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Attendance Registers as A Records-Keeping Tool for the Early Detection of Student Truancy in Private Secondary Schools: Evidence from Morogoro Municipality, Tanzania

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ABSTRACT The study examined the contribution of heads of schools' ethical modelling to promoting students' compliance with school rules and regulations in private secondary schools in Morogoro Municipality, Tanzania. In particular, the study was directed to the influence of leadership ethical practices on students' discipline and responsible behaviour which are characterized by hard work, punctuality, fairness, respectful discipline and promotion of moral values. This study used convergent study type in a mixed method research approach, based on Instructional Leadership Theory. Data gathered were questionnaires, semi-structured interviews and documentation. Descriptive statistics were used to analyse quantitative data obtained from questionnaires and thematic analysis was used to analyse qualitative data obtained from interviews and documents. The results revealed that ethical modelling was a positive influence to students' compliance with school rules and regulations. School leaders and staff consistently showed hard work, punctuality, fairness, professionalism and respect which helped pupils to get a good handle on their own self-discipline, responsibility, and positive attitudes to school rules. Students' responsible behaviour and trust in school leaders was further strengthened by guidance and counselling, moral education activities and fair disciplinary practices. There was also documentary evidence which indicated that ethical values were integrated into school policies and guidance and counselling programmes, staff meetings, and disciplinary practices. The study found that ethical modelling is the effective instructional leadership practice in order to enhance students' discipline. It suggests that principals, teachers and other school staff always model good conduct, enhance moral education and counselling efforts, and fairly and respectfully enforce school policies.

KEYWORDS: Attendance registers, truancy, early detection, student misbehaviors, attendance monitoring, private secondary schools, Morogoro Municipality.

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Attendance registers are official school records that record students' attendance at school for the purposes of teaching and learning. They are one of the most basic management tools of administration for the monitoring of learners' participation, accountability and effective school management. Attendance registers do not just record the number of students present, but can also give ongoing data to help teachers and school leaders recognise attendance patterns, differentiate between excused and unexcused absences, check pupil punctuality, and monitor pupil behaviour. Attendance records that are consistently maintained and systematically analysed are good points of evidence for identifying students who might need academic, behavioural or psychosocial support (Heyne, Keppens, & Dvořák, 2022; Selwyn, Pangrazio, & Cumbo, 2021).

The use of Attendance Registers is one of the most significant applications as regards to the early detection of truancy. Absenting oneself from school without authorization or for extended periods of time is known as truancy and is a well-known predictor of student disengagement from learning. Repeated absences have been linked to academic performance issues, behavioral problems, school dropouts, drug and alcohol use, and delinquency (Hallam & Rogers, 2008; Duke, 2020). Therefore, school attendance records are increasingly being utilized in schools in a variety of ways beyond mere attendance tracking, including as early warning systems for detecting students who may be at risk for chronic absenteeism and for putting in place interventions that could help them stay on track.

Around the world, school and district systems have begun to appreciate the value of monitoring attendance register as part of their efforts to enhance student performance. In England, Alabbad and Jawad (2020) showed that systematic attendance monitoring could help schools to detect attendance patterns and provide interventions to reduce school exclusions and behaviour issues. In a similar manner, Newman-Ford et al. (2008) found that electronic attendance systems have been found to significantly increase student

attendance and academic achievement by detecting absenteeism in a timely fashion. Additionally, Arizmendi et al. (2023) noted that data from schools' standard records offers good evidence to inform learning support decisions for students, highlighting the value of attendance data in evidence-based education management.

In Africa, despite the efforts to make the school attendance more robust, the issue of student absenteeism is largely a problem in secondary education. Sekiwu, Ssempala, and Frances (2020) found that, in Uganda, frequent monitoring of learners' attendance was a significant boost to learner participation and achievement because schools would intervene promptly when learners were absent. Similarly, Koring'ura, Odundo, and Wanjala (2023) reported that pupil timely arrival, pupil participation, and learning achievement was enhanced when the students were monitored regularly in secondary schools in Kenya. These studies show that a school that is proactively analysing attendance data, making effective interventions and acting on them promptly can effectively support early identification of truancy.

