



Relationship Between Teachers' Workload and Teachers' Absenteeism in Public Secondary Schools in Kinango Sub-County, Kwale County, Kenya.

Douglas Magubo Mose*, Susan Mwaka Murage*, Joseph Malechwanzi Muthiani

Pwani University, Kenya

*Corresponding Author

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2026.1026EDU0125>

Received: 16 February 2026; Accepted: 21 February 2026; Published: 13 March 2026

ABSTRACT

The Teacher Service Commission has recognized absenteeism among teachers as a prevalent issue encountered in cases of duty abandonment and other forms of indiscipline. This study aimed to investigate the correlation between teachers' workload and their absenteeism in public secondary schools located in Kinango Sub-County, Kwale County. The objectives was to determine the relationship between teachers' workload and teachers' absenteeism. The research was guided by Fredrick Herzberg's two-factor theory. A mixed methods research design was employed, with a sample size comprising 162 secondary school teachers, 8 school principals in the 24 schools and this determined using Krejcie and Morgan 1970 table. Multi-stage sampling was used that included various sampling techniques; stratified sampling, simple random sampling, and purposive sampling. A questionnaire was administered to collect data from the teachers. Pilot study was conducted for the questionnaire and the coefficient Cronbach's alpha was 0.7 and this is acceptable for research. The researcher sort study permission from NACOSTI and the return rate of research instrument was 80% which was sufficient for the study. Descriptive statistics were illustrated through bar graphs and tables, while the quantitative data were analysed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Correlation was the inferential statistical method applied for data analysis. The findings revealed a negative and statistically significant relationship between teachers' workload and absenteeism, with a correlation coefficient of $r = -0.466$, $p < .01$.

Keywords: Teachers' workload, Absenteeism, Secondary schools

INTRODUCTION

Education serves as a vital tool for acquiring knowledge and enhancing self-assurance in one's life. It plays a significant role in advancing both career prospects and personal development. An individual who is well-educated is likely to contribute positively to society. Furthermore, education equips individuals with the ability to make informed decisions throughout their lives. In today's modern, developed, and industrialized world, the foundation of progress is built upon education. To thrive in a competitive environment, it is essential for everyone to rely on education as a guiding light. Beyond the mere transmission of knowledge, education fosters essential skills that are necessary for adapting to and succeeding in various facets of daily life and professional settings. Onyemah et. al. (2024) indicated that the decreasing levels and quality of productivity within the educational sector have raised significant concerns among stakeholders. A primary issue highlighted is the organizational commitment of employees, along with their workload and overall productivity. Weldon and Ingvarson (2016) carried out a study in Australia, revealing that teachers typically worked an average of 53.2 hours each week, with some exceeding this average at 55 hours per week. Additionally, teachers reported working an extra 14 to 15 hours weekly and dedicating 5 to 6 hours on weekends to teaching-related activities. The research also indicated that approximately half of the teachers effectively planned their lessons, assigned responsibilities, and monitored student discipline. In their research conducted in the United States, Eagle and Glenn (2017) discovered that a significant workload correlated with larger classroom sizes, resulting in increased instances of teacher absenteeism when compared to smaller classrooms. A separate investigation conducted in Nigeria by Asiyai (2017) found that the absenteeism of teachers was attributed to their heavy workloads. These workloads encompassed tasks such as preparing lesson notes, grading students' assignments, planning assessments, and managing student discipline issues. Consequently, this led to teacher burnout, which in turn resulted in increased

absenteeism from school. Mabagala (2016) discovered that educators who faced substantial workloads and exhibited a lack of intrinsic motivation for teaching tended to have higher rates of absenteeism from school. Saleh (2019) indicated that educators' assigned additional administrative duties experienced elevated levels of absenteeism. Furthermore, the study revealed that teachers burdened with excessive workloads also reported significant absenteeism rates.

