Causes and Approaches Used in the Management of Truancy in Public Secondary Schools in Nyamira North District, Nyamira County, Kenya

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Abstract
Purpose: The study sought to investigate the causes and approaches used in the management of truancy in Nyamira North district in Kenya. The study was guided by the following specific objectives: to analyze the school related causes of truancy in secondary schools in Nyamira North district; to assess home related causes of truancy in secondary schools in Nyamira North district; and to evaluate the approaches used in the management of truancy in secondary schools in Nyamira North district. Literature review on truancy was undertaken in order to provide a bridge and clear understanding of existing knowledge base in the problem area. **Methods:** The literature review is based on authoritative, recent, and original sources such as journals, books, thesis and academic projects. A descriptive survey was used to undertake the study. The method permits gathering of data from the respondents in natural settings. A census of 36 public secondary schools in Nyamira North District was undertaken. All the school principals participated in the study. In order to obtain data from the students, stratified random sampling was used, where by in each school, forms 1, 2, 3 and 4 were each represented by 8 students, selected at random. In total 36 Principals and 288 students participated in the study. A semi-structured questionnaire was used to collect primary data from the respondents in public secondary schools in Nyamira North District. Content analysis was employed for data pertaining to the profile of the respondents while data pertaining to the objectives of the study was analyzed by employing descriptive statistics. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used in data entry and analysis. **Results:** The study findings showed that even though the main causes of truancy vary from study to study, a combination of home, school and individual factors may be involved. The main causal factors of truancy include individual factors, institutional factors, and family backgrounds and community factors. The individual factors include: anxiety and fear; poor social skills; low self – esteem; anti-social behavior; scholastic failure; learning problems; cognitive style; poor habits arising from initially legitimate reasons. The institutional factors include: dilapidated school building and poor facilities; school size; movement between classes during lesson changes; classroom management; bullying; educator-learner relationship; teaching or instructional approach. The family and community factors include: socio-economic status of parents; marital status of parents; poor involvement and supervision; peer influence; violence and drug use. The findings also show that the approaches used in the management of truancy in schools may be categorized into the following: personal traits, school aspects, community aspects and others. In view of the findings, the following recommendations were made: there is need for the management of schools to accord the students opportunities for connection and social bonding; there is need for the management of schools to emphasize students' commitment in schools; the management of schools should endeavor to involve students in as many school activities as possible, including day-to-day management of the schools; and belief and values should be emphasized as they are often not formally written but serve as the moral conscience of the society that determines right from wrong.
Keywords: Truancy, Public Secondary schools

1.0   INTRODUCTION

In this section, the background information on the seriousness and implications of truancy are discussed. The chapter also includes the statement of the problem, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, delimitation and limitation of the study, assumptions of the study, conceptual framework and operational definition of terms.

1.1   Background of the Study

According to Whitney (1994), truancy is the absence that has not been authorized by the school and where leave has not been given or approved. In this research, the term "truancy" is broadly defined as unauthorized absence from school. The definition is adopted with the assumption that absence with the knowledge and permission of the school and parents or guardian does not constitute truancy. Since the study sought to explore the type of truancy as manifested at secondary schools, both concepts of truancy (blanket and post-registration) are relevant

and were investigated.

Educational attainment is an important determinant of diverse health outcomes. According to Stiggins (1997), truancy among adolescents jeopardizes chances of achieving their educational goals. Truant behaviors are also associated with various psychosocial problems. Educational attainment is a crucial predictor of several health-related lifestyles and premature mortality. However truant behaviors have potential to curtail possibilities of meaningful academic achievement. Truancy is a predictor of multiple health risk behaviors among adolescents. Truant adolescents have been reported to engage in risky sexual practices, illicit drug use, alcohol drinking and cigarette smoking (Stiggins, 1997). Truancy affects students of all ages, from all types of communities and socioeconomic backgrounds (National Center for School Engagement, 2004). Heaviside *et al.* (1998) observed that "for instance in the United Sates of America, unexcused absences can number in the thousands on certain days". Therefore, in each school day, there are hundreds of thousands of children missing from their classroom-many without a bona fide excuse (Baker *et al.,* 2001).

When truancy leads to school failure or to dropping out of school, youths are also likely to experience higher rates of unintended pregnancies, more criminal behavior, greater instability in career paths, higher rates of unemployment, and lower lifetime earnings (Brezina, Piquero, and Mazerolle, 2001). Truancy also has immediate and long-term consequences for communities in terms of public safety. Thus, there are two primary purposes for reducing truancy. The first is to have all youth attend and be engaged in school so that they will have successful and productive lives. The second is to increase citizen safety, both in the short term, through having students in school rather than out in the community during school hours, and in the long term, through school engagement and achievement leading to later adult responsibility and productivity (Heaviside *et al.,* 1998).

Azizi and Ramli (2009) reported that about 10% of school non-attendance by children in Kenya was due to truancy. Olley studied 169 street youths in Ibadan, Nigeria (Azizi *et al*, 2009) and about 47% of these had a history of truancy. These studies suggest an association between truancy and being on the streets as well as that truancy is an important contributor of non-attendance at school. Gumpel and Meadan (2000) indicated that other factors that have been reported as associations with truancy are level of parental education, amount of adolescents' unsupervised time, poor school grades and illicit drug use. Table 1.1 below presents a summary of data on reported truancy cases in Nyamira North district over a period of three years (2007 to 2009).

Table 1.1: Cases of truancy reported in Nyamira North district

Category of truancy	Type of truancy	Number of cases reported		
		2007	2008	2009
School related	Fear of disciplinary action	205	235	265
	Difficult homework	312	356	387
	A lot of homework	214	304	358
	Loitering in urban centers	115	210	212
	Engaging in illegal activities such as drug and substance abuse, drug trafficking and stealing	39	52	61
	Involvement in secret societies	3	5	7
	Gambling	886	929	1051
Home related influence	Quarrels among parents	86	108	169
	Quarrels with siblings	71	99	108
	Feelings of neglect	285	296	309
	Financial constraints - undertaking part-time jobs (such as "Sokohuru")	610	781	935
	Financial constraints - lack of fees, uniforms and books	3116	814	508

Source: Nyamira District Education Office (June, 2012).

Truancy is costly. It cost students an education, resulting in reduced earning capacity. Truancy costs businesses, which must pay to train uneducated workers. It costs taxpayers, who must pay higher taxes for law enforcement and welfare costs for drop outs that end up on welfare rolls or underemployed. Truants are most likely to drop out of school, and have the highest dropout rates (Dynarski and Gleason, 1999). School dropouts have significant fewer job prospects, make lower salaries, and are more often unemployed than the youth who stay in school (Hollinger, 1996)**.** This study sought to investigate the problem of truancy among secondary school students in Nyamira North district.

1.2   Statement of the Problem

There is limited data on the prevalence and factors associated with truancy among secondary school students in Nyamira North district. Data on the extent and nature of truancy in secondary schools in Kenya is often based on

information obtained from class registers. The figures in table 1.1 above show that truancy cases reported in secondary schools in Nyamira district was on the increase save for truancy related to lack of fees, which seems to have been addressed by the introduction of free secondary education in Kenya. However, this information may be inadequate or almost incomplete and limits the understanding of the phenomenon, thus making it difficult to develop appropriate intervention strategies. More insight on how truancy manifests is needed to provide a base on which to suggest, plan and develop effective intervention strategies. This study serves to bridge the information gap regarding the nature of truancy and to provide a picture of the life world of truants in secondary schools in Nyamira North district.

1.3   Purpose of the Study
The study sought to investigate the causes of truancy and approaches used in the management and reduction of truancy in secondary schools in Nyamira North district.

1.4   Objectives of the Study
The study was guided by the following specific objectives:
  (i)   To analyze the school related causes of truancy in secondary schools in Nyamira North district
  (ii)   To assess home related causes of truancy in secondary schools in Nyamira North district
  (iii) To evaluate the approaches used in the management of truancy in secondary schools in Nyamira North district.

1.5   Significance of the Study
It is anticipated that the study will benefit the following:
Top management of the ministry of education: Findings of the study will facilitate enhanced management of truancy in secondary schools by the top management of the ministry of education. The policy makers in the ministry will gain a better understanding of the causes of truancy in secondary schools and the approaches that have been used elsewhere in the management of truancy, on whose basis, effective policies was formulated.

The management of secondary schools: The managers of secondary schools, who are expected to play a leading role in implementation of policies formulated by the ministry will get deeper insight of truancy management and replicate worthwhile strategies used in this study sample of schools in their respective schools in order to minimize the problem of truancy.

Parents and teachers of children in secondary schools: The parents and teachers of the schools in Nyamira North district will get the opportunity to better understand their role in the management of truancy amongst secondary school pupils. The knowledge gained will further enhance the strategies to be developed by the parents and teachers in truancy management.

Scholars and Researchers: The problems associated with studies on truancy should not prevent further research from being conducted. Solutions should be found, or the causes at least eliminated, because truancy is regarded as a serious problem with socio-economic implications. The study will inspire future researchers to carry out further research in the same or related field.

1.6   Theoretical Framework and Conceptual Framework
1.6.1   Theoretical Framework
For the purposes of this study, social control theory and its four constructs of social bonding (attachment, involvement, commitment, and belief) are used. Maddox and Prinz (2003) noted that the theory is assumed to be the most effective to understand the truant, their decisions to truant, and their interaction within the middle school from the principals' viewpoint. Social control theory is ideal for understanding chronic truancy because it has become one of the major theories in understanding delinquent behaviors. Hirschi (1969) determined that connections to people, in the creation of a relationship, are important factors in delinquency. In other words, social bond matters. For middle school students who are exploring their own identity and finding their own sense of self, opportunities for social bonding is an essential ingredient to their academic and future success (DeMido, 1991; Manning, 1993; Eccles *et al*, 1999; Zins *et al*, 2004).

A lack of opportunities for connection and social bonding to school is purportedly linked to students' disengagement and chronic truancy. One hypothesis is based on what Hirschi and other colleague posit the absence of inhibition or lack of strong positive relationships and presence of weak social bonding, especially to school, facilitates engagement in truancy or various forms of antisocial behaviors (Hirschi, 1969; Brezina, Piquero, and Mazerolle, 2001; Sigfusdottir, Farkas and Silver, 2004). Researchers continue to refer to this theory as one of the first theories to examine school social bond as a primary predictor of delinquency and the four constructs of social bond as key protective factors for the school-aged child with even more influence than family (Crosnoe, Erickson and Dornbusch, 2002; Maddox and Prinz, 2003; Eith, 2005).

Toby (1957) has termed this lack of bonding as lack of *stakes in conformity*. Those who have less to

lose because they are not attached or committed are more likely to take risks. Early social control theory espoused that this risk is based both on students' personal decisions to not comply and on school principals' labeling of the non-compliant behavior (Reiss, 1951). Ideally, there is a presumed correlation of social bond to school engagement and chronic truancy. However, this relationship may be impacted by certain school demographics that help to create or inhibit this relationship within the school (Eith, 2005).

Hirschi (1969) delineates his four major constructs of the social bond. He describes *Attachment* as affection or close relationships with others. This element suggests that students with stronger attachments are less likely to truant and violate school regulations because they are actively engaged. The truants who do not feel attached to persons or entities within the school may not be engaged in opportunities that build social bonds; thereby, they do not embrace the schools' values and norms, and have less of a stake in the school. The second major element is commitment.

Commitment describes the investment made in conventional activities such as peer relationships and school activities. When students invest time, energy, and personal resources into school, they are less likely to abandon it (Hirschi, 1969). Therefore, middle school students who feel committed and invested in school, via academics, extracurricular activities, leadership opportunities, and relationships with a good teacher, friend, or peer group may be less likely to disengage from school and truant. The third element is involvement.

Involvement speaks directly to what individuals find themselves doing to keep busy and deterred from delinquent activities. The more they are invested and engaged in pro-social, structured activities (studying habits), like school, leadership in a club or sports team, the less likely they are to engage in deviant activities, like truanting because they are busy. However, when they cannot find or are not involved in conventional activities that bring them joy in the school, they are more likely to invest in unconventional activities. The last of the four elements of social bonding is belief.

Belief and values are often not formally written but serve as the moral conscience of the society that determines right from wrong. This element speaks to the degree to which students have belief in the value of school and feel that the school's rules and societal values are fair. Moral education is seen as having a direct effect on students' decisions to truant (Siegel and Senna, 2007). Many of these values are taught in the home and are often emphasized in the school. The societal belief in the value of education is a key factor in choosing (or not choosing) to be truant. Many students that are truant do not yet believe that without an education they are bound to failure or limited opportunities.

Social Control theory postulates that the higher the presence of these four constructs, the higher the level of social bonding. The seven needs of middle school students outlined by Lipsitz (1984) earlier in this chapter appear to mimic Hirschi's four constructs of social bonding – attachment, involvement, commitment, and belief. *Attachment* is clearly present when Lipsitz calls for positive social interaction with peers and adults, *involvement* when Lipsitz calls for meaningful participation in school and community activities, and *commitment* when Lipsitz asks that schools provide opportunities for students to explore diversity, self-exploration, and show competence and achievement to meet their personal needs for connection. *Belief* is the last of Hirschi's four constructs and is also addressed by Lipsitz' needs. Lipsitz discusses the schools' provision of clear limits, rules, and norms in the school's organizational structure. Both Lipsitz and Hirschi offer different organizing frameworks for addressing the needs of adolescents.

While social control theory proposes that strong personal bonds deter delinquency, it is an individually driven theory, bringing into question the need to include community and structural community factors. The theory was not originally organized as a way to answer 'why people break the norms of society such as through delinquency but what impacts those decisions. Researchers like Hoffmann (2002) and Kornhauser (1978) suggest that social bonds are impacted by deteriorated structural and community-driven factors that further facilitate involvement in negative behaviors such as truancy. Evidently, where one lives and spends most of their childhood (the school environment) does influence behavior (Catalano and Hawkins, 1996; Herrenkohl, Hawkins, Chung, Hill, and Battin-Pearson, 2001; Sheidow, Gorman-Smith, Tolan, and Henry, 2001). In addition, this study included selected demographic variables and controlled for their effect on schools opportunities for social bonding and principal's perceptions of students' social bonding on rates of chronic truancy.

1.6.2   Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for the study is presented in figure 1.1 below.

Independent Variables   **Intervening Variable**   **Dependent Variable**

School related factors
- dilapidated school buildings
- Poor facilities
- School size
- Movement between classes during lesson changes
- Classroom management
- Bullying
- Educator-learner relationship
- Teaching or instructional approach

Home related factors
- Socio-economic status of parents
- Marital status of parents
- Poor involvement and supervision by parents
- Peer influence
- Violence and drug use.

