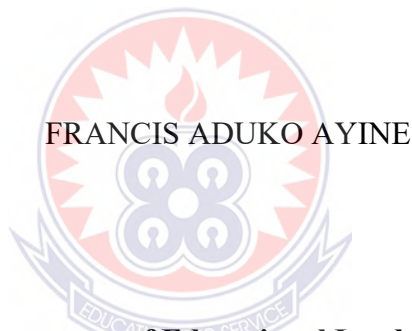UNIVERSITY OF EDUCATION, WINNEBA

EXPLORING THE VIEWS OF TEACHERS ON TEACHER ABSENTEEISM AND

ITS EFFECTS ON ACADEMIC WORK IN WEST A CIRCUIT IN BOLGATANGA

MUNICIPALITY IN THE UPPER EAST REGION

FRANCIS ADUKO AYINE

A Dissertation to the Department of Educational Leadership, Faculty of Education

and Communication Sciences, submitted to the School of Graduate Studies,

University of Education, Winneba, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for

award of the Master of Arts (Educational Leadership) degree

DECEMBER, 2020

DECLARATION

STUDENT'S DECLARATION

I, FRANCIS ADUKO AYINE, declare that this dissertation, with the exception of quotations and references contained in published works which have all been identified and duly acknowledged, is entirely my own original work, and that it has not been submitted, either in part or whole, for another degree elsewhere.

SIGNATURE: ……………………………………………

DATE: ………………………… .…………………………

SUPERVISOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of this work were supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of dissertation as laid down by the University of Education, Winneba.

NAME OF SUPERVISOR: DR. STEPHEN BAFFOUR ADJEI

SIGNATURE: …………………………………………

DATE: …………………………………………………….

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I am most grateful to the almighty God for his guidance, protection, inspiration and wisdom throughout the course of this study. I wish to acknowledge my supervisor; Dr. Stephen Baffour Adjei who despite his busy schedule made time to guide me and thus offered useful suggestions which have made this work a reality. I am also grateful to my wife, Abagna Regina and my children Aduko Cornelia and Aduko Cornelius for the sacrifices they made to support my studies. I say God bless you immensely.

DEDICATION

To my wife, Abagna Regina and my children Aduko Cornelia and Aduko.
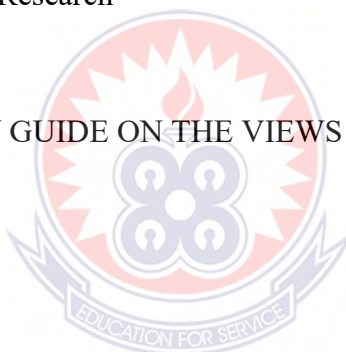
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to explore the views of teachers on teacher absenteeism and its effects on academic work in West A Circuit in the Bolgatanga Municipality of the Upper East Region of Ghana. A qualitative research approach, specifically case study was employed for the study. An interview guide was used to gather data from teachers in West A Circuit in the Bolgatanga Municipality. A total of 20 teachers were selected for the study using purposive sampling technique. Data collected through the in-depth individual interviews was analyzed based on the research questions. Findings from the study revealed that posting teachers to schools that are far from the residence of the teacher, difficulty in getting means of transportation to school, inadequate teacher accommodation in schools, inadequate supervision by circuit supervisors and inadequate teaching and learning materials are the major causes of teacher absenteeism in West A Circuit. With the effects of teacher absenteeism, the absentee teacher could not cover the scheme of work planned for each term and subsequently, the syllabus for the entire year and this translates into poor student performance in tests and examinations. Also, there is more workload on the regular teachers and student indiscipline leading to waywardness with bad character and morals. It is recommended that the Bolgatanga Municipal Education Directorate should consult teachers to see if they have genuine cases with regards to distance before postings. The circuit supervisor should endeavor to pay regular visits to the schools within his or her Circuit to deter teachers from absenting themselves and assist teachers in need of help. The Bolgatanga Municipal Assembly should ensure that provision is made for teachers' accommodation in schools and adequate teaching and learning materials for effective lesson delivery.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This is the first chapter which presents an introductory aspect of the study. Specifically, it looks at the background to the study, statement of the problem under investigation, the purpose of the study, objectives of the study and research questions. The chapter also explores the significance of the study, delimitations and limitations of the study, operational definitions of key terms used and finally, organization of the study.

1.0 Background to the Study

In any educational system, teachers are an essential part of the teaching and learning process. An important consideration is that they play a crucial role in the development of the student to promote their skills (Pollac, 1997). They have a moral duty to train the young generation for the future (Mishra, 2005). The teacher relates with the student by acting as a friend, guide, a role model and philosopher. Considering this critical role of teachers in shaping the lives of students, the presence of the teacher in the school at all times should be upheld.

Rogers and Vegas (2009) argue that teachers absent themselves as a result of wanting to leave the profession when it becomes unattractive to them. The causes of absenteeism are many and include: stress, lack of job satisfaction, boredom on the job, serious accidents and illness, low morale, poor working conditions, excessive workload, transportation problems, inadequate leadership and poor supervision, poor physical fitness, inadequate nutrition, personal problems (financial, marital, substance abuse, childcare, eldercare etc.), unavailability of income protection plans (collective agreement

provisions which guarantee continuous income during period of illness or accident), employee discontent with a collective bargaining process and / or its results (Rogers & Vegas, 2009).

In Tanzania, the Ministry of Education and Vocational Training report of 2010 points out that teacher absenteeism can have various reasons including illness, teachers attending vocational training or academic postgraduate classes, and teachers being on leave due to other public duties. While the possible causes for teachers' absence might be diverse, the effects on children's learning are unquestionably and unvaryingly disastrous (Mishra, 2005).

The government of Kenya's initiative to enhance literacy through the introduction of free and compulsory primary education in 2003 resulted in upsurge of enrolment. However, learning outcomes are yet to be achieved exclusively. Absenteeism in school by teachers has been reported as most assuredly related to poor performance in school. Teachers' absence will affect educational quality since students end up doing 'busy work' or playing in the school yard during study time, thus affecting their educational outcomes (Uwezo, 2011).

Performance of students is a product of socio-economic, psychological and environmental factors. The learning environment must therefore be conducive for students to be able to achieve positive educational outcomes. According to Obeng-Denteh, Yeboah, Sam and Monkah (2014), teachers' presence in the class play a crucial role in determining a student's achievement for academic success. Thus, for students to perform well in academic and co-curricular activities, the teacher needs to be present so as to serve as a guide to the students.

According to Rogers and Vegas (2009), expanding and improving basic education in developing countries requires, at a minimum, teachers who are present in the classroom and motivated to teach, but this essential input is often missing. Chaudhury, Hammer, Kremer, Muralidharan and Rogers (2006) states that teacher absence can also affect educational access and school completion rates if poor quality discourages parents from making the sacrifices necessary to send their children to school. Moreover, high rates of teacher absence often signal deeper problems of accountability and governance that are themselves barriers to educational progress.

Teacher absence disrupts the routines and relationships that support learning. A teacher may need to reallocate instructional time to review classroom rules and procedures upon returning from an absence, perhaps in addition to having to perform a full re-teaching of the lesson that was meant to occur on the day of the absence. Teachers may also have to deal with emotional fallout. Very young students or those with few examples of adult stability in their lives may need some type of reassurance that their teachers' absences are not a sign of indifference (Miller, 2008).

In the view of Bergin and Bergin (2009), secure teacher-student relationships may seem like a low priority in an era of high stakes testing. However, children's socio-emotional well-being is linked to achievement. Higher quality education is the result of healthy relationships from preschool to high school. However, if a teacher is frequently absent from the classroom and students are subjected to a myriad of substitute teachers, it becomes difficult – if not impossible – for students and teachers to form a trusting, secure relationship and could conceivably lead to increased student absence.

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According to Finlayson (2009) when a teacher is absent from the classroom, student learning is disrupted. When that teacher is repeatedly absent, student performance can be significantly impacted in a negative way. The more days a teacher is out of the classroom, the lower their students tend to score on standardized tests (Finlayson, 2009). Therefore, it was against this background that the researcher sought to explore the views of teachers on teacher absenteeism and its effects on academic work of West A Circuit in the Bolgatanga Municipality.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

A study by the World Bank in 2010 indicated that in Ghana, only 109 days out of 197 school days are operational as most teachers spend their time outside school or come to school without engaging the students (Ghana News Agency, 2011). The remaining 88 days of inactivity no doubt, do a lot of harm to the quality of education and academic performance. For instance, performance in basic school examination has dropped from 60.4% to 46.93 between 2001 and 2011 (Ekow, 2013) and this can partly be attributed to teacher absenteeism. This abysmal performance means that many students cannot further their education. Again, when the foundation of a child's education is not strong, it goes a long way to affect the child's productivity. The child cannot be productive as expected as he moves up the educational ladder. Parents do not get good value for money when children do not get good education.

Another report by the World Bank (2011) on Ghana's educational system has identified the high rate of teacher absenteeism as a major problem in the educational sector. The report, titled Education in Ghana: Improving Equity, Efficiency and

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Accountability of Education Service Delivery, said absenteeism is more common in rural schools, with a seeming link to higher occurrences of a poor remuneration, low qualification of teachers and teachers furthering studies. It was released on February 23, 2011. According to the report, teachers in Tunisia and Morocco miss 11.6 days and 13.4 days a year respectively, while teachers in Ghana miss 43 school days in a year. Among the main underlying reasons for the high absentee rate, are: lack of supervision, poor remuneration, poor teacher morale, sickness/medical care, collection of salary at a bank located at a distance, and frequent funeral attendance.

Dorward (2000) states that teacher absenteeism has a direct impact on student academic work and achievement. Current trends of teacher absenteeism seriously disrupt the learning environment of the classroom. When teachers absent themselves from school frequently, it sometimes leaves pupils to go unattended. Moreover, absenteeism by teachers reduces the amount of instructional time and this result in the syllabi not being completed by the end of the academic year. This in return results in lower output of work by the pupils (Ubogu, 2004).