The attendance registers must be maintained, as required by the Education Act Chapter 241 of Tanzania. There are two pieces of legislation that require accurate attendance records in schools: The Education and Training Policy (URT, 2023) which aims to promote accountability, learner welfare and effective school administration, and the later piece of legislation, 353 (2023). Although policy mandates require this, there are still many secondary schools with absentees and truant students. Andrea, (2023) indicated that effective attendance monitoring plays a significant role in the management of classroom and discipline in secondary schools in Morogoro Municipality. Likewise, Charles et al (2021) determined that systematic attendance management created accountability and improved effective school management practices. Most Tanzanian studies, however, have concentrated on attendance as an administrative issue, or on attending school and its relation to academic performance; few have paid attention to the contribution of attendance registers to the detection of truancy, especially in private secondary schools.

Attendance registers are kept regularly in private secondary schools that are located in Morogoro Municipality. However, there is little empirical evidence of how these attendance registers are used as proactive measures for identifying students at risk of being absent and enabling early help. Most of the studies that have already been conducted have focused on attendance rates, school discipline, or academic outcomes and have not specifically investigated the attendance registers as a tool to identify truancy before absenteeism turns into a chronic problem. This gap in knowledge reduces the understanding of the usefulness of attendance records to prevent negative behaviour in private secondary schools. Thus, this study looked into how attendance registers can contribute to the early detection of school truancy in the students of private secondary schools in Morogoro Municipality, Tanzania. The results are likely to be useful for inclusion in educational management literature and for supporting their work in the monitoring of attendance, preventing student absenteeism, and enhancing student behaviours.

Statement of the Problem

Truancy is a major behavioural problem in secondary schools globally as it impacts negatively on the involvement of the students in learning, their academic performance, indiscipline in the school and the school dropout rates. To help meet this challenge, attendance registers are expected to be kept and used for more than just administrative purposes; they should provide early warning for students who have repeatedly missed classes and be used to begin interventions as early as possible. Tanzania's Education Act Cap. Schools should accurately record attendance as required by 353 (2023) and the Education and Training Policy (URT, 2023), for the purpose of improving school management, accountability and student welfare. While these policy requirements exist, however, there are reports of truancy and irregular school attendance in many secondary schools, and therefore, attendance records may not be fully leveraged to inform early detection and intervention.

While the relationship of school attendance to academic achievement is established in previous studies (Newman-Ford et al., 2008; Khan, 2022; Sekiwu et al., 2020), most of these studies focused on attendance rates, class participation or academic outcomes rather than looking at how the attendance register specifically contributes to the early identification of truancy. Likewise, Tanzania's research has concentrated on classroom management and student discipline in general (Andrea, 2023; Stephen, 2024) and minimal empirical research has been conducted to investigate the role of attendance registers as a proactive tool for monitoring students' behaviour, specifically in the private secondary schools in Tanzania. There is therefore little evidence that attendance registers are systematically reviewed and analysed, and used to identify students who are at risk of truancy before they become chronic.

This lack of knowledge hinders school administrators, teachers, and education policy makers from knowing if the current approach to monitoring attendance is valid in terms of supporting early interventions and behaviour management. Hence, the purpose of this study was to explore the role of attendance registers in identifying student truancy in private secondary schools in Morogoro Municipality. Tanzania. The results give empirical evidence that can be used as the basis of school management practices, improve attendance monitoring systems, and develop strategies to reduce school absenteeism and increase student participation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The work described in this study has been inspired by the Faucet Theory (Entwisle, Alexander and Olson, 1997) which states that sustained monitoring and institutional support is vital to positive educational outcomes. The theory compares educational monitoring

systems to a faucet that controls the flow of water. The flow of water is continuous and controlled when the faucet is maintained properly, but it is interrupted and lost when it is not maintained properly. For the purposes of this study, attendance registers will be used as a tool for continuous monitoring and provide ongoing data on student's attendance and enable early detection of truancy by teachers and school administrators. Frequent checks on attendance helps to identify problems early and to inform timely intervention like counselling, parents' participation, follow up actions, etc., before the situation turns into chronic absenteeism. The theory focuses primarily on institutional monitoring but does not pay as much attention to the role of individual learner characteristics, but is still very relevant to the present study, as it discusses the role of systematic use of attendance registers in supporting the early identification of learners' truancy and the importance of intervening in a timely way to improve their attendance and behaviour (Entwisle et al., 2004).

