

# Factors Underlying Teacher Absenteeism in Selected Schools Located in Tshwane West District, South Africa

**Ernest Khalabai Mashaba**

<http://orcid.org/0000-0003-2642-3151>

Tshwane University of Technology,

South Africa

Mashabaek@tut.ac.za

**Simeon Maile**

<http://orcid.org/0000-0002-9837-2157>

Tshwane University of Technology,

South Africa

Mailes@tut.ac.za

## Abstract

Teacher absenteeism is widely recognised as a serious problem, particularly in disadvantaged areas, yet there is little systematic research and data on teacher absence in developing nations. Generally, literature discusses the phenomenon of teacher absenteeism on the basis of high-income countries and low-income countries. The current research argues that the reasons for teacher absenteeism in developed nations are largely personal matters related to the individual and the rate of absence is relatively low. In this study we argue that while teachers' absence is a matter that concerns the individual, there are institutional (school), structural (social environment) and economic factors that impact on the extent of teacher absenteeism in low-income countries. The purpose of the study is to investigate factors underlying teacher absence in disadvantaged communities. We investigated the phenomenon of teacher absenteeism in three ( $n=3$ ) selected schools in the District of Tshwane West (D15) located in Soshanguve, Gauteng Province, South Africa. Soshanguve is a township with a predominantly disadvantaged community which depends on the public schooling system and probably has limited access to private education. The study used qualitative methods and data was collected through semi-structured interviews. The findings reveal that the schools are ineffective in curbing and reducing teacher absenteeism due to insufficient policy measures. The problem of teacher absenteeism is rampant and manifests in many forms. The leave policy seems to be effective in curbing the wage bill for substitute teachers, but at the same time it appears to grossly contribute to the damaging effects of absenteeism on

educational outcomes. We recommend that costs in implementing the policy need to be balanced against the effectiveness of the policy. Reducing teacher absenteeism implies reducing the monetary cost of teacher absence and improving the education outcomes of learners. This ensures that the relationship between inputs (education investment) and outputs (learner performance) is optimal. We conclude that improving teacher attendance will thus increase productivity in schools.

**Keywords:** teacher absenteeism; education outcome; teacher attendance; disadvantaged schools; working conditions; lack of resources; inequality; poor performance

## **Introduction**

Ivatts (2010) defines absenteeism as any failure of an employee to report for or to remain at work as scheduled, regardless of the reason. Strickland's (1998) definition embraces a period of not attending school. Chaudhury et al. (2005) make reference to teachers being present at school but failing to visit their classes to teach, and Castro, Duthilleul, and Caillods (2007) refer to not being in a fit condition to teach the children effectively. Corallo and McDonald (2001) define teacher absenteeism as a determinant of a low performing school. In light of the different definitions, for the purpose of this research, teacher absenteeism refers to when a teacher is not physically present at school when they could be expected to be (Ivatts 2010). An absent teacher lowers the quality of the school experience for the students whom she/he would have taught.

Literature on teacher absenteeism discusses the phenomenon on the basis of high-income (HICs) and low-income countries (LICs) (Bennell 2004; Chapman 1994; Ejere 2010; Ivatts 2010; Miller, Murnane, and Willett 2007; Reddy et al. 2010; Yiga and Wandega 2010). High-income countries refer to the rich and developed nations, whose resources have enabled them to provide good working conditions, excellent infrastructure and a well-resourced education system. Reasons for absenteeism in these countries are largely personal matters related to the individual and the rate of teacher absence is comparatively low (Abeles 2009; Reddy et al. 2010). On the other hand, low-income countries are poor, and their education systems are characterised by poor working conditions, insufficient infrastructure and poorly resourced schools. Absenteeism rates in developing countries are high.

South Africa is described as a dualistic economy. There is a part of the country that is rich and well developed with an education system comparable to those of HICs that is predominantly occupied by whites and there is a poor developing part with an education system comparable to those of LICs, which is predominantly occupied by blacks. This suggests variations in absence rates in South Africa according to differences in socio-economic conditions, whereby absence rates are higher in township and rural schools than in suburban white schools. Most researchers argue that poor working conditions

and low economic incentives (such as pay) cause a depressed environment and the result is job dissatisfaction, which contributes to teacher absenteeism (Abeles 2009; Bennell 2004; Chapman 1994; Ejere 2010).

A high absenteeism rate in township and rural schools would imply that the majority of the students in the country are exposed to the negative consequences of teacher absenteeism, because South Africa is a deeply unequal society with the majority of the population (blacks) still living in abject poverty. Blacks earn 22.8 per cent of what the white population earns, and yet they constitute 79.4 per cent of the total population and whites only 9.2 per cent (Statistics South Africa 2011). During the apartheid era, black schools were severely under-resourced while their white counterparts were well resourced. The fiscal allocation in terms of race resulted in widespread disparities with regard to all aspects of education (Naicker 2011). The consequence of such racial disparity is still felt in South Africa today.

The purpose of this article is to investigate factors underlying teacher absenteeism in public schools that serve disadvantaged communities. We draw our sample from Tshwane West District, located in Soshanguve, a township predominantly populated by poor communities who depend on public schools. Ivatts (2010) purports that children who grow up in poorer conditions receive inferior education, and teacher absenteeism is among the factors that contribute to this.

Studies on teacher absenteeism have identified various factors contributing to teacher absence in developing nations. Most researchers argue that poor working conditions and low economic incentives in disadvantaged communities are major contributing factors to excessive teacher absence (Abeles 2009; Bennell 2004; Chapman 1994; Ejere 2010; Reddy et al. 2010; Yiga and Wandega 2010). In the literature analysed below we depart from the main arguments advanced by the multiple authors discussed above.

## **What Is Known in the Literature**

### **The Impact of Poor Working Conditions**

Factors contributing to teacher absence in disadvantaged nations (communities) go beyond personal reasons to include socio-economic factors and institutional policies that largely feed the problem. According to Chapman (1994), a thorough understanding of the factors or reasons underlying teacher absence is imperative in order to be able to develop strategies and incentives that can reduce absenteeism. Disadvantaged nations have high absenteeism rates, which are often cited as one of the reasons for poor performance in schools (Abeles 2009; Bradley, Greeny, and Leeves 2006; Bennell 2004; Chapman 1994; Ejere 2010; Ivatts 2010; Miller, Murnane, and Willett 2007; Yiga and Wandega 2010).