Proper Management of Truancy using:
- *Personality aspects*: tutoring and mentor systems; and counseling and therapy.
- *The school Aspects*: reinforcement & reward systems; instructional approaches; effective monitoring, registration & recording of attendance; welcome back to school; and student welfare
- *Community aspects:* life-skills education; in-service training; acting fast on learner absence; ordinances; and attending or truancy officers

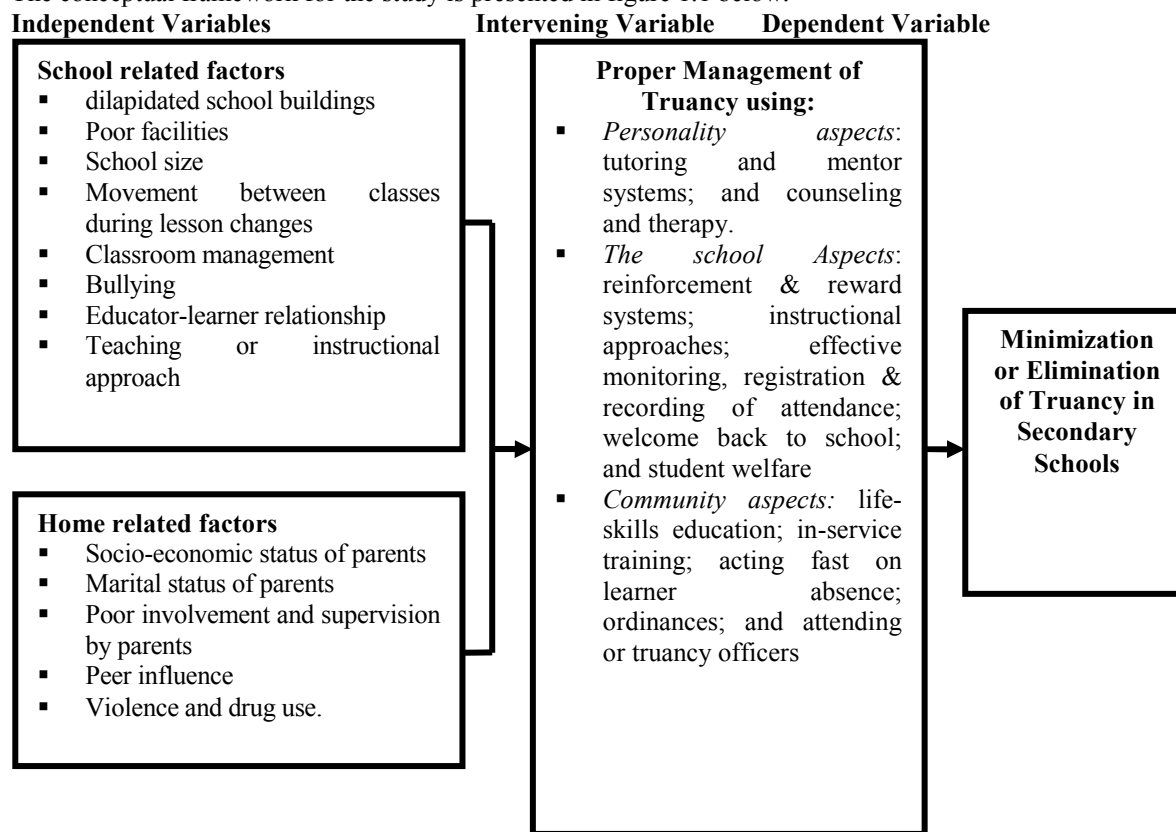**Minimization or Elimination of Truancy in Secondary Schools**

Figure 1.1: Conceptual Framework

It is evident that truancy is a resultant effect of school related and home related factors. The school related factors include: dilapidated school building and poor facilities, school size, movement between classes during lesson changes, classroom management, bullying, educator-learner relationship and teaching or instructional approach. The home related factors include: socio-economic status of parents, marital status of parents, poor involvement and supervision by parents, peer influence, violence and drug use.

Truancy should be managed by using the following approaches:

Personality aspects: tutoring and mentor systems; and counseling and therapy.

The school Aspects: using reinforcement and reward systems; using a variety of instructional approaches; effective monitoring, registration and recording of attendance; welcome back to school; and student welfare

Community aspects: life-skills education; in-service training; acting fast on learner absence; ordinances; and attending or truancy officers

2.0   LITERATURE REVIEW
2.1   Types and Categories of Truancy
2.1.1   Types of Truancy

According to Reid (1999), there are at least three types of truancy: *(i) Specific lesson absence* – those students who skip a particular class, such as Math, English, or PE; (ii) *Post registration truancy* – those students who register for class as present and then leave; and (ii) *Parental-condoned truancy* – those students whose parents agree that they can miss school for various reasons (Reid, 1999). In addition to the types of truancy, Reid (1999) offers a list of possible categories for truants.

2.2.2   Categories of Truancy

Reid (2000) states that there are four major categories of truants: (i) traditional, (ii) psychological, (iii) institutional, and (iv) generic. The *traditional truant* is often shy, has a low self-concept, and removes him or herself from unaccommodating surroundings, therefore missing school primarily for social conditions or difficulties. The *psychological truant* more typically shows behavioral manifestations of laziness, illness, fear of a person or thing, or other issues, thus missing school for emotional factors (Reid, 1999). Third, the *institutional truants* are often leaders. They head their own peer groups and are generally not physically absent from school – often engaged in bullying and harassment. Institutional truants are withdrawn from lessons and skip school

mainly for reasons related to the school itself or contextual school factors. Lastly, the *generic truant* is absent from school haphazardly for various reasons and shows evidence of many of the other categories of truants (Reid, 1999).

2.2.3   Causes of Truancy

Identifying causal factors of truancy is vital in developing preventive methods and interventions (Lehr, Sinclair, and Christenson, 2004; Reid, 2005). Recent research suggests that even though the main causes of truancy vary from study to study, a combination of home, school, and individual factors may be involved (Reid, 2005). This literature review discussed the three main causal factors of truancy that have been identified in the literature. These factors include individual factors, institutional factors, and family backgrounds and community factors (Reid and Kendall, 1982; McCluskey, Lindstadt, 2005; Ventura and Miller, 2005).

Individual Factors

The contributing causes of truancy are intrinsic and located within the learner. Some of the personal attributes of truanting learners that have been identified in the literature are the following:

Anxiety and Fear: In a South Africa Study aimed at predicting truancy, Nel (1975) found that truants tend to be more anxious, and experience more stress related to frustration than non truants. It appears that this study is consistent with research finding where High School Personality Questions (HSPQ) test results revealed that truants are more sensitive and emotionally less stable than non-truants (Malan, 1972). The concept of anxiety is often associated with psychoanalytical theory.

Poor Social Skills: Lewis (1995) asserts that boredom, isolation and lack of friends may be factors that pull a learner off school. It appears that an inability to cope with the demands of making friends triggers a strong impulse to escape from the anxiety-provoking situation, thus leading to truancy. This means that some learners respond to a socially challenging or emotionally threatening situation at school by playing truant.

Low self – esteem: Research indicates that certain personality traits, including lower levels of self esteem, make some learners more prone to absenteeism than their peers Reids (2002). However, research conducted by Sommer and Nigel (1991) failed to show a link between truancy and low self-esteem and to some extent confirmed results obtained earlier in South Africa, where truants studied by Malan (1972) tended to be more assertive and dominant than the study population.

Anti-social Behavior: Reynolds, Jones, Leger and Murgatroyd (1980) define anti-social behavior as "a diagnostic label used to describe children and adolescents who display a persistent and repetitive pattern of antisocial behaviors that violate the right of others". Antisocial behaviors that an individual with conduct disorder displays include defying authorities, lying, fighting, cruelty to animals and people, as well as truant behavior. Therefore, a well-behaved learner can easily make friends and suffer little isolation, and is more likely to cope with the stresses of schooling.

Scholastic Failure: Truants tend to perform poorly in examinations. Gray and Jesson (1990) state that, in England, secondary-school learners who admitted that they have once engaged in serious levels of truancy were likely to report low levels of exam performance. A recent study conducted earlier in South Africa, about 30.7% of truants failed the final Grade 8 examination, compared to 11% of the population (Malan, 1972). A recent study conducted in some secondary schools in South Africa reveals that more truants than learners who are not truants failed three times or more (Mashine, 1997). That is, learners who play truant are more likely to have repeated a certain grade at school. This study suggests that truants are mostly learners who are likely to fail their exams and be retained in a grade. Van Petegem (1994) asserts that poor school results often precede obstinate truancy even though Research evidence suggests that there is no direct relationship between intelligence and truancy.

Learning Problems: According to Le Ritchie (1988), a lack of academic success creates a sense of frustration and a constant fear of failure. It appears that learners who experience difficulty with schoolwork often play truant in an attempt to evade frustration. An inability to cope with academic expectations and demands can contribute to truancy in secondary schools. Truancy appears to be a response to frustration and anxiety associated with difficult lessons. In many instances, lesson difficulty contributes more to post-registration truancy than blanket truancy (Kilpatrick, 1998). Truancy is linked to a lower level of academic self-concept, since these learners tend to perceive themselves as having less ability than their peers (Reid, 1999).

Cognitive Style: It is not enough to assume that learners have difficulty with schoolwork and play truant as a result, without investigating how they learn and process information. Cognitive style is defined as a consistent and typical manner in which an individual organizes and processes information (Riding and read, 1996). There are two basic dimensions of cognitive style, namely the wholistic - analytical style, which indicates an individual's preference for processing information either as a whole or in parts, and the verbal-Imagery style, which shows a tendency to represent information during thinking either verbally or in mental images (Rayner and Riding, 1996). Rayner and Riding (1996) conducted research on learners who have a condition that is known as school refusal. Learners who have such condition refuse to attend school but stay at home when not in school, complain about headaches, stomach pains or nausea and show signs of anxiety and depression (Egger, Costello

and Angold, 2003). In addition, such children tend to be compliant and well behaved, and, unlike truants, they stay at home with the parents' knowledge. Some children tend to display characteristics of both school refusal and truancy (Egger *et al.,* 2003)

Poor habits arising from initially legitimate reasons: In some instances, a learner stays away from school as a result of poor health or need to look after a sick family member. This pattern of absence may be common in the current era of the HIV/AIDS epidemic where a learner's initial absence is legitimate and may not be considered as truancy. However, such absence may lead to the generation of a pattern of non-attendance that is unacceptable, particularly if it is unauthorized. The effect of HIV/AIDS is evident in some parts of the country. Firstly, official absence may lead to a habitual pattern of absenteeism that can turn into truancy. Thus, a long period of absence needs to be followed up and monitored. Secondly, the initial reason that a learner gives for asking permission for absence is for the same reason. Furthermore, absenteeism that is initially official may later turn out to be categorized as truancy. Therefore, learners must be made aware of circumstances under which absence is officially allowed or excused and of their responsibility with regard to notifying the school about personal problems and other concerns.

Institutional Factors

Reid (2005) identified student-teacher relationships, the content and delivery of the curriculum, and bullying as some of the main causes of truancy. Others argue that truancy and nonattendance is the result of personality conflicts with teachers and students (Fornwalt, 1947). Fornwalt explained that teachers who subject their students to shame, sarcasm, name calling, ridicule, and humiliations are the direct causes of truancy. Additionally, the author stated that teachers who encourage their students not to attend class or who do not have any attendance polices are also a leading cause of truancy. Fornwalt stated that truancy is an escape mechanism and boys who truant are trying to get away from something, in this case the teachers. These findings are similar to the findings of Lindstadt, in which a correlation between teacher attitudes and truancy were found.

Barth (1984) and McCluskey *et al.* (2004) identified unsafe school environment, lack of effective and consistent school policies related to attendance, and teachers with low expectations for student achievement as some of the factors that cause truancy. Reid and Kendall (1982) found that schools that were characterized as small in class size, had lower institutional control, had less rigorous rule enforcement, had closer parent-school relationships, and had student involvement in the management of schools had lower rates of absences than schools that were custodial-oriented, had high levels of control, and had inflexible organizational systems. Reid and Kendall also found low attendance rates in schools that had well-planned curricula and realistic expectations of their children. Additionally, they found that irrelevant or unstimulating subject matter, lack of challenging school work, and poor relationships between teachers and students were factors associated with high absentee rates.

Dilapidated school building and poor facilities: In an attempt to find ways of combating truancy, Reid (1999) looked at evidence of research into effective schools and found that, among other factors, school buildings that are clean and well cared for are likely to make learners feel welcome. Attractive school buildings and a good atmosphere seem to create a sense of pride and belonging in learners. Reid states that an unattractive school environment, which is characterized by poor toilet facilities, a lack of proper ventilation and heating dilapidated buildings is unlikely to encourage school attendance.

School Size: According to Cohen and Ryan (1998), school size tends to affect the rate of truancy negatively, in that data collected from Tasmania (Australia) show that larger schools have higher rates of absenteeism. Further, a study of 175 rural schools in the USA shows that larger schools tend to have high rates of truancy and misbehavior. School size is likely to affect the school by making it difficult to control disruptive behavior, particularly when there are more learners than the educators can manage.

Movement between classes during lesson changes: In many instances, learners are expected to move between blocks of buildings to attend different lessons. This practice is common in subjects that involve practical work, for example, when learners have to go to a science laboratory. According to Hallman and Roaf (1995), walking long distances between the different classrooms during lesson changes may provide opportunities for skipping lessons.

Classroom management: Another aspect that affects regular attendance during lessons is classroom management and the way in which attendance is monitored. Administrative inefficiency in terms of registration and poor classroom management can contribute to lesson skipping (Lewis, 1995; Reynolds *et. al,* 1980). Classroom management requires a great deal of dedication and commitment from both the learners and the educator.

Bullying: Bullying is defined as the behavior that occurs when one or more individuals repeatedly inflict physical, emotional or verbal abuse on another (Fried and Fried, 2003). Physical abuse involves actions such as fighting, throwing an object at someone or taking someone's money or lunch; verbal abuse may include name-calling, or an intimidating text message sent by mobile phones; emotional bullying may involve pointing, laughing at, or socially isolating another child. Sexual bullying is also said to occur between male and female or can be male-to-male, but also female-to-female, for example, ridiculing a girl whose breasts jiggle when she runs (Fried and Fried, 2003).

Educator-learner relationship: Black (1996) observed that "negative attitudes displayed by some educators may drive certain pupils to school non-attendance. What this author reveal is that both blanket and post-registration truancy occur because some learners avoid certain teachers. When learners show a tendency of disliking a lesson, it might be that particular educator responds negatively to those learners. This leads to poor relationships between the two parties. This poor educator-learner relationship can also occur as a result of what is regarded as intentionally disinviting practice. According to Mashiane (1997), an educator functions at the level of intentionally dis-iniviting when he or she goes out of his or her way to send messages that destroy a learner. Learners may find such educators and subsequently the school, repulsive and may become truants. Another practice that contributes to truancy is shouting at learners in class (Black, 1996) and in some instances the negative remarks may even appear in the learner's books.

Teaching or instructional approach: The contribution an educator makes in perpetuating or causing truancy is not only related to how or she treats or relates to learners. The educator's instructional approach and his or her feelings towards his or her work may be one of the factors that cause some learners to play truant. An enthusiastic educator instills enthusiasm and motivation in learners. On the other hand, a demoralized educator who shows little interest in his or her work discourages learners. Furthermore, the educator's attitude towards his or her work could either be negative or positive, is contagious and often affects the learners (Donald, Lazarus and Lolwa, 1997). Enthusiastic educators may be perceived to have positive attitude towards their work and are more likely to be keen to vary their instructional approaches.

Family and Community Factors

Recent research has recognized families as having a major impact on student attendance (Epstein and Sheldon, 2002). According to NCSE (2004), most truant students have been exposed to poor living conditions and negative circumstances. Also, they report that factors such as child abuse and parental irresponsibility have a major impact on students. Similarly, Barth (1984) found that a lack of resources and family social support can cause difficulties with parents and thus prevent them from bringing their child to school. Factors such as family socioeconomic status, parenting skills, and child neglect have also been identified as factors that prevent children from attending school (McCluskey, Bynum, and Patchin, 2004).