Attendance registers are more than administrative records used to record students' presence or absence. If they are implemented on an ongoing basis and are regularly monitored, they can assist teachers in spotting students who are starting to skip classes routinely, and allow for intervention before they become chronic absenteeism. This is in accord with the Faucet Theory developed by Entwisle, Alexander, and Olson (1997) which indicates that ongoing monitoring will allow institutions to identify problems at an early stage and to act in time to prevent further problems. Attendance registers in schools continuously give out information and can help teachers and school leaders to track students' attendance habits and make timely remedial interventions.

Research from various countries demonstrates the effectiveness of attendance registers when the information in them is actively utilized by schools. In England, Alabbad and Jawad (2020) have reported that the intervention of regular attendance monitoring in secondary schools identified students who were regularly missing school and led to the earlier intervention and fewer students being excluded from school. Anderson (2020) also found that schools that utilized attendance information and behaviour data were more likely to be able to support students before behaviour became a problem. In a similar fashion, Arizmendi et al. (2023) identified that student records are a reliable indicator of student risk to academic and behavioral issues, and that schools can offer prompt support to students in need. Additionally, Heyne, Keppens, and Dvořák (2022) suggested that keeping attendance registers are most effective when schools conduct analysis of attendance trends rather than only counting attendance each day. While these studies have confirmed the value of attendance registers, most were undertaken in developed nations in which schools are better equipped with systems of monitoring and have greater access to digital technologies. They may therefore not accurately represent what is happening in schools in the developing world.

The evidence from Africa confirms the value of attendance registers to reduce truancy, but there are some practical issues. Sewiwu, Ssempala and Frances (2020) noted that monitoring attendance on regular basis enhanced learner participation and absenteeism in schools in Uganda due to the timely detection of attendance issues. Koring'ura, Odundo and Wanjala (2023) found that schools that routinely reviewed attendance data had improved attendance and participation of learners. Similarly, Ngare (2024) noted that while attendance records are kept in many Kenyan secondary schools, teachers seldom studied the patterns of attendance to determine students who might be at risk of school drop-outs. Likewise, Gbadamosi (2025) discovered that the secondary schools in Nigeria had attendance registers, however, due to inadequate follow-up and poor monitoring of attendance data, they were ineffective in combating student absenteeism. These studies from Africa demonstrate that it is not sufficient to just maintain attendance registers as effective use of the information requires frequent review of the registers by teachers and the use of the information to inform interventions. This is consistent with the Faucet Theory which states that monitoring alone can only yield positive results if it is followed by timely action.

Similar findings are obtained in the Tanzanian context. Andrea (2023) reported that regular attendance monitoring helped to boost classroom discipline and helped teachers identify students who were not attending classes well in advance of any behavioural issues. The authors Charles Sr., Muteti and Siamoo (2021) found that good attendance book-keeping strengthened accountability of teachers and enhanced monitoring in secondary schools. Likewise, Stephen (2024) established that although attendance registers were available in most secondary schools, they were mainly used for administrative purposes instead of identifying students with early signs of truancy. In the same way, Mwaipungu (2023) found that inadequate training on record management had a negative impact on the quality of attendance records, and teachers' absenteeism patterns were not identified correctly. These studies give some evidence of attendance monitoring, but are primarily concerned with public secondary schools or general classroom management as a whole and not specifically on the role of attendance registers in detecting truancy early in private secondary schools.

