 3.9.2.1 of this chapter.

## 3.10 Validity and Reliability of Data Collection Instruments

Validity and reliability of data collection instruments are important aspects in verification of knowledge created by a particular study (Kvale, 1996). Validity and reliability do not belong to one stage of the research only but rather all stages (Cohen *et al.*, 2007). As a result, the two research aspects were addressed throughout all stages of this study, as described in sections 3.10.1 and 3.10.2.

### 3.10.1 Validity

In research validity pertains to the degree that a method investigates what it is intended to investigate (Kvale, 1996). Several measures were taken to ensure validity of instruments used for data collection in this study. Firstly, there was triangulation

of data collection methods involving checklist, questionnaire and interview guide. The researcher examined each information source and sought evidence to support a given teacher absenteeism theme. This aimed at ensuring that the study would be accurate because the information drew on multiple sources of information, individuals, or processes (Creswell, 2012). Secondly, the three data collection instruments, *i.e.* checklist, questionnaire and interview guide, were pilot-tested to teachers with similar characteristics with respondents of this study. The main purpose of the pilot study was to check the suitability and clarity of the items on the instruments, relevance of the information being sought and the language used.

Thirdly, validity of the interview guide was enhanced by a careful questioning about the meaning of what was said. This involved application of follow-up and probing questions leading to clarification of the issue by the respondent(s), as reported in the data collection section. In addition, the researcher ensured she included only true account of the main findings of the study in the dissertation. The justification for this is since the dissertation is the written record of the study then it is supposed to report what truly was found out by the study rather than what was desired by the researcher. Lastly, translation of data collection instruments from English language to Kiswahili was carefully done by a linguist so that the intended meaning of items in the instruments was not distorted. This ensured that the researcher collected the information originally planned to be gathered by the study.

### **3.10.2 Reliability**

In research reliability pertains to the consistency of data collection instruments (Kvale, 1996). Increasing reliability of data collection instruments is desirable in

order to counteract haphazard subjectivity. The following measures were taken to enhance reliability of this study's findings: avoiding leading questions; categorisation of respondents' answers; typing of transcripts. In the questionnaires care was taken to ask questions on recent memory rather than a distant one. As a result, teachers were asked about events they could remember on different causes of absenteeism for the past six months. This was meant to ensure that majority of respondents remembered what they did in the timeframe asked to enhance trustworthiness of answers given.

In addition, in interview responses care was taken in categorisation of respondents' answers so that always similar responses were categorised together to avoid their misinterpretation. This was done by carefully studying the transcript, coding similar responses and later developing themes out of them. Lastly, the researcher ensured that all transcripts and notes were taken by her to enhance consistency in transcription. This was very important since different people would have transcribed the tapes differently leading to data collection inconsistencies.

### **3.11 Ethical Issues Considerations**

Ethical issues have to be addressed before, during and after conducting the study since they do not belong to a separate stage of the research but arise throughout the entire research process (Kvale, 1996). In this study, all important procedures for undertaking this research were observed before conducting the research. Therefore, the following ethical issues were considered during the conduct of this research: research clearance; informed consent; confidentiality; consequences to respondents and the role of the researcher.

### **3.11.1 Research Clearance**

Before research is carried out it needs to be endorsed by authorities in the study area. In addition, the researcher needs to be given clearance to do research from his/her institution of affiliation. As a result, the researcher obtained the research clearance to conduct the study from the Director of Postgraduate Studies, the Open University of Tanzania (OUT) through a letter which introduced her to Morogoro municipal director (Appendix D). The municipal director's office then wrote a letter to head-teachers of PPSs in the municipality permitting the researcher to collect data in their schools (Appendix E).

### **3.11.2 Informed Consent**

Informed consent requires informing the respondents about the overall purpose of the investigation and the main features of the design as well as any possible risks or benefits of participating in the investigation (Kvale, 1996). In this study, all respondents *i.e.*, teachers and head-teachers were informed of the general aim of this study. This was followed by seeking their voluntary participation of the individual respondents at their workplaces prior to data collection. In addition, they were informed that they had the right to withdraw from the study any time. It is important to note that in this process the researcher made sure that the respondents participated willingly without coercion from their colleagues or superiors. These measures were taken to enhance freedom of respondents and consequently, their participation in the study.

### 3.11.3 Confidentiality

In research, confidentiality implies that private data identifying the subjects will not be reported (Kvale, 1996). The implication for this is the respondents had to be kept as anonymous as possible in this dissertation. As a result, the privacy of respondents to this study was protected by several means including concealing their actual names; withholding the names of their schools and securing the transcripts and the recorded tapes. Identity of respondents was protected by using coded names in the questionnaire and interview data. As a result, each respondent's identity was protected by coding in quotations used in presenting qualitative findings in Chapter Four. For example, *TT68* stands for 'teacher number six for school number eight'. Similarly, *HT1* stands for 'head teacher for school number one'. Furthermore, in the dissertation *TSCI* stands for TSC official. Lastly, other measures were taken to withdraw any other personal data that would jeopardise anonymity of respondents. This included omission of their photographs from the dissertation. These measures were taken to protect the privacy of the respondents.

Another decision taken to adhere to confidentiality of respondents was protecting the identity of the primary schools involved. This decision was taken to protect the identity of the head-teachers involved since there is one head-teacher per school. In such a situation, identifying their schools by name would be synonymous with naming them. As a result, the PPSs selected have been coded as *PS1*, *PS2*, *PS3* ... *PS8* in this dissertation. In this study, the researcher had access to some documents that had evidence on teachers' misconduct particularly absenteeism. As a result, she assured the head-teachers never to disclose such information in a way that would

either jeopardise their job security or breach privacy of concerned individuals. Lastly, confidentiality in this study involved securing the recorded tapes for key informant interviews and the transcripts. Since the tapes had audio data that could be used to identify the respondents, they were destroyed later after transcription. For the case of questionnaires and interview transcripts, they were stored in a secure place for future reference.

#### **3.11.4 Consequences to Respondents**

The ethical principle of beneficence implies that the risk of harm to a respondent should be the least possible (Kvale, 1996). Similarly, in the design of this study, the likelihood of harm to respondents involved in the study was rendered inherently low since the study did not involve issues which would cause health or psychological harm. This information was communicated to respondents by the researcher before the beginning of the data collection process. In addition, it was expected that respondents would benefit from the study since they were exposed to different scenarios under which teachers would be considered as absentees. Some of such scenarios, e.g. leave, would not normally be considered as such under normal circumstances.

#### **3.11.5 Role of the Researcher**

It is known that the researcher has a scientific responsibility to his/her profession as well as respondents that a study produces credible knowledge of value to the society (Kvale, 1996). As a result, in this study the researcher ensured that relevant data collection methods and techniques were thoroughly applied throughout the whole

research process. This was done in order to obtain valid knowledge on teacher absenteeism in the selected PPSs in Morogoro municipality.