The following family variables were found amongst truants:

Socio-economic Status of Parents: Research conducted in South Africa shows that some family circumstances are factors that contribute to higher rates of truancy (Malan, 1972). It was recently found that truants tend to come from larger families where parents have a lower level of education and pursue lower socio-economic occupations (Fox, 2000). The research findings cited above are constituent with some of the studies conducted abroad. Overseas researchers indicate that truants predominantly come from poor families living in overcrowded houses and economically deprived families (Le Ritche, 1998; Reid, 1999; Tyreman, 1958).

Marital Status of Parents: Another family variable that has been found to contribute to truancy is unstable family relationships, which include, divorce, parental separation and marital conflicts (Hallom and Roaf, 1995). When the relationship between parents breaks down, there is a likelihood that children will live with one parent or in an extended family structure.

Poor Involvement and Supervision: Parental involvement is an intentional act whereby a parent makes an effort to relate and interact with the child. Parental involvement include monitoring and helping with homework, attending school conferences and functions and providing as supportive learning environment (Crawage, 1992). When parents experience problems in their own lives that are related to intimate relationships and other external factors, they tend to focus less on their children. This can eventually lead to less involvement or a total lack of interest in the children, and subsequent problem behavior. Lack of parental interest, support or involvement in the learner's education is also associated with truancy (Cohen and Ryan, 1998) and many truants receive little or no parental support and encouragement (Reid, 1999). Nhlaop (1997) found that parents of truants are less interested in their children's schoolwork and encourage competency in children to a lesser extent.

Peer Influence: According to a study by Khoza (1997), the friends of truants attend school less regularly than those of learners who are not truants. Learners who play truant attend school only to be with friends and tend to hang around less with their peers who like school (Khoza, 1997). What is cited here is suggestive if the apparent consensus among some researchers that some learners begin to play truant purely to please friends. Such learners might be those with a personality that makes then vulnerable to the pressure of peers.

Violence and Drug Use: Maithela (1992) found that truancy levels tend to increase when some learners engage in violence, carry weapons and make other learners fear school. Truancy encourages the formation of gangs and can also result from fear of bullies who are gangsters. Therefore, truancy may have an indirect link with violence. Truants are more likely to be involved in alcohol, tobacco and other drug use; they tend to bond with drug-using peers; and often use drugs while bunking class (Hallfors *et al.,* 2002). The presence of violence, crime and negative peer culture in neighborhoods can cause emotional stress, which makes parenting tasks more difficult.

2.3   Approaches used in the Management of Truancy

2.3.1   Personality Aspects

Tutoring and mentor systems: When learners experience learning problems it is necessary to provide support that will help to maximize their chances for academic success, thereby reducing the opportunities fro playing truant. Cohen and Ryan (1998) maintain that learners should be provided with counseling and additional tutoring services as a means of reducing truancy. Academic support can be offered to groups or individual learners. Tutoring is particularly important, since some truants in the study by Malan (1972) indicated that they no assistance and had little time to do their homework at home.

Counseling and Therapy: Truanting learners who show signs of having emotional problems relating to poor social skills receive individual and or group therapy (Davis, 1999). According to Macldowie (1999), attendance increased by 7% in two schools in Kent when the Education Welfare Officer's intervention measures included counseling lessons.

2.3.2   The School Aspects

It is important to mention that strategies and initiatives that are used at the level of the individual learner also impact on the school in general. The approaches that are discussed in this section mainly address issues pertaining to reducing the impact of school factor as a step towards the management of truancy.

Using Reinforcement and Reward Systems: Like all other human beings, learners who play truant likely to improve or change their behavior if they are rewarded for desirable behavior. Macldowie (1999) found that developing and dispensing incentives for regular attendance were more effective than applying sanctions to truant.

Using a variety of Instructional Approaches: Instructional approaches that promote active exploration challenge learners to think about their own learning while using other media, such as music, movement and art, to enable them to optimize their own cognitive development and to take active control of their own lives (Donald *et al.,* 1997). It is a healthy learning and teaching environment of this kind that truants need. Cooperative learning activities can also promote the acquisition of social skills, which may be lacking in most learners who tend to play truant.

Effective Monitoring, Registration and Recording of Attendance: Research emphasizes the need for effective recording and monitoring as one of the starting points (Lewis, 1995; Reid, 2002). Some researchers propose the use of a computerized or electronic registration system as a tool for monitoring truancy levels (Macldowie, 1999; Reid, 1999). Computerized registration is said to help identify particular groups of truants, the lessons that are being missed or possible causes of truancy (Social Exclusion Unit, 1998). Learners are less likely to play truant when they know that attendance is being closely monitored.

Welcome Back to School: It is also important to ensure that learners feel welcome back to school after a period of absence in order to prevent further absence. According to Macldowie (1999), the attendance patterns of eight learners improved when one of the strategies included being welcomed back and when their teacher helped them to catch up with the work.

Student Welfare: It is only the administrative issues that are important in reducing truancy. The welfare or wellbeing of a student is also important. The need to look at student wellbeing is echoed by Donald et al. (1997), when stating that schools should work towards promoting whole and healthy development in both students and environment. In other words, problems must be "cured" and prevented, and schools must strive towards developing supportive environments. Lewis (1995) also suggests that pastoral systems and additional tutoring for learners who are identified as having poor literacy skills can reduce aspects of the school that tend to use them out of school. Reid (1999) suggests that the introduction of homework clubs and homework policies can help learners to develop their learning skills and lead to improved academic performance.

2.3.3   Community Aspects

Life-skills Education: According to Donald *et al.* (1997), life skills empower individuals to "engage and cope successfully with life and its challenges' and promote psychological competence. That is, schools must build the resiliency of their learners through life-skills education and thereby reduce the effect of vulnerability towards truancy in "at-risk" learners. Reid (1997) and Lewis (1995) assert that personal and social education programmes should not only help learners with skills that enable them to cope effectively with school and the world of work, but should also include truancy as a theme in their content. Reid (1999) maintains that truancy as a topic should be included or related to themes of the PSE (Personal and Social Education) programmes such as discipline, disruptive behavior, bullying and codes of practice.

In - service Training: The teacher In-service Project's intervention at Modderdam High School is a typical example of school organization development that helped to decrease the level of truancy in South Africa (De Jong, 2000). The author identifies nine major areas of improvement in the school, which include, amongst others, security, physical conditions, relationships between staff and learners, relationship between learners relationships between school and parents, management and governance, quality of teaching and a sense of identity and community.

Acting Fast on Learner Absence: In some instances, truancy reduction efforts focus is on early detection and includes efforts such as Stay in School Program, which targets students in middle school or what is known as the truant during the freshman year (US Department of Education, 1996). Another notable feature of these programmes is that support in the form of counseling for the youth and parenting skills training, and, in some instances, short-term family counseling, are also provided.

Ordinances: According to Pappas (1996), some cities have enacted daytime loitering ordinances and ant-truancy laws. Truants are referred to the juvenile traffic court and may have their driver's licenses delayed, suspended or revoked. The police officer is authorized to take the truants' right hand fingerprints where satisfactory evidence of identity is lacking and in this way to deny them the driving privilege. The loitering ordinance not only improved attendance rates in the whole school district by 2.2% in one year, but also helped to reduce the high school dropout rate by 57%. In addition, a school is expected to send a list of truants to the police agencies for cross-referencing and contacting the youth and their families, and in return the police supply the schools with a copy of the loitering/truancy warning notices.

Attending or Truancy Officers: The full-time services of attendance officers help schools to reduce truancy. According to MaclLdowie (1999), the appointment of officers had an immediate and lasting effect on attendance in Kent schools. It must be emphasized that the effect was particularly felt when the officers picked up truants on their first day of absence. Gerrard, Burhans and Fair (2003) also maintain that assigning a truancy to serious cases of truants and their families does increase attendance rates.

2.4   Previous Studies on Truancy

Lewis (1995) states that attendance difficulties may broadly result from a combination of "pull" and "push" factors. Pull factors are personal and social aspects that "pull" a learner out of school. The pull factors may be related to the psychological indices mentioned by Reid (2002), such as maladjustment, a lower general level of self-esteem and academic self-concept, anxiety and lower career aspirations. Other factors relating to the school and the classroom include bullying, the curriculum, boring lessons (Reid, 1999), teachers' humiliating remarks and poor record-keeping and school organization. According to Pappas (1996), truancy is often symptomatic of family dysfunction, since the parents of truants tend to be permissive, undisciplined and unavailable. Some authors believe that truancy is associated with a poor socio-economic background, including poverty, poor housing and unemployment (Bell, Rosen and Dynlacht, 1994). Some researchers state that there is a link between truancy and delinquent behavior (Collins, 1998; Reid, 1999).

2.5   Summary of the Research Gaps

This literature review has revealed various research findings. For example, intervention during the elementary school years can potentially prevent truancy later on (Ford and Sutphen, 1996). Previous researchers have identified non-attendance or irregular attendance, poor academic performance, and behavioral problems in elementary school as potential risk factors for truancy (Barth, 1984; Ford and Sutphen; Lehr *et al.,* 2004). According to Lehr *et al.,* children at risk for truancy can be identified as early as third grade. Lehr *et al.* explained that it is more effective to work with elementary school children than middle school or high school children because problems tend to be more complex and intense as children get older. Review of the literature has also shown that boys and girls tend to differ in characteristics and behavior at school (Langsford *et al*., 1998; Petrides *et al.,* 2005; Weden and Zabin, 2005).

In addition, from the review of literature, it is apparent that high rates of absenteeism and/or truancy are problems that affect many schools in many countries. Students who habitually miss school exhibit loss of learning and instruction, and have been identified as at-risk for dropping out of school altogether. School systems suffer also when students are absent by loss of instructional time that often must be repeated for the absentee student, which in turn leads to loss of instructional time for other students. Several causes for absenteeism have been identified, with statistics to support the theory of school refusal behavior (SRB), which may manifest in many ways, including truancy. Other identified causes for absenteeism include lack of parental involvement and supervision, lack of challenging curriculum for students, negative self-image and self-esteem, and participation in co-operative work experiences for older students. However, all the literature reviewed present information on studies undertaken in foreign countries and none in Kenya. This study, therefore, sought to replicate the findings to the Kenyan situation, particularly in Nyamira North District, Nyamira County.

3.0   METHODS
3.1   Research Design

Research design provides the glue that holds the research project together. A design is used to structure the research, to show how all of the major parts of the project, which include the samples or groups, measures, treatments or programs, and methods of assignment that work together to try to address the central research questions (Brown *et al,* 2003). A descriptive survey was used to undertake the study. The method permits

gathering of data from the respondents in natural settings. Descriptive research is designed to describe the characteristics or behaviors of a particular population in a systematic and accurate fashion. Survey research uses questionnaires and interviews to collect information about people's attitudes, beliefs, feelings, behaviors, and lifestyles.

Descriptive design is preferred because no matter what method is chosen to collect the data; all descriptive designs have one thing in common: they must provide descriptions of the variables in order to answer the question. One of the most useful methods of numeric analysis available is statistics and this study used this method to describe and make inferences about measurable characteristics of a large group based on measurements from the representative sample of the population. In particular, frequency distribution which was used in this study is intended to show the distribution (or the count) for each business entity to clearly spell out to what extent each of the various factors influences that particular company's social responsiveness activities.

3.2   Location of the Study
The study was located in Nyamira North District, Nyamira County, whose headquarter is located at Ekerenyo township. The area is dominated by small scale tea, coffee and maize farming. It experiences heavy rains throughout the year and fairly warm temperatures of about 20 degrees Celsius.

3.3   Target Population
The study focused on all the secondary schools in Nyamira North District, whose number stood at 36 as at 30th June 2012 (Nyamira North District Education Office, 2011). A census was undertaken since the schools are only 36 (Appendix III). The respondents in each of the schools were the Principals and students of the various schools.

3.4   Sampling Techniques and Sample Size
3.4.1   Sampling Techniques
A census of the public secondary schools in Nyamira North District was undertaken. In order to obtain data from the students, stratified random sampling was used, where by in each school, forms 1, 2, 3 and 4 were each represented by 2 students irrespective of gender, selected at random.
3.4.2   Sample Size
The sample size is presented in table 3.1 below.
Table 3.1: Sample Size

Number of Schools	Number of respondents	Number of Respondents
36	Principals	36
	Students:	
	Form I: 2 per school	72
	Form II: 2 per school	72
	Form II: 2 per school	72
	Form IV: 2 per school	72
Total		**324**

Table 3.1 above shows that 36 principal and 288 students participated in the study

3.5   Construction of Research Instruments
Semi-structured questionnaires were used to collect primary data from the Principals and students of public secondary schools in Nyamira North District. Structured questions were presented on a likert scale. The Likert scale, commonly used in research was used because it allows participants to respond with degrees of agreement or disagreement. The ratings was on a scale from 1 (lowest impact or least important) to 5 (highest impact or most important). The questionnaire was structured in two main sections. Section I captured the profile of the Principals or their appointed representatives whereas section II captured information on pertinent issues touching on truancy in secondary schools as per objectives of the study. In each school, forms 1, 2, 3 and 4 were represented by 8 students irrespective of gender, selected at random.

3.6   Pilot Study
Two procedures were followed during the pre-testing of the questionnaire. According to Cooper and Schindler (2003), the researcher may rely on experts when piloting the instrument to identify changes that can be made with confusing items. Experts and colleagues who are experienced in research were also be requested to examine the questionnaire to check whether there are any items that need to be changed or rephrased, as well as the appropriateness of the time set for completing it. The questionnaires were then pre-tested on six randomly selected principals and students from the neighboring Nyamira South district to enhance effectiveness and hence data validity before being administered. At the end of the exercise, the items in the questionnaires were considered to be satisfactory in term of both wording and format.

3.7   Validity

Validity refers to the extent to which the data collection instrument measures what it is supposed to measure. According to Johnson and Christensen (2004), content validity is a judgmental act where experts check whether the items represent the construct which is being studied as well as the wording, formatting and scoring of the instrument. On the other hand, face validity refers to the extent to which the respondents will perceive the instrument as being valid to test what it is supposed to test (Black, 1999). In order to establish its validity, the questionnaire was given to experts and colleagues to determine content and face validity.

3.8   Reliability

Zikmund (2003) defined reliability as the degree to which measures are free from error and therefore yield consistent results. According to Sekaran (2003),

> *"reliability analysis is conducted to ensure that the measures of variables have internal consistency across time and across the various items that measure the same concept or variable".*

Reliability evaluates accuracy of the measures through assessing the internal stability and consistency of items in each variable. Reliability evaluates accuracy of the measures through assessing the internal stability and consistency of items in each variable (Hair *et al.,* 1998). Experts and colleagues who are experienced in research were also requested to examine the questionnaire to check whether there were any items that needed to be changed or rephrased, as well as the appropriateness of the time set for completing it. Reliability was measured in this study using Cronbach's alpha coefficients. The Cronbach's alpha coefficient was 0.88.

3.9   Data Collection Techniques

Since all the secondary schools studied are located in Nyamira North District, the research assistants administered the questionnaires by hand delivery. The researcher made telephone calls to the respective respondents to further explain the purpose of the study and set a time frame for the completion of the questionnaires. Once completed, the researcher personally collected the questionnaires. This gave him the opportunity to clarify certain issues arising from the various responses.