Similarly, Ivatts (2010) argues that there is evidence in both developed and developing nations that children from poorer socio-economic backgrounds suffer a high rate of

teacher absence. Researchers have noted that poor working conditions, low economic incentives, and heavy workloads are major contributing factors to teacher absence (Abeles 2009; Bennell 2010; Chapman 1994; Ejere 2010).

The schooling system in South Africa is bifurcated, whereby the disadvantaged are still located within the former African schools characterised by poor performance (Bhorat 2008). The binary policy system influenced the allocation of funds to schools on the basis of poverty levels. The government believes that such an approach will ensure that the quality of education in disadvantaged schools will gradually improve (Harsch 2001). Although it has been the largest single allocation in the government's budget since 1994—the advent of democracy in South Africa—the education budget falls woefully short of what is needed to quickly fix both the quantitative and qualitative challenges (Pandor 2005). Despite the increase in funding for disadvantaged schools, conditions in these schools remain poor, which points to the fact that disadvantaged schools do not only face monetary challenges. Reddy (2010) found that 40 000 of the country's estimated 400 000 educators in the public system are absent from school every day. Another report by the HSRC showed that 55 per cent of current educators expressed a desire to leave the teaching profession (Pandor 2005). Such a desire is likely to contribute to a higher rate of teacher absenteeism and attrition.

### **Macroeconomic Policy**

Public expenditure on education is a function of the performance and size of the economy. Harsch (2001) and Maile (2008) point out that a year after its election, and under pressure from both domestic business and the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (IMF), the African National Congress (ANC) came to accept privatisation in principle. In June 1996 the Reconstruction and Development Programme office was disbanded and the government adopted a new macroeconomic policy framework, called the Growth, Employment and Redistribution (GEAR) strategy, to the applause of the Washington-based international financial institution, the World Bank and International Monetary Fund (Harsch 2001).

According to the GEAR strategy, to achieve high economic growth, and generate more jobs and higher income, the government expenditure should be cut back, private and public sector wage increases kept in check and tariff reform accelerated to improve the international competitiveness of the country. Growth would mainly be the result of increases in fixed investment and manufactured exports (Weeks 1999).

Harsch (2001) affirms that the GEAR strategy does not acknowledge the need for redistribution of income and opportunities in favour of the poor. The policy failed to generate the desired economic growth, and slow growth worsened unemployment and impacted negatively on the poverty level of the majority of black South Africans, thus limiting further their ability to contribute to the education resources of their children. Employees' share of the national income declined from 56 per cent in 2005 to 51 per

cent in 2009 (Turok 2010, 32). The failing economic policy and cuts in public expenditure have ensured that the crisis in education persists and the quality of education continues to decline.

GEAR's economic principles continue to dominate policy in South Africa (Turok 2010, 34). The failure of the macroeconomic policy has resulted in the failure of the government to increase the education budget sufficiently to address education imbalances in the country, which have enormous effects on teacher and learner performance, and teacher attendance and attrition. Lack of finance is a source of poor working conditions, which fuel teacher absenteeism.

### **Lack of Resources**

The binary policy of allocating funds to schools, as discussed above, ensures that poor schools receive more funding from the government, especially schools classified as falling into quintile 1 to 3. Schools classified as quintile 4 and 5, formerly known as Model C schools, receive less but adequate funding. The latter is an approach adopted from macro policies, as discussed above. In line with macro policies, former Model C schools ensure, through higher school fees, that their schools are well resourced and that working conditions are adequate. The school governing bodies (SGB) of these schools employ extra staff to ease the heavy workload of state paid educators. Principals and educators are paid bonuses for excellent performances and teachers who engage in extra schooling activities are paid for their services. Sayed and Motala (2009) argue that the high fees charged by public schools highlight the resource divide within the public schooling system. The conditions and incentives in wealthy schools have a positive impact on teacher performance and are likely to impact positively on teacher absence. These conditions are absent in the disadvantaged schools (former African schools). In the disadvantaged communities, the conditions for teaching and learning remain very much unfavourable to both the teachers and learners. Poor conditions and lack of economic incentives impact negatively on performance, attendance and attrition (Chapman 1994, 31).

According to Mda (2009), there are some Africans now attending historically white schools in wealthy areas whose performance is in line with the historically high achievement of such schools (Eramus and Breier 2009, 13). High school fees and transport costs act as barriers to many African parents to send their children to former white schools. Differential resources result in unfavourable conditions that negatively affect achievement and attendance of both learners and teachers in poor schools. In 2009, the attrition rate for white teachers was found to be decreasing, while it is increasing for black teachers (GDE 2010). The increasing attrition rate among black teachers indicates the dissatisfaction with the conditions in their schools.

The odds appear to be stacked against former African schools. Poor children remain trapped in inferior education systems with wholly inadequate infrastructure (Turok

2010, 13). Research (Chandhury et al. 2004) indicates that schools with the best infrastructure had teacher absence rates that were approximately half of that of schools with the worst infrastructure (Reddy et al. 2010, 27).

To demonstrate the prevalence of inferior education arising from dire situations characterised by lack of resources we draw data from the Schools Register of Needs (DoE 2001), which shows that 35.5 per cent of schools have no access to any form of telecommunication, 42.2 per cent have no electricity and only eight per cent have access to the internet (Pandor 2005). Equal Education (2010) points out that the majority of disadvantaged schools lack essential resources such as laboratories, computer labs and adequate textbooks. Only seven per cent of schools have functional libraries. Staff rooms are cramped and inadequate for the marking of work and projects. In many schools the classes comprise 60 learners or more (Equal Education 2010). Block (2009) affirms that 50 per cent or more of white children go on to university; by comparison, only 12 per cent of black children go on to university, and half of the children drop out of school before matriculating (Turok 2010, 42). Such a low resource base in disadvantaged schools perpetuates racial inequities, and contributes to teacher absence.

In an attempt to reduce inequalities, the government introduced no-fee schools for the poor. No-fee schools were introduced in 2007; by 2008 the schools made up 55 per cent of all public schools, and that figure rose to 60 per cent in 2010 (*News24* 2012). Snyman (*News24* 2012) argues that, despite an increase in funding for poor schools, they continue to underperform. This indicates that an increased state expenditure that cannot adequately fund the resources required by the schools will not lead to high academic performance and improved teacher morale. Teacher absenteeism is driven by a lack of resources (Reddy et al. 2010, 27).