### **3.12 Chapter Summary**

This chapter presents research methodology employed by this study. The study applied a mixed research approach. The study selected 48 teachers randomly and eight head-teachers were purposively selected as respondents to this study from PPSs in Morogoro municipality. In addition, one TSC official was purposively selected to constitute a sample of 57 respondents.

Data on teacher absenteeism were collected using checklists, questionnaires and interview guides. Quantitative data was analysed through Excel software where percentages (rates) of absenteeism were obtained. On the other hand, qualitative data were analysed through qualitative content analysis techniques where themes, sub-themes and categories of descriptions of the causes of absenteeism and how to reduce it were developed. Validity and reliability of the data collection instruments were addressed in all the stages of the study. In addition, ethical issues were considered throughout the study.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### 4.0 DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

#### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the data collected, its analysis and discussion. These aspects are presented according to each research objective. As a result, each objective is presented in the order it appears in the objectives section followed by presentation of its data, analysis and discussion.

#### 4.2 Characteristics of Respondents

Teachers who served as respondents to this study had different characteristics in terms of education level, work experience, and gender. The percentages of respondents according to such characteristics are given in Table 4.1.

**Table 4.1: Characteristics of Respondents**

Characteristic	Level	Gender				Sub-total		Total	
		Males		Females		N	%	N	%
		N	%	N	%				
Education	Master's degree	1	1.8	2	3.5	3	5.3	57	100
	Bachelor degree	5	8.8	8	14	13	22.8		
	Diploma	8	14	16	28.1	24	42.1		
	Certificate	7	12.3	10	17.5	17	29.8		
Experience	1-2 years	0	0	0	0	0	0	57	100
	2-5 years	1	1.8	6	10.9	7	12.7		
	5-9 years	4	7	9	15.8	13	22.8		
	10 or more years	16	28.1	21	36.4	37	64.5		

Source: Field data, (2017).

According to table 4.1, majority of teachers selected (64.5%) have work experience of 10 more years therefore they are expected to be conversant with regulations pertaining to attendance in their work stations. As for education level, all respondents had required qualifications, which is certificate in education and above. And lastly, respondents of both gender were represented in the study.

### **4.3 Causes of Teacher Absenteeism**

The first objective of this study was focused on investigating on the causes of teacher absenteeism in selected PPSs in Morogoro municipality. Findings for item one through to item13 of the questionnaire are presented in tabular form (section 4.3.1). On the other hand, findings for item 14 of the questionnaire and head-teachers' interviews are presented as sub-themes and categories of descriptions (sections 4.3.2.to 4.3.4). Finally, the theme ends with a discussion of findings of objective one (section 4.3.5).

#### **4.3.1 Ranking the Causes of Teacher Absenteeism**

The responses to the first 13 items of the questionnaire were used to rank the different causes of teacher absenteeism in the selected schools. They have been ranked according to the percentage of teachers who responded 'YES' to each question (Table 4.2).

**Table 4.2: Ranks of the Causes of Absenteeism**

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Question number</b>	<b>Question</b>	<b>YES (%)</b>
1	12	Have you ever stayed at home on a workday due to family commitments like babysitting or taking care of the sick/elderly in the past six months?	56
2	3	Have you ever followed up your application for annual leave, study leave or any other leave to municipal or ministry level in the past six months?	52
3	5	Have you ever followed up your application for promotion to municipal or ministry level in the past six months?	50
4	8	Have you ever skipped work to attend socio-cultural events such as prayers, marriage reception, or games and sports in the past six months?	40
5	1	Have you been away on sickness leave in the past six months?	35
6	11	Have you ever stayed at home on a workday due to bad weather in the past six months?	31
7	4	Have you ever followed up financial claims like salary arrears, transfer money, leave allowance, subsistence allowance or any other to municipal or ministry level in the past six months?	29
7	9	Have you ever stayed at home on a workday due to lack of fare/transport to workplace in the past six months?	29
9	6	Have you ever followed up your application for transfer request to municipal or ministry in the past six months?	25
9	10	Have you ever stayed at home on a workday due to lack of money for buying food at workplace in the past six months?	25
11	13	Have you ever skipped classes because you felt you lacked motivation to teach in the past six months?	23
12	7	Have you ever skipped work for private income generating activities like small business, farming, animal keeping, teaching at a private school or paid tutoring in the past six months?	21
13	2	Have you been away on official duties in the past six months?	15

Source: Field Data, (2017).

These questionnaire items were constructed to shine more light on the nature of causes of absenteeism and their importance as such information would have been easily captured through neither the interviews nor the questionnaire. From the table, it can be seen that the most prevalent causes of absenteeism are family responsibilities, follow-up on leave applications, follow-up on promotion claims, and attending socio-cultural events.

#### **4.3.2 Family and Social Responsibilities**

In this sub-theme are views of some of teachers and head-teachers involved with this study who attributed teacher absenteeism to reasons related to family or social responsibilities. They suggested that sometimes teachers skip work in order to attend social functions such as family responsibilities and social events. As a result, these two issues constitute the categories for causes of teacher absenteeism under this sub-theme.

##### **4.3.2.1 Family Responsibilities**

Majority of teachers and head-teachers in the aforementioned sub-theme cited family responsibilities as one of the causes of teacher absenteeism in the selected schools. In this category, issues that engage teachers and subsequently limit their ability to attend work were mentioned. Female teachers seemed to be more affected by this social responsibility than were their male counterparts. The following extracts from responses to teachers' questionnaires represent this kind of a reason:

*One day my house-girl left so I had to remain at home and take care of my young child myself (TT23).*

*Sometimes a family member falls sick, as a woman I am expected to take care of such a person instead of going to work (TT16).*

#### **4.3.2.2 Attending Social Events**

Teachers who mentioned causes of absenteeism pertaining to this category had a view that some social events were so important culturally that one cannot afford to miss. According to such teachers, when your relative, friend or neighbour is bereaved or hosts a ceremony you have to support them by physically attending the corresponding event. The events mentioned by teachers include religious conferences, burial, and wedding ceremony. The following extract from responses to teachers' questionnaire represents this kind of a reason:

*There was a sudden death of my neighbour. According to our traditions and norms I had no choice but attend the funeral. As a result, I did not attend work on that day (TT33).*

#### **4.3.3 Poor Work Conditions**

Some teachers cited different poor work conditions as reasons for them missing attending work. In this sub-theme are conditions that pertain to denial or delay of professional rights; poor co-worker relations; poor infrastructure; and job dissatisfaction. These issues were developed as categories for this sub-theme, as presented hereafter.

