

# Keeping Teachers in the Classroom: How School Management Tackles Absenteeism in South Africa

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## ABSTRACT

Teacher absenteeism remains a significant and persistent issue in educational institutions across the globe. It negatively affects student learning results, disrupts curriculum coverage, and lowers school morale and overall performance. This qualitative study examined the connection between teacher attendance and school management methods, with a particular emphasis on leadership styles, policy enforcement, and the prevailing school culture. This study used desktop data analysis to examine the extent to which school administrators can successfully lower absenteeism with intentional and strategic management techniques. It consulted a variety of recent literature, educational policy documents, and documented case studies. The study's findings revealed that transformational leadership is essential in influencing teachers' dedication and responsibility. In addition, developing a welcoming, encouraging, and inclusive school climate and consistently enforcing explicit attendance standards are crucial components in encouraging frequent teacher attendance. Successful school leadership that prioritises professional growth, open communication, and staff well-being is more likely to foster a culture of accountability and teacher motivation. This study provides a set of recommendations designed to help school management teams proactively address absenteeism. Enhancing teacher presence and raising student accomplishment can be achieved through fostering a collaborative school culture, strengthening leadership capacity, and matching policies with supportive practices. This study highlights how transformational leadership, consistent policy enforcement, and a supportive school culture mitigate teacher absenteeism, deepening understanding of how strategic school management fosters teacher engagement and reliable attendance.

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## INTRODUCTION

Absenteeism among teachers remains a major problem in educational systems around the world, affecting student achievement, instructional quality, and overall school efficacy. Teacher absenteeism rates vary greatly throughout the world; research suggests that absenteeism can reach 45% in some areas.<sup>1</sup> Karamperidou et al. found that in 19 Eastern and Southern African nations, absenteeism rates ranged from 15 % to 45 %, depending on how absenteeism was measured.<sup>2</sup> Absenteeism among teachers has been a growing issue in the United States of America. According to recent data from the Houston Independent

<sup>1</sup> Despina Karamperidou et al., "Time to Teach: Teacher Attendance and Time on Task in Eastern and Southern Africa," 2020.

<sup>2</sup> Karamperidou et al., "Time to Teach: Teacher Attendance and Time on Task in Eastern and Southern Africa."

School District, after stricter leave approval procedures and sanctions for excessive absenteeism were implemented, the average number of absences per teacher decreased from nine to seven.<sup>3</sup>

In South Africa, teacher absenteeism is also a pressing issue. Mpundu, Assan and Mokoena reveal a concerning rise in teacher attrition in South Africa, identifying the government pension fund controversy as a significant factor driving many educators to resign.<sup>4</sup> However, only about 15,000 new graduates are absorbed into the public sector each year, indicating a significant gap between teacher supply and demand.<sup>5</sup> In Sub-Saharan Africa, the situation is particularly dire. A study by Helen et.al., indicates that in some countries, teacher absenteeism remains a significant challenge, though reported figures may be influenced by various reporting and measurement issues.<sup>6</sup> This absenteeism not only disrupts learning but also wastes valuable financial resources and hinders progress toward achieving educational goals.

A comprehensive strategy is needed to address teacher absenteeism, one that incorporates supportive school culture, transparent attendance regulations, and efficient school management. By concentrating on these areas, schools can increase teacher attendance, which will improve student learning results and foster institutional stability. For students to receive effective teaching, the teacher's presence in the classroom must be constant.<sup>7</sup>

This study aims to explore how school management approaches, particularly leadership styles, policy enforcement, and school culture, affect teacher absenteeism, with a focus on identifying strategic management practices that promote teacher attendance and improve educational outcomes. The following questions underlie the study:

- How do different leadership styles influence teacher attendance in educational institutions?
- To what extent does the enforcement of school policies affect teacher absenteeism?