### **Poor Conditions of Employment**

In the previous sections of this article we demonstrated that teacher absenteeism is influenced by the resources allocated to schools and policy provisions; in this section we argue based on the literature review that poor working conditions can be linked to teacher absenteeism as well. For instance, the low level of compensation is another important cause of absenteeism. Bennell (2004) argues that the salary scale of teachers is often very flat with very small increments that have little or no link to job performance. GEAR policy is largely responsible for the low teacher compensation by advocating for one per cent real increases in salaries and pegging these to the inflation rate (CPIX), which does not take into account interest on bond repayments (Weeks 1999).

Expenditure tracking by Wildeman (2007, 14) indicates the framework for the containment of expenditure for personnel which allows other expenditure components to grow, and consequently results in slow growth and low pay for school teachers. This implies that a redistributive (trade-off) approach is used whereby teachers are made

worse off, thus violating the Pareto optimality principle. A Pareto improvement is a change in an allocation which makes someone better off without making anyone else worse off (Caplan 2011). Literature indicates that teachers compensate themselves for their low salaries with frequent absenteeism. This suggests that the redistributive process of reducing teacher compensation increases teacher absenteeism. The opportunity cost of containment and reducing teacher remuneration is absenteeism. Opportunity cost is defined by Mostert et al. (2002, 9) as the advantage of the alternative allocation of resources that is sacrificed for a certain allocation of resources.

A heavy workload encourages teachers to absent themselves from school (Bradley, Greeny, and Leeves 2006). The Educator Workload Report by the Human Science Research Council found that teachers' workload has increased (Chisholm et al. 2005). Firstly, the report shows that the increase in teachers' workload is a result of increased administrative demands placed upon teachers by outcome-based education (OBE) assessments. Secondly, the workload is increased by an overcrowded curriculum, the number of learning areas to be taught per grade, poorly-planned and cross-cutting departmental accountability requirements. Thirdly, class size, the mainstreaming of learners with barriers to learning, and the expectation of educators to fill a number of roles in addition to teaching—as school managers, treasurers, fundraisers, counsellors, nurses, administrators, cleaners, learning material developers, and so on—increases teachers' workload (Chisholm et al. 2005, 19).

The survey found heavy workloads to have disastrous effects in African schools by crowding out the instructional time (Chisholm et al. 2005). This indicates that advantaged schools employ extra staff to reduce the workload of state paid educators. A heavy workload leads to job dissatisfaction, poor perception of meaningfulness of work, and stress. Job-related stress can result in absenteeism, strain, illness, a high turnover, reduced productivity and other workplace problems (Bennell 2004; Ejere 2010). Bennell (2004) points out that reform programmes that increase the workload of teachers and ignore or pay insufficient attention to pay and other conditions of service contribute to teacher absenteeism. He further argues that a constantly changing curriculum is a major de-motivator to educators, and thus impacts negatively on teacher attendance.

The burden of carrying the workload of absent teachers may in turn encourage teachers to absent themselves from schools (Bradley, Greeny, and Leeves 2006). In Gauteng Province, a teacher is replaced by a substitute if he/she is absent for 20 or more consecutive working days—that is, a full month. It therefore means that for any number of absent days fewer than 20, no substitute is provided. This policy seems to be effective in curbing the wage bill of substitute teachers, but at the same time, it appears to grossly contribute to the damaging effects of absenteeism on educational outcomes. There is a lack of uniformity with the application of the policy. The Western Cape Department of Education pays for a substitute when an educator is on sick or maternity leave for a period of 10 working days or more (Reddy et al. 2010, 5).

The provision of the leave system that does not allow teachers to accumulate leave days contributes to teacher absenteeism (Miller, Murnane, and Willett 2007). The education department in the country practises the policy of non-cumulative leave days. Chapman (1994, 39) argues that the provision of rewards and incentives reduces teacher absenteeism.

### **Trade Unionism**

Trade unions contribute to absenteeism through industrial actions and strikes. A review on labour strikes found that the South African Democratic Teachers Union (SADTU) was responsible for 42 per cent of all working days lost due to industrial action between 1995 and 2009 in the country (Equal Education 2010). A teachers' strike is the worst form of teacher absenteeism as it involves the complete shutdown of the schooling system with disastrous impact on results. Learners have a constitutional right to education, and it rests upon the shoulders of the government to ensure that they enjoy it. This right is trampled upon by the authority's unwillingness to pay teachers decent salaries and to improve their working conditions. Equal Education (2010) argues that in a society such as ours, where teachers are overworked, underpaid and disrespected, they should not be prevented from organising protests peacefully and legally.

### **Gender Differential**

Many researchers (Abeles 2009, 34) maintain that women are absent more frequently than men because of family responsibilities. Abeles (2009, 34) further points out that promotion to a supervisory position leads to a reduction in subsequent spells and time lost in absence. Bennell (2004, 25–31) argues that poor motivation and lack of accountability are widely reported to result in high levels of teacher absenteeism. Moreover, participation in official duties, meetings, and workshops by principals accounts for a large proportion of teacher absence. Yiga and Wandega (2010) argue that the longer the teacher's commute between home and school, the more likely it is that the teacher will be absent.

### **Gaps Identified**

There is a paucity of research documenting leave (absence) rates among South African teachers and this paucity also extends to understanding the dynamics underpinning educator absenteeism (Reddy et al. 2010). While teacher absenteeism is widely recognised as a serious problem, researchers have produced little systematic research and data on teacher absence in developing nations (Bennell 2004; Chapman 1994; Ivatts 2010). However, a close scrutiny of the above literature reveals that in South Africa there is a paucity of scientific knowledge on institutional (school), structural (social environment) and economic factors that impact on the extent of teacher absenteeism.

Knowledge of institutional factors prevalent in disadvantaged communities that contribute to teacher absenteeism is critical because schools as organisations inhabited



by human beings may be fraught with conflicts and deficits in the treatment of individuals and the allocation of resources. The argument here is that institutional practices, resources and cultures are likely to contribute to teacher absenteeism. Similarly, the social environment needs to be investigated to establish how it influences teacher absenteeism. From the studies that dealt with poor working conditions and low economic incentives this study elevates the discourse to another level where, with the link to challenges of the social environment, we argue that teacher absenteeism is probably increased by poor incentives within the school environment and in the broader system of education.

The significance of the study relates to the importance of ensuring that our social institutions, and in particular schools, are effective and efficient in their service delivery. Schools must maintain a high level of productivity which is reflected in excellent learner performance and results. Good service delivery requires better resource allocation and efficient management. Optimal utilisation of teachers is hampered by teacher absence. Understanding the phenomenon and the factors feeding the problem (absenteeism) will enable education authorities and school managers to develop strategies and policies that can curb teacher absence. Miller, Murnane, and Willett (2007) argue that the existence of discretionary leave means that feasible policy changes could significantly reduce rates of absence. According to Ivatts (2010), the development of strategies and recommendations that hold the potential to reduce the level and incidence of absenteeism is in the interest of economic efficiency and good quality education.