##### **4.3.3.1 Denial or Delay of Professional Rights**

Majority of teachers who mentioned factors pertaining to poor work conditions as a possible cause of their absenteeism belong to this category. Like other professionals, teachers need recognition in their career in form of promotions from one grade to the next whenever they are due. Such promotion usually goes with an increase in salary

corresponding to the salary scale of the new level. If the new salary is not paid immediately to the promoted teacher, then it is expected to be paid at a later date including arrears for months between the promotion and the payment of new salary. Likewise, teachers expect to get an annual increment in their salaries every July. However, sometimes this is not the case with Tanzanian teachers. As a result, they spend a considerable time following up claims on promotion, annual increment, salary arrears and annual leave allowance which are either delayed or denied. The following extracts from responses to teachers' questionnaire and head-teachers' interview represent this kind of a reason:

*The recent deferment of promotions as well as cancellation of the annual increments disappointed some of the teachers to the point of seeing no value in attending work regularly (HT7).*

*Government's failure to address teachers' claims and challenges. It focuses on school infrastructure rather than taking care of the welfare of its experts (teachers) (TT32).*

#### **4.3.3.2 Poor Co-Worker Relations**

Another work condition which supposedly deterred some teachers in the investigated schools from attending work was poor relations at work. The relations could be with peers or superiors. Teachers who gave responses corresponding to this category mentioned bad language from superiors; teacher – teacher conflict; poor co-operation amongst teachers; and corruption as causes of their absence from work. The following extracts from responses to teachers' questionnaire represent this kind of a reason:

*... foul language by my superior kept me at home the next day (TT65).*

*Sometimes I do not attend work because of misunderstandings with my fellow teachers (TT78).*

#### 4.3.3.3 Job Dissatisfaction

Teachers in this category cited several factors pertaining to job dissatisfaction as reasons for not attending work. Such reasons included low salary; laziness and low motivation. The following extracts from responses to teachers' questionnaire represent this kind of a reason:

*One day I just felt lazy and stayed at home ... nothing motivated me to attend work on that day (TT47).*

*The salary I get is unsatisfactory, therefore sometimes I attend to an alternative source of income like finding market for my broiler chickens (TT11).*

#### 4.3.3.4 Poor Infrastructure

Teachers in this category cited several factors pertaining to poor infrastructure as factors contributing to their work absence. Two issues emerged from teachers' questionnaire namely writing examinations/tests on the chalkboard and poor accessibility of the school by public transport. The following extracts from responses to teachers' questionnaire represent this kind of a reason:

*I decided to stay at home on one examinations day lest I torture myself with writing on the chalkboard (TT31).*

Here *TT31* decided to skip work because the school had no infrastructure to support the conduct of examinations, e.g. electricity, printers, photocopiers, and/or projectors. It requires a teacher with good writing skills to squeeze all the examination questions on the board at once. This is important so as not to interfere with students' order as well as time of answering questions.

*Some schools in the municipality are not easily accessible through road ... and to reach some schools you have to hire a motorcycle due to absence of town bus routes in their vicinity (TT28).*

In the above extract, *TT28* blames teacher absence on lack of cheap and reliable public transport to some schools in Morogoro municipality. Such a situation adds to the economic burden teachers already have since hiring private transport of any sort costs more money than commuting on public transport. As a result, teachers might skip work in certain days due to lack of money or seeing no value of going to work.

#### **4.3.4 Poor Health and Accidents**

Majority of teachers who responded to questionnaires cited health-related factors and accidents as reasons for not attending work. Two categories were developed from this sub-theme: illness and pregnancy, and accidents.

##### **4.3.4.1 Illness and Pregnancy**

In this category are responses of teachers and head-teachers who associated health-related conditions such as illness, pregnancy and alcoholism with teacher absenteeism. The following extracts from responses to teachers' questionnaire represent this kind of a reason:

*When I am sick I seek medical care rather than attend work (TT54).*

Illnesses weaken people physically affecting their ability to attend work. As a result, *TT54* understandably prefers going to seek medical attention to going to work when sick.

*Teacher absenteeism is not a problem at this school, but we had one male teacher who used to be chronically absent due to alcoholism. He was transferred to another school last year (HT1).*

Here, *HT1* dismisses the suggestion that teacher absenteeism might be a problem at his school. In the process he reveals that some PPS teachers might be affected by drunkenness to an extent of missing work frequently.

*... for example, with female teachers you might find that she gets pregnant immediately after completing her maternity leave (HT5).*

In this extract *HT5* shares a very unfortunate situation in which a female teacher fresh from maternity leave gets pregnant soon after returning to work. It is a sympathetic situation that leads to the teacher missing work frequently due to nutritional challenges the pregnancy brings both to the newly born child and its pregnant breast-feeding mother.

#### **4.3.4.2 Accidents**

Accidents can occur at home, while on transit to work or at work. Such accidents affect teachers' ability to attend or continue with work. Teachers who mentioned factors in this category cited personal accidents and fire incidences. The following extracts from responses to teachers' questionnaire represent this kind of a reason:

*One day I was involved in an accident at work where I dislocated my wrist. I had to leave for hospital immediately and never returned until three days later (TT63).*

*TT63* suggests she could not continue working because an accident impaired her ability to do so. Notably, the accident leads to few more days of rest for her since she has to feel well before returning to work.

*... one of my neighbour's house caught fire so I had to join other neighbours in an effort to extinguish it (TT26).*

In this extract we can see that an emergency situation arises in TT26's neighbourhood which forces him to switch his attention to it. He subsequently missed work on that day.

#### **4.3.5 Discussion of Causes of Teacher Absenteeism**

Family responsibilities have been found out to be an important cause of teacher absenteeism in the investigated schools (Table 4.2). The most dominant type of such responsibilities identified by teachers was taking care of young children (sub-section 4.3.2.1). Majority of female teachers alleged that according to African traditions taking care of children is the responsibility of the mother. In Tanzanian often families of employed mothers employ house-girls to help them with the house chores. However, when the services such persons are not available due to sickness, travelling or moving to another employer the mother has to assume the responsibilities full time. Likewise, when a child falls sick his/her mother would normally be expected to take him/her to hospital.

Other responsibilities would include taking care of a sick spouse or an elderly; going to pay utility bills; and an appointment with his/her child's teacher or school management. All these scenarios limit the corresponding teachers' ability to go to work since family responsibilities are of prime importance compared to organizational ones. Similar findings are reported in the study by Chapman (1994) where workers were found to honour family responsibilities over organizational ones. Attendance to socio-cultural events like burials and weddings has also been

found to contribute to teacher absenteeism especially when they occur during or close to working hours (sub-section 4.3.2.2). According to some African traditions, such events are closely intertwined to the moral fabric of the society that missing them might result to the corresponding teacher being excluded from the community. As a result, rather than facing such harsh consequences teachers would normally choose to miss work for that day. A study by Okurut (2012) done in Uganda came up a similar finding particularly regarding attending burials.