According to Bray and Percy (2003), teacher absenteeism has a wide and influential effect on a country's educational system. High levels of absenteeism negatively impacts student achievement, tarnishes the school reputation, contributes to the decline of the profession and in turn, leads to student absenteeism. A report by UWEZO (2011) points out that widespread teacher absenteeism is generally acknowledged as a major obstacle to the effective and sustainable improvements of a country's education system. The report concludes that with high rates of teacher absenteeism, it is difficult for children to learn consistently and to build on their skills

throughout the school year. A study by Manlove and Elliott (1977) found that the overall performance of a school was negatively affected by high teacher absenteeism.

The financial cost of having 5.3% of teachers absent in the United States on any given day is staggering, accounting for $4 billion in substitute and administrative costs annually (Miller, 2008). However, limited attention has been devoted to how teacher absence affects students' emotional wellbeing and ultimately impact academic outcomes – especially at the elementary level. Teacher attendance issues can be particularly detrimental to closing the achievement gap in lower-performing schools that typically are populated with students from lower socioeconomic levels (Imants & Van Zoelen, 1995) who may have a difficult time forming relationships with caregivers (Bergin & Bergin, 2009; O'Connor & McCartney, 2007). According to Cornelius-White (2007), secure and reciprocal attachments are important for students to engage in their relationships with teachers, peers, and subject matter and develop healthy self-concepts and senses of well-being.

Sawada and Ragatz (2005) point out that absenteeism is very costly. Evidence suggests that teachers' absence affects students' attendance which eventually profoundly affects students' grade point averages. But both teachers and students' attendance in class predicts so much more than just a student's performance, with some of these events having long-term effects on the student's life and future. A report by World Bank in (2004) finds out that teachers may come to school but have to leave early to deal with a family emergency, for example, and even if a colleague covers, the absence may not make it into the log book.

In developed countries, like in the USA, there are estimates that approximately 4 percent of teachers are absent from school on a given workday (U.S Department of Education, 2007). According to Miller, Miller, Murnane and Willett (2007), a substantial district school with high teacher absences are discretionary, and that higher absences lead to significantly lower student achievement. A study done in North Carolina found out that teacher absences are associated with lower student achievement in primary school (Clotfelter, Ladd, & Vigdor, 2007). According to UWEZO survey (2011), 38% of government primary schools in Kenya have a teacher absentee rate of between 10% and 5%. This means that in schools, more than one teacher is absent at any one time, likely leaving pupils unattended and certainly increasing the work burden for the teachers who are present or at worst, pupils are left to learn on their own.

Student absenteeism and its adverse effect on achievement have been well documented (Baxter, Royer, Hardin, Guinn, & Devlin, 2011; Balfanz & Byrnes, 2012; Chang & Romero, 2012; Gottfried, 2010; Parks & Kanyongo, 2012; Ready, 2010; Sheldon & Epstein, 2004; Spradlin, Cierniak, Shi& Chen, 2012). However, until recently, teacher attendance has not received the same scrutiny. With 37% of the teachers absent for 10 or more days for non-school-related reasons in the most recent sample, it is imperative that researchers examine the impact of this high rate of employee absenteeism on those who are most affected – the students.

While teacher absenteeism and its negative effect on student academic work is increasingly becoming a focus of researchers (Brouilette, 2012; Clay, 2007; Clotfelter, Ladd & Vigdor, 2009; Miller, 2008; Tingle, Schoeneberger, Schools, Wang, Algozzine & Kerr, 2012; Woods & Montagno, 1997), there seems to be a void in the literature with

regard to the views of teachers on teacher absenteeism and its effects on academic work in the West A Circuit in Bolgatanga Municipality. It was against this background that the current study sought to fill this gap in a bid to explore the views of teachers on teacher absenteeism and its effects on academic work in West A Circuit in the Bolgatanga Municipality.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

As noted earlier, education plays a vital role in the development of any nation. For the education sector to achieve its aims and objectives, the presence and hard work of the teacher in the classroom cannot be underscored. The purpose of this study was to explore the views of teachers on teacher absenteeism and its effects on academic work in West A Circuit in the Bolgatanga Municipality.
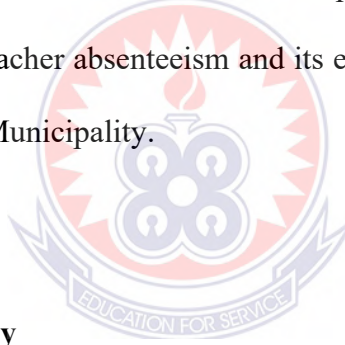
1.3 Objectives of the Study

The study sought:

1. To find out the causes of teacher absenteeism in West A Circuit in the Bolgatanga Municipality.

2. To explore the effects of teacher absenteeism in West A Circuit in the Bolgatanga Municipality.

3. To explore ways of reducing teacher absenteeism in West A Circuit in the Bolgatanga Municipality.

1.4 Research Questions

The research questions that directed the course of this study were as follows:

1. What are the causes of teacher absenteeism in West A Circuit in the Bolgatanga Municipality?

2. What are the effects of teacher absenteeism in West A Circuit in the Bolgatanga Municipality?

3. What are the ways to reduce teacher absenteeism in West A Circuit in the Bolgatanga Municipality?

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study might be useful in a number of ways. In the first place, it will help identify the causes of teacher absenteeism in West A Circuit in the Bolgatanga Municipality in particular, and Ghana at large.

Again, the study will be of help to the Ghana Education Service (GES), head teachers and teachers as it will reveal the effects of teacher absenteeism in West A Circuit in the Bolgatanga Municipality. The Ghana Education Service and school authorities could then find ways of preventing or minimizing such cases of absenteeism since this study will explore ways of reducing teacher absenteeism in West A Circuit in the Bolgatanga Municipality in particular, and the nation at large.

Furthermore, academic performance of students will improve as teachers will be regular at school and put in their best efforts to uplift the image of their schools. The future of these students would thus be shaped as each of them gets an opportunity to further build relationships with the teachers as they pursue their academic exploits.

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Last but not least, the study will also be of benefit to future researchers in the sense that it could give them a further insight to the issue of teacher absenteeism. This may serve as a basis for further research on the phenomenon of teacher absenteeism.

1.6 Delimitations of the Study

The scope of the study centered on the views of teachers on teacher absenteeism and its effects on academic work in West A Circuit in the Bolgatanga Municipality. This study was confined to the West A Circuit in the Bolgatanga Municipality in the Upper East Region. The reason is that, it was not possible to cover all schools in the Municipality since it required financial and supervisory roles which did not permit the researcher to accomplish the task within the specified time frame.

1.7 Limitations of the Study

The researcher encountered some challenges in the course of this work. Some of these issues included the non-generalizability of the findings. This was because a relatively small sample size was used for the study. Moreover, the issue of subjectivity could arise in selecting the sample for the study and in analyzing the data. These may affect the results of the study.

Again, some respondents were reluctant to provide answers to some questions posed with the view that they may be exposed even though they were assured of the confidentiality of their views. These might have affected the findings.

1.8 Operational Definitions of Key Terms

Teacher: A trained person who facilitates the teaching and learning process of students.

Absenteeism: The act of not being at school or work when one should be.

Circuit: A number of school communities grouped together as one for the purpose of monitoring.

School: A place where students go to be educated.

Municipality: A city that meets certain criteria (category of population) in any region in Ghana.

Academic work: Any work, activity or project in the school used to determine academic credit. It includes class work, assignments, homework, examination, etc.

1.9 Organization of the Study

This study was made up of six chapters. Chapter One provides the introductory aspect of the study. It covered the background to the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, research questions, significance of the study, delimitations of the study, limitations of the study as well as operational definitions of key terms used. Chapter Two was devoted to the review of related literature on the study. Chapter Three captured the methodology employed for the study, while Chapter Four dealt with the presentation of results and Chapter Five provides a discussion of the results in relation to the literature reviewed. Chapter Six summarizes the findings of the research, conclusions drawn and recommendations, and provides suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.0 Introduction

In this chapter, relevant literature on the study has been reviewed. Literature relating to the concept of teacher absenteeism, causes of teacher absenteeism, effects of teacher absenteeism as well as ways of reducing teacher absenteeism in schools have been reviewed. The chapter also discusses the theoretical framework that guides the study.

2.1 Concept of Absenteeism and Teacher Absenteeism

According to Martocchio and Jimeno (2003), absence constitutes a single day of missed work. Absence occurs whenever a person chooses to allocate time to activities that compete with scheduled work, either to satisfy the waxing and waning of underlying motivational rhythms or to maximize personal utility. Absenteeism refers to the non-attendance of employees for scheduled work. Absenteeism from the work place is considered as a symptom of a deep seated problem, and not as a problem on its own (Brayfield & Muchnisky, 2006). It might be an indication that the worker is demoralized or dissatisfied with the work. Majority of the employers, when factoring in the effects of absenteeism to the performance of the company, do not differentiate between those absences that were out of necessity and those that were unnecessary.

Absenteeism is a habitual pattern of absence from a duty or obligation. Traditionally, absenteeism has been viewed as an indicator of poor individual performance, as well as a breach of an implicit contract between employee and employer;

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it was seen as a management problem, and framed in economic or quasi-economic terms. More recent research seeks to understand absenteeism as an indicator of psychological, medical, or social adjustment to work (Winkler, 1980).

The problem of teacher absenteeism is an increasing concern in the education sector. Teacher absenteeism cannot be left out of the reasons why students perform badly in school. Teacher absenteeism is a situation in which a teacher fails to report to school. Teacher absenteeism can be grouped into two: excused and unexcused. In the case of excuse absenteeism, the teacher notifies the authorities of his or her inability to report to school. This may be due to sickness, or funeral leave while the unexcused absenteeism is when the teacher fails to notify the authorities in advance and cannot give any tangible explanation for his or her absence (Brayfield & Muchnisky, 2006). In situations of excused absenteeism, a temporal provision is made. In some situations other teachers are made to teach the pupils in their spare time although this is not always effective.