## **Research Strategy**

A qualitative approach was used in the study to investigate the factors underlying teacher absenteeism in South African schools located in the District of Tshwane West (D15), Soshanguve, Gauteng Province. Soshanguve was selected because it is a township with a predominantly disadvantaged community. The previous political dispensation (Chipkin 1998) designated specific areas (townships) on the outskirts of the city as locations for black migrant workers to live in order to keep cheap black labour close to white cities (Osman and Lemmer 2003). Research done by Infusion (2007, 3) found that 60 per cent of the residents of Soshanguve feel most strongly that they cannot meet their basic needs with their income. The majority of the population is impoverished and depends on the public schooling system. The authors wanted to gain a deep understanding of the problem of teacher absenteeism within a disadvantaged community. Soshanguve happens to be a suitable context characterised by poverty and many developmental challenges. More relevantly, Soshanguve schools experience the same problem of teacher absenteeism experienced in other South African townships. Research indicates that children of low socio-economic status experience a larger absent teacher rate than their peers in suburban setting (Ivatts 2010, 8). It was the researchers' intention to investigate and understand the phenomenon of teacher absenteeism in a disadvantaged community.

A sample of three ( $N=3$ ) schools was selected using purposive sampling. The selected three schools had cases of teachers applying for medical retirement. For this reason, purposive sampling was used. We sampled the three cases on the basis of their characteristics and congruence with the problem under investigation (Cohen, Manion, and Morrison 2002, 103). Data was collected through semi-structured interviews. In order to get a comprehensive account of the problem we selected the participants according to the different positions they occupied in a school—from managerial positions to ordinary classroom teachers. Hence in each school, the principal, deputy principal, an HOD, and a teacher were selected.

## **Findings**

The findings are presented according to the hermeneutic steps of data analysis. What appears in this paper are the themes and verbal quotations from the participants. Participants are categorised as follows: School A participants: A1—principal, A2—deputy principal, A3—an HOD, and A4—a teacher; from School B: B1—principal, B2—deputy principal, B3—an HOD, and B4—a teacher, and from School C: C1—principal, C2—deputy principal, C3—an HOD, and C4—a teacher.

### **Perceptions on the Prevalence of Teacher Absenteeism**

With regard to the prevalence of teacher absenteeism, some interviewees claimed that teacher absenteeism in their schools is relatively low, but in the third school interviewees pointed out that the institution is characterised by a relatively higher rate of absenteeism. Interviewees cited the following:

Participant A4 said, “The level of absenteeism is not high. Absenteeism in our school is not bad. It is at a level that I can describe as understandable and acceptable. The absence rate is stable and not increasing.”

Participant B4 said, “In a day you may find 15 educators being absent, out of the teaching staff of 36. Absenteeism in this school is very high and teachers absent themselves to sabotage the principal, and there is also a tendency of bunking classes by educators.”

### **Teacher Absenteeism and School Performance**

With regard to the school with the higher absent teacher rate, the authors found that the institution is classified as a non-performing school by the district office. The non-performance was viewed by the interviewees as exacerbated by teacher absence and negatively impacts learner enrolment.

Participant C4 said, “The school is classified as an underperforming school by the district. The parents are withdrawing their children from the school, and learner

enrolment has sharply decreased. Absenteeism and the bunking of classes are the cause of these problems.”

On the link between absenteeism and learner performance, the participants pointed out that teacher absenteeism does impact negatively on learner performance. Interviewees offered the following observations:

Participant B4 said, “When the teacher is absent, learners miss on teaching time, and what happens the following day is that the teacher may not be prepared to cover-up the lost time by teaching the learners in the afternoon.”

Participant C4 said, “Learners of absent educators tend to have results that are below the performance of learners with regular attending teachers.”

### **Common Types of Leave Taken**

The participants cited many reasons for teacher absenteeism. Among the reasons they mentioned is that many teachers tend to take the normal leave provided as part of the employment conditions, such as sick leave and family responsibility leave. The head of the institution (A1) stated the following: “The most common type of leave taken by educators is sick leave, family responsibility is not that much taken.”

This finding resonates with Mashaba’s (2014) study in which he discovered that sick leave is the most common type of leave taken.

Participant C1 reflected, “Not all the reasons given by teachers for taking leave are genuine, but I believe some of the reasons are genuine.”

### **Unfavourable Working Conditions**

Participants pointed out that due to unfavourable working conditions most teachers absent themselves as a result of the heavy workload, larger class sizes, poor remuneration, conflict among staff and stress-related problems. The participants observed the following:

Participant A4 said, “This workload is too heavy on us, our classes are also overcrowded, and the department officials do not take cognisance of this fact, they just keep on pushing us and calling us to attend endless number of meetings. When a teacher is tired he/she deserves the right to have a bed-rest.”

Participant B3 said, “Conflict is causing absenteeism. There is a lot and lot of conflict among the staff members.”

## **Demographic Factors of Absenteeism**

In terms of the demographic factors that influence teacher absenteeism we found that female educators are perceived to be absent more often than male teachers. Similarly, the participants indicated that older and experienced teachers are less likely to be absent than younger teachers. This pattern is not different among school management team (SMT) members and non-SMT members. The interviewees stated that SMT members are less absent in their schools than non-SMT members.

Participant C1 said, “Female educators are the ones who mostly take leave than male educators. I do not say female educators are the weaker sex, but they take more leave days due to health reasons and family responsibility.”

Participant B1 said, “Many of the staff members at the school are young, so I hold separate meetings with the old and experienced teachers and encourage them to be exemplary to young teachers, including attendance.”

Participant A1 said, “SMT members are less absent than non SMT members. As an SMT member, I must lead by an example. Even if things are bad, I make sure that I come to school. I must lead my subordinates by an example.”

## **Substitute Teachers**

Educators argued that when a teacher is absent other teachers have to carry his/her workload. As a result, this affects their ability to teach their own classes. Carrying the workload of absent teachers was found to worsen the workload that is already unbearable for them. Educators revealed the following:

Participant A3 said, “Our workload is killing us, but for the sake of the children, we carry the workload of absent teachers.”

Participant C4 said, “Teachers are not happy for going extra mile by teaching children that belong to absent educators. There are some teachers who flatly refuse to teach those learners, claiming that their work is too much, and that the absent teacher goes to his/her bank alone on a pay day, and they are not going to work for other teachers.”