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Causes of Teacher absenteeism

Personal, institutional, and systemic variables all play a part in the complex problem of teacher absenteeism. The main reasons for teacher absenteeism are stress-related factors, family responsibilities, and personal health problems. South African teachers are increasingly burdened by exhaustion, mental health pressures, school violence, and excessive administrative demands, factors that drive higher rates of absenteeism and, in some instances, prompt intentions to exit the profession.<sup>8</sup> Similarly, Maceke, Chauke, and Nkoana found that personal factors, such as illness and family responsibilities, as well as school-related factors, contribute significantly to teacher absenteeism.<sup>9</sup> Teachers frequently carry heavy workloads, experience emotional exhaustion, and a lack of mental health support, all of which can lead to increased sick leave usage. Poor living and working conditions for teachers, illness, and the lack of accountability of management and inspectors are the most frequently mentioned causes.<sup>10</sup>

Teacher absenteeism is strongly influenced by job dissatisfaction. Nabasitu and Arinaitwe found that low morale, limited professional development opportunities, and unfavorable working conditions are

<sup>3</sup> Nusaiba Mizan, "Houston ISD Reduced Substitute Teacher Count by over 10% amid Dropping Teacher Absenteeism," Houston Chronicle, 2025, [https://www.houstonchronicle.com/news/houston-texas/education/hisd/article/substitute-teachers-dropping-teacher-absenteeism-20056578.php?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://www.houstonchronicle.com/news/houston-texas/education/hisd/article/substitute-teachers-dropping-teacher-absenteeism-20056578.php?utm_source=chatgpt.com).

<sup>4</sup> Mubanga Mpundu, Thomas Assan, and Mamolahluwa Mokoena, "An Analysis of High Teacher Turnover and Attrition in the North-West Province of South Africa," *E-Journal of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences* 4, no. 4 (April 5, 2023): 404–14, <https://doi.org/10.38159/ejass.20234413>.

<sup>5</sup> M. Gustafsson, "Projections of Educators by Age: Teacher Production and Class Size (TDD Project)," Research on Socio-Economic Policy (RESEP), Stellenbosch University, 2022, <https://resep.sun.ac.za/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/Note-2-Teacher-production-and-class-size-TDD-1-Dec-2022>.

<sup>6</sup> J. Helen et al., "Factors Influencing Teacher Absenteeism in Public and Private Senior Secondary Schools in Bauchi State, Nigeria," *African Journal of Humanities and Contemporary Education Research* 20, no. 1 (2025): 1–18.

<sup>7</sup> Agustin Porres, "The Impact of Teacher Absenteeism On Student Achievement: A Study On U.s. Public Schools, Using Results of the 2011-2012 Civil Rights Data Collection," *Public Policy & Policy Management*, 2016, <hdl.handle.net/10822/1040835>.

<sup>8</sup> Umamah Bakharia, "Half of SA Teachers Want out Because of Violence, Exhaustion," Mail & Guardian, April 22, 2025, <https://mg.co.za/education/2025-04-22-half-of-sa-teachers-want-out-because-of-violence-exhaustion/>.

<sup>9</sup> Ronnie Risimati Maceke, Thulani Andrew Chauke, and Elvis Modikela Nkoana, "Contributing Factors to Unexcused Teacher Absenteeism in Adult and Community Education and Training Centres," *International Journal of Educational Management & Development Studies* 6, no. 3 (September 30, 2025): 102–31, <https://doi.org/10.53378/ijemds.353241>.

<sup>10</sup> Margo O'Sullivan, "Teacher Absenteeism, Improving Learning, and Financial Incentives for Teachers," *PROSPECTS* 52, no. 3–4 (December 15, 2022): 343–63, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11125-022-09623-8>.

the primary drivers of absenteeism among teachers in several Sub-Saharan African countries.<sup>11</sup> In Zambia's Mporokoso District, teacher absenteeism was influenced by environmental, school-related, and personal factors, including poor transport infrastructure, ineffective leadership, and family obligations.<sup>12</sup> Furthermore, a culture where absenteeism is either accepted or not appropriately addressed can be created by institutional flaws, including weak support networks and inefficient supervisory procedures. Absenteeism rates tend to rise in schools with inadequate accountability and no formal monitoring systems.<sup>13</sup> Many studies have also shown that remuneration for teachers and compensation are important factors that influence teacher motivation, with low pay frequently mentioned as a major contributor to job unhappiness.<sup>14</sup>

### Impact on Educational Outcomes

The consequences of teacher absenteeism are significant and far-reaching. Most directly, absenteeism compromises the quality and continuity of instruction, which negatively affects student learning outcomes. For instance, a report by the National Council on Teacher Quality highlighted that frequent teacher absences can lower student achievement in math by an amount equivalent to students being taught by a beginner teacher versus a teacher with 3 to 5 years of experience.<sup>15</sup> An earlier study in seven African countries found that, on average, primary students received less than 2.5 hours of teaching per day, less than half the intended instructional time.<sup>16</sup>