3.10   Data Analysis

An appropriate method of analysis for this study has been described by Bogdan and Biklen (2003) as working with data, organizing it, breaking it into manageable units, coding, synthesizing it, searching for patterns discovering what is essential as well as showing the findings are important and making it understandable. According to Marshall and Rossman (1999), data analysis is the process of bringing order, structure and interpretation to the mass of collected data. In order to facilitate analysis, the collected data from the questionnaire and other secondary sources was systematically organized. Content analysis was employed for data pertaining to the profile of the respondents while data pertaining to the objectives of the study was analyzed by employing descriptive statistics. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used in data entry and analysis. SPSS is preferred because it is very systematic and covers a wide range of the most common statistical and graphical data analysis. In data presentation, computation of frequencies in tables, charts and bar graphs was widely used. Mean scores was used to present information pertaining to the study objectives.

3.11   Logistical and Ethical Considerations

In undertaking the study, the researcher adhered to ethical issues and the following fundamentals were taken into consideration:
Safeguarding the interests of those involved in, or are affected by the study by way of their work was well thought through. The findings of the study were reported accurately and truthfully. The researcher is convinced that the study is worthwhile and that the techniques to be used were appropriate to enable deduction of any conclusions. The researcher also ensured that the study is his original idea and that he does not present another person's work as his own. In addition, the researcher ensured that the findings were not misrepresented.   The other ethical aspects that are also clearly understood include:
Confidentiality: The research guaranteed the participants' confidentiality and was assured that the information provided would not be made available to anyone who was not directly involved in the study. The principle of anonymity which essentially means that the participants would remain anonymous throughout the study was also strictly adhered to.
The principle of voluntary participation: was also observed and nobody would therefore be coerced to participate in the research. The information obtained was thus treated with confidentiality and any use to be made from such information would need express permission from the individual respondents to be used as such.

4.0   RESULTS AND ANALYSIS
4.1   Introduction
The study utilized a combination of both quantitative and qualitative techniques in the collection of data. The study focused on all the secondary schools in Nayamira North District, whose number stood at 36 as at 30th June 2012 (Nyamira North District Education Office, 2011). A census was undertaken and each of the schools was represented in the study by the Principal. Out of the 36 questionnaires sent out, 33 questionnaires were returned completed, (91.7%) response rate. Eight students were targeted in each of the 36 schools, making a possible 288, out of which 242 questionnaires were collected for analysis (84% response).

The data was analyzed by employing descriptive statistics such as percentages, frequencies and tables. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to aid in analysis. The researcher preferred SPSS because of its ability to cover a wide range of the most common statistical and graphical data analysis and is very systematic. Mean scores were used to indicate measures of central tendency while standard deviations were used to indicate measures of dispersion. Computation of frequencies in tables, charts and bar graphs was used in data presentation. The information is presented and discussed as per the objectives and research questions of the study.

4.2   Background information
This section presents a summary of responses with respect to the background information of the school principals.
Time period school has been in existence: The principals were asked to specify their school's period of existence; responses are summarized and presented in figure 4.1 below.
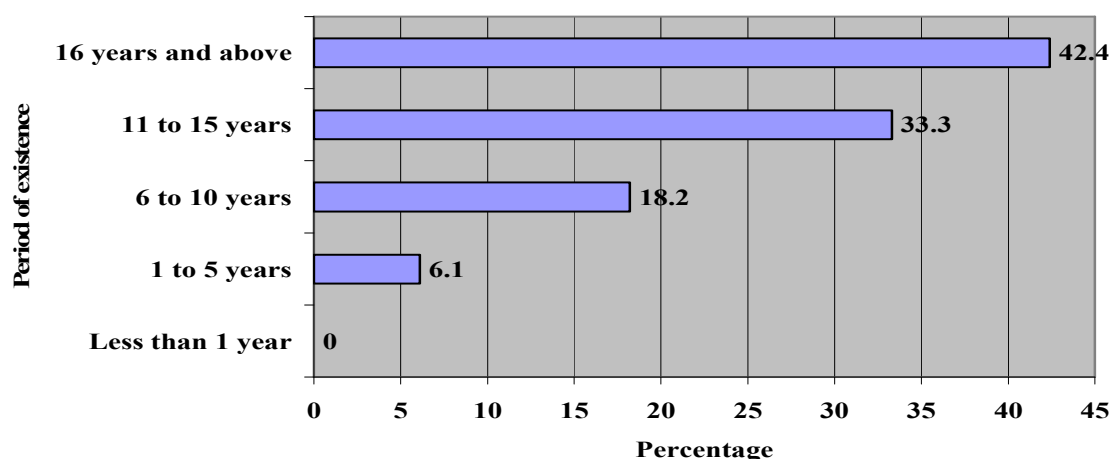

Figure 4.1: Schools' Period of Existence

The findings show that at least (93.9%) of the respondent schools have been in existence for a period exceeding 5 years, hence the responses were expected to be objective.
Type of Schools: Table 4.1 below presents a summary of information on the type of schools in Nyamira North district.
Table 4.1: Type of Schools

Type of school	Frequency	Percentage
Mixed day and boarding	10	27.8
Mixed day	21	58.3
Girls boarding	2	5.5
Boys boarding	1	2.8
Boys day	1	2.8
Girls day and boarding	1	2.8
Total	**36**	**100.0**

The responses indicate that majority of the schools (58.3%) were mixed day, followed by mixed day and boarding (27.8%), while Girls boarding were 5.5% and Boys boarding, Boys day and Girls day and boarding were 2.8% each.
Students Population: This section presents the population of students in the respondent schools.
Number of male students: The principals were asked to give the number of male students in their schools. The responses are summarized and presented in figure 4.2 below.
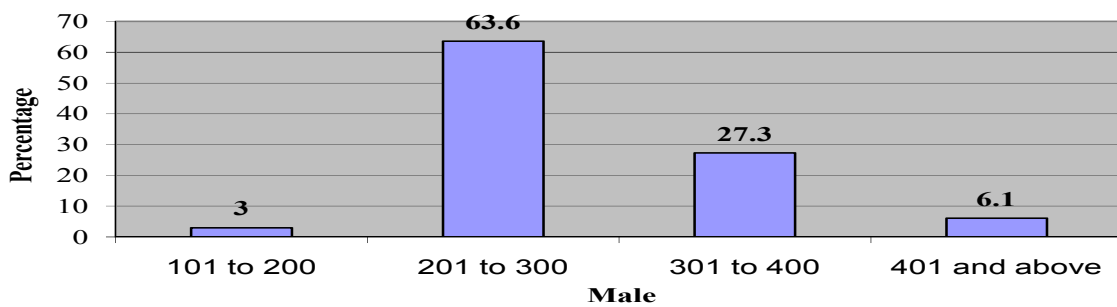
Figure 4.2: Number of male students

The findings in figure 4.2 shows that majority of the schools (63.6%) have between 201 and 300 male students, (27.3%) of the schools have between 301 and 400 male students, (3%) of the schools have between 101 and 200 male students, (6.1%) of the respondent schools had 401 and above male students and none of the schools have less than 101 male students. The findings show that at least 90.1% of the respondent schools had more than 201 male students.

Number of female students: The principals were asked to give the number of female students in their schools. The responses are summarized and presented in figure 4.3 below.

Figure 4.3: Number of female students

The findings in figure 4.3 above shows that (9.1%) have more than 401 female students, (30.3%) of the schools have between 301 and 400 female students, (54.4%) of the schools have between 201 and 300 female students, (6.1%) of the schools have between 101 and 200 female students and none of the schools have less than 100 female students. The findings show that at least 84.8.1% of the respondent schools had more than 201 female students.

Population of teachers

Number of male teachers: The school principals were asked to give the number of male teachers in their schools. The responses are summarized and presented in figure 4.4 below.

Figure 4.4: Number of male teachers

The findings in figure 4.4 above shows that majority of the schools (57.6%) have between 11 and 15 male teachers, (18.2%) of the schools have between 5 and 10 male teachers, (15.2%) of the schools have between 16 and 20 male teachers, (3%) of the schools have more than 21 male teachers and (6.1%) of the schools have less than 5 male teachers. The findings show that 75.7% of the respondent schools had at least 10 male teachers. This shows that there was equitable distribution of gender representation between male and female teachers in Nyamira North district.

Number of female teachers: The school principals were asked to give the number of male teachers in their schools. The responses are summarized and presented in figure 4.5 below
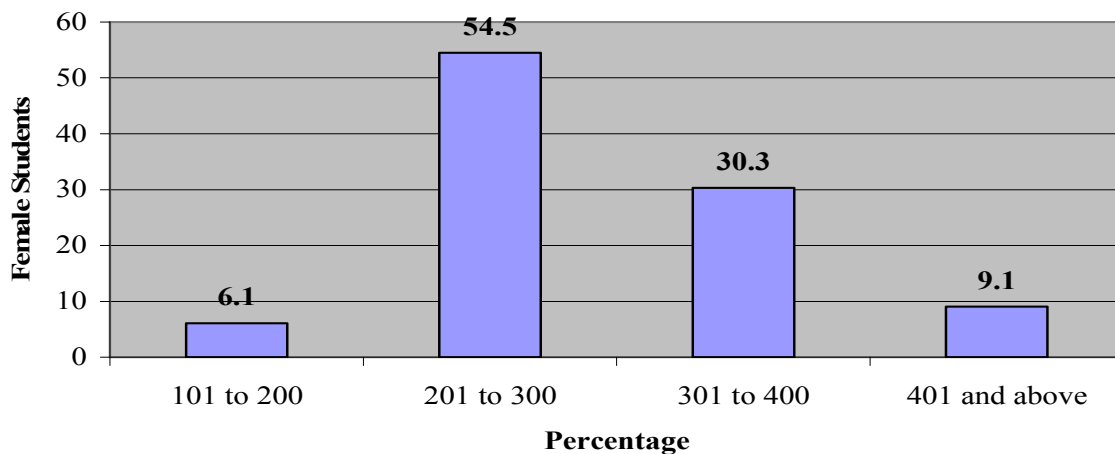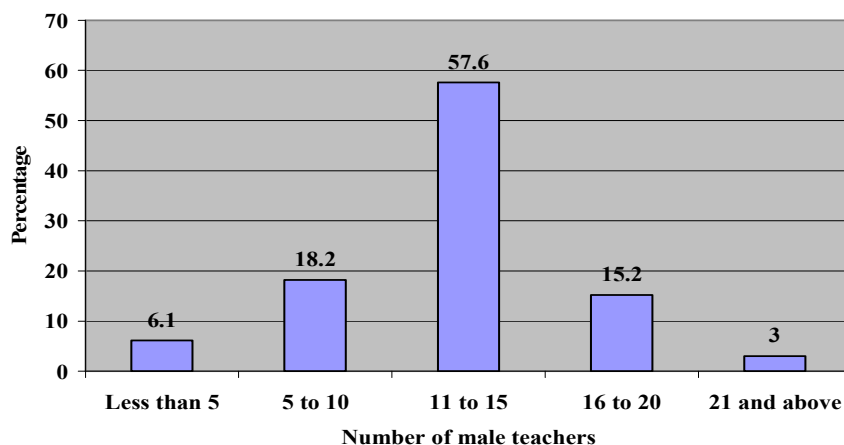

Figure 4.5: Number of female teachers

The findings in figure 4.5 above shows that majority of the schools (54.5%) have between 11 and 15 female teachers, (21.2%) of the schools have between 5 and 10 female teachers, (9.1%) of the schools have between 16 and 20 female teachers, another (9.1%) of the schools have less than 5 female teachers and only (6.1%) of the schools have more than 21 female teachers. The findings show that 84.8% of the respondent schools had at least 10 female teachers. This shows that there was equitable distribution of gender representation between male and female teachers in Nyamira North district. This shows that there was equitable distribution of gender representation between male and female teachers in Nyamira North district.

Time period the principals worked in the current school: The school principals were asked to give the period of working in their current schools; responses are summarized and presented in figure 4.6 below.
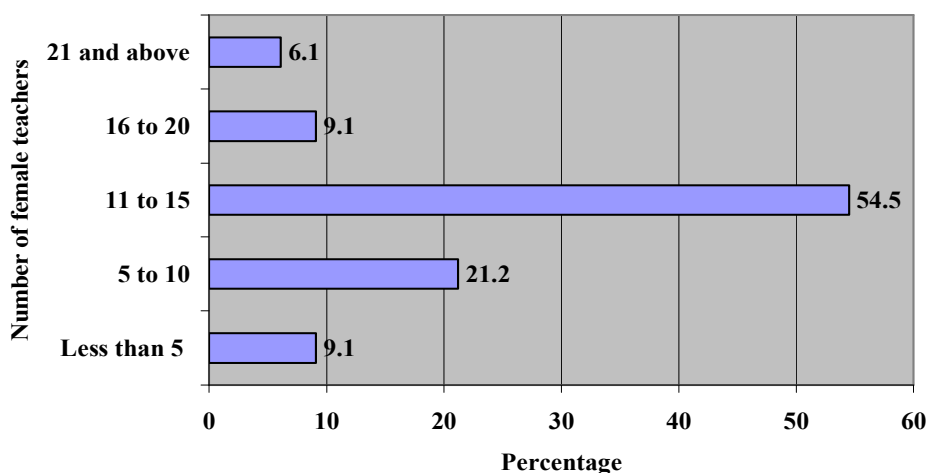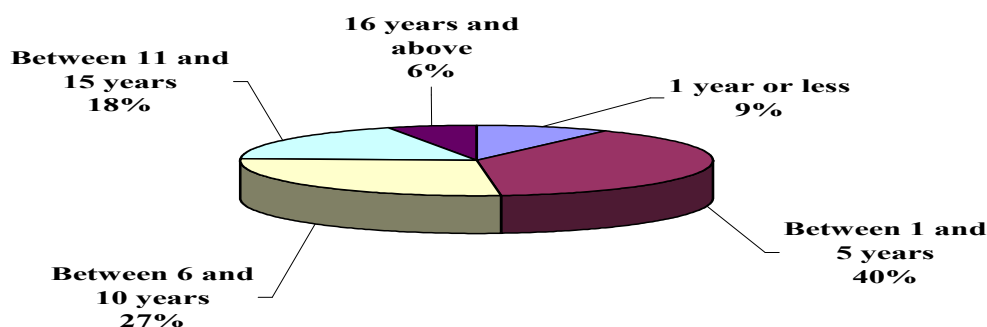
Figure 4.6: Time period the principals worked in the current school
The findings in figure 4.6 above shows that majority of the school principals (40%) have worked in their current schools for a period of between 1 and 5 years, (27%) of the principals have worked in their current schools for a period of between 6 and 10 years, (18%) of the principals have worked in their current schools for a period of between 11 and 15 years, (9%) of the principals have worked in their current schools for less than 1 year and (6%) of the principals have worked in their current schools for more than 16 years. The findings show that at least 51% of the principals had worked in their current schools for a period exceeding 5 years, which is long enough to enable them articulate issues pertaining to the objectives of the study.
Length of time in the current position: The school principals were asked to indicate the length of time that they have been in their current positions; responses are summarized and presented in figure 4.7 below

Figure 4.7: Length of time in the current position
The findings in figure 4.7 above show that majority of the school principals (46%) have been in their current position for a period of between 6 and 10 years, (21%) of the principals have been in their current position for a period of between 1 and 5 years, (18% of the principals have been in their current position for a period of between 11 and 15 years, (9%) of the principals have been in their current positions for more than 16 years and (6%) of the principals have been in their current position for less than 1 year. The findings show that at least 73% of the principals had worked as principal for a period exceeding 5 years and were thus expected to provide objective responses to the study.