Participant B3 said, “We are a no fee school and cannot afford to employ relieve teachers. Sick leave overburdens teachers. Rich schools are better placed than us because they can afford to employ substitutes. The 20-day substitution policy by the government is wrong. The correct policy is the one that can provide substitute staff for less than 20 days.”

We also found that when a replacement teacher teaches in the place of an absent teacher in some cases the learners do not co-operate with the substitute teacher. The learners question the methods of teaching and the amount of work done. In some instances, chaos

erupts in the classroom. Often effective learning does not take place, and the learners fall behind. At the end of the year such classes underperform.

### **Disciplinary Problems**

The study found that teacher absenteeism aggravates disciplinary problems in the classroom and in the whole school. Participant C3 said, “We have a very big school here, about 1500 learners. If a teacher is not in class, there is a very big noise and some learners roam around the school yard.”

### **Management of the Leave System**

The participants revealed that the leave system is not well managed within the schools and in the entire system. Participants indicated that their schools prepare the leave analysis, which is mandatory, but the analysis is not used to encourage responsible leave taking. They also pointed out that their schools do not apply the 8-week rule which was promulgated to curb absenteeism, and leave without pay as a punitive measure is not applied. PILIR (Policy and Procedure on Incapacity Leave and Ill-Health Retirement), which is meant to reduce teacher absence, is viewed by participants as ineffective. In this regard, the participants offered the following observations:

Participant C1 said, “The leave cycle is ending on the 30th of June, and educators went to the office to check their remaining leave days. They started absenting themselves from school, claiming that they are using their remaining leave days.”

Participant B1 said, “We do not apply the 8-week rule and leave without pay, we use the logbook. When a teacher is absent, he/she fill the leave forms, and the leave is recorded in the logbook and the teacher sign the book.”

Participant A1 said, “The PILIR policy is not effective in reducing teacher absenteeism.”

We also found that medical retirement applicants spend many years on paid sick leave. The Department of Basic Education takes a long time to process ill-health retirement. The participants argue that in the meantime classes suffer and teachers are overloaded as they need to carry the workload of such applicants. Interviewees mentioned the following:

Participant B1 said, “The school has a teacher on sick leave for four years, and at the end of every quarter, I submit PILIR forms to the district for her sick leave. The teacher is on a wheel-chair and the doctor had declared her permanently disabled. The department is not doing anything about it, they keep on saying that I must submit her PILIR forms so that the school can be provided with the substitute teacher.”

Participant C1 said, “We had a teacher in a relieving post for seven years. The department always complains about the budget, but they paid two teachers in one post for seven years and we lack resources in the school.”

For a complete summary of the findings we provide a comparison of data obtained from the three schools in Table 1 below.

**Table 1:** Summary of the findings

No	<i>School A</i>	<i>School B</i>	<i>School C</i>
1	Relatively low level of absenteeism	Relatively low level of absenteeism	Relatively high level of absenteeism
2	Reasons for teacher absence: sick leave, family responsibility, heavy workload, larger class size, poor remuneration, and stress.	Teacher absenteeism factors: urgent private matters, sick leave, examinations, stress, and poor remuneration.	Reasons for teacher absence: conflict and infighting among staff, mismatch of educator qualification, and constantly changing curriculum.
3	Sick leave is the most common type of leave taken.	Sick leave is the highest proportion of the leave taken.	Sick leave is the most common leave taken.
4	There is abuse of the leave system by educators.	The educators abuse the leave system.	The educators abuse the leave system.
5	Female educators are absent more often than male educators.	Female educators are absent more often than male educators.	Female educators are absent more often than male educators.
6	Older and experienced educators are absent less than younger educators.	Older and experienced educators are absent more than younger and experienced teachers.	Older teachers are absent less than younger teachers.
7	The absenteeism pattern is not different between SMT members and non-SMT members.	SMT members are absent less often than non-SMT members.	SMT members are absent less often than non-SMT members.
8	Leave analysis not prepared by the school.	Leave analysis is prepared by the school.	Leave analysis is done by the school.
9			School managers do not apply a supportive management style.

10	Teacher absence impacts negatively on learner performance.	Teacher absenteeism negatively affects learner performance.	Learner performance is negatively affected by teacher absence.
11	Teacher absence increases the workload of other educators.	Teacher absence increases the workload of other teachers.	Absenteeism increases the workload of other educators.
12	Teacher absences cause learner disciplinary problems.	Teacher absences cause learner disciplinary problems.	Teacher absences lead to learner disciplinary problems.
13	Medical retirement applicants spend many years on paid sick leave, wasting financial resources.	Teachers applying for ill-health retirement spend many years on paid sick leave, wasting financial resources.	Teachers applying for ill-health retirement spend many years on paid sick leave, wasting financial resources.
14	The 8-week rule is not applied by the school.	The 8-week rule is not applied by the school.	The 8-week rule is applied but is not effective in curbing absenteeism.
15	The PILIR policy is not effective in curbing teacher absence.	The PILIR policy is ineffective in curbing absenteeism.	The PILIR policy is ineffective in curbing absenteeism.
16	The principal motivates teachers to attend regularly.	The principal motivates teachers to attend regularly.	The principal motivates teachers to attend regularly.
17	Leave without pay is not applied.	Leave without pay is not applied.	Leave without pay is not applied.
18	The 20-day substitution policy is not acceptable; it needs to be changed.	The 20-day substitution policy is not acceptable and must be changed.	The 20-day substitution policy is not acceptable; it needs to be changed.

## Discussion

Factors contributing to teacher absenteeism are numerous and their impact may differ in different schools. Chapman (1994, 33) argues that, in order to develop strategies and incentives that can reduce teacher absenteeism, the first step is to formulate a clear picture of the influences feeding the problem.

A disturbing factor that was found by the study to underlie teacher absenteeism is the application process for ill-health retirement. Teachers applying for medical boarding spend years on paid sick leave—much more than the prescribed time in the policy, which is 60 working days. Three schools participated in the interviews; the results show

that in the first school, the educator spent four years on paid sick leave while applying for ill-health retirement. In the second and third schools, both the teachers spent seven years respectively on paid sick leave. The schools were never provided with reason(s) for the delay in granting the educators ill-health retirement and repeated request by the schools have yielded no answer. The escalation of teacher absenteeism seems to be driven by ill-health retirement and extensive sick leave. As a result, substitute teachers are employed to replace the absent teachers. This implies that one teaching post is used to employ and pay two teachers for years, wasting the limited financial resources of the education department. It is interesting to note that, while the availability of adequate resources in township and rural schools remains a serious challenge, the education authorities are wasting money, and thus allocating resources inefficiently. Inefficient resource allocation was found to be compounded by the leave system that allows for and encourages the abuse of the leave system. Participants agreed that not all of the reasons given by teachers for taking leave are genuine.