It has been demonstrated that teacher absences in South Africa disrupt the delivery of the curriculum and lead to student indiscipline. In Gauteng province, frequent teacher absences have led to syllabus delays, hampered assessment schedules, and a greater reliance on unprepared substitute teachers, according to the Department of Basic Education.<sup>17</sup> Students in remote and under-resourced schools are especially affected by these disruptions since there are fewer options for academic help and interim teacher replacement. Absenteeism has significant financial repercussions as well. Administrative expenses related to scheduling lessons, finding replacement teachers, and filling in performance gaps are frequently incurred by schools. This is consistent with research by O'Sullivan that found teacher absenteeism imposes substantial economic costs, as lost instructional time reduces the return on education investment.<sup>18</sup> Frequent teacher absences can undermine parental confidence in schools and negatively affect their reputation.<sup>19</sup>

### Management Strategies

Addressing teacher absenteeism requires strategic and context-sensitive management practices. Effective school leadership is central to managing and reducing absenteeism. Transformational leadership, which emphasises vision-building, staff empowerment, and motivation, has been found to correlate with improved teacher attendance and job satisfaction.<sup>20</sup> Professional development opportunities can also equip teachers with the tools to manage their classrooms effectively, thereby increasing their confidence and reducing the likelihood of absenteeism.

<sup>11</sup> Dorothy Nabasitu and Julius, Arinaitwe, "The Impact of Teachers' Absenteeism On Students' Academic Performance in Uganda. A Case Study of Busiro- Sub County Wakiso District," *Avance International University Research Repository Extension* 3 (December 30, 2024): 435–45.

<sup>12</sup> George Chanda et al., "Effective Practices for Managing Teacher Absenteeism in Public Secondary Schools: A Case Study of Mporokoso District; Zambia" 11 (September 26, 2023): 1729–45.

<sup>13</sup> Sithembile Rejoice Gabuza, "Exploring School Management Teams' Approaches for Managing Teacher Absenteeism in Rural Schools" (University of Kwazulu-Natal, 2015), <https://researchspace.ukzn.ac.za/items/0f092c31-eddf-48eb-a919-a16a1604cbe9>.

<sup>14</sup> David Evans and Fei Yuan, *The Economic Returns to Interventions That Increase Learning* (World Bank, 2017), <https://riseprogramme.org/sites/default/files/inline-files/Evans Returns to Learning - v2017-06-09 CLEAN.pdf>.

<sup>15</sup> Patricia Saenz-Armstrong, "Roll Call," National Council on Teacher Quality, 2020, [https://www.nctq.org/research-insights/roll-call-2020/?utm\\_source=chatgpt.com](https://www.nctq.org/research-insights/roll-call-2020/?utm_source=chatgpt.com).

<sup>16</sup> Tessa Bold et al., "What Do Teachers Know and Do? Does It Matter?: Evidence from Primary Schools in Africa," *Policy Research Working Paper No. 7956* (World Bank, 2017), <https://documents.worldbank.org/curated/en/882091485440895147/pdf/WPS7956>.

<sup>17</sup> Department of Basic Education, *School Monitoring Survey 2016* (Pretoria: Government Printers, 2016).

<sup>18</sup> O'Sullivan, "Teacher Absenteeism, Improving Learning, and Financial Incentives for Teachers."

<sup>19</sup> Rameck Mazambara and Mmalefikane Sylvia Sepeng, "School Heads Experiences in Motivating Zimbabwean Rural Teachers in an Unstable Education Environment.," *African Journal of Development Studies* 14, no. 3 (2024).

<sup>20</sup> Tony Bush and Derek Glover, "School Leadership Models: What Do We Know?," *School Leadership & Management* 34, no. 5 (October 20, 2014): 553–71, <https://doi.org/10.1080/13632434.2014.928680>.

Effective management of teacher attendance requires clear and consistently applied rules.<sup>21</sup> School Management Teams (SMTs) have increasingly implemented proactive measures to reduce teacher absenteeism. These strategies include requiring prior notice for scheduled leave, promoting timely reporting of illness, maintaining accurate attendance records, and conducting regular performance evaluations.<sup>22</sup> By applying these measures, SMTs help ensure that absenteeism is monitored and minimised, thereby supporting consistent teaching and learning.