Overall, the studies reviewed indicate that attendance registers can contribute to early identification of the issue of absence and their subsequent response to prevent students from becoming chronic absentees. However, past research also indicates that the success of attendance registers is related to the regular review of attendance data, timely intervention, teacher engagement and school leadership. The few available studies have been on attendance management, academic performance, or overall discipline, and no attention has been paid to the use of attendance registers as early warning indicators of private secondary school truancy. Further, the available studies that have attempted to describe these relationships have not done so with consideration of the Faucet Theory, which emphasises the need for ongoing surveillance and intervention. This generates an empirical and theoretical gap that warrants

the current study that examines the role of attendance registers in early detection of pupil's truancy in private secondary schools in Morogoro Municipality, Tanzania.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This chapter shows the methodology employed to collect data for the study of the role of attendance registers and discipline records in controlling students' behaviours in private secondary schools in Morogoro Municipality. The mixed-methods approach was used, following the principles of the philosophical stance known as pragmatism, and descriptive research design techniques were employed to gather both quantitative and qualitative information. The research was conducted in five selected private secondary schools in Morogoro Municipality, with a target population of 150 participants, including 145 teachers and 5 head teachers. The sample size was calculated to be 109 respondents (104 teachers and 5 head teachers) using Yamane's formula. After determining the sample size, simple random sampling was used to choose the teachers, while purposive sampling was used to choose head teachers. Data were collected via structured questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. Quantitative data were analysed by means of descriptive statistics, while qualitative data were processed using thematic analysis.

The research used structured surveys, semi-structured interviews, and document review for the acquisition of quantitative and qualitative data. In order to collect quantitative data on the employment of attendance lists and discipline records in student behaviour monitoring, structured surveys were distributed amongst 104 teachers while semi-structured interviews were held with five principals in order to gather qualitative data on their practices and experiences. Documentary review of attendance lists and discipline records was conducted to confirm and supplement the acquired data. The validity of the research tools was achieved through expert evaluations and pilot tests, whilst their reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha known to yield a value of 0.87, which reveals that the questionnaire is reliable and has high internal consistency.

Prior to gathering data, the researcher received an introductory letter from the Postgraduate Office of JUCo and gained research approval from the concerned educational authorities and the chosen schools. After coding and analyzing the quantitative data using IBM SPSS Version 24, the descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages) were used to summarize the data, while the Pearson Product Moment Correlation was employed to test the connection between attendance registers, discipline records, and effective student behaviour monitoring. The analysis suggested statistically significant positive relations ($p < 0.05$), which showed the contribution of attending as well as using discipline records in terms of effective student behaviour monitoring. The qualitative data were analyzed through content analysis in order to find themes, which were aligned with the quantitative analysis results.

DATA ANALYSIS

This section includes the results of research conducted on 93 teachers and five heads of schools in the private secondary schools of Morogoro Municipality. Quantitative data were analysed and presented in the form of frequencies and percentages, whereas interview data and documentary evidence were used to corroborate the results. The analysis focuses on the demographic characteristics of the respondents, attendance records, discipline tracking records, early identification of absenteeism, and challenges encountered in accessing and utilising these records.

Demographic Data

The study achieved a high response rate, with 93 out of 104 teachers (89.4%) returning properly completed questionnaires and all five selected head teachers (100%) participating in the interviews, resulting in an overall response rate of 89.9%. The response rate was deemed sufficient for valid findings and reduce non-response bias. A total of 98 respondents (93 teachers and 5 head teachers) were involved in the study. As for their background characteristics, most teachers had 3 to 5 years of teaching experience (31.2%), and the majority of head teachers had 3 to 5 years of administrative experience (60.0%), meaning that respondents had enough professional experience to give relevant information regarding the attendance and discipline management. The majority of teachers (51.6%) were subject teachers while all the teachers interviewed were head teachers, which were those who were directly involved in the monitoring of student attendance and discipline. The findings also revealed that 62.4% of the teachers and 100% of head teachers were formally trained with respect to attendance and discipline record management, among which, almost half (45.8%) were trained within the last year, indicating a high level of knowledge and skills in monitoring student behaviour. By sex, the majority of the teachers were male (77.4%) and the majority of the head teachers were male (60.0%) with the females making up the rest of the two groups, thus ensuring that both genders were represented in the study.

Contribution of Attendance Registers to the Early Detection of Truancy among Students in Private Secondary Schools in Morogoro Municipality

The objective sought to examine how attendance registers contribute to the early detection of truancy among students in private secondary schools in Morogoro Municipality. Truancy is one of the earliest indicators of student disengagement from school and is often associated with declining academic performance, indiscipline, and increased risk of dropping out. Attendance registers provide schools with daily records of students' attendance, enabling teachers and school administrators to identify unusual attendance

patterns and intervene before absenteeism develops into a persistent behavioural problem. Data for this objective were collected from 93 teachers through questionnaires and complemented by interviews with five head teachers. The findings are presented in Table 4.12.