The leave system in the country is contributing to teacher absenteeism in the participating schools. It lacks built-in mechanisms to encourage good attendance. The education department practises the policy of non-cumulative leave days, and teachers were found to be using up their leave days rather than lose them. In the study it was found that teachers are mostly absent for one to two days, a period for which they do not have to provide medical certificates, and that Mondays and Fridays form part of popular leave patterns to stretch weekends. Miller, Murnane, and Willett (2007), Reddy et al. (2010), Yiga and Wandega (2010), and also Hubbell (2008) agree with this finding. A policy of unlimited sick leave accumulation improves attendance because teachers do not have a use-it-or-lose-it mentality.

While two schools were found to have a relatively low rate of teacher absence, in the third school researchers found the institution experienced an excessive rate of teacher absence. The source of the problem is seen as the high level of conflict and infighting among educators in the school, which is said to be caused by the principal. The principal is viewed as not treating all the teachers equally; some educators are favoured and others not. Absenteeism was found to be used by teachers as a weapon to sabotage the principal, and the school is also characterised by a tendency of educators to bunk classes. This clearly indicates an abuse of the leave system.

The school mentioned above is classified by the district office as a non-performing school and parents are withdrawing their children from the school. Chapman (1994) affirms that teacher absenteeism can lead to a loss of community confidence in schools, and thus to the growth of private schooling, which the disadvantaged cannot afford. When schools perform poorly, the principal and his/her management team are called to account to the district officials for poor performance. One-way accountability (management) allows teachers to abuse their position (through absenteeism) in the interest of poor performance because they will not be held directly accountable. The finding in the school suggests the need for collective accountability (involving both



management and teachers) for poor performance. Imants and van Zoelen found that collegial staff relationships and a supportive management style implemented by the school principal reduced the rate of teacher absence (cited in Bradley, Greeny, and Leeves 2006).

Providing substitutes for absent teachers had been found to lower the negative impact of teacher absenteeism on the education of children (Adeley 2008; Bennell 2004; Bradley, Greeny, and Leeves 2006; Ivatts 2010; Yiga and Wandega 2010). The substitution policy was found to be ineffective. The study found that the burden of carrying the workload of absent teachers in turn encouraged other teachers to absent themselves from school. The qualitative study also found that the burden of carrying the workload of absent teachers strains relations between school managers and teachers as some teachers refuse to carry the extra burden.

In Gauteng Province, a school will be given a substitute by the district office if a teacher is absent for 20 or more consecutive days, that is, a full month. It therefore means that for any number of absent days fewer than 20, no substitute from education authorities will be provided and schools cannot afford to employ substitute teachers. This policy seems to be effective in curbing the wage bill of substitute teachers, but at the same time it appears to grossly contribute to the damaging effects of absenteeism on educational outcomes. Costs in implementing the policy need to be balanced against the effectiveness of the policy.

Ejere (2010) argues that heavy workloads lead to job dissatisfaction, poor perception of work as meaningful and stress. Job-related stress can result in absenteeism, strain, illness, a high turnover, reduced productivity and other workplace problems (Ejere 2010). All the participants in the interviews complained about heavy workloads. Job dissatisfaction contributes to teacher absenteeism.

Most researchers argue that low pay causes depression among educators and the result is job dissatisfaction, which as mentioned above contributes to teacher absenteeism (Abeles 2009; Bennell 2004; Chapman 1994; Ejere 2010). The study found that teachers perceive their remuneration as being very low and dissatisfying. Equal Education (2010) affirms that in our society teachers are overworked and underpaid. According to Bennell (2004), reform programmes that increase the workload of teachers and ignore or pay insufficient attention to pay and other conditions contribute to teacher absenteeism.

Reform programmes in the country have increased teachers' workload. The GEAR policy is largely responsible for low teacher compensation by advocating a one per cent real increase in salaries and pegging it to the inflation rate (CPIX), which does not take into account interest on bond repayments (Weeks 1999). Raising teachers' salaries (Chapman 1994, 36) will reduce the absence rate, but to be effective, increases in salary have to be coupled with clear policies that limit outside work that competes with school attendance.

Working conditions were found to be poor. Participants pointed to inadequate infrastructure, large class sizes, inadequate textbooks and other resources, endless meetings and workshops attended at the district office, and a constantly changing curriculum as de-motivators to teachers. In one school, it was found that teachers with secondary school teaching qualifications were redeployed to a primary school and these teachers constantly complain about subject allocation in the school. The problem of the mis-match of qualification and position is seen to be compounded by the constantly changing curriculum, thus contributing to teacher absence. Policies that encourage teachers to absent themselves from school need to be reviewed and corrective measures taken by authorities.

Equal Education (2010) argues that many teachers are victims of the inequalities in education inherited from the past. The majority of rural and township schools lack laboratories, libraries, computer labs, and adequate textbooks; moreover, their staff rooms are cramped. The failing economic policy and cuts in public expenditure ensure that the crisis persists and the quality of education continues to decline. Turok (2010, 31) argues that poor children remain trapped in inferior education systems with wholly inadequate infrastructure. The fiscal discipline simply means the government cannot borrow money or raise the taxes of the business sector and well-to-do citizens to address gross inequities. Harsch (2001) states that the GEAR strategy does not acknowledge the need for the redistribution of income and opportunities in favour of the poor.

To the disadvantaged communities, the conditions for teaching and learning remain very much unfavourable to both the teachers and learners. Poor conditions are a source of dissatisfaction, in particular to teachers, and hence impact negatively on performance and teacher absence (Chapman 1994, 31).

Research conducted by Chaudhury et al. (2004) found schools with the best infrastructure have teacher absent rates that are nearly half that of schools with the worst infrastructure (Reddy et al. 2010, 44). Abeles (2009, 44) suggests that regular surveys that test teacher satisfaction levels will help in implementing the desired changes.

It was found that schools prepare an analysis of the leave taken by teachers to determine the pattern of leave taken and the number of days taken by individual teachers, but the analysis is not used to improve teacher attendance. Reddy et al. (2010, 81) argue that leave analysis can be used to promote responsible leave taking in schools.