Monitoring systems, such as time book reviews, peer accountability, and regular audits, are essential tools for tracking teacher attendance patterns and identifying emerging trends.<sup>23</sup> However, monitoring must be accompanied by supportive measures, including professional development, recognition of good performance, and opportunities for career advancement, to address the root causes of absenteeism. The involvement of district officials and education departments in providing oversight and resources also plays a crucial role. According to Kiyundo et.al., absenteeism rates decline in schools that provide consistent support to teachers, including timely salary payments, housing allowances, and other income security measures.<sup>24</sup>

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This study is grounded in Transformational Leadership Theory, a model that emphasises the ability of leaders to inspire, influence, and motivate their followers to achieve more than what is typically expected of them.<sup>25</sup> Transformational leadership is particularly relevant in educational contexts where the performance, morale, and commitment of teachers are essential to the success of the institution. In the face of challenges, such as teacher absenteeism, transformational leadership offers a framework for school leaders to cultivate a positive organisational climate, foster shared values, and instil a sense of purpose among staff members.

Transformational leaders in education have traits, such as establishing specific objectives, providing intellectual stimulation, offering tailored support, and modelling professional conduct.<sup>26</sup> Since they increase teacher motivation, job satisfaction, and a strong feeling of accountability, these qualities are essential in lowering teacher absenteeism. Teachers are more likely to stay on campus and perform their jobs when school administrators foster conditions that make them feel appreciated, supported, and linked to the school's mission.

Better teacher attendance is positively correlated with transformational leadership approaches, according to research. In Tanzanian schools, transformational leadership by principals was found to reduce occupational stress among teachers, which can potentially lead to lower absenteeism rates.<sup>27</sup> According to Bush and Glover, leadership that prioritises teamwork, establishing trust, and professional growth fosters a culture of accountability that deters needless absenteeism.<sup>28</sup> Transformational leadership theory provides a framework for examining how school administration procedures affect teacher attendance in the context of this study. It directs the study of how school management teams and administrators can serve as change agents by implementing strategic policies, providing emotional support, and exercising visionary leadership to reduce absenteeism and cultivate a more dedicated teaching staff.

## METHODOLOGY

This study used desktop data analysis approach and a qualitative research design to investigate the connection between teacher absenteeism and school administration practices. Since it enables in-depth evaluation of textual data, qualitative research is especially well-suited for studies that seek to comprehend

<sup>21</sup> Gabuza, "Exploring School Management Teams' Approaches for Managing Teacher Absenteeism in Rural Schools."

<sup>22</sup> Gabuza, "Exploring School Management Teams' Approaches for Managing Teacher Absenteeism in Rural Schools."

<sup>23</sup> Gabuza, "Exploring School Management Teams' Approaches for Managing Teacher Absenteeism in Rural Schools."

<sup>24</sup> Dinensio Zikanga Kiyundo et al., "Remuneration and Job Performance of Teachers in Government Aided Secondary Schools in Western Uganda," *Interdisciplinary Journal of Education Research* 3, no. 2 (May 4, 2021): 10–22, <https://doi.org/10.51986/ijer-2021.vol3.02.02>.

<sup>25</sup> Bernard M. Bass and Bruce J. Avolio, *Improving Organizational Effectiveness through Transformational Leadership* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications, 1993).

<sup>26</sup> Inez Wilson Heenan, Niamh Lafferty, and Patricia Mannix McNamara, "Enactment of Transformational School Leadership—Insights from Primary School and System Leaders," *Education Sciences* 14, no. 6 (May 22, 2024): 557, <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci14060557>.

<sup>27</sup> Eliza Mwakasangula and Kelvin Mwitwa, "Transformational Leadership Style and Occupational Stress among Primary School Teachers in Tanzania" 1 (July 1, 2022): 76–85.

<sup>28</sup> Bush and Glover, "School Leadership Models: What Do We Know?"

complicated social phenomena.<sup>29</sup> The goal of the desktop review was to compile the current secondary data sources, which included government policies, institutional reports, academic literature, theses, dissertations, and non-governmental publications. This method made it easier to fully comprehend how institutional management techniques and school leadership affect teacher attendance in various educational environments.