The study has also revealed that some teachers cited the promotions which have been deferred for not less than two years now as one of the causes of absenteeism (sub-section 4.3.3.1). Such an act is tantamount to denying their opportunities for advancement in their teaching career. This is because in every profession one has the opportunity to grow and reach the highest possible level rather than remaining stagnant at the same stage for some time. Likewise, teachers' persistent claims for salary arrears or transfers could have a similar effect. Similar findings were found in studies by Okurut (2012), Betweli, (2010) and Al-Hassan (2009). However, while these studies associated absenteeism directly with poor remuneration for teachers, the current study implies it since promoting a teacher or paying his/her salary arrears is known to improve the teachers' financial condition. In other words, if it were not for financial gains, majority of teachers would not bother about being promoted or paid salary arrears. When a teacher is satisfied with the work environment and the assignments associated with his/her work, it is expected that the teacher will have a strong desire to go work (Steers and Rhodes, 1978). One of the findings of objective one shows that some teachers have had experienced poor relations with either their

peers or superiors at work. These included misunderstandings or conflicts between one teacher and his/her colleague. It also included the use of abusive or embarrassing language by head-teachers or their deputies. In addition there was poor co-operation amongst teachers; and corruption between teachers and their supervisors (sub-section 4.3.3.2). In other words, leader style also had a negative effect on some teachers' job satisfaction and hence motivation to attend work. Such teachers reacted to the situation by avoiding going to work for a day or more.

Another finding on job situation from the study that could be linked with attendance behaviour is writing examinations/tests on the chalkboard. Some teachers claimed to be too lazy to write examinations on the chalkboard to the extent of opting to skip work (sub-section 4.3.3.4). The question is "how do they deliver their lessons to students?" Does it mean without writing on the board? Therefore, rather than having a direct effect on attendance motivation, it is argued that this problem has an effect on job satisfaction which in turn affects attendance motivation (Figure 2.1). Similar findings on the effect of school infrastructure on teacher attendance can be found in studies by Okurut (2012), Al-Hassan (2009) and Alcazar *et al.*, (2006).

However, this study's finding is different in the context that apparently the infrastructure that is supposed to be used by teachers daily seems to affect their attendance on examination days only. Transport problems have also been found to contribute to the causes of teacher absenteeism in the selected schools in several ways (sub-section 4.3.3.4). Four scenarios of how such problems can hinder teacher attendance are given in this paragraph. Firstly, some schools are located far away from the town bus (daladala) stands requiring the teacher either to walk long

distances or hire a motorcycle (bodaboda) to his/her workplace. Secondly, even when the school is easily reachable by daladals they are not a reliable means of transport since they are prone to occasional boycotts. Thirdly, hiring a bodaboda costs roughly between TZS 2,000 and TZS 4,000 for a day — making it too expensive for a lowly paid PPS teacher to afford during the later days of the month. Lastly, roads to some schools are in a bad shape making it difficult and/or expensive to use private cars.

In short, one or a combination of any of the aforementioned scenarios can force a teacher willing to go to work to stay at home. The justification for this is a teacher cannot reach his/her school far away from his/her home without affording a means of transport. Similar findings were found in a study by Bennell & Akyeampong (2007).

In this study it has also been found out that health-related conditions such as illnesses, pregnancies and deliveries are one of causes of teacher absenteeism in the visited schools (sub-section 4.3.4.1). Normally a sick teacher attends hospital to seek medical attention and thereafter he/she might spend some time at home recuperating.

The illness or the weakness associated with it affects the corresponding teacher's ability to come to work even if he/she is highly motivated to do so. Studies by Okurut (2012); Al-Hassan (2009); Bennell & Akyeampong (2007); and Habyarimana *et al.* (2005) had similar findings regarding the effect of illnesses on teacher absenteeism. In addition, accidents, whether personal or to a family member, are somehow related to illnesses in that more often than not they result to body injuries (sub-section 4.3.4.2). As a result, their effects on teachers' health and their attendance at work are like those discussed before regarding illnesses.

#### 4.4 Objective Two: Rates of Teacher Absenteeism

The second objective of this study was focused on determining the rates of teacher absenteeism in PPSs in Morogoro municipality. Section 4.4.1 presents the rates and their analysis for each of the investigated schools, while section 4.4.2 presents the rates for each cause investigated. In addition, the discussion of such findings is presented (section 4.4.3).

##### 4.4.1 Absenteeism Rates per School

The rates of teacher absenteeism for each selected school and the average rate are presented in Table 4.3. This was done to show how the individual schools compare in terms of the magnitude of the problem.

**Table 4.3: Rates of Teacher Absenteeism per School**

School	Teacher absenteeism (%)
PS1	19
PS2	15
PS3	13
PS4	15
PS5	20
PS6	12
PS7	16
PS8	12
<i>Unweighted average</i>	<i>15</i>

Source: Field data, (2017)

Briefly, from Table 4.3, it can be seen that teacher absenteeism rates in the investigated schools in Morogoro municipality ranged between 12 percent (in *PS6* and *PS8*) and 20 percent (in *PS5*). On the other hand, the unweighted average of rates of teacher absenteeism for the same schools was found to be 15 percent.

#### 4.4.2 Absenteeism Rates per Cause

The rates for teacher absenteeism were also obtained for each cause in the selected schools. As a result, the rates for absenteeism due to illness, attending official duty outside the school as well as other absences with or without leave are presented in this section (Table 4.4).

**Table 4.4: Rates of Teacher Absenteeism per Cause**

<b>Cause</b>	<b>Teacher absenteeism (%)</b>
Illness	6
Duty outside school	2
Other (with leave)	5
Other (without leave)	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>

Source: Field data, (2017).

From the table, it can be observed that absence due to illness was found to be the dominant cause of teacher absenteeism (six percent). On the other hand, absences due to teachers attending official duty outside the school accounted for the lowest incidences of absenteeism, two percent. Using these rates, teacher absenteeism in the investigated schools is estimated to be 16 percent.

#### 4.4.3 Discussion of Absenteeism Rates

Absence without leave accounted for only three percent in this study (Table 4.4). If this study was conducted focusing on absenteeism as misconduct (e.g. Mfaume & Bilinga, 2017; Mabagala, 2016; Betweli, 2013) then this would have been the rate obtained. As a result, this would have underestimated the problem by 13 percent (from 16 to three percent). Instead the study focused on all types of absenteeism including absence with leave. This is because under the current strict management of

public service, it was predicted that absenteeism would manifest itself predominantly in this form. The rate of teacher absenteeism found in this study, ranging from 12 to 20 percent with an average of 15 percent, compares with or is lower than the different rates for selected countries reported in Chaudhury *et al.*, (2006) — which averaged at 19 percent (section 1.2.1). On the other hand, the rate is lower compared to that reported in Bennell & Akyeampong (2007) done at the same level in Tanzania, which stood at 32 percent. Therefore, while absence without leave is low, the total rate of absenteeism is significantly high in the visited schools. This necessitates for measures to evaluate the validity of reasons advanced by teachers during their applications for leave.