One of the objectives for the introduction and application in 2006 of the PILIR policy (Policy and Procedure on Incapacity Leave and Ill-Health Retirement) in the public sector was to curb absenteeism. None of the participants viewed the PILIR policy as effective in curbing teacher absence. Although the policy states that incapacity leave is not an unlimited amount of additional sick leave days at an employee's disposal, it appears to suggest to teachers that sick leave days are unlimited, hence the abuse in the education system.

Principals in participating schools were found to be attending meetings called by the district officials frequently during school hours. Bennell (2004, 28) argues that such meetings or official duties should be conducted outside school time to reduce absence.

The researchers found that women are absent more often than male teachers, older and experienced educators are absent less often than younger teachers, and members of the school management team (SMT) are absent less than other teachers (non-SMT members). The findings are in line with the literature. A teacher's personal status, which includes gender, number of children and age, affects their absence rates. Abeles (2009, 34–5) maintains that women are absent more frequently than men because of family responsibility, and further affirms that the higher a teacher's administrative position and the higher the salary scale, the greater the impact on job satisfaction, which results in a reduction in subsequent spells of absence.

Generally all respondents view teacher absence as impacting negatively on learner performance and results due to lost time for teaching and learning, and an incomplete programme of work. It was found that some absent educators do not make up time to cover for the time lost due to absenteeism. Teacher absence causes learner disciplinary problems in the schools as unattended learners make a lot of noise and roam around the school yard. The study found that students of regularly absent teachers tend to have high absent rates. Substitute teachers renew their employment contract at the end of every quarter. The renewal process often results in delays of one to three months in payment (remuneration) to the teachers. The delays in payment were found to have a significant negative influence on teacher morale, which is likely to impact negatively on the education of students.

In order to curb or reduce the level of teacher absenteeism, respondents felt that the following needs to be done. At the department level, working conditions must be improved, class sizes reduced, heavy workloads reduced, remuneration improved, compensation for unused sick leave days must be provided, schools must be inspected regularly by the district, and incentives for good attendance must be provided. At a school level, principals must create a happy working environment, support and help teachers who are regularly absent to overcome their difficulties, motivate teachers to attend regularly, and implement leave without pay.

## **Conclusions**

Teacher absenteeism has negative effects on the academic achievement of children in both developed and developing countries, with effects being relatively high in disadvantaged communities. In addition to the salary cost for the absent teacher, there are the costs of substitute staff, lost productivity, reduced quality of service, and management time spent dealing with absence that could be used for another purpose. Abuse of the leave system by teachers is rampant, and sound human relations appear to be a necessary precondition for principals to be effective in dealing with the problem of

teacher absence. Prolonged delays in processing ill-health retirement applications and placing applicant educators on paid sick leave for years is a source of significant wastage of the financial resources of the department—and this takes place while teachers complain about the lack of resources in their schools. Policies and practices in curbing teacher absenteeism are ineffective. The substitution policy seems to be effective in curbing the wage bill of substitute teachers, but appears to grossly contribute to the damaging effects of absenteeism on educational outcomes.

Devising appropriate policies and practices that can reduce teacher absence will improve the quality of education received by children, and the efficiency of the financial management of schools. Improving teacher attendance and thus reducing the cost of absent teachers will increase productivity. Finally, economic policies and the performance of the economy (funding base) remain central to the success of our social institutions. From the empirical investigation we can conclude the following:

1. Teacher absenteeism is very high, though it varies from one school to another.
2. Teacher absenteeism affects the general performance of the school and learners' academic achievement in particular.
3. Sick leave is the most common leave taken by teachers and it is often abused.
4. Female teachers take leave more often than their male counterparts for varying reasons.
5. Teacher absenteeism increases other teachers' workload and causes disciplinary problems.
6. Poor schools struggle to find replacements or substitutes due to lack of funding.
7. The leave system is not well managed.

## **Recommendations**

Taking into account the suggestions made by the participants, we suggest that the following remedies to teacher absenteeism. The researchers recommend the following:

1. In order to curb the prevalence of teacher absenteeism in schools, general system-wide improvements need to be made. This research indicates it is important to

- a. Provide incentives in the leave system to encourage attendance—those who come regularly should be rewarded;
  - b. Provide funding for substitute teachers, especially in the annual grants;
  - c. Provide psychological and counselling support for teachers with stress and depression symptoms;
  - d. Ensure the application of the 8-week rule by the principals; and
  - e. Review the 20-day substitution policy to cater for fewer than 20 absent days.
2. All possible effort should be made to improve the working conditions of teachers. This can include measures to
    - a. Ensure the physical safety of teachers;
    - b. Provide enough teaching and learning material; and
    - c. Improve the reward system so that it is aligned with the market.
  3. An efficient and effective system to handle educator ill-health retirement should be put in place, for example:
    - a. A leave system that can be controlled from the school with interactive online system of leave management linked to the provincial offices.
  4. It is vital to intervene as soon as possible in schools where there is conflict and infighting among staff members to ensure the smooth running of the schools.

## References

- Abeles L. R. 2009. “Absenteeism among Teachers—Excused Absence and Unexcused Absence.” *International Journal of Education Administration* 1 (1): 31–49.
- Bhorat, H. 2008. “Unemployment in South African: Descriptors and Determinants.” Development Policy Research Unit, University of Cape Town Press.
- Bloch, G. 2009. “Getting Rid of OBE and Other Education Fixes.” *New Agenda: South African Journal of Social and Economic Policy* 36 (4): 41–4.