### **Data Collection Method**

Thirty possible data sources were first identified for this study after a thorough evaluation of credible, publicly available academic materials, such as theses, dissertations, and peer-reviewed journal articles. Every source's applicability to the study's focus on teacher absenteeism was thoroughly considered. In all, ten sources were chosen to be included in the final study. These 10 were selected because they provided valuable insights into the management and structural elements that influence teacher absenteeism and because they were highly aligned with the study's main goals. Several factors led to the exclusion of the final 20 sources. Many of them focused on locations or educational systems that were very different from the South African setting, making them geographically irrelevant. Others were rejected for lacking empirical evidence or for having conclusions that were out of date and did not consider recent advancements in educational administration and policy. When collecting desktop data, several difficulties surfaced. Access to recent, high-quality, region-specific data was scarce, especially for low and middle-income nations. Comparative analysis was further complicated by variations in research methodology among studies. The lack of transparency in data reporting from some sources made it more difficult to draw reliable judgements. In the area of teacher absenteeism, these constraints highlight the need for more methodologically sound and globally comprehensive research. The objective of this study was to guarantee the authenticity and trustworthiness of its findings by giving priority to the most recent and contextually relevant sources.

### **Data Analysis**

The data acquired were evaluated using thematic analysis, which Braun and Clarke (2006) describe as a qualitative technique to find, evaluate, and interpreting patterns or themes within the data. The researcher was able to code the data inductively and classify the resulting codes into important thematic categories. The implementation of institutional policies, leadership practices and school culture were among them. This procedure allowed the study to find recurrent themes that clarified the root reasons of teacher absence, how they affect student results, and how different management strategies work well. Since the coding procedure was data-driven rather than theory-based, the conclusions were guaranteed to arise naturally from the data. Using this approach, a logical narrative connecting teacher absenteeism to more general management and structural procedures was developed. The analysis approach was suitable for the study's objectives and offered insightful information about the organisational and systemic elements affecting teacher absenteeism.

### **Ethical Considerations**

This study used a desktop qualitative technique, referencing previously published works from publicly available sources, including theses, papers, and other materials. Since the study used mainly secondary data, it did not interact directly with individuals or organisations. The researcher had to assume full responsibility for ensuring that all sources were properly cited and acknowledged to uphold academic integrity. Ethical considerations were crucial to ensure the credibility, dependability, and trustworthiness of the sources used, thereby improving the rigor of the study. The study acknowledges any potential biases in the literature and provides a fair evaluation of different points of view because it only examines publicly available data.

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<sup>29</sup> J. W. Creswell and C. N. Poth, *Qualitative Inquiry and Research Design: Choosing among Five Approaches* (SAGE Publications, 2018).

## Limitations of the Study

Desktop research has limits, even though it provides valuable information. The study relies on existing data for availability and precision, which may not always be up to date or sufficiently address the research problem. Furthermore, the lack of direct connection with participants may result in some contextual and experiential concepts not being sufficiently recorded.

## PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

### Leadership Practices

One of the main factors that reduce teacher absenteeism is effective leadership. Absenteeism rates are typically lower in schools run by transformational leaders who encourage, support, and inspire their employees. Sasan et al. conducted a qualitative study exploring how transformational leadership practices shape school culture in high schools.<sup>30</sup> The findings of their study indicate that practices such as setting high expectations, building a sense of community, and focusing on student learning can result in a positive school culture characterised by high levels of engagement and collaboration among staff and students. These elements align with the core components of transformational leadership, emphasising the importance of clear communication and fostering a supportive school environment. According to a study conducted in Rwanda's Nyaruguru District, school principals who used transformational leadership techniques saw significant improvements in their teachers' performance in terms of instructional planning, student assessment, and fostering greater parental cooperation.<sup>31</sup>

Teachers who felt more encouraged and inspired by their supervisors reported higher job satisfaction and lower absenteeism.<sup>32</sup> Additionally, transformational leadership fosters a sense of shared accountability and responsibility, which motivates instructors to attend class on a regular basis since they feel a personal stake in the school's performance and mission.<sup>33</sup>

### Policy Implementation, Leadership Practices, School Culture

It has been shown that implementing attendance regulations can effectively reduce teacher absenteeism. It is possible to drastically reduce teacher absences by enforcing stringent leave permission procedures and imposing sanctions for excessive absences. To avoid penalties, teachers must submit leave requests well in advance and for good cause.<sup>34</sup>