Statement of the problem

Education plays a crucial role in developing young individuals into competitive and innovative members of society, particularly within the framework of a global economy that is becoming increasingly complex and rapidly evolving. Knoster (2016) indicates that, despite various governmental initiatives aimed at enhancing the quality of education and the teaching profession, the issue of teachers' absenteeism remains a significant barrier to achieving efficient and effective instructional delivery. The Teachers Service Commission (TSC) has attempted to oversee teachers' attendance through the implementation of the Performance Appraisal and Development (PTAD) form, as well as maintaining an attendance register. Nevertheless, research conducted by Uwezo (2016) and Mgandi (2017) indicates that the issue of teachers' absenteeism persists, highlighting the necessity for further investigation into this matter. Uwezo (2016) noted that the rate of absenteeism among teachers in Kwale County was significantly higher at 14%, in contrast to the national average of 12.3% for absenteeism in Kenya. Therefore, this study was conducted to investigate the correlation between teachers' workload and their absenteeism in public secondary schools located in the Kinango Sub-County of Kwale County.

Objectives

The study objective was to establish the relationship between teachers' workload and teachers' absenteeism in public secondary schools, Kinango Sub-County Kwale County.

Significance of the study

This research study is anticipated to assist the TSC sub-county director in Kinango by providing findings that will enable the commission to implement effective mitigation strategies aimed at reducing instances of teacher absenteeism, thereby enhancing the education system within the country. Additionally, the study may prove valuable to management training organizations, such as the Kenya Education Management Institute (KEMI), by identifying management challenges that can be tackled during the training of principals and other educational leaders. Furthermore, the heads association in the Kinango Sub-County may also benefit from the study by addressing specific localized issues.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Herzberg's two-factor theory, formulated by psychologist Frederick Herzberg in the 1960s as cited by Zeng and Paphawasit (2024) addresses motivation within the workplace. This theory categorizes workplace needs into two distinct groups: motivation factors, which provide employees with a sense of fulfilment, and hygiene factors, which establish the essential level of job security and stability. According to Herzberg, the presence of motivating factors leads to employee satisfaction, whereas dissatisfaction stems from the absence of hygiene factors. The two-factor theory posits that job satisfaction and dissatisfaction are independent constructs influenced by different elements. To foster a harmonious work environment, Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory suggests that employers should enhance both motivation factors and hygiene factors concurrently.

STUDY FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

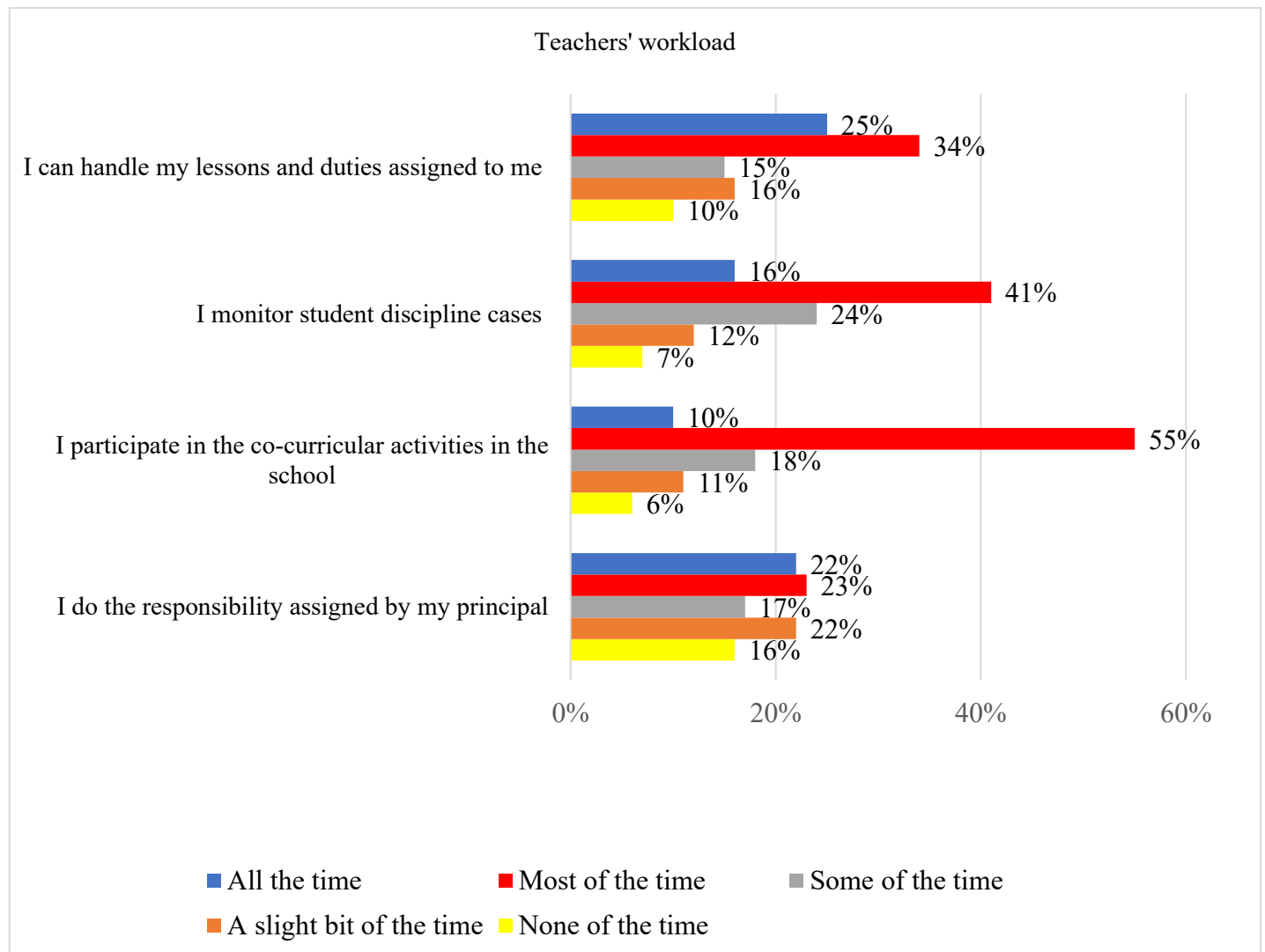
Teachers' workload in relation to teachers' absenteeism