4.3   Causes and approaches used in the management of truancy in secondary schools in Nyamira North district
The causes of truancy in secondary schools in Nyamira North district: In order to assess the possible factors causing truancy in secondary schools, respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they agree/disagree to each of the listed factors, responses are summarized and presented below.
School Related Factors Causing Truancy in Nyamira North District: This section presents responses with respect to school related factors causing truancy in secondary schools in Nyamira North District. The findings are summarized and presented in table 4.2 below.
Where: Strongly agree = (6); Agree = (5); Somehow agree = (4); Somehow disagree = (3); Disagree = (2); Strongly disagree = (1)

Table 4.2: Anxiety and fear

Type of Respondent	Response	6	5	4	3	2	1
Principals (n = 33)	Percentage	33.3	36.4	9.1	9.1	6.1	6.1
	Frequency	11	12	3	3	2	2
Students (n = 242)	Percentage	38.8	28.1	14.1	7.4	6.2	5.4
	Frequency	94	68	34	18	15	13
Total (N= 275)	Percentage	38.2	29.1	13.5	7.6	6.2	5.5
	Frequency	105	80	37	21	17	15

Anxiety was considered amongst school related factors causing truancy in Nyamira North District by (29.1 %) of the respondents who "agreed", (38.2 %) of the respondents who "strongly agreed" and (13.5%) of the respondents who "somehow agreed". The other responses indicate that (6.2 %) of the respondents "disagreed", (7.6%) of the respondents "somehow disagreed" and only (5.5%) of the respondents "strongly disagreed". The findings show that (80.8%) of the respondents indicated that anxiety and fear caused truancy in their schools. The findings are consistent with those of Nel (1975) who found that truants tend to be more anxious, and experience more stress related to frustration than non truants. It appears that this study is consistent with research finding where High School Personality Questions (HSPQ) test results revealed that truants are more sensitive and emotionally less stable than non-truants (Malan, 1972). Table 4.3 below presents findings related to *"poor social skills"*.

Where: Strongly agree = (6); Agree = (5); Somehow agree = (4); Somehow disagree = (3); Disagree = (2); Strongly disagree = (1)

Table 4.3: Poor social skills

Type of Respondent	Response	6	5	4	3	2	1
Principals (n = 33)	Percentage	27.3	33.3	12.1	9.1	9.1	6.1
	Frequency	9	11	4	3	3	2
Students (n = 242)	Percentage	13.6	27.7	28.1	20.7	11.2	5.4
	Frequency	33	56	64	50	27	13
Total (N= 275)	Percentage	15.3	24.4	24.7	19.3	10.9	5.5
	Frequency	42	67	68	53	30	15

Poor social skills was considered a factor causing truancy by (24.4%) of the respondents who "agreed", (15.3%) of the respondents who "strongly agreed" and (24.7%) of the respondents who "somehow agreed". However, (10.9%) of the respondents "disagreed", (19.3%) of the respondents "somehow disagreed" and (5.5%) of the respondents "strongly disagreed". The findings show that (64.4%) of the respondents indicated that poor social skills caused truancy in their schools. Lewis (1995) found that boredom, isolation and lack of friends may be factors that pull a learner off school. It appears that an inability to cope with the demands of making friends triggers a strong impulse to escape from the anxiety-provoking situation, thus leading to truancy. This means that some learners respond to a socially challenging or emotionally threatening situation at school by playing truant. Table 4.4 below presents findings related to *"low self – esteem"*. *Where:* Strongly agree = (6); Agree = (5); Somehow agree = (4); Somehow disagree = (3); Disagree = (2); Strongly disagree = (1).

Table 4.4: Low self-esteem

Type of Respondent	Response	6	5	4	3	2	1
Principals (n = 33)	Percentage	36.4	30.3	15.2	6.1	3.0	9.1
	Frequency	12	10	5	2	1	3
Students (n = 242)	Percentage	14.1	14.1	27.7	21.9	16.9	5.4
	Frequency	34	34	67	53	41	13
Total (N= 275)	Percentage	16.7	16.0	26.2	20.0	15.3	5.8
	Frequency	46	44	72	55	42	16

The responses with regards to low self-esteem as a factor causing truancy were as follows: (16.7%) of the respondents "strongly agreed", (16.0%) of the respondents "agreed", (26.2%) of the respondents "somehow agreed", (15.3%) of the respondents "disagreed", (20.0%) of the respondents "somehow disagreed" and (5.8%) of the respondents "strongly disagreed". The findings show that (58.9%) of the respondents indicated that low self-esteem caused truancy in their schools. The findings are consistent with those by Reids (2002) who found that certain personality traits, including lower levels of self esteem, make some learners more prone to absenteeism than their peers. However, research conducted by Sommer and Nigel (1991) failed to show a link between truancy and low self-esteem and to some extent confirmed results obtained earlier in South Africa,

where truants studied by Malan (1972) tended to be more assertive and dominant than the study population.
Table 4.5 below presents findings related to *"anti-social behavior"*. **Where:** Strongly agree = (6); Agree = (5); Somehow agree = (4); Somehow disagree = (3); Disagree = (2); Strongly disagree = (1).

Table 4.5: Anti-social behavior

Type of Respondent	Response	6	5	4	3	2	1
Principals (n = 33)	Percentage	30.3	36.4	21.1	6.1	6.1	9.1
	Frequency	10	12	4	2	2	3
Students (n = 242)	Percentage	0.3	0.3	18.2	8.7	7.0	5.4
	Frequency	70	80	44	21	17	13
Total (N= 275)	Percentage	29.1	33.5	17.5	8.4	6.9	5.8
	Frequency	80	92	48	23	19	16

With respect to anti-social behavior, majority of the respondents (33.5%) "agreed", (29.1%) of the respondents "strongly agreed", (17.5%) of the respondents "somehow agreed", (6.9%) of the respondents "disagreed", (8.4%) of the respondents "somehow disagreed" and another (4.7%) of the respondents "strongly disagreed". The findings show that (80.1%) of the respondents indicated that anti-social behavior caused truancy in their schools. Reynolds, Jones, Leger and Murgatroyd (1980) define anti-social behavior as "a diagnostic label used to describe children and adolescents who display a persistent and repetitive pattern of antisocial behaviors that violate the right of others". Antisocial behaviors that an individual with conduct disorder displays include defying authorities, lying, fighting, cruelty to animals and people, as well as truant behavior. Therefore, a well-behaved learner can easily make friends and suffer little isolation, and is more likely to cope with the stresses of schooling.
Table 4.6 below presents findings related to *"scholastic failure"*. **Where:** Strongly agree = (6); Agree = (5); Somehow agree = (4); Somehow disagree = (3); Disagree = (2); Strongly disagree = (1).

Table 4.6: Scholastic failure

Type of Respondent	Response	6	5	4	3	2	1
Principals (n = 33)	Percentage	24.2	36.4	18.2	6.1	12.1	3.0
	Frequency	8	12	6	2	4	1
Students (n = 242)	Percentage	24.0	21.9	36.4	10.7	3.3	3.7
	Frequency	58	53	88	26	8	9
Total (N= 275)	Percentage	24.0	23.6	34.2	10.2	4.4	3.6
	Frequency	66	65	94	28	12	10

Scholastic failure was responded to as follows: (23.6%) of the respondents "agreed", (24.0%) of the respondents "strongly agreed", (34.2%) majority of the respondents "somehow agreed", (3.6%) of the respondents "disagreed", (10.2%) of the respondents "somehow disagreed" and only (4.4%) of the respondents "strongly disagreed". The findings show that (81.8%) of the respondents indicated that scholastic failure caused truancy in their schools. Gray and Jesson (1990) state that, in England, secondary-school learners who admitted that they have once engaged in serious levels of truancy were likely to report low levels of exam performance. A study conducted earlier in South Africa, about 30.7% of truants failed the final Grade 8 examination, compared to 11% of the population (Malan, 1972). A study conducted in some secondary schools in South Africa reveals that more truants than learners who are not truants failed three times or more (Mashine, 1997). That is, learners who play truant are more likely to have repeated a certain grade at school. This study suggests that truants are mostly learners who are likely to fail their exams and be retained in a grade. Van Petegem (1994) asserts that poor school results often precede obstinate truancy even though Research evidence suggests that there is no direct relationship between intelligence and truancy.
Table 4.7 below presents findings related to *"learning problems"*. **Where:** Strongly agree = (6); Agree = (5); Somehow agree = (4); Somehow disagree = (3); Disagree = (2); Strongly disagree = (1).

Table 4.7: Learning problems

Type of Respondent	Response	6	5	4	3	2	1
Principals (n = 33)	Percentage	30.3	36.4	15.2	9.1	6.1	3.0
	Frequency	10	12	5	3	2	1
Students (n = 242)	Percentage	34.7	30.6	24.0	7.4	2.5	0.8
	Frequency	84	74	58	18	6	2
Total (N= 275)	Percentage	34.2	31.3	22.9	7.6	2.9	1.1
	Frequency	94	86	63	21	8	3

Learning problems caused truancy, according to (31.3%) of the respondents who "agreed", (34.2%) of the

respondents who "strongly agreed" and (22.9%) of the respondents who "somehow agreed". Never the less, (2.9%) of the respondents "disagreed", (7.6%) of the respondents "somehow disagreed" and only (1.1%) of the respondents "strongly disagreed". The findings show that (88.4%) the respondents indicated that learning problems caused truancy in their schools. According to Le Ritchie (1988), a lack of academic success creates a sense of frustration and a constant fear of failure. It appears that learners who experience difficulty with schoolwork often play truant in an attempt to evade frustration. An inability to cope with academic expectations and demands can contribute to truancy in secondary schools. Truancy appears to be a response to frustration and anxiety associated with difficult lessons. In many instances, lesson difficulty contributes more to post-registration truancy than blanket truancy (Kilpatrick, 1998). Truancy is linked to a lower level of academic self-concept, since these learners tend to perceive themselves as having less ability than their peers (Reid, 1999).

Table 4.8 below presents findings related to *"cognitive style"*. **Where:** Strongly agree = (6); Agree = (5); Somehow agree = (4); Somehow disagree = (3); Disagree = (2); Strongly disagree = (1).

Table 4.8: Cognitive style

Type of Respondent	Response	6	5	4	3	2	1
Principals (n = 36)	Percentage	21.2	24.2	18.2	9.1	21.2	6.1
	Frequency	7	8	6	3	7	2
Students (n = 242)	Percentage	24.8	29.8	34.7	9.5	0.0	1.2
	Frequency	60	72	84	23	0	3
Total (N= 275)	Percentage	24.4	29.1	32.7	9.5	2.5	1.8
	Frequency	67	80	90	26	7	5

Cognitive style caused truancy, as indicated by (29.1%) of the respondents who "agreed", (24.4%) of the respondents who "strongly agreed" and (32.7%) of the respondents who "somehow agreed". The rest of the responses were as follows: (2.5%) of the respondents "disagreed", (9.5%) of the respondents "somehow disagreed" and only (1.8%) of the respondents "strongly disagreed". The findings show that (86.2%) of the respondents indicated that cognitive style caused truancy in their schools. It is not enough to assume that learners have difficulty with schoolwork and play truant as a result, without investigating how they learn and process information. There are two basic dimensions of cognitive style, namely the Wholistic- Analytical style, which indicates an individual's preference for processing information either as a whole or in parts, and the verbal-Imagery style, which shows a tendency to represent information during thinking either verbally or in mental images (Rayner and Riding, 1996). Rayner and Riding (1996) conducted research on learners who have a condition that is known as school refusal. Learners who have such condition refuse to attend school but stay at home when not in school, complain about headaches, stomach pains or nausea and show signs of anxiety and depression (Egger, Costello and Angold, 2003). In addition, such children tend to be compliant and well behaved, and, unlike truants, they stay at home with the parents' knowledge. Some children tend to display characteristics of both school refusal and truancy (Egger *et al.,* 2003).

Table 4.9 below presents findings related to "*poor habits arising from initially legitimate reasons*". **Where:** Strongly agree = (6); Agree = (5); Somehow agree = (4); Somehow disagree = (3); Disagree = (2); Strongly disagree = (1).

Table 4.9: Poor habits arising from initially legitimate reasons

Type of Respondent	Response	6	5	4	3	2	1
Principals (n = 3)	Percentage	36.4	39.4	12.1	3.0	6.1	3.0
	Frequency	12	13	4	1	2	1
Students (n = 242)	Percentage	34.3	28.9	26.0	5.8	2.5	2.5
	Frequency	83	70	63	14	6	6
Total (N= 275)	Percentage	34.5	30.2	24.4	5.5	2.9	2.5
	Frequency	95	83	67	15	8	7

Poor habits arising from initially legitimate reasons caused truancy, as indicated by (30.2%) of the respondents who "agreed", (34.5%) of the respondents "strongly agreed" and (24.4%) of the respondents who somehow agreed". However, (2.9%) of the respondents "disagreed", (5.5%) of the respondents "somehow disagreed" and (2.5%) of the respondents "strongly disagreed". The findings show that (89.1%) of the respondents indicated that poor habits arising from initially legitimate reasons caused truancy in their schools.

Table 4.10 below presents findings related to "*dilapidated school building and poor facilities*". **Where:** Strongly agree = (6); Agree = (5); Somehow agree = (4); Somehow disagree = (3); Disagree = (2); Strongly disagree = (1).

Table 4.10: Dilapidated school building and poor facilities

Type of Respondent	Response	6	5	4	3	2	1
Principals (n = 33)	Percentage	30.3	24.2	15.2	12.1	12.1	6.1
	Frequency	10	8	5	4	4	2
Students (n = 242)	Percentage	16.1	26.9	36.7	11.6	5.4	3.3
	Frequency	39	65	89	28	13	8
Total (N= 275)	Percentage	17.8	26.5	34.2	11.6	6.2	3.6
	Frequency	49	73	94	32	17	10

Dilapidated school building and poor facilities was considered to cause truancy by (17.8%) of the respondents who "strongly agreed", (34.2%) of the respondents "somehow agreed" and (26.5%) of the respondents "agreed". But (6.1%) of the respondents "disagreed", (11.6%) of the respondents "somehow disagreed" and (3.6%) of the respondents "strongly disagreed". The findings show that (78.5%) of the respondents indicated that dilapidated school building and poor facilities caused truancy in their schools. In an attempt to find ways of combating truancy, Reid (1999) looked at evidence of research into effective schools and found that, among other factors, school buildings that are clean and well cared for are likely to make learners feel welcome. Attractive school buildings and a good atmosphere seem to create a sense of pride and belonging in learners. Reid states that an unattractive school environment, which is characterized by poor toilet facilities, a lack of proper ventilation and heating dilapidated buildings is unlikely to encourage school attendance.

Table 4.11 below presents findings related to "*school size*". **Where:** Strongly agree = (6); Agree = (5); Somehow agree = (4); Somehow disagree = (3); Disagree = (2); Strongly disagree = (1).

Table 4.11: School Size

Type of Respondent	Response	6	5	4	3	2	1
Principals (n = 33)	Percentage	18.2	30.3	21.2	15.2	9.1	6.1
	Frequency	6	10	7	5	3	2
Students (n = 242)	Percentage	23.5	27.3	33.9	12.4	2.1	0.8
	Frequency	57	66	82	30	5	2
Total (N= 275)	Percentage	22.9	27.6	32.4	12.7	2.9	1.5
	Frequency	63	76	89	35	8	4

School size was considered to cause truancy by (27.6%) of the respondents who "agreed", (22.9%) of the respondents who "strongly agreed" and (32.4%) of the respondents who "somehow agreed". The rest of the respondents indicated as follows: (2.9%) of the respondents "disagreed", (12.7%) of the respondents "somehow disagreed" and (1.5%) of the respondents "strongly disagreed". The findings show that (82.9%) of the respondents indicated that school size caused truancy in their schools. According to Cohen and Ryan (1998), school size tends to affect the rate of truancy negatively, in that data collected from Tasmania (Australia) show that larger schools have higher rates of absenteeism. Further, a study of 175 rural schools in the USA shows that larger schools tend to have high rates of truancy and misbehavior. School size is likely to affect the school by making it difficult to control disruptive behavior, particularly when there are more learners than the educators can manage.