Absenteeism is discouraged by this type of regulatory structure, which guarantees accountability while also clearly defining expectations for educators. A clear policy for handling absenteeism ensures that educators understand guidelines and the possible repercussions, increasing the likelihood that they will follow attendance standards.<sup>35</sup> Furthermore, consistent monitoring and well-established attendance regulations can help school administrators in spotting absenteeism trends early on and act before problems worsen. Since teachers are more likely to follow rules when they are certain that they will be implemented consistently and equitably, research indicates that schools with strict policy enforcement face fewer absenteeism issues.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>30</sup> John Michael Sasan, Gemma R. Escultor, and Vahid Norouzi Larsari, "The Impact of Transformational Leadership on School Culture," *International Journal of Social Service and Research* 3, no. 8 (August 25, 2023): 1899–1907, <https://doi.org/10.46799/ijssr.v3i8.334>.

<sup>31</sup> Bruce Uwamahoro, Theresia J. Shavega, and Maulid J. Maulid, "Examining the Influence of Transformational Leadership Style on Teachers' Performance in 12 Year-Basic Education in Nyaruguru District, Rwanda," *Asian Research Journal of Arts & Social Sciences* 22, no. 12 (November 11, 2024): 1–12, <https://doi.org/10.9734/arjass/2024/v22i12592>.

<sup>32</sup> Robert Akpalu et al., "Influence of Head-Teachers' Instructional Supervision Practices on Teacher Performance in Primary Schools in Ghana: An Integrated Theoretical Model," *International Journal of Research and Innovation in Social Science* IX, no. IIIS (2025): 151–59, <https://doi.org/10.47772/IJRISS.2025.903SEDU0012>.

<sup>33</sup> Ayhan Kandemir, "The Mediating Role of School Effectiveness in the Relationship between Transformational Leadership and Workplace Exclusion," *Frontiers in Psychology* 15 (October 4, 2024), <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2024.1475156>.

<sup>34</sup> Mizan, "Houston ISD Reduced Substitute Teacher Count by over 10% amid Dropping Teacher Absenteeism."

<sup>35</sup> Mizan, "Houston ISD Reduced Substitute Teacher Count by over 10% amid Dropping Teacher Absenteeism."

<sup>36</sup> Mary Lee et al., *Review of International Research on Factors Underlying Teacher Absenteeism (REL 2015–087)* (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Pacific, 2015).

## School Culture

Teachers are more likely to report for duty when they feel that their contributions are recognised and that they belong to a cooperative and supportive team, as this sense of recognition and belonging has been shown to reduce absenteeism.<sup>37</sup> Furthermore, the motivation and commitment to their work increases when they are provided with opportunities for ongoing professional development, which further encourages regular attendance and participation in teaching activities.<sup>38</sup> The chance to grow professionally and enhance their skill set boosts job satisfaction, which lowers absenteeism.<sup>39</sup> Additionally, schools with a recognition culture where educators' accomplishments and efforts are honoured and create a productive workplace that reduces teachers' motivation to miss work.

## DISCUSSIONS

The findings of this study highlight the crucial role of school administration in influencing teacher attendance. Transformational leadership emerged as a key factor in reducing absenteeism. Leaders who encourage, inspire, and support teachers create a sense of purpose and shared accountability, motivating educators to attend regularly.<sup>40</sup> Teachers who feel valued and engaged report higher job satisfaction, which is closely linked to reduced absenteeism.<sup>41</sup> These findings are consistent with previous studies that indicate that leadership that prioritises collaboration, high expectations, and professional development strengthens teacher commitment and positively shapes school culture. Transformational leadership effectively motivates teachers, fosters accountability, and promotes consistent attendance, particularly when combined with supportive policies and a positive school culture.<sup>42</sup>

The implementation of policies also plays a pivotal role in reducing absenteeism. Schools that maintain clear and consistently applied attendance regulations are more likely to experience lower absentee rates.<sup>43</sup> Teachers understand the expectations and potential repercussions for noncompliance, creating accountability and discouraging unapproved absences. This study reinforces the notion that motivational leadership and formal policy enforcement work in tandem: leadership fosters engagement, while policy ensures adherence to institutional standards. In settings where absenteeism is a persistent challenge, strict enforcement of leave procedures combined with transparent communication can significantly reduce teacher absences.

The dimension of school culture further illustrates the interplay of professional recognition, collaboration, and development opportunities. Teachers who perceive a supportive and inclusive environment feel more accepted and appreciated, enhancing both motivation and attendance.<sup>44</sup> Professional development opportunities allow teachers to grow their skills and meaningfully contribute to the school, reinforcing job satisfaction and lowering absenteeism. Recognition of teacher efforts creates a positive feedback loop: Engaged educators attend regularly, which in turn strengthens the overall school culture and promotes collective accountability.