Table 1: Contribution of Attendance Registers to the Early Detection of Truancy (n = 93)

Indicator	Frequency	Percent (%)
Attendance registers are very effective in monitoring truancy	36	38.7
Attendance registers are effective in monitoring truancy	29	31.2
Students are formally flagged after 3–5 days of absence	29	31.2
Students are formally flagged after 2 days of absence	23	24.7
Attendance registers trigger parent contact (Strongly Agree)	47	50.5

Source: Field Data (2026).

The results show that registers of attendance are a significant source in identifying pupils' attendance problems early. Over 69.9% (31.2% effective, 38.7% very effective) of those responding rated attendance registers as effective/very effective for identifying deliberate absenteeism. Much smaller numbers thought that they were ineffective, and this indicates that attendance registers are well trusted as a reliable instrument in identifying pupils whose attendance is becoming poor. This means that attendance registers are not only used to take daily attendance, but also to track how students' attendance patterns are changing that could need immediate attention by the school.

The raw data can be analyzed further to gain deeper insights into the role of attendance registers in behaviour monitoring. Almost three-fourths of teachers strongly agreed that attendance records reflect excused versus unexcused absences; 19.4% agreed. Likewise 64.5% strongly agreed that registers of attendance could be used to evidentiate behavioural patterns like recurrent absenteeism, while 25.8% agreed. The results suggest that attendance registers are more than just attendance books; they are a source of behavioural data. Teachers can differentiate between acceptable and unacceptable absences and be alert to patterns of absences to identify a student who may be engaging in behaviours that ultimately become a behaviour of truancy rather than a legitimate absence from school.

The research also revealed that there are intervention thresholds in place in schools for addressing absenteeism. Some 31.2% reported that students are formally flagged after 3 to 5 days of unexcused absence and 24.7% said students are flagged after 2 consecutive days of absence. Less than one third said they intervened after 1 day, while 16.1% stated there was no formal threshold they knew of, and 8.6% said their schools did not have a fixed intervention point. The results indicate that while private secondary schools have processes in place for identifying those at risk of truancy, the processes of intervention are not uniformly standardized in all private secondary schools. There are no shared targets, so that some pupils might not be identified until their attendance issues are more serious.

One key finding is that attendance registers foster interaction between parents and schools. Half of the respondents (50.5%) strongly agreed that students' attendance records automatically lead to parental contact if they miss a set number of days, and 18.3% agreed. Shows that attendance registers are a warning system between school and family in tackling attendance issues. Parental involvement in the early stages makes both parents and the school more accountable and allows schools to be aware of issues affecting the home that may lead to school absences before they get out of hand.

The analysis also showed that the attendance monitoring process goes beyond the recognition of absenteeism. The raw data indicated that 65.6% of the respondents considered attendance registers very effective in monitoring general absenteeism, while 38.7% saw them as very effective in monitoring truancy, 38.7% saw them as very effective in monitoring lateness and 37.6% saw them as very effective in monitoring early departure from school. This implies that attendance registers can give schools more information than just information on the number of students who are present at school. Teachers, therefore, can detect a number of warning indicators, such as late arrival, irregular attendance and unauthorized school leave, that are frequently indicative of more serious behavioural issues.

The results of this qualitative study provide strong confirmation to the quantitative results. In the interviews, all five head teachers highlighted that registers assist schools to take prompt action when there are unusual attendance levels. One head teacher described: “When the student is absent for several consecutive days, the class teacher reports immediately, it is not necessary to wait for the problem to become serious, as the attendance register can help us to know the situation early.” (2026, Interview, HT1).

Another head teacher emphasised that parents need to be engaged at early stages and said: Once it reaches our school's limit, "parents are contacted immediately and reasons for absenteeism are discussed and agreed upon to get the student into regular attendance. (HT3, Interview, 2026)

Likewise, another respondent noted that attendance is tracked to inform counselling: "Attendance registers are used to identify students who are regularly missing classes before any punishment is enforced, to know the reasons for their absence through counselling and guidance." (HT4, Interview, 2026).