2.2 Causes of Teacher Absenteeism

There are several reasons for which teachers absent themselves from school the world over and in West A Circuit in the Bolgatanga Municipality. According to Nelson and Quick (2008), people who are dissatisfied with their jobs are absent more frequently. They went on to say that the type of dissatisfaction that most often leads employees to miss work is: dissatisfaction with the work itself. In other cases, they are not satisfied with their salaries or poor motivation. The psychological model that discusses this is the withdrawal model, which assumes that absenteeism represents individual withdrawal from dissatisfying working conditions. This finds empirical support in a negative

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association between absence and job satisfaction, especially satisfaction with the work itself.

Similarly, Lens and De Jesus (1999) argue that teachers absent themselves as a result of wanting to leave the profession, when it becomes unattractive to them. This situation may include: stress, lack of job satisfaction, boredom on the job, serious accidents and illness, low morale, poor working conditions, excessive workload, transportation problems, inadequate leadership and poor supervision, poor physical fitness, inadequate nutrition, personal problems (financial, marital, substance abuse, childcare, etc.), the unavailability of income protection plans (collective agreement provisions which ensures continuity of income during period of illness or accident), employee discontent with a collective bargaining process and / or its results.

A report by World Bank in (2004) found out that teachers may come to school but have to leave early to deal with a family emergency, for example, and even if a colleague covers, the absence may not make it into the log book. Teacher absenteeism in public schools is widespread and unpredictable. The health status of the teacher and that of his/her family members is, almost invariably. The need by a physically indisposed teacher to attend hospital is taken to be the justification for staying away from school. Pregnancy and childcare reasons are mainly associated with the female teachers' absenteeism. Although illness is a valid reason for absenteeism, most teachers fake illnesses and take advantage of the situation to attendance of social activities such as funerals and marriages (Wandega, 2010).

In the view of Bullington (2002), many teachers do absent themselves from school based on illness. Sometimes some sick teachers are forced to go to school and as a

result, they may transmit communicable diseases to their co-teachers. This leads to even greater absenteeism and reduced productivity among other teachers who try to work while ill (Bullington, 2002). Workforces often excuse absenteeism caused by medical reasons if the worker supplies a medical report or other form of documentation. There is however, other absenteeism in which a teacher doesn't seek any excuse for not coming to school. School authorities and pupils do expect this teacher in school but they get to school to meet his/her absence. Others however, seek permission from authorities for not coming to school.

Teachers in rural schools put in a lesser working time than their counterparts in urban areas. Any trip away from the rural area, to visit a doctor, to collect pay, to engage in in-service training, or to visit family may involve long journeys and involve more missed school days (Ejere, 2010). Teachers in rural areas most at times do not go to school because they are aware that no circuit supervisor will be able to easily get to the school since the place is far and the road is also not good. Based on this, the teachers choose not to go to school. Teachers equally give other excuses such as funeral, rain and not having money to fare themselves to school (Ejere, 2010).

Teachers' access to school facilities also contributes to absenteeism and reduced instructional time. Due to shortage of teachers' accommodation, teachers walk long distances to school daily and thus may tend to start late, and finish early (World Bank, 2008). Some research looks specifically at absenteeism in relation to how teachers report their absences. For example, Miller's (2012) research established that teachers are most likely to be absent less often if they are required to notify their head teachers by telephone about impending absences.

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2.3 Effects of Teacher Absenteeism

It is obvious that teachers' absence will affect educational quality if students end up doing 'busy work' or playing in the schoolyard. Chaudhury, Hammer, Kremer, Muralidharan, and Rogers (2006) stated that teacher absence can also affect educational access and school completion rates, if poor quality discourages parents from making the sacrifices necessary to send their children to school. This implies that the learning of students in West A Circuit in the Bolgatanga Municipality will be negatively affected if teachers continue to absent themselves from school. More important, high rates of teacher absence often signal deeper problems of accountability and governance that are themselves barriers to educational progress (Morumbwa, 2006).

When teachers absent themselves from school frequently, it leaves pupils to go unattended. Moreover, absenteeism by teachers reduces the amount of instructional time and this result in the syllabi not being completed. This in return results in lower output of work by the pupils (Ubogu, 2004). According to Bray and Percy (2003), teacher absenteeism has a wide and influential effect on a country's educational system. High levels of teacher absenteeism negatively impacts student achievement, tarnishes the school reputation, contributes to the decline of the profession and precipitates student absenteeism.

A report by UWEZO (2011) points out that widespread teacher absenteeism is generally acknowledged as a major obstacle to the effective and sustainable improvements of a country's educational system. The report concludes that with high rates of teacher absenteeism, it is difficult for children to learn consistently and to build on their skills throughout the school year.

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Sawada and Ragatz (2005) point out that absenteeism is very costly. Evidence suggests that teachers' absence affects students' attendance which eventually profoundly affects students' grade point averages. But both teachers and students attendance in class predicts so much more than just a student's performance, with some of these events having long-term effects on the student's life and future.

According to Miller, Miller, Murnane and Willett (2007), a school with high teacher absences are discretionary, and that higher absences lead to significantly lower student achievement. A study done in North Carolina found out that teacher absences are associated with lower student achievement in primary school (Clotfelter, Ladd, & Vigdor, 2007). From the view point of Finlayson (2009), when a teacher is absent from the classroom, student learning is disrupted. When that teacher is repeatedly absent, student performance can be significantly impacted in a negative way. The more days a teacher is out of the classroom, the lower their students tend to score on standardized tests.

Rogers and Emiliana (2009) state that high rate of teacher absenteeism is a huge resource wastage that exerts an upward pressure on education costs. According to UNESCO (2011), investing in school management is one of the most cost effective means of school development.

Moreover, Bergin and Bergin (2009) opined that if a teacher is frequently absent from the classroom and students are subjected to idling about, it becomes difficult – if not impossible – for students and teachers to form a trusting, secure relationship and could conceivably lead to increased student absence.

Bruno (2002) purports that when there is a high teacher absence, it tends to lower the morale of remaining teachers resulting in high teacher turnover. Other teachers tend

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to feel more burdened because they may have to plan for the teacher who is absent. Bruno (2002) stressed that students in a classroom eventually lose the desire to learn when the regular teacher is frequently absent and the delivery of the instruction is done by other teachers. In addition to teacher morale, urban teachers tend to become frustrated with poor resource allocations in their schools and tend to have the desire to disconnect from the inner city campus with high rates of minority children whose families are labeled as low- income. Because of this, Bruno (2002) emphasizes that teaching at low-income area schools increases the propensity of teachers to be absent.

Research also shows that when a teacher is absent from the classroom, student learning is disrupted. As pointed out, Finlayson (2009) found that when a teacher is repeatedly absent, student performance can be significantly impacted negatively. Her study shows that the more days a teacher is out of the classroom, the lower their students score on every test. She measured the relationship between third grade teacher absenteeism and third-grade student scores on the math and reading sections on the Criterion Reference Competency Test (CRCT). She also reports that, nationally, teachers are absent from the classroom on average ten days per year.

In developing countries, the discussion has turned to education quality including the impact of teacher absenteeism. For example, recent research in a sub-metro area in Ghana, finds that when a teacher is absent from the classroom, student learning is disrupted (Obeng-Denteh, 2011). More specifically, Obeng-Denteh sought to determine whether student and teacher absenteeism affect the performance of students on Ghana's basic education certificate examination (BECE). The analysis indicated that student absenteeism was not significant, but that teacher absenteeism had an impact on the

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performance of the students in the BECE. The higher the teacher absenteeism rate as concluded by Obeng-Denteh, the lower the students mean score. Conversely, the lower the teacher absenteeism rate, the higher the mean students score.

2.4 Ways of reducing Teacher Absenteeism in schools

Considering the numerous effects posed by teacher absenteeism, there is the urgent need to find ways of reducing it to ensure that students benefit a lot from their teachers. Balfanz and Byrnes (2012) stated that because it is not measured, chronic absenteeism is not acted upon. Like bacteria in a hospital, chronic absenteeism can wreak havoc long before it is discovered. That havoc may have already undermined school reform efforts of the past quarter century and negated the positive impact of future efforts. Hence, the need to find ways of reducing teacher absenteeism.

According to Rogers and Vegas (2009), expanding and improving basic education in developing countries requires, at a minimum, teachers who are present in the classroom and motivated to teach, but this essential input is often missing. Performance of students is a product of socio-economic, psychological and environmental factors. The learning environment must therefore be conducive for students to be able to achieve positive educational outcomes. As opined by Obeng-Denteh (2011), teachers' presence in class plays a crucial role in determining a student's achievement for academic success.

Students who experience solid relationships with their teachers will show up to class. Teachers must also understand how their coursework plays a role in students' future life, and these students will do better if the teacher avoids covering information in class that only repeats what is in the book. Teachers who encourage this type of

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atmosphere in class can have a positive effect on their students' absences. Evidence in Asia and Latin America indicates that better facilities and infrastructure provided for teachers leads to low teacher absentees. The researcher also emphasizes that professional training and motivation can help us to reduce teacher absenteeism. Also, school inspection on a daily basis can help to mitigate this issue (Chaudhury et. al., 2006).

Hausknecht, Hilller and Vance (2008) provided ways to address issues of absenteeism with employees, including teachers. These include:

a. Wage payment/incentive system: Workers respond to monetary incentives. If they know that wage payment is dependent on production quality, you can bet that they are going to try harder to bring out their best as much as possible.

b. Child care and employee assistance programs: Employers should show that they care about their employees by providing them with services that will reduce the stressful experiences not only at work but outside of work as well. This is because it will be unreasonable to expect 100% focus from a worker who is having a traumatic situation at home.

c. There should be coherent leadership in the workplace.

d. Systems and processes in the workplace should be available.

e. Staff problems should be dealt with quickly and appropriately.

f. Morale of teachers/students should be boosted.

g. Supervisors and head teachers should be trained to manage teachers and students absenteeism problems.

h. The working environment should be made conducive such that staff members can cooperate with other staff members and students (Hausknecht, Hilller & Vance, 2008).