Descriptive statistics for teachers' workload

Descriptive statistics were employed to assess the variability linked to teachers' workload and absenteeism. Participants received a series of statements regarding teachers' workload and were requested to express their level of agreement using a specified scale were; 1 none of the time, 2 a slight bit of the time, 3 some of the time,

4 most of the time, 5 all the time. The descriptive data on teachers' workload is indicated in the figure 1 and 2 respectively.

Figure 1: Descriptive statistics on teachers' workload



The research aimed to determine whether the respondents fulfilled the responsibilities assigned to them by the school principal. As illustrated in Figure 1, a significant portion of the respondents, 23%, indicated that they performed their duties most of the time, while 16% reported that they did not fulfill their responsibilities at all. This suggests that teachers may have been motivated to complete their assigned tasks to avoid potential victimization and the scrutiny of the disciplinary committee.

The researcher also sought to assess the level of participation among respondents in co-curricular activities. The findings revealed that a majority, 55%, participated most of the time, whereas 6% did not engage at all. It was noted that teachers who took part in co-curricular activities were more likely to be absent from school, particularly during competition events.

Additionally, the study examined whether teachers actively monitored student discipline cases. The results indicated that 41% of respondents reported monitoring most of the time, while 7% stated they did not monitor at all. It was observed that some teachers serving on the disciplinary committee tended to be absent from school, especially on days designated for addressing student discipline issues.

Finally, the respondents were asked about their ability to manage their lessons and assigned duties. While 10% indicated they could not manage at all, the majority, 34%, reported that they were able to do so most of the time. This suggests that most teachers effectively managed their lessons and responsibilities, as the Teacher Service Commission (TSC) stipulates a maximum of 27 lessons per teacher, with clearly defined duties outlined in the TSC Act.