"We have another head teacher who explained that students who have been away for extended periods of time must come back with parents/guardians to be readmitted to class," said one teacher

"If a student starts to miss school without permission for a few days, we need to get the parent to come to school before the student is able to come back to school, this way we can work out the issue together" (HT2, Interview, 2026).

The interviews also confirmed that attendance records help schools avoid future disciplinary issues from the start. As one Headteacher noted: "Poor attendance is the most serious discipline issues that we have, and by noticing these early, it is easier to manage them." (HT5, Interview, 2026).

The results are also confirmed by the answers to the open-ended questionnaire. Some teachers said they were able to discover pupils who were often absent from school, late and taking lessons and would then inform parents and offer counselling. One teacher gave an account of a student regularly being absent from the first two lessons each day, who attended once the parents were brought in. One of the respondents explained how he had observed that students were leaving the school premises during school hours by checking the attendance sheets, and that this was an effective way for the school to stop the behaviour from spreading to other students. A few of the respondents, however, did report instances where the records of attendance were incomplete and this prevented the identification of repeated absenteeism, which showed that not only does the attendance register have to be available to be useful, but it also needs to be kept in a consistent and accurate manner.

This study supports the results of some past studies and also gives some new insights. Heyne, Keppens, and Dvořák (2022) determined that attendance records are only effective when schools routinely review attendance data and apply it to help students and not as a formality. Early detection of absenteeism also allows schools to take timely action to lower absenteeism (Hallam and Rogers,2008). According to Duke (2020), the continuous presence monitoring helps to build a stronger relationship between students and school, and decreases the risk of behavioural issues, because schools can intervene before the absenteeism becomes chronic. Similarly, Sekiwu, Ssempala, and Frances (2020) reported that frequent monitoring of school attendance increased learners' engagement and reduced absenteeism in schools in Uganda. The present study differs from these earlier studies by finding that attendance registers at private secondary school in Morogoro Municipality are not only used to identify those absent from school, but are also used to engage parents, counsel, and follow-up their behavior, with variations in intervention thresholds among schools indicating the need for more standardized attendance monitoring.

The results also support the Faucet Theory proposed by Entwisle, Alexander and Olson (1997) which states that a continuous monitoring process enables institutions to identify new issues before they become hard to manage. Attendance registers are also continuous monitoring tools, as they provide information that aids teachers and school leaders to identify early signs of school absence, provide counselling, engage parents, and take corrective measures as soon as possible. The study, therefore, shows that attendance registers are not just administrative documents rather tools for early warning which help in the improvement of student behaviour monitoring system and diminishes the possibility of chronic absenteeism in private secondary schools.

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This part summarises the findings, conclusions and recommendations from the study on the importance of attendance and discipline records in tracking student misconduct in private secondary schools in Morogoro Municipality. In this context, the summary also includes the conclusions based on the four objectives of the study, the recommendations containing practical actions aimed at improving maintenance and usage of attendance and discipline records for timely detection and control of student misconduct.

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

This study focused on the role of attendance registers in the early detection of school absenteeism in private secondary schools in Morogoro Municipality. The results indicated that in almost all the schools that participated, attendance registers were kept and updated regularly. Attendance was taken every day, primarily by class teachers, with most teachers saying that school management regularly checked attendance. The study also confirmed that attendance registers did not only serve to record whether pupils were present or absent but were also utilised to differentiate between excused and unexcused absenteeism, to identify pupils who had repeated absenteeism, to monitor lateness, and also to gain insight on the behavioural patterns that may be related to truancy. The interviews with head teachers revealed that attendance records were accurate in indicating students' need for early help.

The study also determined that attendance registers played an important role in the detection of truancy. Most respondents felt that attendance registers were effective or very effective in detecting pupils who deliberately failed to attend school or classes. The majority of schools had identified thresholds for intervention, with students who had a number of absences being identified and then followed up on the school, by the parents and/or administration using counselling, parental engagement and/or administrative measures. Another benefit of attendance records was that they helped to foster communication between the school and the parents

because they resulted in immediate communication when the attendance rate fell above the acceptable rate of absenteeism. Head teachers highlighted the importance of checking attendance registers at an early stage in the day to be able to address attendance issues before they escalated into disciplinary issues, improving pupil attendance and engagement.