A strategy to deter and discourage teachers from absenting themselves was proposed in 2014 by the Ministry of Education in Ghana (Daily Graphic, 2014). As part of this policy, zero tolerance of absenteeism was echoed. Teachers who absent themselves from school for ten consecutive days will be sacked (Daily Graphic, 2014). It is believed that because the educational system of Ghana is still in need of teachers, it is highly unlikely sacking teachers will occur. That notwithstanding, a teacher can choose to absent himself from school for eight days and appears in school on the ninth day if he does not want to be sacked. Zero tolerance of absenteeism has not yet been successful.

Moreover, according to a report by the Ministry of Education, the sign up book is used in many organizations to keep track of lateness and absenteeism. Public schools all over the country also use this traditional way to track teacher absenteeism each day. Teachers are made to write their names, the time they report to school and to sign against their entries. Teachers were to go through the same process when school is over before they leave the school premises (Ministry of Education, 2014). Although this method can help in tracking absenteeism among teachers, it is however problematic and cannot be relied on. Teachers who know they cannot come to school make other teachers sign up for them. The teachers forge the signature or simply write the initials of the names of their fellow teachers in place of the signature. Teachers can also sign in and leave the school for extended periods and children do not get any education while the teacher is out.

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In addition to the above, alleviating teacher burnout can contribute to lowering teacher absenteeism. One of the highest predictors of teacher absenteeism is the percentage of students reading below grade level. Such circumstances may contribute to teacher burnout. When absenteeism is related to teacher burnout, the following points should be considered:

a. Helping individual teachers identify short term signposts of progress in meeting their own and the school's improvement goals

b. Rotating teachers' classroom assignments so as to ensure that the same teachers do not always have, year after year, difficult students, and

c. Providing adequate financial and material resources (Hausknecht, Hilller & Vance, 2008).

2.5 Theoretical Framework

This study is guided by the Standard Principal-Agent Theory. The Standard Principal-Agent Theory provides a framework for analyzing incentives of public service providers (World Bank, 2004). Public school teachers can be seen as agents for multiple stakeholders, including parents, communities, and government agencies with responsibilities for the delivery of education services. The objective is to induce teachers to exert effort to provide a good service with regards to education delivery and in doing so, restrain from opportunistic behavior such as absenteeism.

The context of the Standard Principal-Agent framework is ideal for this study due to the relationship and relay of information between teachers (agents) and parents as well as government representatives. Better informed school stakeholders, for example, would

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exert more pressure on teachers to provide a better service and not shirk their responsibilities. Thus, this has the tendency of lowering teacher absence rates in communities where all stakeholders are involved in the school activities. An emerging strain of the education service delivery emphasizes the positive role that community involvement can play in school management, giving greater discretion to parents and communities to reduce teacher absence (Jimenez & Sawada, 1999). If monitoring is effective, better teacher performance in public schools will be experienced.

Moreover, the Standard Principal-Agent Theory places emphasis on the effects of government payment systems and incentives on behavior of public service providers (Dixit, 1997). These have motivated reforms in public sector management to emphasize performance management and incentives (Goddard, Mannion, & Smith, 2000). Within this framework, public school teachers, for example, would be motivated to exert more effort and less opportunistic behavior if there are payments linked to performance and in the presence of disciplinary measures. Teachers will be more motivated to refrain from opportunistic behavior if they feel more attached to their students or the communities where they serve or if they feel comfortable with the conditions of their workplaces. Teachers' absence rates could depend on their incentives and the constraints they face, in addition to the relevant logistical issues, transportation issues and family responsibilities which are important in understanding the institutional context in which these teachers work.

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CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to assess the effects of teacher absenteeism on academic work in West A Circuit in the Bolgatanga Municipality. This section describes the population, instruments used to collect data, trustworthiness criteria, sampling procedures, data collection techniques, the technique employed for data analysis and ethical considerations.

3.1 Research Approach

The study employed the qualitative approach. This approach embodies many research approaches such as historical research, phenomenological study, ethnographic study, and case study. These approaches may share similarities or features but differ in goals (Kusi, 2012). Qualitative research explores a social or human problem by building a complex holistic picture, analyzing words rather than numbers, and providing detailed information on the views of the participants in their natural settings (Creswell, 1998). As Silverman (2005) states, qualitative research examines the details found in the precise particulars of such matters as peoples' understanding and interactions and stress the socially constructed nature of reality; the intimate relationship between the researcher and what is studied. The researcher has close contact with the participants due to personal observation and face-to-face interviews.

In this study, the researcher adopted plans and procedures that span from broad assumption to specific methods of data collection and analysis as stipulated by Creswell

(2005). In this case, therefore, the researcher adopted a qualitative research design. This design is associated with the constructivist or interpretionist approaches. The interpretionists believe reality to be socially constructed and only knowable from multiple and subjective points of view where the knower and the known are seen as inseparable (Rocco, Bliss, Gallagher & Pérez-Prado, 2003). Rocco et al. (2003) maintained that inductive logic and qualitative methods are generally employed with the goal of understanding a particular phenomenon within its social context.

Qualitative research shares its philosophical underpinnings with naturalistic paradigms, which describe and explain a person's experiences, behaviours, interactions and social contexts without the use of statistical procedures or quantification (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Naturalistic philosophers believe that reality is multiple, interrelated and determined within context (Horsburgh, 2003; Thorne, 2000) and attempts to measure it can only be limited to human comprehension (Rolfe, 2006). According to Cole (2006), central to good qualitative research is whether the research participants' subjective meanings, actions and social contexts as understood by them are illuminated. Cole (2006) asserts that perhaps the thing that dichotomizes the data in a qualitative study from those generated in a quantitative designed study is a set of assumptions, principles, and values about truth and reality. He maintains that qualitative researchers are more concerned about uncovering knowledge about how people feel and think in the circumstances in which they find themselves, than making judgments about whether those thoughts and feelings are valid.

3.2 Research Design

The case study design was adopted to uncover the views of teachers on teacher absenteeism and its effects on academic work in West A Circuit in the Bolgatanga Municipality. The choice of this approach is in line with ontological and epistemological assumptions underpinning knowledge constructions. The case study aims at an in-depth understanding of the issue at hand in its natural setting, taking cognizance of its context and complexity. It also has a holistic focus, which aims at preserving and understanding the wholeness and unity of the case (Punch, 2005).

Moreover, the study design permits the use of multiple methods to collect data from the teachers in their natural context: a defined geographical area (West A Circuit), for the realization of the purpose and objectives of the study. The experiences of participants in qualitative studies are shaped by the contexts; it would thus be difficult to appreciate such experiences if they are taken out of such contexts (Kincheoloe, 1991).

According to Alhassan (2006), case study involves critical study of an aspect of a problem. The case study approach is particularly appropriate for individual researchers as it gives the opportunity for one aspect of a problem to be studied in some depth within a limited time scale. Case studies involve an intensive investigation into the complex factors that contribute to the individuality of a social unit – a person, family, group, social institution or community. The purpose of case studies is to understand the life cycle or an important part of the life cycle of the unit through the study of an aspect or part of the whole. Case studies are concerned principally with the interaction of factors and events through a careful study of practical instances to obtain a full picture of the whole. The greatest strength of the case study method is that it allows the researcher to concentrate

on a specific instance or situation and to identify the various interactive processes at work. These processes may remain hidden in large-scale surveys but may be crucial to the success or failure of systems or organizations (Alhassan, 2006).

Despite the numerous strengths in favour of case studies, there are some weaknesses associated with this approach (Denscombe, 2008). First, the findings of case studies are difficult to be generalized. This is because such studies often concentrate on an instance or a few instances of a phenomenon and involves a relatively small sample size. Secondly, the approach requires a prolonged stay in the socio-cultural context of the participants for data collection and, therefore, negotiating access to such a place can be difficult.

3.3 Population

Population according to Burke and Larry (2012), is the large group to which the researcher wants to generalize findings of a sample. It is the entire set of individuals (or objects) having some common characteristics as defined by the sampling criteria established for the study (Burns & Grove 1998; Polit & Hungler 1999). Alonge (2010) defined population as the universe that contains all the subjects or parameters of interest.

The target population for the study comprised all teachers in West A Circuit in the Bolgatanga Municipality. There are 142 teachers (79 males and 63 females) in the Circuit. Thus, 142 formed the population for this study.

3.4 Sampling Technique

Purposive sampling technique was employed to select the teachers that were interviewed. According to Creswell (2008), in purposive sampling, researchers intentionally select individuals and sites to learn or understand the central phenomenon. The standard used in choosing the participants and sites is whether they are 'information rich'. The researcher used purposive sampling because it was easy and faster to use teachers in West A Circuit who could provide the required information for the study.

3.5 Sample Size

The researcher selected 20 teachers for the study. This sample size was convenient enough and manageable for the researcher, as it has been argued that qualitative studies need a sample size that will enable the phenomenon under study to be explored for a better understanding Creswell (2005). According to Creswell (2005), selecting a large number of interviewees will result in superficial perspectives and the overall ability of the researcher to provide an in-depth picture diminishes with the addition of each new individual component.

3.6 Instrument for Data Collection

An interview guide was used to solicit information from the teachers sampled for the study. This instrument was used because it served as a guide for the researcher to ask appropriate questions in order to gather the right data. Interview guides consist of a series of broad (semi-structured) interview questions that the researcher is free to explore and probe with the interviewee (Maykat & Morehouse, 1994). Interviews are important aspects of qualitative research because they are two-way approaches, which allow

exchange of ideas and information between the interviewee and the interviewer. Interviews seek to clarify issues and where a respondent misinterprets a question, the researcher could immediately follow up with an explanation or where possible, ask an alternative question (Seidu, 2006).