#### **4.5 Measures Taken to Reduce Absenteeism**

The third objective of this study aimed at assessing measures taken to reduce absenteeism in the visited schools. Head-teachers and a TSC official were the respondents to interviews on this topic. In this theme on measures taken to reduce teacher absenteeism, two sub-themes were developed for: short term absenteeism and chronic absenteeism (sections 4.5.1 and 4.5.2). Finally, a discussion on the measures is presented (section 4.5.3).

##### **4.5.1 Short Term Absenteeism**

Head-teachers of schools investigated revealed that they treated what they deemed as minor cases of teacher absenteeism by reprimanding or warning the corresponding teachers. They suggested that they took such measures as it is what is stipulated in the regulations.

#### 4.5.1.1 Reprimands

Head-teachers of schools investigated revealed that they have a mandate to reprimand any misbehaving teacher in their schools. As a result, they reported that when a teacher is absent for a couple of days without leave they can reprimand such a teacher. The following extract from interview with head-teachers reflects this kind of practice:

*No. It depends on the number of days the teacher has been missing... For me, I would reprimand a teacher who does not attend work for one, two or three days without my permission (HT1).*

Here *HT1* emphasises the fact that reprimands are given to wrongdoers. In other words, this kind of action is reserved for those who do not adhere to official procedures to absent themselves from work regardless of the reason.

#### 4.5.1.2 Warning Letters

Head-teachers of schools investigated revealed that sometimes they wrote warning letters to teachers found to be absent for a period they deemed sufficient enough to warrant such a measure. The following extract from interview with head-teachers reflects this kind of practice:

*Normally I write a letter to such a teacher warning him/her of his/her future conduct regarding work attendance. In addition, the same letter shall require the teacher to respond in writing as to why further action should not be taken against him/her (HT3).*

Conversation with *HT3* quoted above shows that basically a warning letter serves to notify the culprit that he/she is given the last chance to rectify his/her behaviour.

Moreover, it acts a written evidence of the misconduct of the teacher should further disciplinary action be pursued.

#### **4.5.2 Chronic Absenteeism**

In schools investigated, there had been teachers with high absenteeism frequencies. Head-teachers of the selected schools and the TSC official revealed that such chronically absent teachers are dealt with through counselling, dismissals or transfers depending on the nature and seriousness of the absenteeism.

##### **4.5.2.1 Counselling**

Some of head-teachers interviewed said that they felt that some absenteeism cases in their schools were better addressed through counselling the corresponding teachers. As a result, they revealed that they offer counselling services to teachers frequently absent due to some problems. They mentioned examples of such problems as frequent delivery of children and failure to service debts. The following extracts from interview with head-teachers reflect this kind of solution:

*The public service regulations require an employee to take maternity leave after at least three years. But we have a female teacher here who used to deliver a child almost every year. We counselled her on the issue and she decided to consult an expert on birth control... now it is more than a year without such an incident (HT2).*

Another interviewee, HT7, had the following to say:

*Some teachers at this school have been found to default on their debts. Therefore, their lenders frequently visit the school to check on them. In avoiding them, the teachers resort to keeping away from school ... We cannot pay for them. We just counsel them on how to handle the issue and avoid further embarrassment (HT7).*

Both *HT2* and *HT7* indicate that some forms of teacher absenteeism can be controlled by availing the appropriate knowledge to the corresponding teacher rather than disciplining them. It is assumed that once such a problem is addressed the corresponding teacher attends work regularly as required.

#### **4.5.2.2 Transfer**

As discussed before in some preceding sections of this dissertation, serious cases of teacher absenteeism are dealt with TSC at district level after being forwarded by schools. The head-teachers interviewed and the TSC official suggested that this is usually the last resort after all other options under their jurisdiction have been exhausted. The following extract from an interview with a head-teacher reflects this kind of procedure:

*The procedure we follow is as follows: Firstly, the head-teacher warns the absentee. Secondly, if he/she does not take heed of the warning and continues missing work, he/she is summoned to appear before the school ethics committee which convenes to deliberate on the issue. The minutes of such a meeting are recorded for future reference. Lastly, if he/she still does not change his/her behaviour, a formal charge is written and forwarded to the district teachers' disciplinary authority, TSC, for appropriate action (HT4).*

Judging by the procedure described above by *HT4*, it can be assumed that for a teacher to be reported to TSC he/she must have been absent from work for a duration requiring disciplinary action probably longer than that stipulated in the Standing Orders. In other words, head-teachers and school management in general have a lot of influence on teachers' attendance at work. TSC might opt to punish the teacher found guilty of absenteeism by transferring him/her to another school away from factors influencing his/her absenteeism or to a deemed to have poor work conditions.

The following extract from an interview with a TSC official reflects this kind of a punishment:

*Well, it depends on many factors including his/her defence on the case then the verdict might be giving the teacher a second chance. This involves receiving a stern warning and/or a transfer proposal. In case of a transfer, we advise his/her employer to transfer the teacher to another school ... but the transfer gives the teacher a fresh start because sometimes relations with the current boss might be damaged making returning there difficult (TSC1).*

What is apparent from the quotation above is once a teachers' case is lodged at TSC it is rare for that particular teacher to escape without at least a stern warning. As TSC1 puts it, transfers give corresponding teachers an opportunity to change their behaviour.

#### **4.5.2.3 Dismissal**

Some serious cases of teacher absenteeism lead to expulsion of the teacher from service. The procedure described by HT4 is followed by head-teachers of the schools at which the absentee teacher is posted. The only difference with the aforementioned case is this time the corresponding teacher with a guilty verdict is not lucky enough to stay in the service. The following extract from an interview with a TSC official reflects this kind of a punishment:

*Like I said before, for some cases we have no option other than terminating the teachers' public service. Nobody likes it because we have an inadequate number of teachers in this country. But aren't absentee teachers as good as non-existent ones?(TSC1)*

Here TSC1 emphasises that usually dismissing teachers from the service is not the preferred route. However, sometimes circumstances dictate that the conduct of the

teacher is short of what is required in the public service. In such a situation termination of the guilty teacher's contract is inevitable.