- Bradley, S., C. Greeny, and G. Leeves. 2006. "Worker Absence and Shirking: Evidence from Matched Teacher-School Data." Lancaster University. Accessed November 13, 2018. <http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/staff/ecasb/papers/bradley12.pdf>.
- Bennell, P. 2004. *Teacher Motivation and Incentives in Sub-Saharan Africa and Asia*. Brighton: Knowledge and Skills for Development. Accessed November 11, 2018. <http://eldis.org/go/home&id=15756&type=Document>.
- Caplan, B. 2001. "The Concept and Use of Pareto Optimality in Economics." Accessed August 16, 2011. <https://stason.org/TULARC/ideology/anarchy/15-a-The-concept-and-uses-of-Pareto-optimality-in-economics.html>.
- Chipkin, C. 1998. "Preparing for Apartheid, Pretoria and Johannesburg." In *Architecture of the Transvaal*, edited by R. Fisher, S. Le Roux, and E. Mare, 172–80. Pretoria: UNISA.
- Corallo, C., and D. MacDonald. 2001. "What Works with Low-Performing Schools: A Review of Literature on Low-Performing Schools." Washington, DC: Office of Educational Research and Improvement. Accessed November 29, 2018. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED462737>.
- Castro, V., Y. Duthilleul, and F. Caillods. 2007. *Teacher Absences in an HIV and AIDS Context: Evidence from Nine Schools in Kavango and Caprivi (Namibia)*. Paris: UNESCO. Accessed November 24, 2018. <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0015/001533/153367e.pdf>.
- Chaudhury, N., J. Hammer, M. Kremer, K. Mularidharan, and H. Rogers. 2004. "Teacher Absence in India." Draft report. Washington, DC: Development Economics Department, World Bank.
- Chaudhury, N., M. Kremer, K. Mularidharan, and H. Rogers. 2005. "Missing in Action: Teacher and Health Care Worker Absence in Developing Countries." *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 20 (1): 91–116. <https://doi.org/10.1257/089533006776526058>.
- Chapman, D. W. 1994. *Reducing Teacher Absenteeism and Attrition: Causes, Consequences and Responses*. Paris: UNESCO.
- Chisholm, A. L., U. Hoadley, M. Kivilu, H. Brookes, C. Prinsloo, A. Kgobe, D. Mosia, H. Narsee, and S. Rule. 2005. *Educator Workload in South Africa*. Cape Town: Human Sciences Research Council.
- Cohen, L., L. Manion, and K. Morrison. 2002. *Research Methods in Education*. New York: Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203224342>.
- DoE (Department of Education). 2001. *Report on the School Register of Needs*. Pretoria: Department of Education.

- Equal Education. 2010. "EE's Statement on Tokiso Review and SATDU." August 5. Accessed July 9, 2011. <https://equaleducation.org.za/2010/08/05/ees-statement-on-tokiso-review-and-sadtu/>.
- Ejere, I. E. 2010. "Absence from Work: A Study of Teacher Absenteeism in Selected Primary Schools in Uyo, Nigeria." *International Journal of Business and Management* 5 (9): 39–53.
- Erasmus, J., and M. Breier. 2009. *Skills Shortages in South Africa: Case Studies of Key Professions*. Cape Town: Human Sciences Research Council Press.
- GDE (Gauteng Department of Education). 2010. *Five-Year Strategic Plan 2010–2014*. Johannesburg: Gauteng Department of Education.
- Harsch, E. 2001. "South Africa Tackles Social Inequities." *Africa Recovery* 12–8.
- Hubbell, P. 2008. "Reducing Teacher Absenteeism." Accessed May 13, 2009. [www.smhccpre.org/download/12](http://www.smhccpre.org/download/12).
- Infusion. 2007. "Beyond the Obvious." Accessed March 8, 2011. <http://www.in-fusion.co.za/?page-id=10>.
- Ivatts, A. R. 2010. *Literature Review on Teacher Absenteeism*. Budapest: Roma Education Fund.
- Maile, S, ed. 2008. *Education and Poverty Reduction Strategies: Issues of Policy Coherence; Colloquium Proceedings*. Cape Town: Human Sciences Research Council.
- Mashaba, E. K. 2014. "The Impact of Teacher Absenteeism on the Effective Management of Selected Schools in District 15, Soshanguve, Gauteng Province." MEd diss., Tshwane University of Technology.
- Miller, R. T., J. R. Murnane, and J. B. Willett. 2007. "Do Teacher Absences Impact Student Achievement? Longitudinal Evidence from an Urban School District." NBER Working Paper Series, Working Paper No. 13356. National Bureau of Economic Research. <https://doi.org/10.3386/w13356>.
- Mostert, J. W., A. G. Oosthuizen, P. C. Smith, and T. C. van der Vyver. 2002. *Macroeconomics: A Southern African Perspective*. Lansdowne: Juta.
- Naicker, S. M. 2000. *From Apartheid Education to Inclusive Education: The Challenges of Transformation*. Paper presented at the International Education Summit for a Democratic Society, Wayne State University, Detroit, Michigan, June 26–28. Accessed November 13, 2018. <http://www.wholeschooling.net/WS/WSPress/From%20Aparthied%20to%20Incl%20Educ.pdf>.

- News24. 2012. "More No-Fee Schools in SA-SAIRR." *News24*, July 23. Accessed November 14. <http://www.news24.com/SouthAfrica/News/More-no-fee-schools-in-SA-SATRR-20120723>.
- Pandor, N. 2005. "The Worst Legacy of Apartheid Is Education." Media briefing released by the Minister of Department of Science and Technology.
- Osman, A., and C. Lemmer. 2003. "Open Building Principles in South Africa: An Academic Exploration in Soshanguve." Accessed November 13, 2018. <https://repository.up.ac.za/bitstream/handle/2263/4382/open%20building%20in%20soshanguve.pdf?sequence=1>.
- Reddy, V. 2010. "HSRC Study Reveals Shocking Teacher Absenteeism." Accessed January 4, 2011. <http://www.hsrc.ac.za/factsheet-17.phtml>.
- Reddy, V., C. H. Prinsloo, T. Netshitangani, R. Moletsane, A. Juan, and D. J. van Rensburg. 2010. *An Investigation into Educator Leave in South African Ordinary Public Schooling System*. Cape Town: Human Sciences Research Council.
- Sayed, Y., and S. Motala. 2009. *Finance, School and Access to Education*. Johannesburg: Heinemann.
- Statistics South Africa. 2011. "Quarterly Labour Force Survey: Quarter 4 (October to December), 2010." Press Statement. Pretoria: Statistics South Africa.
- Strickland, V. P. 1998. "Attendance and Grade Point Average: A Study." Accessed November 23, 2018. <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED423224>.
- Turok, B. 2010. "Big Business Comes to the Table." *New Agenda: South African Journal of Social and Economic Policy* 37: 8–14.
- Weeks, J. 1999. "Stuck in Low GEAR? Macro-Economic Policy in South Africa, 1996–1998." *Cambridge Journal of Economics* 23 (6): 795–811. <https://doi.org/10.1093/cje/23.6.795>.
- Wildeman, R. A. 2007. *A Review of National and Provincial Education Budgets 2007*. Cape Town: Idasa.
- Yiga, D., and A. Wandega. 2010. *Primary School Absenteeism in the Iganga District of Uganda*. A Study conducted by the African Network for the Prevention and Protection against Child Abuse and Neglect (ANPPCAN) Uganda Chapter with Support from Transparency and Accountability Program (TAP) of the Results for Development Institute.