Table 4.12 below presents findings related to "*movement between classes during lesson changes*". **Where:** Strongly agree = (6); Agree = (5); Somehow agree = (4); Somehow disagree = (3); Disagree = (2); Strongly disagree = (1).

Table 4.12: Movement between classes during lesson changes

Type of Respondent	Response	6	5	4	3	2	1
Principals (n = 33)	Percentage	21.2	27.3	15.2	12.1	9.1	15.2
	Frequency	7	9	5	4	3	5
Students (n = 242)	Percentage	38.0	27.7	24.3	6.6	3.7	0.0
	Frequency	92	67	59	16	9	0
Total (N= 275)	Percentage	36.0	27.6	23.3	7.3	4.4	1.5
	Frequency	99	76	64	20	12	4

Movement between classes during lesson changes led to truancy, according to (27.6%) of the respondents who "agreed", (36.0%) of the respondents who "strongly agreed" and (23.3%) of the respondents "somehow agreed". However, (4.4%) of the respondents "disagreed", (7.3%) of the respondents "somehow disagreed" and (1.5%) of the respondents "strongly disagreed". The findings show that (86.9%) of the respondents indicated that movement between classes during lesson changes caused truancy in their schools. According to Hallman and Roaf (1995), walking long distances between the different classrooms during lesson changes may provide opportunities for skipping lessons.

Table 4.13 below presents findings related to "*classroom management*". **Where:** Strongly agree = (6); Agree = (5); Somehow agree = (4); Somehow disagree = (3); Disagree = (2); Strongly disagree = (1).

Table 4.13: Classroom management

Type of Respondent	Response	6	5	4	3	2	1
Principals (n = 33)	Percentage	21.2	24.2	13.9	21.2	13.9	11.1
	Frequency	7	8	3	6	5	4
Students (n = 242)	Percentage	38.0	28.1	25.2	5.8	2.9	0.0
	Frequency	92	68	61	14	7	0
Total (N= 275)	Percentage	36.0	27.6	23.3	7.3	4.4	1.5
	Frequency	99	76	64	20	12	4

Classroom management caused truancy, as indicated by (32.0%) of the respondents who "agreed" and (22.5%) of the respondents who "strongly agreed". The other responses were as follows: (5.1%) of the respondents "disagreed, (28.7%) of the respondents "somehow agreed", (8.7%) of the respondents "somehow disagreed" and (2.9%) of the respondents "strongly disagreed". The findings show that (83.2%) of the respondents indicated that classroom management caused truancy in their schools. Administrative inefficiency in terms of registration and poor classroom management can contribute to lesson skipping (Lewis, 1995; Reynolds *et. al,* 1980). Classroom management requires a great deal of dedication and commitment from both the learners and the educator. Table 4.14 below presents findings related to "*bullying*". **Where:** Strongly agree = (6); Agree = (5); Somehow agree = (4); Somehow disagree = (3); Disagree = (2); Strongly disagree = (1).

Table 4.14: Bullying

Type of Respondent	Response	6	5	4	3	2	1
Principals (n = 33)	Percentage	9.1	18.2	6.1	12.1	21.2	33.3
	Frequency	3	6	2	4	7	11
Students (n = 242)	Percentage	6.2	4.5	9.5	21.9	21.9	36.0
	Frequency	15	11	23	53	53	87
Total (N= 275)	Percentage	6.5	6.2	9.1	20.7	21.8	35.6
	Frequency	18	17	25	57	60	98

Majority of the respondents were of the view that bullying was not a factor causing truancy, where by the responses were as follows: (35.6%) of the respondents "strongly disagreed", (21.8%) of the respondents "disagreed" and (20.7%) of the respondents "somehow disagreed". The responses indicating that bullying was a factor causing truancy were as follows: (6.2%) of the respondents "agreed", (9.1%) of the respondents "somehow agreed" and (6.5%) "Strongly agreed". The findings show that only (21.8%) of the respondents indicated that bullying caused truancy in their schools. This finding is in line with the works of Fried and Fried (2003) who found out that sexual bullying occurs between male and female or can be male-to-male, but also female-to-female, for example, ridiculing a girl whose breasts jiggle when she runs. Table 4.15 below presents findings related to "*education-learner relationship*". **Where:** Strongly agree = (6); Agree = (5); Somehow agree = (4); Somehow disagree = (3); Disagree = (2); Strongly disagree = (1).

Table 4.15: Education-learner relationship

Type of Respondent	Response	6	5	4	3	2	1
Principals (n = 33)	Percentage	24.2	30.3	18.2	15.2	6.1	6.1
	Frequency	8	10	6	5	2	2
Students (n = 242)	Percentage	23.1	28.1	34.3	7.4	3.7	3.3
	Frequency	56	68	83	18	9	8
Total (N= 275)	Percentage	23.3	28.4	32.4	8.4	4.0	3.6
	Frequency	64	78	89	23	11	10

With respect to educator-learner relationship, (28.4%) of the respondents "agreed", (23.3 %) of the respondents "strongly agreed", other (32.4 %) of the respondents "somehow agreed", (4.0%) of the respondents "disagreed", while (3.6%) of the respondents "strongly disagreed", and (8.4%) of the respondents "somehow disagreed". The findings show that (84.1%) of the respondents indicated that educator-learner relationship caused truancy in their school. Black (1996) observed that "negative attitudes displayed by some educators may drive certain pupils to school non-attendance. What this author reveals is that both blanket and post-registration truancy occur because some learners avoid certain teachers. When learners show a tendency of disliking a lesson, it might be that particular educator responds negatively to those learners. This leads to poor relationships between the two parties. This poor educator-learner relationship can also occur as a result of what is regarded as intentionally disinviting

practice. According to Mashiane (1997), an educator functions at the level of intentionally dis-iniviting when he or she goes out of his or her way to send messages that destroy a learner. Learners may find such educators and subsequently the school, repulsive and may become truants. Another practice that contributes to truancy is shouting at learners in class (Black, 1996) and in some instances the negative remarks may even appear in the learner's books. Table 4.16 below presents findings related to "*teaching or instructional approach*". **Where:** Strongly agree = (6); Agree = (5); Somehow agree = (4); Somehow disagree = (3); Disagree = (2); Strongly disagree = (1).

Table 4.16: Teaching or instructional approach

Type of Respondent	Response	6	5	4	3	2	1
Principals (n = 33)	Percentage	18.2	27.3	15.2	30.3	9.1	3.0
	Frequency	6	9	5	10	2	1
Students (n = 242)	Percentage	23.6	27.7	35.1	6.2	4.1	3.3
	Frequency	57	67	85	15	10	8
Total (N= 275)	Percentage	22.9	27.6	32.7	9.1	4.4	3.3
	Frequency	63	76	90	25	12	9

Teaching or instructional approach caused truancy in secondary schools in Nyamira North district, as indicated by (22.9%) of the respondents who "strongly agreed", (27.6%) of the respondents who "agreed" and (32.7%) of the respondents who "somehow agreed". Only (9.1%) of the respondents "somehow disagreed", (4.4%) of the respondents "disagreed" and (3.3%) of the respondents "strongly disagreed". The findings show that (83.2%) of the respondents indicated that teaching or instructional approach caused truancy in their schools. The educator's attitude towards his or her work could either be negative or positive, is contagious and often affects the learners (Donald, Lazarus and Lolwa, 1997). Enthusiastic educators may be perceived to have positive attitude towards their work and are more likely to be keen to vary their instructional approaches.

Home Related Factors Causing Truancy in Nyamira North District: Findings with respect to home related factors causing truancy in secondary schools in Nyamira North District are summarized and presented in the tables below.

Findings related to *"socio-economic status of parents"* are summarized and presented in table 4.17 below. *Where:* Strongly agree = (6); Agree = (5); Somehow agree = (4); Somehow disagree = (3); Disagree = (2); Strongly disagree = (1).

Table 4.17: Socio-economic status of parents

Type of Respondent	Response	6	5	4	3	2	1
Principals (n = 33)	Percentage	27.2	33.3	15.2	6.1	6.1	12.1
	Frequency	9	11	5	2	2	4
Students (n = 242)	Percentage	20.2	55.8	4.1	12.8	4.5	2.4
	Frequency	49	135	10	31	11	6
Total (N= 275)	Percentage	21.1	53.1	5.5	12.0	4.7	3.6
	Frequency	58	146	15	33	13	10

Social economic status of parents causes truancy, according to (53.1 %) of the respondents who "agreed", (21.1%) of the respondents who "strongly agreed" and (5.5%) of the respondents who "somehow agreed". The responses for those who disagreed are as follows: (4.7%) of the respondents "disagreed", (12.0%) of the respondents "somehow disagreed" and (3.6%) of the respondents "strongly disagreed". The findings show that (79.7 %) of the respondents indicated that socio-economic status of parents caused truancy in their schools. Research conducted in South Africa shows that some family circumstances are factors that contribute to higher rates of truancy (Malan, 1972). It was recently found that truants tend to come from larger families where parents have a lower level of education and pursue lower socio-economic occupations (Fox, 2000). The research findings cited above are constituent with some of the studies conducted abroad. Overseas researchers indicate that truants predominantly come from poor families living in overcrowded houses and economically deprived families (Le Ritche, 1998; Reid, 1999; Tyreman, 1958). Findings related to *"marital status"* are summarized and presented in table 4.18 below. *Where:* Strongly agree = (6); Agree = (5); Somehow agree = (4); Somehow disagree = (3); Disagree = (2); Strongly disagree = (1).

Table 4.18: Marital status

Type of Respondent	Response	6	5	4	3	2	1
Principals (n = 33)	Percentage	24.2	42.4	15.2	6.1	3.0	9.1
	Frequency	8	14	5	2	1	3
Students (n = 242)	Percentage	34.3	27.2	21.1	7.9	5.8	3.7
	Frequency	83	66	51	19	14	9
Total (N= 275)	Percentage	33.1	29.1	20.4	7.6	5.5	4.4
	Frequency	91	80	56	21	15	12

The marital status of parents was considered a factor causing truancy by (29.1%) of the respondents who "agreed", (33.1%) of the respondents who "strongly agreed" and (20.4%) of the respondents who "somehow agreed". However, (5.5%) of the respondents "disagreed", (7.6%) of the respondents "somehow disagreed" and (4.4%) of the respondents "strongly disagreed". The findings show that (82.6 %) of the respondents indicated that marital status of parents caused truancy in their schools. A family variable that has been found to contribute to truancy is unstable family relationships, which include, divorce, parental separation and marital conflicts (Hallom and Roaf, 1995). When the relationship between parents breaks down, there is a likelihood that children will live with one parent or in an extended family structure. Findings related to *"poor involvement and supervision"* are summarized and presented in table 4.19 below. ***Where:*** Strongly agree = (6); Agree = (5); Somehow agree = (4); Somehow disagree = (3); Disagree = (2); Strongly disagree = (1).

Table 4.19: Poor involvement and supervision

Type of Respondent	Response	6	5	4	3	2	1
Principals (n = 3)	Percentage	21.2	36.3	18.2	9.1	6.1	9.1
	Frequency	7	12	6	3	2	3
Students (n = 242)	Percentage	19.4	28.9	24.8	14.9	9.1	2.9
	Frequency	47	70	60	36	22	7
Total (N= 275)	Percentage	19.6	29.8	24.0	14.2	8.7	3.6
	Frequency	54	82	66	39	24	10

With respect to poor involvement and supervision, majority of the respondents (29.8%) "Agreed", (19.6%) of the respondents "strongly agreed", (24.0%) of the respondents "somehow agreed", (8.7%) of the respondents "disagreed", (14.2%) of the respondents "somehow disagreed" and (3.6%) of the respondents "strongly disagreed". The findings show that (73.4 %) of the respondents indicated that poor involvement and supervision caused truancy in their schools. Parental involvement is an intentional act whereby a parent makes an effort to relate and interact with the child. Parental involvement include monitoring and helping with homework, attending school conferences and functions and providing as supportive learning environment (Crawage, 1992). When parents experience problems in their own lives that are related to intimate relationships and other external factors, they tend to focus less on their children. This can eventually lead to less involvement or a total lack of interest in the children, and subsequent problem behavior. Lack of parental interest, support or involvement in the learner's education is also associated with truancy (Cohen and Ryan, 1998) and many truants receive little or no parental support and encouragement (Reid, 1999). Nhlaop (1997) found that parents of truants are less interested in their children's schoolwork and encourage competency in children to a lesser extent. Findings related to *"peer influence"* are summarized and presented in table 4.20 below. ***Where:*** Strongly agree = (6); Agree = (5); Somehow agree = (4); Somehow disagree = (3); Disagree = (2); Strongly disagree = (1).

Table 4.20: Peer influence

Type of Respondent	Response	6	5	4	3	2	1
Principals (n = 36)	Percentage	36.4	45.5	12.1	3.0	3.0	36.4
	Frequency	12	15	4	1	1	12
Students (n = 242)	Percentage	40.9	293	18.6	7.9	2.1	3.7
	Frequency	99	71	45	19	5	9
Total (N= 275)	Percentage	40.4	31.3	17.8	7.3	2.2	1.1
	Frequency	111	86	49	20	6	3

According to the respondents, peer influence caused truancy. The responses show that (31.3%) of the respondents "agreed", (40.4%) of the respondents "strongly agreed" and (17.8%) of the respondents "somehow agreed". The responses related to those who disagreed were as follows: (2.2%) of the respondents "disagreed", (7.3%) of the respondents "somehow disagreed" and (1.1%) of the respondents "strongly disagreed". The findings show that (89.5 %) of the respondents indicated that peer influence caused truancy in their schools. Learners who play truant attend school only to be with friends and tend to hang around less with their peers who like school (Khoza, 1997). What is cited here is suggestive if the apparent consensus among some researchers

that some learners begin to play truant purely to please friends. Such learners might be those with a personality that makes then vulnerable to the pressure of peers. Findings related to *"violence and drug use"* are summarized and presented in table 4.21 below. ***Where:*** Strongly agree = (6); Agree = (5); Somehow agree = (4); Somehow disagree = (3); Disagree = (2); Strongly disagree = (1).

Table 4.21: Violence and drug use

Type of Respondent	Response	6	5	4	3	2	1
Principals (n = 33)	Percentage	21.2	36.4	15.2	12.1	9.1	6.1
	Frequency	7	12	5	4	3	2
Students (n = 242)	Percentage	31.0	28.5	29.3	6.6	1.7	2.9
	Frequency	75	69	71	16	4	7
Total (N= 275)	Percentage	29.8	29.5	27.6	7.3	2.5	3.3
	Frequency	82	81	76	20	7	9

Violence and drug use was considered a factor causing truancy by (29.5 %) of the respondents who "agreed", (29.8%) of the respondents who "strongly agreed" and (27.6%) of the respondents who "somehow agreed". Nevertheless, (2.5%) of the respondents "disagreed" (7.3%) of the respondents "somehow disagreed" and (3.3%) of the respondents "strongly disagree". The findings show that (86.9 %) of the respondents indicated that violence and drug abuse caused truancy in their schools. Maithela (1992) found that truancy levels tend to increase when some learners engage in violence, carry weapons and make other learners fear school. Truancy encourages the formation of gangs and can also result from fear of bullies who are gangsters. Therefore, truancy may have an indirect link with violence. Truants are more likely to be involved in alcohol, tobacco and other drug use; they tend to bond with drug-using peers; and often use drugs while bunking class (Hallfors *et al.,* 2002). The presence of violence, crime and negative peer culture in neighborhoods can cause emotional stress, which makes parenting tasks more difficult.