#### **4.5.3 Discussion of Measures for Reducing Absenteeism**

Briefly, measures taken by head-teachers or TSC were reprimands, warning letters, counselling, transfers and dismissals (sections 4.5.1 & 4.5.2). The role such measures play in addressing teacher absenteeism is assessed in this section. Specifically, the discussion focuses on the role played by such measures on influencing teachers' attendance motivation and affecting their ability to go to work. Counselling a chronically absent teacher might have a positive effect on the teacher's values and job expectations. However, for this to influence attendance motivation the teacher must react favourably to the job situation regardless of its status. Arguably, that could also be achieved through counselling the teacher on how to react to job situation variables like role stress, leader style, co-worker relations *etc.* As a result, if carefully planned and executed, counselling can help to a teacher feel satisfied with the job situation and subsequently, enhance his/her attendance motivation (Figure 2.2).

In the context of Tanzanian PPSs, transfers might have an effect on the job situation particularly work group size, leader style and co-worker relations variables. As the teacher is transferred from one school to another these variables are expected to change. However, they could get better or worse or even remain the same. If absenteeism was caused by variables pertaining to a school with poor job situation then the teacher is transferred to a school with better job situation, then his/her attendance motivation might be enhanced. In addition, transfers might also affect

positively teachers' ability to attend by either sending him/her to a school which is closer to his/her home solving the transportation problem. This could also partly solve the problem of teachers attending family responsibilities during work hours and not returning to work. Otherwise, the transfers can be viewed by the teachers as just a punishment which might further complicate the job situation subsequently enhancing absenteeism. Reprimands and warning letters could send signals to the corresponding teacher of the impending danger of a dismissal. As a result, they could be viewed as pressures to attend work as they might instil fear of one losing his/her job if the job market is unpredictable. In addition, such measures signify school's or TSC's commitment to reducing absenteeism — another pressure to attend work. In other words, dismissals can be regarded as TSC's strategy to create pressure to attend work for teachers who are yet to be found guilty of absenteeism.

In this study, economic and market conditions might be considered as enhancing teachers' attendance because currently there are very limited opportunities for teacher employment in the private sector. In addition, the government (the employer of PPS teachers) is in the process of verifying its workers including teachers. The effect of this exercise to teachers' attendance might be twofold. First, it might have limited mobility of teachers from the teaching service to other jobs in the public service. Secondly, it might have saturated the job market with job hunters making it difficult for any worker to afford losing their current jobs. As a result, teachers are expected to value their employment and attend work regularly for fear of losing their jobs. Steers & Rhodes (1978) report on studies with similar findings on effects of job market on dynamics of employment. The aforementioned effect of economic and

employment market conditions might be undone by lack of a clear incentives/reward system offered by schools to enhance attendance, as implied by head-teachers' responses to a question on measures of reducing absenteeism (sections 4.5.1 & 4.5.2). However, rather than the dynamics of the employment market, some scholars believe that incentive mechanisms affect who chooses to enter and remain in the teaching profession, as well as how well teachers do their day-to-day work in the classroom (Rogers & Vegas, 2009). They suggest that this becomes more evident when the incentive or reward follows immediately the action to be rewarded (Chapman, 1994). Furthermore, it is suggested that incentives improve employees' job satisfaction particularly with their salary (Guerrero *et al.*, 2012). This is because incentives/rewards too are variables pertaining to pressures to attend work, i.e., they are additive to attendance motivation variables (Steers & Rhodes, 1978). As a result, not including a clear incentive mechanism in the measures for reducing absenteeism might lower the effectiveness of such measures.

Chapman (1994) emphasises on the importance of incentives or rewards on enhancing teacher attendance and how organisational commitment is crucial to management of employee absenteeism. However, generally there is lack of organizational commitment in reducing teacher absenteeism. This can be reflected by head-teachers' insistence in the interviews that absenteeism was not a problem in their schools since most of absent teachers were granted leaves (e.g. *HTI*). Such head-teachers were not concerned that reasons advanced by some teachers while applying for such leaves are sometimes not genuine. For example, some of the teachers who avoided writing examinations on the chalkboard (sub-section 4.3.3.4)

said they were granted leave after feigning illness. Further evidence for unreliability of teachers' reasons for application of leave can be seen by observing the disparity of findings between the questionnaire and the checklist. In the questionnaire teachers chose the real reasons for their absence hence family responsibilities are ranked higher (first) than sickness (fifth). However, when it comes to the checklist where they reported reasons that could maximise their chances of being granted leave, sickness came out first. It can be concluded that the current measures used to address teacher absenteeism can be considered to be relevant for enhancing some variables of teacher attendance. However, they are not sufficient since most of such measures are designed as negative rather than positive motivators. Therefore, incentives or rewards and other positive management strategies should be applied in curbing teacher absenteeism in addition to the current strategies.

#### **4.6 Chapter Summary**

In this study, the findings have been presented as percentages in tabular form (for quantitative data) or quotations in categories of descriptions developed for each sub-theme (for qualitative data). Causes of teacher absenteeism in the investigated schools can be grouped into the following categories: family and social responsibilities; poor work conditions; and poor health and accidents. Such causes relate to teachers' dissatisfaction with the work environment and their inability to attend work. It has been found out that the rate of teacher absenteeism in the investigated schools ranges from 12 percent to 20 percent and overall it has been estimated at an average of 15 percent. On the other hand, the rates for absenteeism due to different causes have been found to be six percent for illness, two percent for attending duty outside the school, five percent for other reasons with leave and three

percent for reasons without leave. Measures taken to reduce teacher absenteeism in Morogoro municipality include reprimands, warning letters, counselling, transfers and dismissals. It is concluded that such measures are not sufficient enough to address the problem of teacher absenteeism in the investigated schools.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### 5.0 SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Introduction

Certain inferences can be made from the data analysed in this study to draw meaningful conclusions. In addition, several recommendations on what should be done can be made in accordance with the finding of each objective. As a result, this chapter presents summary of the study, conclusions and recommendations of the study.

#### 5.2 Summary of the Study

The aim of this study was to investigate the causes and management of teacher absenteeism in public primary schools in Morogoro municipality, Tanzania. The study was guided by the following three specific objectives. Firstly, to examine the causes of teacher absenteeism in public primary schools in Morogoro municipality. Secondly, to determine the rate of teacher absenteeism in public primary schools in Morogoro municipality. Lastly, to assess measures taken to reduce absenteeism among primary school teachers in Morogoro municipality.

The study was guided by Steers and Rhodes' Process Model. The study employed a mixed research design in data collection and analysis. The sample of 57 respondents included 48 teachers randomly selected from eight schools in the municipality, eight purposively selected head-teachers and one TSC official. Data were collected using checklists, questionnaires and key informant interviews. In this study, quantitative data was analysed through Excel computer software where formulas were inserted to

calculate percentages. On the other hand, qualitative data was analysed through qualitative content analysis method. The following are the main findings of this study:

- i. The study revealed that teacher absenteeism is caused by family and social responsibilities, poor work conditions, and poor health and accidents.
- ii. The rate of teacher absenteeism in the selected primary schools in study area was 15 percent.
- iii. It was revealed that measures to reduce teacher absenteeism included reprimanding, warning, counselling, transferring or dismissing the guilty teachers.