It is worth noting that contextual factors, such as socio-economic challenges and institutional resource limitations, may mediate the effectiveness of these strategies. For example, schools in resource-constrained areas may find it difficult to provide consistent professional development opportunities, potentially reducing the impact of leadership and cultural interventions.

<sup>37</sup> Akpalu et al., "Influence of Head-Teachers' Instructional Supervision Practices on Teacher Performance in Primary Schools in Ghana: An Integrated Theoretical Model."

<sup>38</sup> Mete Akcaoglu, Meryem Seyda Ozcan, and Selcuk Dogan, "What Keeps Teachers Engaged during Professional Development? The Role of Interest Development," *Education Sciences* 13, no. 2 (February 10, 2023): 188, <https://doi.org/10.3390/educsci13020188>.

<sup>39</sup> Motlokoe P. Mampuru, Bakae A. Mokoena, and Anthony K. Isabirye, "Training and Development Impact on Job Satisfaction, Loyalty and Retention among Academics," *SA Journal of Human Resource Management* 22 (January 24, 2024), <https://doi.org/10.4102/sajhrm.v22i0.2420>.

<sup>40</sup> Sasan, Escultor, and Larsari, "The Impact of Transformational Leadership on School Culture"; Uwamahoro, Shavega, and Maulid, "Examining the Influence of Transformational Leadership Style on Teachers' Performance in 12 Year-Basic Education in Nyaruguru District, Rwanda."

<sup>41</sup> K. Leithwood and D. Jantzi, "The Effects of Transformational Leadership on Organizational Conditions and Student Engagement with School," *Journal of Educational Administration* 38, no. 2 (2000): 112–29.

<sup>42</sup> Sasan, Escultor, and Larsari, "The Impact of Transformational Leadership on School Culture."

<sup>43</sup> Mizan, "Houston ISD Reduced Substitute Teacher Count by over 10% amid Dropping Teacher Absenteeism."

<sup>44</sup> Mampuru, Mokoena, and Isabirye, "Training and Development Impact on Job Satisfaction, Loyalty and Retention among Academics."

## RECOMMENDATIONS

A key component of efficient school administration is leadership development. Investing in educating school administrators to use transformational leadership approaches can greatly increase the dedication and motivation of teachers. It is possible to motivate teachers to regularly attend class and perform their best work when transformational leaders set high standards, provide direction and support, and cultivate a feeling of shared responsibility. Another crucial component of combating teacher absenteeism is the implementation of clear and uniform policies. By creating clear attendance guidelines, educators can be sure they are aware of the standards for attendance and the repercussions for non-compliance. These regulations increase the likelihood that educators will follow established standards by holding them accountable and fostering a structured workplace that reduces absenteeism.

Another crucial element in reducing absenteeism is a supportive environment. Establishing a school culture that values teachers' contributions, encourages professional growth, and fosters teamwork helps them feel appreciated and included. Teachers are more likely to attend class on a regular basis when they feel valued and encouraged because they are more likely to have both professional and emotional fulfilment. Lastly, to quickly detect and resolve absenteeism issues, continuous monitoring and assessment of teacher attendance is required. By implementing mechanisms to monitor attendance, school administrators can spot trends or anomalies early on and take prompt action to resolve any issues. When necessary, this continuous monitoring allows for prompt action and helps ensure that absenteeism does not interfere with the teaching and learning process.

## CONCLUSION

This paper has examined the connection between teacher attendance and school management methods, with a particular emphasis on leadership styles, policy enforcement, and the prevailing school culture. To reduce teacher absenteeism, which has a major influence on the quality of education, effective school administration is crucial. Teachers can be inspired and motivated by school leaders who use transformational leadership techniques, creating a welcoming and encouraging work atmosphere that promotes regular attendance. A structured framework on which teachers can rely is also created by clear and consistently implemented attendance standards, which guarantee accountability and deter needless absences. A supportive school climate that prioritises cooperation, professional development, and acknowledges teachers' contributions also improves job satisfaction and reduces absenteeism. When combined, these management techniques not only solve the problem of teacher absenteeism but also enhance overall school performance, which strengthens the learning environment for students and improves student results.

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