O'Leary (2005) argues that semi-structured interviews are neither fully fixed nor fully free and are perhaps best seen as flexible. Interviews generally start with some defined questioning plan, but pursue a more conversational style of interview that may see questions answered in an order natural to the flow of the conversation (O'Leary, 2005). They may also start with a few defined questions but be ready to pursue any interesting tangents that develop. Wragg (2002) notes that this instrument allows the interviewer to ask initial questions, followed by probes meant to seek clarification of issues raised. Probes are either pre-stated or posed in the course of the interview, making the interview process flexible.

The interview guide consisted of a number of questions. The development of the questions was guided by the research questions and the literature review. The first question dwelt on causes of teacher absenteeism. The effects of teacher absenteeism on academic work was also considered. The last question sought to explore ways of reducing teacher absenteeism in West A Circuit in the Bolgatanga Municipality.

The researcher also used observation in gathering data for this research. In the course of the individual interviews, the researcher observed the facial expression and body gestures of the respondents and read meanings to them. This enriched the information gathered.

3.7 Data Collection Procedure

The researcher approached each of the respondents for face-to-face interviews. After seeking the consent of each respondent, the researcher proceeded to conduct the interviews. On the average, 30 minutes was spent on each interview. Each respondent was interviewed using the problem centered interview approach, which combines narration based interviews with guideline interviews and minimal interviewer structuring of the interview (Creswell, 2008). This approach gave freedom to the interviewee to structure the narration at the beginning according to his/her relevant setting. This helped respondents express their views more broadly and deeply in their natural setting, the school. Field notes and an audio recorder were used to document the views expressed. Each of the respondents was interviewed in his/her school, using English as the language.

3.8 Trustworthiness Criteria

In order to have any effect upon educational theory or practice, educational research studies must be rigorous and present results that are acceptable to other educators and researchers (Merriam, 2002). It is often argued that in qualitative research, human behaviour is dynamic and unpredictable. It is more likely for one's response to a similar question to vary over time. Therefore, the use of validity and reliability in qualitative research is problematic simply because of the dynamic nature of human behaviour. To accomplish this task in qualitative research, the studies must be of high quality and the results must be subjected to the trustworthiness criteria propounded by Guba (1992). The elements of this criteria include credibility or authenticity, transferability or fittingness, dependability or consistency, and confirmability.

3.8.1 Credibility

The credibility of a qualitative study, which implies the confidence in the truth of the research findings, can be ensured through triangulation (Silverman, 2005). Triangulation involves the use of two or more methods of data collection in a study. To this end, the researcher used individual interviews and observation to collect the needed data. Employing this strategy helped the researcher to offset the limitations associated with using only method to collect data.

3.8.2 Transferability

Transferability of findings in a qualitative research, is equivalent to generalizability in quantitative research. It is often argued that in a qualitative study, findings are difficult to be generalized because such studies usually focus on few instances or just one instance. In a qualitative study therefore, the aim is not to generalize findings but rather to enhance an understanding of the phenomenon under study (Silverman, 2005). However, it is acceptable for readers of this study to transfer or apply the findings to their individual contexts should they find sufficient similarities between the context of this study and their context.

3.8.3 Dependability

Dependability or consistency of qualitative research findings corresponds to reliability of findings in quantitative research (Merriam, 2002). The dependability or consistency of this study was ensured by asking clear questions, reducing bias and subjectivity during data collection, and validating the data through triangulation.

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3.8.4 Confirmability

Confirmability which is equivalent to objectivity in quantitative research, implies that the meanings of the data collected in qualitative research are not changed by the researcher's knowledge and experiences (Merriam, 2002). Thus, the results of this study can be traced back to the raw data collected and not merely a product of the researcher's worldview. The constructions could be seen to have emerged directly from the data, thereby confirming the research findings and grounding them in the evidence or raw data.

3.9 Data Analysis Plan

Researchers analyze qualitative data in diverse ways. Walliman (2005) argues that the analytical framework chosen for a study depends on the theoretical and philosophical perspectives which inform it, the goal of the study, the questions addressed and the methodology used. Data collected through the interview sessions were analyzed using thematic analysis. This strategy was chosen because the desire was to interact and have a hands-on feel for the data and the volume of data collected was manageable, making it less difficult to identify relevant texts. The problem with analyzing data manually is that it is laborious (Creswell, 2005; Marshall & Rossman, 2006).

The interview sessions were recorded and analyzed question-by-question. This strategy required the researcher to organize the data across all respondents or interviewees with their respective answers so as to identify consistencies and differences. The next stage involved intensive and repeated reading of the data. The aim was to immerse the researcher in it so as to determine analytical categories or themes (Creswell, 2005) using professional judgment (Denscombe, 2003). The coding process began after

determining the themes. Contributions, responses and comments made were not attached to names but to the codes. Brief quotations from the data were used to add realism (Creswell, 2005) to the description. During the analysis of the findings, the links and relationships between responses were explored.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

It must be pointed out that qualitative research largely involves human participation in data collection rather than some inanimate mechanism (Frankel & Wallen, 2006) and therefore the researcher has an obligation to respect the rights, needs, values and desires of the informant(s). The use of qualitative instruments invades the life of informants and sensitive information is sometimes revealed. This was of particular concern in this study since ethical issues raise concerns for the trustworthiness and credibility of the research report and the data contained therein. This research therefore, as a matter of principle and obligation was guided by a number of ethical considerations.

One major issue that was considered by the researcher is eliminating interviewer bias and making the collected data truly reflective of the views of the respondents. The strategy was a constant self-check against being passionate, sentimental and negative attitude during the interview process while personal experiences and opinions were also avoided.

Data in all cases were obtained with the accord of the respondents. This was achieved by clearly explaining the purpose of the research to the respondents and reminding them that they had a choice to either participate in the research or not. In

administering interviews in the schools, permission was sought from the Municipal Directorate of Education and the heads of the schools respectively.

Moreover, respondents were made to understand that they were at liberty to opt out if they felt uncomfortable at any point during the interview. Respondents' consent was sought before voice recordings were made or any photographs taken. Whatever was recorded was played back for respondents to listen to after the interview. As much as possible, respondents' identities were not disclosed. Finally, the cardinal principle that guided the analysis is reflexivity. Constantly, the researcher reflected on and checked to avoid the imposition of personal experiences in the analysis of data.

3.11 Summary

This chapter outlined the methodology for carrying out the research. It looked at the research design, approach, population, sampling technique and sample size used for the study. The chapter also described the instrument for data collection, data collection procedure, trustworthiness criteria, the plan for data analysis and ended by exploring some ethical considerations in approaching the research participants.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF RESULTS/FINDINGS

4.0 Introduction

This chapter presents data collected from teachers in West A Circuit to assess the effects of teacher absenteeism on academic work. The data collected through observation and documentary evidence are linked to the appropriate research questions and presented accordingly.

4.1 Characteristics of Respondents

The purpose of this section is to provide a descriptive summary of the demographic and socio-economic profile of respondents. The distribution of respondents by the various demographic and socio-economic characteristics can be used as an approximate indicator to represent the general population. The main background characteristics to be described in detail include sex, age and educational level of respondents.

The distribution of the respondents shows that 12 were males, while 8 were females. The respondents' ages were as follows: 5 of the respondents were found in the 20-29 age group, 12 were in the 30-39 age bracket, 2 were between 40-49, and 1 was in the 50-59 age group. Finally, on the educational levels of respondents, it is interesting to note that only 1 of the respondents had a Master's degree, 10 of the respondents had Diploma, whilst 9 had a Bachelors' degree. The demographic characteristics of the respondents is captured in table 1.

Table 4.1: Demographic characteristics of the respondents

Item	Frequency
Gender	
Male	12
Female	8
Total	*20*
Age	
20-29	5
30-39	12
40-49	2
50-59	1
Total	*20*
Educational Qualification	
Diploma	10
Degree	9
Masters	1
Total	*20*

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4.2 Presentation of Main Data

Research Question 1: What are the causes of teacher absenteeism in West A Circuit in the Bolgatanga Municipality?

Causes of Teacher Absenteeism in West A Circuit

In this section, the causes of teacher absenteeism as explained by the respondents has been presented. To this, the respondents gave different opinions as to why teachers absent themselves from school. The first male teacher had this to say:

"The following are some of the causes of teacher absenteeism:

a. *Family issues*

b. *Lack of proper teacher training*

c. *Unsatisfactory conditions of service*

d. *Lack of means of transport to school*

e. *Posting teachers to distant places without accommodation."* (Male teacher 1, 2020).

Similarly, another male respondent was quick to add that:

"I think several factors account for teacher absenteeism. Some of these are the distance of the school from the teacher's home, inadequate supervision of teachers, weather conditions such as prolonged rainfall. That is not all, other causes of teacher absenteeism include inadequate motivation for teachers and lack of interest in the teaching profession." (Male teacher 2, 2020).

Commenting further on this, another male respondent stated:

> *"For me, the main causes of teacher absenteeism are lack of transportation to school, distance from one's house to the school and failure of circuit supervisors to properly supervise teachers in their circuits."* (Male teacher 3, 2020).

In the view of another male teacher:

> "*In my opinion, laziness, negative attitude towards work, sickness, strike actions, lack of regular supervision and monitoring and lack of harmony between teachers and parents are some causes of teacher absenteeism in this circuit."* (Male teacher 4, 2020).

Continuing the discussion on the causes of teacher absenteeism, one of the male respondents opined thus:

> *"Well, some teachers absent themselves from school in order to look for additional income because there is little income or salary in the teaching profession. Some also absent themselves because of lack of adequate supervision and sanctions for culprits. Last but not least, some teachers absent themselves from school on health grounds."* (Male teacher 5, 2020).

Yet, one other male teacher said:

> *"I believe some causes of teacher absenteeism are lack of transportation, health reasons and lack of accommodation in schools."* (Male teacher 6, 2020).