### **5.3 Conclusions**

Different conclusions could be drawn from the findings of this study depending on the researcher's focus on each objective. However, in this dissertation three conclusions pertaining to each objective are going to be presented. Briefly, the conclusions are: absenteeism is caused by teacher's non-job responsibilities and poor work or health conditions; majority of absentees are granted leave; and measures for reducing absenteeism are inadequate.

#### **5.3.1 Absenteeism is caused by Responsibilities and Poor Conditions**

The findings of the first objective of this study show that the problem of teacher absenteeism is caused by different factors that can be categorised as family and social responsibilities; poor work conditions; poor health and accidents. Therefore, the study concludes that teacher absenteeism in the investigated PPSs in Morogoro

municipality is caused teacher's non-job responsibilities and poor work or health conditions.

### **5.3.2 Majority of Absentees are Granted Leave**

The findings of the second objective of this study show that the rate of teacher absenteeism in the eight schools involved with this investigation from Morogoro municipality was between 12 and 20 percent, averaging at 15 percent. However, absence without leave was found to be three percent. In other words, about 12 percent of absenteeism is due to absence with leave. As a result, the problem of high rate of teacher absenteeism is being masked by the fact that majority of teachers found absent had applied for and been granted one of the types of leaves e.g. sick leave, leave of absence, etc. Seemingly, this is a response to the current government's (Dr. Magufuli's) strict stance on work attendance. Therefore, it can be concluded that majority of absentee teachers are granted leave to miss work in the selected PPSs in Morogoro municipality.

### **5.3.3 Measures for Reducing Absenteeism are Inadequate**

The findings of objective three of this study reflected what is stipulated in the Standing Orders for public servants, i.e. only un-authorised teacher absenteeism has a clear mechanism to be addressed with. And that is solely through disciplinary procedures. This impression was created by the head-teachers and the TSC official interviewed. While they agreed that incentives or rewards like allowances and teachers' accommodation in school's vicinity could improve teachers' attendance at work, they confessed that currently such strategies are not being used to reduce teacher absenteeism in the study area. The only solution to the problem is a

disciplinary one involving warnings, transfers and dismissals to teachers found guilty of absenteeism. However, this leaves out authorised absenteeism through leaves granted such as leave of absence for unsubstantiated reasons or sickness leave for unverified sickness not addressed. Several teachers interviewed were quick to explain how they have been exploiting this loophole through faking reasons for applying for leave of absence to stay at home while the actual reasons were low motivation, laziness or poor co-worker relations. Therefore it can be concluded that measures taken in reducing absenteeism in selected PPSs in Morogoro municipality are inadequate in addressing the problem.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

Since this study has revealed several findings regarding teacher absenteeism, it is worth recommending appropriate proposals. Three types of recommendations are going to be given in this study namely recommendations for: policy, action and further studies.

##### **5.4.1 Recommendations for Policy**

Some of the findings of this study have policy implications. Specifically, this study recommends that the government should formulate a policy on incentive mechanisms for awarding frequently attending teachers. In addition, it is recommended that teachers' welfare services should be decentralised from President's Office – Regional Administration and Local Governments (PO-RALG) to LGAs.

#### **5.4.1.1 Incentive Mechanisms for Attendance**

While there is a clear mechanism to punish absence in teacher service-related policy frameworks such as the code of conduct and ethics and Standing Orders there is no such a guidance tailored solely on awarding attendance for teachers in Tanzanian PPSs. Therefore, it is recommended that the government formulate a policy on promoting incentive mechanisms for awarding frequently attending teachers.

#### **5.4.1.2 Decentralization of Teachers' Services**

To reduce long waiting times at the ministry which lead to teachers' frequent follow-ups, issues pertaining to teachers' welfare should be dealt with at district level. Therefore, it recommended that services related to teachers' welfare be decentralised from PO-RALG to LGAs to improve efficiency of delivery of such services.

#### **5.4.2 Recommendations for Action**

The findings of this study require certain actions to be implemented in order to reduce the rate of teacher absenteeism. The recommended actions are: implementation of timely promotions and payment of new salaries and supervision of teacher attendance.

##### **5.4.2.1 Timely Promotions and Payment of New Salaries**

One of the leading causes of absenteeism found in this study was teachers visiting municipal headquarters or PO-RALG making follow-up on the status of their promotions or salary arrears. Although this problem has been compounded by the on-going worker verification process, it had persisted for some years before the introduction of the exercise. Generally, delays in teacher promotions and associated

payment of new salaries or salary arrears affect motivation of corresponding teachers. Such a situation could be avoided by implementing government directives on the issue to ensure that teachers are promoted and payed their new salaries on a timely manner. Therefore, it is recommended that PPSs teachers be promoted and paid new salary simultaneously in a timely manner.

#### **5.4.2.2 Supervision of Teacher Attendance**

Teachers' questionnaires revealed that teachers used different tricks to be granted leave of absence or sick leave. In addition, the interviews with head-teachers also revealed that some schools do not implement of special registers for signing in and out while leaving and returning to a duty post during working time as stipulated in Standing Orders. Therefore, it is recommended that supervision of teacher attendance in PPSs be routinely checked to ensure conformity to the corresponding regulations.

#### **5.4.3 Recommendations for Further Studies**

This study focused on a few issues regarding teacher absenteeism. As a result, there are other relevant issues that are important to be investigated. Two studies are recommended in this dissertation: investigation of educational administrators' perceptions of teacher absenteeism and assessment of effectiveness of TSC in managing teacher absenteeism.

##### **5.4.3.1 Administrators' Perceptions of Teacher Absenteeism**

In researchers' interviews with head-teachers and TSC official it was evident that theirs perception of the concept of teacher absenteeism was too limited to guarantee its proper management. Therefore, it is recommended that a study on investigation of

educational administrators' perceptions of the concept of teacher absenteeism be carried out.

#### **5.4.3.2 Effectiveness of TSC**

TSC Act of 2015 gave the mandate of the now defunct Teachers' Service Department (TSD) to TSC. In the process TSC inherited all functions and employees of TSD. As early as it seems, it is important to learn how the new organisation is faring in addressing the problem of teacher absenteeism in the country. In addition, the suitability of TSC's institutional set-up in dealing with teacher absenteeism should be assessed. This is because if we have established a new organisation (TSC) then its set-up and subsequently its effectiveness should be better than the one it replaces (TSD). Therefore, it is recommended that a baseline study on assessment of effectiveness of TSC in managing teacher absenteeism be carried out.