Lastly, the results showed that attendance registers were a successful method to track nonattendance in school, but a few barriers hindered their maximum use. These ranged from the lack of a common set of intervention thresholds in schools, to poor digital record management, to records not being analysed in some schools, to occasionally slow turnaround time for attendance information. Some teachers also commented that the lack of records may cause students who have persistent absences to be delayed in being identified. In spite of these difficulties, both quantitative and qualitative results revealed that attendance registers are still a useful component of early warning which help facilitate timely interventions, better collaboration between schools and parents and effective monitoring of student behaviour in private secondary schools in Morogoro Municipality.

CONCLUSIONS

From the study results, it is concluded that attendance registers are important tools in detecting pupil's absenteeism in private secondary schools in Morogoro Municipality. The study found that teachers and school leaders who regularly record and review attendance can identify pupils who are regularly absent, help to differentiate between absence for legitimate and inappropriate reasons, and notice attendance trends which could signal the onset of behavioural issues. Attendance registers are therefore effective as an early warning system that helps to implement proactive rather than reactive student attendance management.

The study also finds that attendance registers can be used to help with timely interventions, as they are able to provide reliable information that helps inform counselling, parental involvement and administration follow-up. Regularly auditing attendance records gives schools a more advantageous chance to take preventative action before high levels of absenteeism escalate into chronic truancy or other disciplinary issues. The results also show that the cooperation of the school with parents based on attendance data gives an added boost to the work of improving pupil attendance and fosters greater responsibility for pupils.

Even with these positive impacts, the study suggests that the effectiveness of attendance registers is dependent on their use, not merely their availability. Attendance registers are not fully used to identify early truancy due to different procedures of interventions across schools, not using digital attendance management systems, and inconsistent analysis of attendance records. Therefore, ongoing data analysis, uniform attendance tracking, ongoing staff development and enhanced parent involvement to support timely and effective interventions for at-risk students is needed to maximize the value of attendance registers.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are proposed to improve the use of attendance registers in the early detection of truancy among students in private secondary schools in Morogoro Municipality.

Recommendations to School Administrators

School administrators should strengthen attendance monitoring by ensuring that attendance registers are completed accurately, reviewed daily, and analysed regularly to identify students with repeated absenteeism. Schools should also establish standardised procedures for identifying and responding to truancy so that interventions are implemented consistently across all classes. In addition, schools should consider introducing digital attendance management systems to improve record accuracy, facilitate timely analysis, and enhance early detection of truancy.

Recommendations to Teachers

Teachers should use attendance registers not only as administrative records but also as behaviour-monitoring tools. They should regularly review attendance patterns to identify students showing early signs of truancy and initiate timely interventions such as guidance and counselling, classroom follow-up, and communication with parents. Teachers should also ensure that attendance records are completed accurately and promptly to support effective decision-making.

Recommendations to Parents and Guardians

Parents and guardians should work closely with schools in monitoring their children's attendance by responding promptly whenever schools report repeated absenteeism. They should regularly follow up on their children's attendance and cooperate with teachers and school administrators in addressing the factors contributing to truancy. Strong school-parent collaboration will help improve regular attendance and promote positive student behaviour.

Recommendations to the Ministry of Education and School Owners

The Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, together with private school owners, should develop clear guidelines on the effective use of attendance registers for early identification and management of truancy. They should also organize regular training programmes for teachers and school administrators on attendance data analysis and behaviour monitoring, while supporting schools in adopting digital attendance management systems to improve efficiency and timely intervention.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future studies should examine the effectiveness of digital attendance management systems in reducing truancy and improving student behaviour in secondary schools. Similar studies should also be conducted in public secondary schools and in other regions of Tanzania to compare attendance monitoring practices across different school settings. In addition, future researchers may investigate the relationship between attendance monitoring, academic performance, and student retention to provide broader evidence for improving educational management and student success.

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