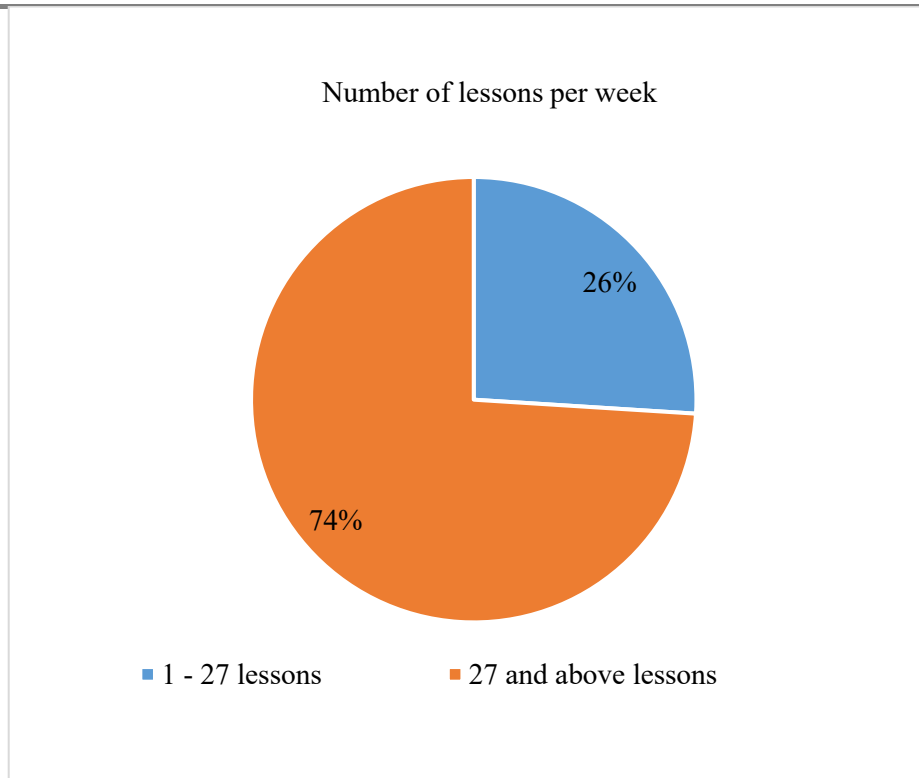


Figure 2. Number of lessons teachers’ teach per week

As illustrated in Figure 2, a significant majority (74%) of the respondents indicated that they conducted more than 27 lessons each week. This suggests that the teachers exceeded the recommended maximum of 27 lessons set by the Teachers Service Commission. The findings of the current study align with those of Higton et. al. (2017), who reported that secondary school principals experienced considerably longer working hours compared to their regular teaching counterparts. The observed differences were attributed to the numerous responsibilities that senior leaders in secondary schools must fulfill, which encompass administrative duties, teaching, and direct engagement with students during school hours, resulting in fewer instances of absenteeism.

Correlational analysis on the relationship between teachers’ workload and teachers’ absenteeism.

Table 1: Correlation analysis on the relationship between teachers’ workload and teachers’ absenteeism

Paired Variables	Correlation (r)	Sig. (2-tailed)	N
Workload and teachers’ absenteeism	-.466**	.000	162

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

Table 1 illustrates the correlation between teachers' workload and their absenteeism. The research revealed a negative and statistically significant relationship between these two variables ($r = -0.466$, $P < 0.01$). This suggests that an increase in teachers' workload corresponds with a decrease in absenteeism. Teachers who have a heavier workload tend to be more present in schools to fulfill their assigned responsibilities. This finding aligns with the work of Musyoki (2015), who discovered that teachers’ assigned additional responsibilities by school principals reported fewer instances of absenteeism. The extra duties assigned to teachers, whether within or outside the school environment, foster a commitment that often prevents them from missing school or classes (Saleh, 2019; Tsakle, 2020; Ullah et al., 2021; Weldon & Ingvarson, 2016). Similar conclusions were drawn by Johari et. al. (2018), who noted that workload influences teachers' performance and school attendance. Nwobi et. al. (2020) and Eagle and Glenn (2017) also pointed out that each term in the academic calendar is filled with various activities, including sports, drama, festivals, and student societies, necessitating school patrons to supervise students during school days. Badubi (2017) and Mabeya et. al. (2019) corroborated these findings, indicating

that excessive workloads and extended working hours lead to teacher fatigue, prompting them to miss school in search of rest. These studies suggest that burnout may lead to teachers not attending school regularly (Maia et al. 2019 & Ismail et al., 2021). Nonetheless, such high workloads may adversely affect productivity, as effectiveness and efficiency are often compromised. Herzberg's two factor theory acknowledges workload as a hygiene factor and it leads to teacher absenteeism. Therefore, increased responsibilities can lead to higher levels of job satisfaction, which may enhance teachers' commitment to their roles.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The research findings indicated that the frequency of lessons taught by educators, the observation of student behaviours, involvement in extracurricular activities, and the acceptance of additional responsibilities assigned by school administration all play a role in teacher absenteeism. The study suggests that teachers should be given a workload that is manageable.