### **5.5 Chapter Summary**

In this chapter the summary of findings of this study has been presented. The following conclusions have also been drawn from the findings of this study: teacher absenteeism is caused teacher's non-job responsibilities and poor work or health conditions; majority of absentee teachers are granted leave to miss work; and measures taken in reducing teacher absenteeism are inadequate in addressing the problem. In addition, the study gives recommendations for policy, action and further research. On policies, this study recommends that the government should formulate a policy on incentive mechanisms for awarding frequently attending teachers and teachers' welfare services should be decentralised from PO-RALG to LGAs. The recommended actions are: implementation of timely promotions and payment of new

salaries and supervision of teacher attendance. Finally, two studies are recommended in this dissertation: investigation of educational administrators' perceptions of the concept of teacher absenteeism; and a baseline study on assessment of effectiveness of TSC in managing teacher absenteeism.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A

#### Checklist for School Records

My name is Asina Mageni. I am a Masters of Education in Administration, Planning and Policy Studies (MEd APPS) student from the Open University of Tanzania (OUT). I am doing research titled “Assessment of Causes of Teacher Absenteeism in Primary Schools in Morogoro Municipality, Tanzania.” Therefore, I am requesting you to fill in the questionnaire honestly to assist me in doing this research. The Findings of the study will be reported in the dissertation and will be used for academic purposes only. Furthermore, your identity will not be disclosed to anyone in any form whatsoever. Thank you in advance.

School Code .....

1. The total number of teachers posted at the school .....
2. The number of teachers absent today, yesterday and the day before yesterday and reasons for absenteeism

Reported Cause	Number of Absent Teachers		
	Today	Yesterday	The day before
Illness			
Official duty			
Leave			
Other (mention)			
1. ....			
2. ....			
3. ....			
4. ....			
Total			



**PART B: Causes of Absenteeism**

Please answer questions 1 to 13 in the following table by ticking in the appropriate 'Yes' or 'No' column.

SN	Questions	YES	NO
1	Have you been away on sickness leave in the past six months?		
2	Have you been away on official duties in the past six months?		
3	Have you ever followed up your application for annual leave, study leave or any other leave to municipal or ministry level in the past six months?		
4	Have you ever followed up financial claims like salary arrears, transfer money, leave allowance, subsistence allowance or any other to municipal or ministry level in the past six months?		
5	Have you ever followed up your application for promotion to municipal or ministry level in the past six months?		
6	Have you ever followed up your application for transfer request to municipal or ministry in the past six months?		
7	Have you ever skipped work for private income generating activities like small business, farming, animal keeping, teaching at a private school or paid tutoring in the past six months?		
8	Have you ever skipped work to attend socio-cultural events such as prayers, marriage reception, or games and sports in the past six months?		
9	Have you ever stayed at home on a workday due to lack of fare/transport to workplace in the past six months?		
10	Have you ever stayed at home on a workday due to lack of money for buying food at workplace in the past six months?		
11	Have you ever stayed at home on a workday due to bad weather in the past six months?		
12	Have you ever stayed at home on a workday due to family commitments like babysitting or taking care of the sick/elderly in the past six months?		
13	Have you ever skipped classes because you felt you lacked motivation to teach in the past six months?		

**PART C**

14. What reason do you consider as the leading cause of you not attending work, regardless of whether you are granted leave or not? Explain (turn the back of page if space is not enough)

.....

.....

.....

**Thank you for your cooperation**



## Appendix D

### Research Clearance

#### THE OPEN UNIVERSITY OF TANZANIA

#### DIRECTORATE OF RESEARCH, PUBLICATIONS, AND POSTGRADUATE STUDIES

Kawawa Road, Kinondoni Municipality,  
P.O. Box 23409  
Dar es Salaam, Tanzania  
<http://www.out.ac.tz>



Tel: 255-22-2666752/2668445  
Ext.2101  
Fax: 255-22-2668759,  
E-mail: [drps@out.ac.tz](mailto:drps@out.ac.tz)

Date: 05/02/2017

The Director  
Morogoro Municipal Council  
P.O.Box  
Morogoro

#### RE: RESEARCH CLEARANCE

The Open University of Tanzania was established by an act of Parliament No. 17 of 1992, which became operational on the 1<sup>st</sup> March 1993 by public notice No. 55 in the official Gazette. The act was however replaced by the Open University of Tanzania charter of 2005, which became operational on 1<sup>st</sup> January 2007. In line with the later, the Open University mission is to generate and apply knowledge through research.

To facilitate and to simplify research process therefore, the act empowers the Vice Chancellor of the Open University of Tanzania to issue research clearance, on behalf of the Government of Tanzania and Tanzania Commission for Science and Technology, to both its staff and students who are doing research in Tanzania. With this brief background, the purpose of this letter is to introduce to you Ms. Mageni Asina Reg. HD/E/469/T.13 pursuing Masters of Education in Administration, Planning and Policy Studies. We hereby grant this clearance to conduct a research titled "Assessment Of Causes Of Teacher Absenteeism In Public Primary Schools In Morogoro Municipality, Tanzania". She will collect her data at Morogoro Municipality in Morogoro Region from May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017 to June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017.

Incase you need any further information, kindly do not hesitate to contact the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic) of the Open University of Tanzania, P.O. Box 23409, Dar es Salaam. Tel: 022-2-2668820. We lastly thank you in advance for your assumed cooperation and facilitation of this research academic activity.

Yours sincerely,

Prof Hossea Rwegoshora  
For: VICE CHANCELLOR  
THE OPEN UNIVERSITY OF TANZANIA

**Appendix E:****Permission Letter****MOROGORO MUNICIPAL COUNCIL**

Tel/Fax No: 023 – 261- 4727  
Email: info@morogoromc.go.tz  
Web Site: www.morogoro.go.tz  
In reply please quote:



Municipal Director Office,  
P.O. Box 166,  
MOROGORO,  
**TANZANIA**

Ref. No. E10/MMC.78/Vol II/79

15 May,2017

Ms. Mageni Asina  
Open University of Tanzania  
P.O. Box 23409  
Dar es Salaam

**RE: PERMISSION FOR RESEARCH DATA COLLECTION  
FROM May 1<sup>st</sup> 2017 TO JUNE 1<sup>st</sup> 2017**

With reference to the heading above. Permission has been granted for you to collect research data at Primary schools in Morogoro Municipality with the title "Assessment of causes of teachers absenteeism in Public Primary schools in the period scheduled above.

Meanwhile, make sure that you observe value, discipline, rules and orders to both teachers and pupils during the class sessions.

Wishing all the best.

*A.H. Buhety*

For: **MUNICIPAL DIRECTOR**  
MOROGORO

**MUNICIPAL DIRECTOR**  
**MOROGORO**