4.4   Approaches used in the management of truancy in secondary schools
In order to asses the approaches used in the management and reduction of truancy, respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which they have utilized each of the listed approaches. The findings indicate that when students experience learning problems it is necessary to provide support that will help to maximize their chances for academic success, thereby reducing the opportunities for playing truant. The findings also show that the approaches used in the management of truancy in schools may be categorized into the following: personal traits, school aspects, community aspects and others. The responses related to personal traits approaches used in the management of truancy in secondary schools in Nyamira North District are summarized and presented in tables below.

Table 4.22: Tutoring and Mentor systems

Type of Respondent	Response	Not at all	Neutral	To some extent	Much	Very much
Principals (n = 33)	Percentage	3.0	3.0	9.1	48.5	36.4
	Frequency	1	1	3	16	12
Students (n = 242)	Percentage	3.7	14.5	24.4	29.8	27.6
	Frequency	9	35	59	72	67
Total (N= 275)	Percentage	3.6	13.1	22.5	32.0	28.7
	Frequency	10	36	62	88	79

The findings show that tutoring and mentor systems are one of the personal traits approaches used in the management of truancy in Nyamira North District. This was confirmed by majority of the respondents, (32.0 %) who indicated "much", (28.7 %) indicated "very much" and (22.5 %) indicated "to some extent". However, while (13.1 %) of the respondents indicated "neutral", only (3.6%) of the respondents indicated "not at all". Findings show that 83.2% of the respondents indicated that their respective schools used tutoring and mentor systems in the management of truancy. Cohen and Ryan (1998) maintain that learners should be provided with counseling and additional tutoring services as a means of reducing truancy. Academic support can be offered to groups or individual learners. Tutoring is particularly important, since some truants in the study by Malan (1972) indicated that they no assistance and had little time to do their homework at home.

Table 4.23: Counseling and Therapy

Type of Respondent	Response	Not at all	Neutral	To some extent	Much	Very much
Principals (n = 33)	Percentage	3.0	6.1	12.1	45.5	33.3
	Frequency	1	2	4	15	11
Students (n = 242)	Percentage	7.9	11.2	22.3	26.4	32.2
	Frequency	19	27	54	64	78
Total (N= 275)	Percentage	7.3	10.5	21.1	28.7	32.4
	Frequency	20	29	58	79	89

Counseling and therapy was used in the management of truancy, as indicated by (28.7 %) of the respondents who indicated "much", (32.4 %) of the respondents indicated "very much" and   (21.1%) of the respondents indicated "to some extent". Whereas (10.5 %) of the respondents indicated "neutral", only (7.3%) of the respondents indicated "not at all". Findings show that 82.2% of the respondents indicated that their respective schools used counseling and therapy in the management of truancy. Truanting learners who show signs of having emotional problems relating to poor social skills receive individual and or group therapy (Davis, 1999). According to Macldowie (1999), attendance increased by 7% in two schools in Kent when the Education Welfare Officer's intervention measures included counseling lessons. The findings related to school aspects approaches used in the management of truancy in Nyamira North District are summarized and presented in tables below.

Table 4.24: Using reinforcement and reward systems

Type of Respondent	Response	Not at all	Neutral	To some extent	Much	Very much
Principals (n = 33)	Percentage	3.0	6.1	18.2	42.4	30.3
	Frequency	1	2	6	14	10
Students (n = 242)	Percentage	7.9	7.0	21.1	26.4	37.6
	Frequency	19	17	51	64	91
Total (N= 275)	Percentage	1.5	6.9	20.7	28.4	36.7
	Frequency	20	19	57	78	101

Using reinforcement and reward systems is one of the school aspects approaches used in the management of truancy in Nyamira North District, as confirmed by (28.4 %) of the respondents who indicated "much", (36.7 %) of the respondents indicated "very much" and (20.7 %) of the respondents indicated "to some extent". The respondents who were of the contrary opinion were just (6.9 %) of the respondents who indicated "neutral" and (1.5 %) of the respondents who indicated "not at all". Findings show that 91.6% of the respondents indicated that their respective schools used reinforcement and reward systems in the management of truancy. Like all other human beings, learners who play truant likely to improve or change their behavior if they are rewarded for desirable behavior. Macldowie (1999) found that developing and dispensing incentives for regular attendance were more effective than applying sanctions to truant.

Table 4.25: Using a variety of instructional approaches

Type of Respondent	Response	Not at all	Neutral	To some extent	Much	Very much
Principals (n = 33)	Percentage	6.1	12.1	15.2	39.4	27.3
	Frequency	2	4	5	13	9
Students (n = 242)	Percentage	0.8	6.1	21.5	31.0	40.5
	Frequency	2	15	52	75	98
Total (N= 275)	Percentage	4.0	7.6	22.2	34.5	31.6
	Frequency	4	19	57	88	107

Using a variety of instructional approaches was also considered as one of the school aspects approaches used in the management of truancy, as indicated by majority of the study participants whose responses were as follows: (34.5 %) indicated "much", (31.6%) of the respondents indicated "very much" and (22.2%) of the respondents indicated "to some extent". The respondents whose opinion was different were (7.6 %) of the respondents who indicated "neutral" and (4.0%) of the respondents who indicated "not at all". Findings show that 88.3% of the respondents indicated that their respective schools used a variety of instructional approaches in the management of truancy. Instructional approaches that promote active exploration challenge learners to think about their own learning while using other media, such as music, movement and art, to enable them to optimize their own cognitive development and to take active control of their own lives (Donald *et al.,* 1997). It is a healthy learning

and teaching environment of this kind that truants need. Cooperative learning activities can also promote the acquisition of social skills, which may be lacking in most learners who tend to play truant.

Table 4.26: Effective monitoring, registration and recording of attendance

Type of Respondent	Response	Not at all	Neutral	To some extent	Much	Very much
Principals (n = 33)	Percentage	3.0	3.0	9.1	48.5	36.4
	Frequency	1	1	3	16	12
Students (n = 242)	Percentage	3.3	5.8	23.1	29.3	38.4
	Frequency	8	14	56	71	93
Total (N= 275)	Percentage	3.3	5.5	21.5	31.6	38.2
	Frequency	9	15	59	87	105

With respect to effective monitoring, registration and recording of attendance, (31.6 %) of the respondents indicated "much", (38.2 %) of the respondents indicated "very much", (21.5 %) indicated "to some extent", (5.5 %) of the respondents indicated "neutral" and (3.3%) of the respondents indicated "not at all". Findings show that 91.3% of the respondents indicated that their respective schools used effective monitoring, registration and recording of attendance in the management of truancy.   Research emphasizes the need for effective recording and monitoring as one of the starting points (Lewis, 1995; Reid, 20029). Some researchers propose the use of a computerized or electronic registration system as a tool for monitoring truancy levels (Macldowie, 1999; Reid, 1999). Computerized registration is said to help identify particular groups of truants, the lessons that are being missed or possible causes of truancy (Social Exclusion Unit, 1998). Learners are less likely to play truant when they know that attendance is being closely monitored.

Table 4.27: Welcome back to school

Type of Respondent	Response	Not at all	Neutral	To some extent	Much	Very much
Principals (n = 33)	Percentage	6.1	6.1	21.2	36.4	30.3
	Frequency	2	2	7	12	10
Students (n = 242)	Percentage	4.5	8.7	16.9	29.3	40.5
	Frequency	11	21	41	71	98
Total (N= 275)	Percentage	4.7	8.4	17.5	30.2	39.3
	Frequency	13	23	48	83	108

Majority of the study respondents indicated that welcoming learners to school could be used to manage truancy. The responses show that (30.2 %) of the respondents indicated "much", (39.3%) of the respondents indicated "very much" and (17.5 %) of the respondents indicated "to some extent". However, (8.4 %) of the respondents indicated "neutral" and (4.7 %) of the respondents indicated "not at all". Findings show that 87% of the respondents indicated that their respective schools used welcome back to school in the management of truancy. It is also important to ensure that learners feel welcome back to school after a period of absence in order to prevent further absence. The finding agrees with Macldowie (1999) study which found out that the attendance patterns of eight learners improved when one of the strategies included being welcomed back and when their teacher helped them to catch up with the work.

Table 4.28: Student welfare

Type of Respondent	Response	Not at all	Neutral	To some extent	Much	Very much
Principals (n = 33)	Percentage	3.0	6.1	12.1	45.5	33.3
	Frequency	1	2	4	15	11
Students (n = 242)	Percentage	4.1	11.2	26.4	30.6	27.7
	Frequency	10	27	64	74	67
Total (N= 275)	Percentage	4.0	10.5	24.7	32.4	28.4
	Frequency	11	29	68	89	78

Student welfare, according to the study respondents, can be used in the management of truancy since (32.4 %) of the respondents indicated "much", (28.4 %) of the respondents indicated "very much", (24.7 %) of the respondents indicated "to some extent"; but only (10.5 %) of the respondents indicated "neutral" and (4.0 %) of the respondents indicated "not at all". Findings show that 85.5% of the respondents indicated that their respective schools used student welfare in the management of truancy. It is only the administrative issues that are important in reducing truancy. The welfare or wellbeing of a student is also important. The need to look at

student wellbeing is echoed by Donald *et al.* (1997), when stating that schools should work towards promoting whole and healthy development in both students and environment. In other words, problems must be "cured" and prevented, and schools must strive towards developing supportive environments. Lewis (1995) also suggests that pastoral systems and additional tutoring for learners who are identified as having poor literacy skills can reduce aspects of the school that tend to use them out of school. Reid (1999) suggests that the introduction of homework clubs and homework policies can help learners to develop their learning skills and lead to improved academic performance. The findings related to community aspects approaches used in the management of truancy in Nyamira North District are summarized and presented in tables below.

Findings related to *"life-skills education"* are summarized and presented in table 4.29 below. **Where:** Not at all = (1); Neutral = (2); To some extent = (3); Much = (4); Very much = (5).

Table 4.29: Life-skills education

Type of Respondent	Response	1	2	3	4	5
Principals (n = 33)	Percentage	6.1	9.1	18.2	39.4	27.3
	Frequency	2	3	6	13	9
Students (n = 242)	Percentage	5.8	11.2	30.2	26.0	26.9
	Frequency	14	27	73	63	65
Total (N= 275)	Percentage	5.8	10.9	28.7	27.6	26.9
	Frequency	16	30	79	76	74

Life – skills education is one of the community aspects approaches used in the management of truancy in secondary schools in Nyamira North District, as indicated by majority of the respondents, (27.6 %) who indicated "much", (26.9 %) indicated "very much" and (28.7 %) of the respondents indicated "to some extent". The respondents whose opinion was different were (10.9 %) who indicated "neutral" and (5.8 %) who indicated "not at all". Findings show that 83.2% of the respondents indicated that their respective schools used life-skills education in the management of truancy. According to Donald *et al.* (1997), life skills empower individuals to "engage and cope successfully with life and its challenges' and promote psychological competence. That is, schools must build the resiliency of their learners through life-skills education and thereby reduce the effect of vulnerability towards truancy in "at-risk" learners. Reid (199) and Lewis (1995) assert that personal and social education programmes should not only help learners with skills that enable them to cope effectively with school and the world of work, but should also include truancy as a theme in their content. Reid (1999) maintains that truancy as a topic should be included or related to themes of the PSE (Personal and Social Education) programmes such as discipline, disruptive behavior, bullying and codes of practice. Findings related to *"in-service training"* are summarized and presented in table 4.30 below. **Where:** Not at all = (1); Neutral = (2); To some extent = (3); Much = (4); Very much = (5).

Table 4.30: In-service training

Type of Respondent	Response	1	2	3	4	5
Principals (n = 33)	Percentage	9.1	6.1	15.2	45.5	24.2
	Frequency	3	2	5	15	8
Students (n = 242)	Percentage	5.8	14.0	31.8	21.5	26.9
	Frequency	14	34	77	52	65
Total (N= 275)	Percentage	6.2	13.1	29.8	24.4	26.5
	Frequency	17	36	82	67	73

In-service training was considered a community aspects approach used in the management of truancy, as indicated by (24.4 %) of the respondents for "much", (26.5 %) of the respondents indicated "very much", (29.8 %) of the respondents indicated "to some extent", (13.1 %) of the respondents for "neutral" and (6.2 %) of the respondents for "not at all". Findings show that 80.7% of the respondents indicated that their respective schools used in-service training in the management of truancy. The teacher In-service Project's intervention at Modderdam High School is a typical example of school organization development that helped to decrease the level of truancy in South Africa (De Jong, 2000). The author identifies nine major areas of improvement in the school, which include, amongst others, security, physical conditions, relationships between staff and learners, relationship between learners relationships between school and parents, management and governance, quality of teaching and a sense of identity and community. Findings related to *"acting fast on learning absence"* are summarized and presented in table 4.31 below. **Where:** Not at all = (1); Neutral = (2); To some extent = (3); Much = (4); Very much = (5).

Table 4.31: Acting fast on learning absence

Type of Respondent	Response	1	2	3	4	5
Principals (n = 33)	Percentage	0	3.0	9.1	51.5	36.4
	Frequency	0	1	3	17	12
Students (n = 242)	Percentage	4.1	7.4	27.3	28.1	33.1
	Frequency	10	18	66	68	80
Total (N= 275)	Percentage	3.6	6.9	25.1	30.9	33.5
	Frequency	10	19	69	85	92

Acting fast on learning absence was considered a community aspect approach used in the management of truancy by majority of the respondents, (30.9 %) who indicated "much", (33.5 %) of the respondents indicated "very much" and (25.1 %) of the respondents indicated "to some extent". However, (6.9 %) of the respondents indicated "neutral" and (3.6%) of the respondents indicated "not at all". Findings show that 89.5% of the respondents indicated that their respective schools used acting fast on learning absence in the management of truancy. In some instances, truancy reduction efforts focus is on early detection and includes efforts such as Stay in School Program, which targets students in middle school or what is known as the truant during the freshman year (US Department of Education, 1996). Another notable feature of these programmes is that support in the form of counseling for the youth and parenting skills training, and, in some instances, short-term family counseling, are also provided. Findings related to *"ordinances"* are summarized and presented in table 4.32 below. ***Where:*** Not at all = (1); Neutral = (2); To some extent = (3); Much = (4); Very much = (5).