Again, a male respondent revealed clearly that:

> *"The teacher may have family problems like the child is sick, the wife is sick, a family member or he himself is sick, and death of a family member."* (Male teacher 7, 2020).

Moreover, in the view of another male teacher, teacher absenteeism may be as a result of:

> *"Unreliable means of transport for teachers, lack of accommodation for teachers in their various schools, scanty salaries, and farness of the school from towns in which the teacher stays."* (Male teacher 8, 2020).

Still commenting on the causes of teacher absenteeism, a male teacher remarked:

> *"I am convinced that poor road network most especially during rainy season, low teacher motivation and lack of teaching and learning materials to aid the teacher in lesson delivery are some causes of teacher absenteeism."* (Male teacher 9, 2020).

From the viewpoint of another male respondent:

> *"The causes of teacher absenteeism stem from lack of regular supervision, health problems and poor road network especially during the rainy season."* (Male teacher 10, 2020).

Another male teacher had this to say:

> *"One of the causes of teacher absenteeism is the distance to school. Another one is when the teacher is not well, he or she may not be able to go to school."* (Male teacher 11, 2020).

The last male respondent to speak on the causes of teacher absenteeism was of the view that:

> *"Demotivation of the student towards teaching and learning make teachers lose interest in going to school regularly. Some teachers are naturally lazy and therefore indulge in absenteeism. Sickness on the part of the teacher and very long distances to school may also cause the teacher to be an absentee."* (Male teacher 12, 2020).

The female teachers were not left out of the discussion on the causes of teacher absenteeism and this is what one of them had to say:

> *"For me, drunkenness, sickness, laziness and settling family disputes are some of the causes of teacher absenteeism."* (Female teacher 1, 2020).

Commenting further on this, another female teacher mentioned that:

> *"A teacher can absent himself or herself due to ill health, lack of motivation and lack of teaching and learning materials."* (Female teacher 2, 2020).

Another young female teacher had this to say:

> *"Low attendance of students to school can influence teachers to be absent to school. Again, lack of motivation and lack of means to travel to school are causes of teacher absenteeism."* (Female teacher 3, 2020).

In addition to the above views, a female respondent was of the view that:

> *"Stubbornness, lack of teacher motivation, low salary intake, drunkenness and laziness are key cause of teacher absenteeism."* (Female teacher 4, 2020).

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Moreover, one other female teacher was of the opinion that:

> *"The teacher may have a workshop somewhere to attend and cannot make it to school. Then of course, when a teacher gets an accident or is sick, he or she will not be able to make it to school. Some teachers also absent themselves without permission just for their own selfish interest."* (Female teacher 5, 2020).

Yet, another female respondent shortly noted that:

> *"Personal issues and nature of the area where a teacher works can be causes of absenteeism."* (Female teacher 6, 2020).

The second but last female teacher said:

> *"When the teacher is not in good terms with the head teacher or other members of staff, he/she may feel reluctant to go to school, thereby causing the teacher to be absent from school sometimes. Also, the attitude of students towards teachers in the school can cause teacher absenteeism."* (Female teacher 7, 2020).

The last female respondent on the causes of teacher absenteeism crowned this section by stating that:

> *"Poor conditions of service, lack of supervision by head teachers and other officials, lack of accommodation facilities for teachers and unavailability of means of transport are some of the causes of teacher absenteeism."* (Female teacher 8, 2020).

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Research Question 2: What are the effects of teacher absenteeism in West A Circuit in the Bolgatanga Municipality?

Effects of Teacher Absenteeism

Answering the question on the effects of teacher absenteeism in West A Circuit, the first male teacher revealed that:

"One of the effects of teacher absenteeism is that the teacher will not be able to cover the syllabus with the students." (Male teacher 1, 2020).

In the view of another male teacher:

"The effects of teacher absenteeism include poor academic results of students and a lot of pressure will be put on those teachers who are regular to school. Therefore, the aims and objectives of the school might not be achieved." (Male teacher 1, 2020).

For one other male respondent:

"Poor performance on the part of students is the ultimate effect of teacher absenteeism." (Male teacher 3, 2020).

Another male teacher explained that:

"Teacher absenteeism has several effects. First, students' performance can be significantly impacted in a negative way. There will also be low students' attendance. From the above two effects, there is no doubt that the name of the institution or school will be compromised." (Male teacher 4, 2020).

Coming from a different point of view, a male teacher remarked thus:

"Pupils whose teachers absent themselves from school frequently will not get proper character and moral training from the school and this can lead to wayward behaviour of students." (Male teacher 5, 2020).

Again, another male respondent said:

"The following are the effects of teacher absenteeism: poor performance of pupils and poor attendance of pupils." (Male teacher 6, 2020).

Moreover, a young male teacher was of the opinion that:

"With teacher absenteeism, the pupils will not have regular classes and the attendance of the pupils will not be properly monitored. This is because the teacher is not in school all the time to mark the attendance register." (Male teacher 7, 2020).

To add to the above, one other male respondent elaborated that:

"Teacher absenteeism breeds indiscipline in students because the class teacher is not present all the time to monitor students' behaviour. Also, it leads to failure of the teacher to complete the scheme of work. Last but not least, it brings about poor performance of students during examinations." (Male teacher 8, 2020).

Yet, a male teacher mentioned that:

"Teacher absenteeism encourages social vices on the part of students because they are mostly left alone." (Male teacher 9, 2020).

Another male teacher said that:

> *"The children will not come to school regularly. This is because if they know that the teacher will not come to school, they will also stay at home."* (Male teacher 10, 2020).

Moreover, a male teacher remarked that:

> *"It may affect the performance of the students because the teacher may not cover all the topics for the term or year."* (Male teacher 11, 2020).

The last male respondent indicated that:

> *"Teacher absenteeism leads to student transfers because some of them will go to other schools. This will lead to low enrolment in the school."* (Male teacher 12, 2020).

On the part of the female teachers, one of them stated:

> *"Teacher absenteeism increases the workload of the head teacher, reduces learners' performance in class and also increases learners' absenteeism."* (Female teacher 1, 2020).

Another female respondent went straight to the point:

> *"Absenteeism of teachers causes deviant behaviour of students, low performance of students and school drop out."* (Female teacher 2, 2020).

Interestingly, one female respondent opined that:

> *"Teacher absenteeism affects the individual teacher's productivity and discourages students from coming to school every day. Aside that, the teacher will not be able to cover the syllabus for the academic year."* (Female teacher 3, 2020).

In another dimension, a middle-aged female teacher argued that:

"The effects of teacher absenteeism is that it leads to low standard of education. This also results in low development of the country as a whole." (Female teacher 4, 2020).

Again, a respondent enumerated the effects of teacher absenteeism as follows:

"Some effects of teacher absenteeism are:

1. The teacher may not be able to cover the syllabus for the term.

2. The students may not perform well in that teacher's subject.

3. There will not be cordial relationship between the teacher and the head teacher.

4. The teacher will have issues with Ghana Education Service (GES)." (Female teacher 5, 2020).

Another respondent minced words when the question on effects of teacher absenteeism was posed by saying:

"Slow teaching and learning. It makes students to relax." (Female teacher 6, 2020).

Similar to the opinions of other respondents, one teacher opined that:

"Teacher absenteeism can have negative effects on the academic performance of students. Since the teacher is not always in school, he or she will be missing lessons on the time table and will not be able to cover his or her syllabus for the term or even the year." (Female teacher 7, 2020).

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The female teacher to respond last to this question was of the view that:

> *"The absence of the teacher results in poor performance by pupils academically. It affects the teacher emotionally because he or she may not have a clear conscience of his or her behaviour. Also, it has a negative effect on the relationship between the teacher and the community."* (Female teacher 8, 2020).

Research Question 3: What are the ways to reduce teacher absenteeism in West A Circuit in the Bolgatanga Municipality?

Ways of reducing Teacher Absenteeism

This part of the interaction sought to find out how teacher absenteeism can be reduced in West A Circuit in the Bolgatanga Municipality. In response to this question, one of the male teachers had this to say:

> *"Teachers should be provided with accommodation facilities. Then again, teachers' conditions of service should be improved to encourage or motivate the teacher to be in school all the time."* (Male teacher 1, 2020).

Another male teacher was of the view that:

> *"Supervision of teachers should be strict and regular in order to curb the phenomenon of teacher absenteeism. Heads should improve their managerial functions and constantly plan, organize and coordinate the activities of teachers."* (Male teacher 2, 2020).

In a similar view, a male teacher opined that:

> *"There must be thorough supervision on the part of circuit supervisors and teachers' quarters should be provided for teachers who stay far away from the school."* (Male teacher 3, 2020).

Moreover, one of the male teachers stated:

> *"Regular supervision and motivation of teachers are some ways of reducing teacher absenteeism in this circuit."* (Male teacher 4, 2020).

In addition to the above, a male teacher noted that:

> *"First, the Municipal Director of Education should pay unannounced visits to schools to check attendance of teachers and sanction culprits. Secondly, there should be regular and proper supervision of teachers by the circuit supervisor and the appropriate sanctions should be meted out to the culprits. Last but not least, teachers' salaries should be increased to motivate them. Talking about motivation, an award scheme should be instituted for regular teachers."* (Male teacher 5, 2020).

Another male teacher remarked as:

> *"Teacher absenteeism can be reduced if the government provides means of transport and accommodation for teachers."* (Male teacher 6, 2020).

Still on ways of reducing absenteeism among teachers, one revealed that:

> *"Teacher absenteeism can be reduced if teachers always report to school first and then seek permission from the head teacher before attending to other personal issues."* (Male teacher 7, 2020).

A young teacher who was very passionate about the issue under discussion and teaching as a profession outlined the following measures:

1. *"Motivation of teachers who do not absent themselves from school*

2. *Teachers should be paid well so that they can afford better means of transport*

3. *Ultra-modern teachers' quarters should be constructed within the schools and hooked to all the amenities for teachers to stay."* (Male teacher 8, 2020).