REFERENCES

1. Badubi, M., R. (2017). A critical risk analysis of absenteeism in the work place. *Journal of international business research and marketing* 2 (6), 32-36. DOI: 10.18775/jibrm.1849-8558.2015.26.3004
2. Eagle, L. D. & Glenn, J.W. (2018). Teachers absence in commonwealth of Virginia: An analysis of patterns and prediction and implication for policy. *Journal of school administration research and development*, 3(1).
3. Higon, J., Leonardi, S., Richards, N. & Choudhoury, A. (2017). Teacher workload survey. Department of education.
4. Ismail, R., MarinahAwang, IntanFairuzzahbdullah & Othman, K., M. (2021). Financial cost for protecting instructional time: A pilot study of primary and secondary schools in Malaysia. *Turkish Journal of Computer and Mathematics Education* 12 (3), 2873-2882. Doi.org/10.17762/turcomat.v12i3.1317.
5. Johari, J., Tan, Y. F. & Zulkarnain, T. I. Z. (2018). Autonomy, workload, work-life balance and job performance among teachers. *International journal of education management*, 32(1). Doi: <http://doi.org/10.1108/IJEM-10-2016-0226>.
6. Knoster, K. (2016). Strategies for addressing student and teacher absenteeism: Washington DC: U.S. Department of Education, North Central Comprehensive Centre.
7. Mabagala, S. (2016). Prevalence of professional misconduct in Nzega district, Tanzania public secondary schools. *African journal of teacher education*, 5(1).
8. Mabeya, T., M., Gikuhi, M. & Anyona, J., N. (2019). Influence of working conditions on teacher attrition in public secondary schools in Uasin Gishu County, Kenya. *European journal of education studies* 6(5). doi: 10.5281/zenodo.3366080.
9. Maia, G., E., Claro, M., R. & Assuncao, A., A. (2019) Multiple exposures to the risk of work absenteeism among Brazilian school teachers. Doi: 10.1590/0102-311X00166517.
10. Mgandi, N. P. (2017). Strategies in management of teachers levels of absenteeism in public primary schools in Kilifi North Constituency, Kilifi County, Kenya. (Masters dissertation, Pwani University).
11. Musyoki, I. K. (2015). Key factors influencing teacher absenteeism in public secondary schools in Nzau sub county Makueni County. (Masters Research project report, Southern Eastern Kenya).
12. Nwobi, A., U., Anthony, C., O., & Nwagbara, C., F. (2020). Effects of electronic register on teachers' absenteeism in Osadenis mixed secondary school Delta State, Nigeria. *Journal of business & social sciences (CJBSS)*, 11(1).
13. Onyemah, T. N., Raji, N. A., Sylvester, A. O., & Adewuyi, H. O. (2024). Enhancing teaching productivity among university staffers: The influence of organizational commitment and workload. *Journal of General Education and Humanities*, 3(1), 37-46.
14. Saleh, M. (2019). The relationship between organizational health and teachers' absenteeism in schools. (Master Dissertation, British University, Dubai).
15. Tsakle, A. (2020). Factors influencing absenteeism among junior high school teachers in Atimatim circuit in the Afigya Kwabre south district. (Masters dissertation, Winneba University).
16. Ullah, N., Jan, A., Niamatullah, Ahmed, M., Veasar, H., M., Muhammad Nadeem, M. & Ahmed, A. (2021). Causes of teacher' absenteeism and its impact on students' achievement at secondary schools



- of district Kech Balochistan, Pakistan. *PalArch's Journal of Archaeology of Egypt / Egyptology*, 18(08), 120-129.
17. Uwezo. (2016): Are our children learning? Uwezo Kenya sixth learning assessment report. Nairobi: Twaweza East Africa.
 18. Weldon, P. R., & Ingvarson, L. (2016). School Staff Workload Study: Final Report to the Australian Education Union – Victorian Branch. Australian Education Union, Victoria Branch. https://research.acer.edu.au/tll_misc/27
 19. Zeng, S., & Paphawasit, B. (2024). Exploring Key Factors In Understanding Graduate Turnover Through Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory: A Literature Review. *Educational Administration: Theory and Practice*, 30(7), 503-512.