Table 4.32: Ordinances

Type of Respondent	Response	1	2	3	4	5
Principals (n = 33)	Percentage	12.1	15.2	27.3	21.2	24.2
	Frequency	4	5	9	7	8
Students (n = 242)	Percentage	3.7	5.0	30.2	32.6	28.5
	Frequency	9	12	73	79	69
Total (N= 275)	Percentage	4.7	6.2	29.8	31.3	28.0
	Frequency	13	17	82	86	77

Findings of the study show that ordinances were used in the management of truancy in Nyamira North District. Whereas (31.3%) of the respondents indicated "much", (28.0 %) of the respondents indicated "very much" and (29.8 %) of the respondents indicated "to some extent". Only (6.2%) of the respondents indicated "neutral" and (4.7 %) of the respondents indicated "not at all". Findings show that 89.1% of the respondents indicated that their respective schools used ordinances in the management of truancy. According to Pappas (1996), some cities have enacted daytime loitering ordinances and ant-truancy laws. Truants are referred to the juvenile traffic court and may have their driver's licenses delayed, suspended or revoked. The police officer is authorized to take the truants' right hand fingerprints where satisfactory evidence of identity is lacking and in this way to deny them the driving privilege. The loitering ordinance not only improved attendance rates in the whole school district by 2.2% in one year, but also helped to reduce the high school dropout rate by 57%. Findings related to *"availability of truancy officers"* are summarized and presented in table 4.33 below. ***Where:*** Not at all = (1); Neutral = (2); To some extent = (3); Much = (4); Very much = (5).

Table 4.33: Availability of Truancy officers

Type of Respondent	Response	1	2	3	4	5
Principals (n = 33)	Percentage	9.1	12.1	12.1	30.3	36.4
	Frequency	3	4	4	10	12
Students (n = 242)	Percentage	0.4	5.8	28.9	28.3	35.5
	Frequency	1	14	70	71	86
Total (N= 275)	Percentage	1.5	6.5	26.9	29.5	35.6
	Frequency	4	18	74	81	98

In relation to availability of Truancy Officers as a community aspect approach used in the management of truancy, (29.5 %) of the respondents indicated "much", (35.6 %) of the respondents indicated "very much" and (26.9 %) of the respondents indicated "to some extent". Nevertheless, (6.5 %) of the respondents indicated "neutral" and (1.5 %) of the respondents indicated "not at all". Findings show that 92% of the respondents indicated that their respective schools used attending or truancy officers in the management of truancy. The full-time services of attendance officers help schools to reduce truancy. According to MaclLdowie (1999), the appointment of officers had an immediate and lasting effect on attendance in Kent schools. It must be emphasized that the effect was particularly felt when the officers picked up truants on their first day of absence. Gerrard, Burhans and Fair (2003) also maintain that assigning a truancy to serious cases of truants and their

families does increase attendance rates. The findings related to other effective approaches used in the management of truancy in Nyamira North District are summarized and presented in tables below. Findings related to *"school – community collaboration"* are summarized and presented in table 4.34 below. **Where:** Not at all = (1); Neutral = (2); To some extent = (3); Much = (4); Very much = (5).

Table 4.34: School-community collaboration

Type of Respondent	Response	1	2	3	4	5
Principals (n = 33)	Percentage	6.1	6.1	12.1	45.5	30.3
	Frequency	2	2	4	15	10
Students (n = 242)	Percentage	4.1	6.6	25.2	33.5	30.6
	Frequency	10	16	61	81	74
Total (N= 275)	Percentage	4.4	6.5	23.6	34.9	30.5
	Frequency	12	18	65	96	84

The study findings show that that school - community collaboration and safe learning environments could be used to manage truancy. Majority of the respondents, (34.9 %) indicated "much", (30.5 %) of the respondents indicated "very much" and (23.6 %) of the respondents indicated "to some extent". The alternative responses show that (6.5 %) of the respondents indicated "neutral" and another (4.4%) of the respondents indicated "not at all". Findings show that 89% of the respondents indicated that their respective schools used school -community collaboration in the management of truancy. Findings related to *"safe learning environments"* are summarized and presented in table 4.35 below. **Where:** Not at all = (1); Neutral = (2); To some extent = (3); Much = (4); Very much = (5).

Table 4.35: Safe learning environments

Type of Respondent	Response	1	2	3	4	5
Principals (n = 33)	Percentage	18.2	9.1	24.2	27.3	21.2
	Frequency	6	3	8	9	7
Students (n = 242)	Percentage	0.8	3.3	21.9	38.4	35.5
	Frequency	2	8	53	93	86
Total (N= 275)	Percentage	2.9	4.0	22.2	37.1	33.8
	Frequency	8	11	61	102	93

Safe learning environments, according to the study findings, could be used in the management of truancy. Out of the 275 study participants, (37.1 %) of them indicated "much", (33.8 %) of indicated "very much" and (22.2%) indicated "to some extent". Of the remainder, (4.0%) of the indicated "neutral" and (2.9%) of the respondents indicated "not at all". Findings show that 93.1% of the respondents indicated that their respective schools used safe learning environments in the management of truancy. The teacher In-service Project's intervention at Modderdam High School is a typical example of school organization development that helped to decrease the level of truancy in South Africa (De Jong, 2000). The author identifies nine major areas of improvement in the school, which include, amongst others, security, physical conditions, relationships between staff and learners, relationship between learners relationships between school and parents, management and governance, quality of teaching and a sense of identity and community. Findings related to *"mentoring/tutoring"* are summarized and presented in table 4.36 below. **Where:** Not at all = (1); Neutral = (2); To some extent = (3); Much = (4); Very much = (5)

Table 4.36: Mentoring/tutoring

Type of Respondent	Response	1	2	3	4	5
Principals (n = 33)	Percentage	3.0	3.0	18.2	42.4	33.3
	Frequency	1	1	6	14	11
Students (n = 242)	Percentage	3.3	3.3	25.2	30.2	35.1
	Frequency	8	8	61	73	85
Total (N= 275)	Percentage	3.3	5.8	24.4	31.6	34.9
	Frequency	9	16	67	87	96

Mentoring/tutoring could also be used in the management of truancy, as indicated by (31.6 %) of the respondents for "much", (34.9 %) of the respondents indicated "very much" and (24.4%) of the respondents indicated "to some extent". The respondents with a contradicting opinion were (5.8%) who indicated "neutral" and (3.3%) who indicated "not at all". Findings show that 90.9% of the respondents indicated that their respective schools used mentoring/tutoring in the management of truancy. Cohen and Ryan (1998) maintain that learners should be provided with counseling and additional tutoring services as a means of reducing truancy. Academic support can be offered to groups or individual learners. Tutoring is particularly important, since some truants in the study by

Malan (1972) indicated that they no assistance and had little time to do their homework at home. Findings related to *"individualized instruction"* are summarized and presented in table 4.37 below. **Where:** Not at all = (1); Neutral = (2); To some extent = (3); Much = (4); Very much = (5)

Table 4.37: Individualized instruction

Type of Respondent	Response	1	2	3	4	5
Principals (n = 33)	Percentage	12.1	18.2	15.2	30.3	24.2
	Frequency	4	6	5	10	8
Students (n = 242)	Percentage	2.0	4.1	25.6	31.8	36.4
	Frequency	5	10	62	77	88
Total (N= 275)	Percentage	2.9	4.4	28.4	33.1	31.3
	Frequency	9	16	67	87	96

With respect to individualized instruction, (33.1 %) of the respondents indicated "much", (31.3 %) of the respondents indicated "very much", (28.4%) of the respondents indicated "to some extent", (4.4%) of the respondents indicated "neutral" and (2.9%) of the respondents indicated "not at all". Findings show that 92.8% of the respondents indicated that their respective schools used individualized instruction in the management of truancy. Instructional approaches that promote active exploration challenge learners to think about their own learning while using other media, such as music, movement and art, to enable them to optimize their own cognitive development and to take active control of their own lives (Donald *et al.,* 1997). It is a healthy learning and teaching environment of this kind that truants need. Cooperative learning activities can also promote the acquisition of social skills, which may be lacking in most learners who tend to play truant.

5.0   SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
5.1   Summary
The study sought to investigate the school and home related causes and approaches used in the management of truancy in Nyamira North district in Kenya. The study was guided by the following specific objectives: to establish the school and home related causes of truancy in secondary schools in Nyamira North district; and to determine the approaches used in the management of truancy in secondary schools in Nyamira North district. Literature review was undertaken in order to eliminate duplication of what has been done and provide a bridge and clear understanding of existing knowledge base in the problem area. The literature review is based on authoritative, recent, and original sources such as journals, books, thesis and academic projects.

A descriptive survey was used to undertake the study. A census of public secondary schools in Nyamira North District was. A semi-structured questionnaire was used to collect primary data from the Principals and students of public secondary schools in Nyamira North District. Content analysis was employed for data pertaining to the profile of the respondents while data pertaining to the objectives of the study was analyzed by employing descriptive statistics. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used in data entry and analysis.

Findings of the study indicate that the following are the key school factors causing truancy in Nyamira North district: poor habits arising from initially legitimate reasons, as reported by 89.1% of the respondents; learning problems, as reported by 88.4% of the respondents; movement between classes during lesson changes, as indicated by 86.9% of the respondents; cognitive Style, as indicated by 86.2% of the respondents; educator-learner relationship, as indicated by 84.1% of the respondents; classroom management, as indicated by 83.2% of the respondents; teaching or instructional approach, as indicated by 83.2% of the respondents; school size, as indicated by 82.9% of the respondents; scholastic failure, as indicated by 81.8% of the respondents; anxiety and fear, as reported by 80.8% of the respondents; anti-social behavior, as indicated by 80.1% of the respondents; and dilapidated school building and poor facilities, as indicated by 78.5% of the respondents. The findings also show that bullying was not considered a key factor causing truancy in the secondary schools in Nayamira district, as indicated by only 21.8% of the respondents who agreed.

The key home factors causing truancy in Nyamira North district include: peer influence, as reported by 89.5% of the respondents; violence and drug use, as reported by 86.9% of the respondents; marital status of parents, as reported by 82.6% of the respondents; socio-economic status of parents, as reported by 79.7% of the respondents; and poor involvement and supervision, as reported by 73.4% of the respondents.

Findings of the study also show that the main approaches used in the management of truancy in secondary schools in Nyamira North district include the following: safe learning environments, as reported by 93.1% of the respondents; Individualized Instruction (92.8) , as reported by 82.2% of the respondents; early childhood education, as reported by 92.7% of the respondents; availability of truancy officers, as reported by 92% of the respondents; early literacy development, as reported by 92% of the respondents; using reinforcement and reward systems, as reported by 91.6% of the respondents; effective monitoring, registration and recording of attendance, as reported by 91.3% of the respondents; mentoring/tutoring, as reported by 90.9% of the

respondents; systemic renewal, as reported by 90.2% of the respondents; family engagement, as reported by 89.8% of the respondents; acting fast on learning absence, as reported by 89.5% of the respondents; ordinances, as reported by 89.1% of the respondents; school - community collaboration, as reported by 89% of the respondents; after- school opportunities, as reported by 89% of the respondents; using a variety of instructional approaches, as reported by 88.3% of the respondents; welcome back to school, as reported by 87.0% of the respondents; learning communities within schools, as reported by 86.5% of the respondents; career and technical education, as reported by 85.8% of the respondents; student welfare, as reported by 85.5% of the respondents; personalized learning, as reported by 85.5% of the respondents; life-skills education, as reported by 83.2% of the respondents; tutoring and mentor systems, as reported by 83.2% of the respondents; counseling and therapy, as reported by 82.2% of the respondents; in-service training, as reported by 80.7% of the respondents; and alternative schooling, as reported by 74.2% of the respondents.

5.2   Conclusions

The study findings indicate that high rates of truancy are problems that affect many schools in many countries. Students who habitually miss school exhibit loss of learning and instruction, and have been identified as at-risk for dropping out of school altogether. School systems suffer also when students are absent by loss of instructional time that often must be repeated for the absentee student, which in turn leads to loss of instructional time for other students.

Several causes for truancy have been identified, with statistics to support the theory of school refusal behavior (SRB), which may manifest in many ways, including truancy. Other identified causes for truancy include lack of parental involvement and supervision, lack of interesting and challenging curriculum for students, a desire for hedonistic activities with peers, negative self-image and self-esteem, and participation in co-operative work experiences for older students.

The findings indicate that when students experience learning problems it is necessary to provide support that will help to maximize their chances for academic success, thereby reducing the opportunities for playing truant. The approaches used in the management of truancy in schools may be categorized into the following: personal traits, school aspects, community aspects and others.

5.3   Recommendations
5.3.1   Recommendations for policy and practice

Based on findings of the study, it is expected that the stakeholders, who include the management of schools and parents will gain a better understanding of the causes and effective approaches that may be used in the management of truancy in order to improve performance of students. In view of the findings, the following recommendations are made: (i) In view of the finding that a lack of opportunities for connection and social bonding to school is purportedly linked to students' disengagement and chronic truancy, there is need for the management of schools to accord the students opportunities for connection and social bonding; (ii) There is need for the management of schools to emphasize students' commitment in schools. Commitment describes the investment made in conventional activities such as peer relationships and school activities. When students invest time, energy, and personal resources into school, they are less likely to abandon it. Therefore, school students who feel committed and invested in school, via academics, extracurricular activities, leadership opportunities, and relationships with a good teacher, friend, or peer group may be less likely to disengage from school and truant; (iii) The managements of schools should endeavor to involve students in as many school activities as possible, including day-to-day management of the schools. Involvement speaks directly to what individuals find themselves doing to keep busy and deterred from delinquent activities. The more they are invested and engaged in pro-social, structured activities (studying habits), like school, leadership in a club or sports team, the less likely they are to engage in deviant activities, like truanting because they are busy; and (iv) Moral education is seen as having a direct effect on students' decisions to truant Many of these values are taught in the home and are often emphasized in the school. The societal belief in the value of education is a key factor in choosing (or not choosing) to be truant. Many students that are truant do not yet believe that without an education they are bound to failure or limited opportunities.

5.3.2   Recommendations for further research

The findings of this study, it is hoped, will contribute to the existing body of knowledge and form basis for future researches. The following areas of further research are thus suggested: Whereas the current study focused on the responses from the principals with respect to the causes and the approaches used in the management of truancy, future studies should focus on responses from the students and parents; and further studies should also focus on the challenges faced in implementation of the approaches used in the management of truancy and possible interventions that could be used employed to enhance the effectiveness of the approaches.

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APPENDIX II: LIST OF SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN NYAMIRA NORTH DISTRICT

No.	Name	Type of School
1	Nyagokiani	Mixed Day and Boarding
2	Nyamauro	Mixed Day
3	Nyamwanchani	Mixed Day
4	Nyamiranga	Mixed Day and Boarding
5	Kiabonyoru	Mixed Day and Boarding
6	Omonayo	Mixed Day and Boarding
7	Kerema	Mixed Day
8	Nyakwerema	Mixed Day
9	Egentubi	Mixed Day
10	Nyangoge	Mixed Day and Boarding
11	Enkinda	Mixed Day
12	Kenyoro	Mixed Day
13	Endiba	Mixed Day
14	Maagonga	Mixed Day
15	Biego	Mixed Day
16	Gekendo	Mixed Day and Boarding
17	Ikonge	Girls Day and Boarding
18	Ikonge	Boys Day
19	Kea	Mixed Day
20	Kebabe girls	Girls Boarding
21	Kenguso	Mixed Day
22	Nyairanga	Mixed Day and Boarding
23	Eronge D.E.B	Mixed Day and Boarding
24	Nyamusi	Girls Boarding
25	Matongo	Boys Boarding
26	Matongo Lutheran	Mixed Day
27	Riomego	Mixed Day and Boarding
28	Gekonge	Mixed Day
29	Ikamu	Mixed Day
30	Gisage	Mixed Day
31	St. Kaisser Nyamonge	Mixed Day
32	Mochenwa D.E.B	Mixed Day
33	Nyambiri	Mixed Day
34	Ntana	Mixed Day and Boarding
35	Misambi	Mixed Day
36	Nyekenimo	Mixed Day

Source: Nyamira North District Education Office, 2011

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