In another vein, one responded that:

"Teachers should be given all the necessary teaching and learning materials to encourage them to be present always and they should also be well motivated." (Male teacher 9, 2020).

Quite different from all the responses, a male teacher noted that:

"Schools should be cited at places that have good road network." (Male teacher 10, 2020).

Commenting on to reduce teacher absenteeism, one male teacher responded that:

"Effective supervision by GES will curb this menace of teacher absenteeism" (Male teacher 11, 2020).

On the part of the last male teacher,

"Some ways of reducing teacher absenteeism are by motivating teachers, considering the distance between the school and the teacher's residence before posting teachers, and teachers should be made to understand the rational of the teaching fraternity" (Male teacher 12, 2020).

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On the part of the female teachers, one of them interestingly mentioned that:

"Teachers who absent themselves from school without any tangible reasons should have their salaries reduced. The head teacher can also sit with absentee teachers and advice or counsel them." (Female teacher 1, 2020).

In the view of another female teacher:

"There should be motivation for teachers, there should be regular supervision and adequate teaching and learning materials." (Female teacher 2, 2020).

One other female teacher noted that:

"Teachers in rural communities should be motivated and the government should provide means of transport for teachers. Measures should also be put in place to make sure that student attendance is high." (Female teacher 3, 2020).

Moreover, a teacher was of the view that:

"Moral training should be provided for absentee teachers and the government should step in by increasing the salaries of teachers so that they can meet their needs." (Female teacher 4, 2020).

Another respondent gave a heart-touching response thus:

"The Ghana Education Service should organize a workshop for teachers on the effects of teacher absenteeism. Most importantly, we the teachers should see the students as our children and help them by not missing our classes." (Female teacher 5, 2020).

One of the teachers gave a sharp and short response that:

"Roads should be worked on." (Female teacher 6, 2020).

A thought-provoking response was given by another female respondent:

"The head teacher should work cordially with the teachers/staff to promote a lovely environment for all. Again, the circuit supervisor should understand teachers whenever they complain of distance from home to school. Lastly, it is also very important for students to cooperate with their teachers and show respect to promote cordial relationship between them and their teachers. This way, the teacher will always be happy to be in school and do his/her best." (Female teacher 7, 2020).

The last but not least respondent of the females had this to say:

"A loan scheme should be made available to teachers to enable them have access to means of transportation. Accommodation should also be made available to teachers in the various schools they teach. Finally, the government should improve the conditions of service for teachers." (Female teacher 8, 2020).

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS/FINDINGS

5.0 Introduction

The previous chapter presented the research findings, highlighting the major themes to 'make sense' of the data. The current chapter discusses the data with reference to applicable literature in an attempt to explore the deeper meanings of the responses and to understand the phenomenon. The findings of the interviews have been discussed, extracting their deeper meanings in relation to the themes outlined in chapter four. As noted earlier, the purpose of this study was to assess the effects of teacher absenteeism on academic work in West A Circuit in the Bolgatanga Municipality.

5.1 Causes of Teacher Absenteeism in West A Circuit in Bolgatanga Municipality

The causes of teacher absenteeism sets the tone for the discussion of the results of this study. Some of the respondents clearly indicated that teachers absent themselves from school because they are not satisfied with their jobs. Their level of job satisfaction with the teaching profession is low. Thus, they are simply dissatisfied with the teaching job. This explains why some teachers leave the field. The findings of the teachers support research findings of Nelson and Quick (2008) that people who are dissatisfied with their jobs are absent more frequently. The psychological model that discusses this is the withdrawal model, which assumes that absenteeism represents individual withdrawal from dissatisfying working conditions.

Moreover, the responses indicate that some teachers who absent themselves no longer have interest in the teaching profession and therefore stand a chance of leaving the

profession. This lack of interest results from low motivation in teaching and unsatisfactory conditions of service. Their viewpoint is in line with the findings of Lens and De Jesus (1999) who argued that teachers absent themselves as a result of wanting to leave the profession, when it becomes unattractive to them. A report by World Bank in (2004) found out that teachers may come to school but have to leave early to deal with a family emergency, for example, the health status of the teacher and that of his/her family members. In line with this assertion, the respondents in this study posited that teachers absent themselves from school in order to attend to family issues. Such issues include sickness of a family member or death of a close relation. In some cases, the teacher himself may be indisposed and therefore cannot make it to school for a day or some number of days.

Ejere (2010) revealed that teachers are sometimes absent in order to engage in in-service training. This point was aptly captured by the respondents when they mentioned that teachers sometimes stay away from school in order to attend meetings, workshops or training. Some teachers who stay close to the school go early in the morning to sign in or log in before going for the meetings, training or workshop. However, teachers who stay far away from the school absent themselves in order to make time for such meetings. It should be noted that some of these meetings are official and work related and therefore are in the interest of the school. In some cases, teachers also go for sporting and cultural activities in other circuits without going to school first to sign.

The respondents in this study also bemoaned that inadequate supervision by the circuit supervisor may account for teacher absenteeism. When the circuit supervisor hardly visits the school, teachers take the opportunity to stay away from school knowing

that nobody checks on them. It is sad to note that sometimes a circuit supervisor may visit a school only once in a whole term or even not a single visit. The respondents noted further that weather conditions such as rainfall cause some teachers to be absent from school. When it starts raining in the morning into late morning, most teachers and students alike fail to make it to school. Poor road network leading to the school community also accounted for absenteeism of some teachers, who sometimes go to school for three days in a week. These assertions of the respondents are in support of the findings of Ejere (2010) who established that teachers in rural areas most at times do not go to school because they are aware that no circuit supervisor will be able to easily get to the school since the place is far and the road is also not good. Based on this, the teachers choose not to go to school by giving excuses such as rain, bad roads, etc.

A report by the World Bank (2008) highlighted that due to shortage of teachers' accommodation and the fact that some teachers walk long distances to school daily, their attendance may be reduced. The teachers equally alluded that some of the schools do not have accommodation for teachers. In this case, teachers who stay far away from the school do not make it to school regularly. Closely related to the problem of accommodation in schools is the challenge with means of transport to school. Some of the teachers in this study explained that they do not have any means of transport to school. Such teachers therefore rely on public means of transport which is not convenient because it takes a longer time for them to get full.

One other major cause of teacher absenteeism according to the respondents is the issue of posting teachers to schools that are far from the residences of the teachers. The teachers lamented that the Municipal Education Directorate does not take their concerns

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into consideration before postings and transfer of teachers. When teachers are posted to schools which are far away from where they stay, it discourages them from going to school regularly. Some teachers have to rely on colleague teachers who own motor bikes for lifts to school.

Other factors which account for teacher absenteeism from the perspective of the teachers include negative attitude of the teacher towards work, low salaries, inadequate teaching and learning materials, drunkenness of some teachers, low student attendance, problems/misunderstanding with the head teacher or other members of staff, etc.

5.2 Effects of Teacher Absenteeism in West A Circuit in Bolgatanga Municipality

Some of the respondents indicated that teacher absenteeism has a negative effect on the standard of education in the Circuit. As many teachers absent themselves from school, the resultant effect will be low standard of education. Students could obtain poor results or grades in tests and examinations. Academic performance of students will be compromised. The respondents argued that when students' results are bad, it tarnishes the reputation of the school in question and this can also in turn reduce the number of students enrolled in the school by way of attendance. The views of the respondents have been succinctly captured in literature by Bray and Percy (2003) who mentioned that teacher absenteeism has a wide and influential effect on a country's educational system. High levels of teacher absenteeism negatively impacts student achievement, tarnishes the school reputation, contributes to the decline of the profession and precipitates student absenteeism.

Research findings by Ubogu (2004) revealed that when teachers absent themselves from school frequently, it leaves pupils to go unattended. Therefore, absenteeism by teachers reduces the amount of instructional time and this result in the syllabi not being completed. This in return results in lower output of work by the pupils. The respondents in this study confirmed this view when they opined that teachers who absent themselves from school will not be able to cover the scheme of work they prepared for the term. Subsequently, at the end of the year, the syllabus for that particular class will not be completely taught. Some important topics will be left untaught.

The respondents did not miss words when they suggested that teacher absenteeism has a negative effect on student attendance to school. When teachers frequently absent themselves from school, student absenteeism also increase. This confirms Sawada and Ragatz's (2005) point that teacher absenteeism is very costly. Evidence suggests that teachers' absence affects students' attendance which eventually profoundly affects students' grade point averages.

Sawada and Ragatz (2005) continued that both teachers and students' attendance in class predicts so much more than just a student's performance, with some of these events having long-term effects on the student's life and future. The teachers also espoused that, increased teacher absenteeism affects the life of students. The students could become undisciplined, wayward, and grow with bad character and morals because the teacher is not always present to admonish, guide and direct them. Students may become deviants and engage in all manner of social vices. They may even drop out of school. Moreover, Bergin and Bergin (2009) opined that if a teacher is frequently absent from the classroom and students are subjected to idling about, it becomes difficult, if not

impossible, for students and teachers to form a trusting, secure relationship and could conceivably lead to increased student absence.

The respondents further noted that when a teacher is mostly absent from school, it increases the workload of the remaining teachers. This is because other teachers or the head teacher has to take up the classes of the absentee teacher to minimize the incidence of students idling about. The stance of the respondents supports Bruno (2002) who purported that when there is high incidence of teacher absence, it tends to lower the morale of the remaining teachers resulting in high teacher turnover. Other teachers tend to feel more burdened because they may have to plan for the teacher who is absent. Students in a classroom eventually lose the desire to learn when the regular teacher is frequently absent and the delivery of the instruction is done by other teachers.

In another instance, the teachers stated that an absentee teacher may eventually have a bad relationship with other members of staff, that is, his or her colleague teachers. The head of the school will certainly have issues with the said teacher and may arrange for his or her transfer from the school. With a worsened relationship between the absentee teacher and his or her colleagues, he or she may end up with emotional crises as it becomes increasingly difficult to cope at the workplace.

5.3 Ways of reducing Teacher Absenteeism in West A Circuit in Bolgatanga Municipality

The respondents in the current study suggested some ways of reducing teacher absenteeism in West A Circuit in Bolgatanga Municipality. For the respondents, strict supervision on a regular basis by the head teacher and the circuit supervisor will help

curb the incidence of teacher absenteeism. Head teachers should ensure that they play their supervisory roles daily to reduce the occurrence of teacher absenteeism. The circuit supervisor on the other hand, whose presence in the school signals some level of seriousness, should endeavor to also pay regular visits to the school for inspection and supervision. As already noted by Chaudhury et. al (2006), school inspection on a daily basis can help to mitigate the issue of teacher absenteeism.

Hausknecht, Hilller and Vance (2008) postulated that workers respond to wage payment and other monetary incentives. If workers know that wage payment is dependent on production quality, you can bet that they are going to try harder to bring out their best as much as possible. In line with this, respondents in this study also advocated the need for salary increment and some incentives to be given to teachers to motivate them to be in school regularly. The respondents argued that allowances be given to teachers who play special roles in the school.

The respondents also posited that absentee teachers should be sanctioned in order to deter them from indulging in absenteeism. They believe that when certain measures such as outright dismissal and withholding or deduction of salary from regular absentee teachers are implemented, it will go a long way to reduce the canker. The respondents' view has already been highlighted by Daily Graphic's (2014) strategy to deter and discourage teachers from absenting themselves proposed by the Ministry of Education in Ghana. As part of this policy, zero tolerance for absenteeism was echoed. Teachers who absent themselves from school for ten consecutive days will be sacked (Daily Graphic, 2014). Contrary to meting out sanctions for absentee teachers, some respondents also

believed that regular teachers should be motivated so as to entice all teachers to be regular at school.

Hausknecht, Hilller and Vance (2008) alluded that when absenteeism is related to teacher burnout, providing adequate material resources can be of help. The respondents indicated that some teachers absent themselves because of lack of teaching and learning materials. To solve this problem, they suggested that the requisite teaching and learning materials should be made available in schools. The availability of teaching and learning materials make the teaching and learning process enjoyable and effective.

Moreover, the respondents were of the view that government should assist teachers, for instance with affordable loan facilities, to get a means of transport. Once teachers have means of transport, the problem of having to wait for public means as well as covering long distances to school, will be reduced. Other ways of reducing teacher absenteeism include; organizing workshops for teachers on the effects of absenteeism, head teachers advising teachers constantly to refrain from absenteeism, and teachers seeing the students as their own children in search of knowledge for a livelihood.

5.4 Summary

This aspect of the study discussed the findings on each of the research questions posed. This was done in relation to the literature reviewed. It ended on strategies that can be put in place to reduce teacher absenteeism in West A Circuit in Bolgatanga Municipality.

CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This is the final chapter which provides a brief overview of the study, highlighting the major findings to draw conclusions and suggest the way forward. The purpose of this study was to assess the effects of teacher absenteeism on academic work in West A Circuit in the Bolgatanga Municipality. Three objectives were set out and these were to: find out the causes of teacher absenteeism in West A Circuit in the Bolgatanga Municipality; explore the effects of teacher absenteeism in West A Circuit in the Bolgatanga Municipality; and explore ways of reducing teacher absenteeism in West A Circuit in the Bolgatanga Municipality. To achieve the objectives stated above, the following research questions were set:

a. What are the causes of teacher absenteeism in West A Circuit in the Bolgatanga Municipality?

b. What are the effects of teacher absenteeism in West A Circuit in the Bolgatanga Municipality?

c. What can be done to reduce teacher absenteeism in West A Circuit in the Bolgatanga Municipality?

Relevant literature was also reviewed around many issues on the topic under study including the concept of teacher absenteeism, causes of teacher absenteeism, effects of teacher absenteeism, ways of reducing teacher absenteeism in schools as well as the theoretical framework that guided the study. A qualitative research design using

the case study approach was employed for the study. A sample size of 20 was used for the study. The key findings of the study are presented in the next section.

6.1 Summary of Results/Findings

The first research question explored the causes of teacher absenteeism in West A Circuit in the Bolgatanga Municipality. The study revealed that posting teachers to schools that are far from the residence of the teacher, difficulty in getting means of transportation to school, inadequate teacher accommodation in schools, inadequate supervision by circuit supervisors, poor road network leading to schools, inadequate teaching and learning materials, low student attendance in some schools and unsatisfactory conditions of service are the major causes of teacher absenteeism in West A Circuit.

The second research question sought to find out the effects of teacher absenteeism in West A Circuit in the Bolgatanga Municipality. It came to light that the absentee teacher will not be able to cover the scheme of work planned for each term and subsequently, the syllabus for the entire year and this translates into poor student performance in tests and examinations. Other effects of teacher absenteeism include; more workload on the regular teachers, low student attendance, school dropout and student indiscipline leading to waywardness with bad character and morals.

On the third and final research question, strategies to reduce teacher absenteeism in West A Circuit in the Bolgatanga Municipality have been brought to the fore. Some of these included ensuring availability of teaching and learning materials, provision of

accommodation facilities for teachers, attractive salaries and allowances, regular supervision of teachers by the head teacher and circuit supervisor amongst others.

6.2 Conclusions

On the basis of the findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn. The salary and other conditions of service of the teaching profession influences the teacher's motivation as far as regularity in school is concerned. When the teacher is well motivated, he will at least, have a peace of mind, and attracted to be in school regularly and deliver.

Aside salary and monitory incentives, there are other important factors that determine teacher regularity in school and as such, must be looked at. The teacher needs adequate Teaching and Learning Materials, accommodation, means of transport, etc to be in school regularly. In a nutshell, it is important that the above factors are looked at in order to minimize teacher absenteeism. For the country to achieve its educational goals, the teacher must be regular at his job so he can play his part very well to reach those goals. To this end, a number of recommendations have been given below.

6.3 Recommendations

It has been said that teachers are arguably, the most important group of professionals for the nation's future. It is thus, very disturbing to find that some of today's teachers including those in West A Circuit in the Bolgatanga Municipality are victims of teacher absenteeism. Although the Ministry of Education has put in place so many measures such as the Best Teacher's Award Scheme, salary increment and study leave with pay, to

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mention but a few, the researcher believes that the recommendations given would go a long way to reduce teacher absenteeism. In the light of the findings of the study and conclusions drawn, the following recommendations are made:

1. It emerged from the study that the teachers are not usually consulted before postings by the Ghana Education Service directorate. Due to this lack of consultation, some of the teachers are posted to schools which are far away from where they stay. Therefore, it is recommended that the Ghana Education Service directorate should consult teachers to see if they have genuine cases with regards to distance before postings.

2. The circuit supervisor should endeavor to pay regular visits to the schools within his or her jurisdiction to deter teachers from absenting themselves and assist teachers in need of help.

3. The District Director of Education should pay frequent unannounced visits to all schools to check teacher absenteeism and sanction culprits accordingly.

4. Government should ensure that provision is made for teachers' accommodation in schools that are far from town. This will enable some teachers to stay in the school community in order to minimize absenteeism.

5. Government should ensure that there is adequate Teaching and Learning Materials and the necessary tools needed in lesson delivery in order to entice the teachers.

6. The District Assembly should at least, resurface bad roads leading to school communities to prevent teachers from using bad and inaccessible roads as an excuse, especially during the rainy season.

7. The SMC/PTA and community members should encourage their wards to be in school all the time to motivate teachers to stay away from using student absenteeism as an excuse to also stay away from school.

6.4 Suggestions for Future Research

A relatively small sample size was employed for this study. Future researchers could consider increasing the number of research participants to obtain varied views on the phenomenon under study. They could also consider conducting the research on this topic in other parts of the country to reveal the effects of teacher absenteeism in schools in Ghana.

Bindu and Sudueeshkumer (2005) postulate that, a motivated and a happy teacher is very likely to exert himself or herself to work with enthusiasm and absenteeism could be minimized. It is therefore suggested that future researchers can research into curriculum designers and policymakers' contributions on how to deal with teacher absenteeism by involving the teachers themselves. This is important because teachers feel that they are not part of the curriculum design process, and see curriculum policies as an imposition on them. This is a good area for future studies since this study could not investigate into the role of curriculum designers and policy makers (GES) in contributing to teacher motivation in order to minimize absenteeism.

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TOPIC: EXPLORING THE VIEWS OF TEACHERS ON TEACHER ABSENTEEISM AND ITS EFFECTS ON ACADEMIC WORK IN WEST A CIRCUIT IN BOLGATANGA MUNICIPALITY IN THE UPPER EAST REGION

INTERVIEW GUIDE ON THE VIEWS OF TEACHERS ON TEACHER ABSENTEEISM AND ITS EFFECTS ON ACADEMIC WORK IN WEST A CIRCUIT IN BOLGATANGA MUNICIPALITY IN THE UPPER EAST REGION

This interview guide is designed to solicit information from teachers on their views of teacher absenteeism and its effects on academic work in West A Circuit in Bolgatanga Municipality. It is designed to help the researcher in writing a dissertation which is required for the award of a Master of Arts in Educational Leadership. As such, it is intended for academic purposes only. Questions will not probe into personal issues of respondents or fault findings. Hence, frankness in responding to the items is very much required. The interview guide will not bear the names of the respondents and the researcher will be held responsible if the information is not intended for its purpose. An empirical data base determining the effects of teacher absenteeism on academic work in West A Circuit in Bolgatanga Municipality would be based on your candid opinion on these issues, which would be crucial to the study. Your responses will be treated confidentially.

1. Gender?

2. Age?

3. Marital status?

4. How many years have you spent in the teaching service?

5. What is your professional/academic qualification?

6. What are some of the causes of teacher absenteeism?

7. What are some effects of teacher absenteeism on academic work?

8. How can teacher absenteeism be reduced in your Circuit?

THANK YOU