Influence of Family-Related Truancy on Pupils' Academic Performance in Public Primary School in Kakamega Central Sub-County, Kenya

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ABSTRACT

Education is a continuous process of structured instruction aimed at achieving Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through pupils' academic performance. However, Kenyan primary schools encounter persistent challenges, including low grades, behavioral issues, lack of engagement, and difficulties in mastering basic academic skills, raising significant concerns. Thus, the purpose of the study was to investigate the influence of family-related truancy on pupils' academic performance in public primary school in Kakamega Central Sub-County, Kenya. The study was anchored on Hirschi (1969) social control theory. The study employed a descriptive survey research design, targeting 768 respondents, including 67 deputy head teachers 134 pupils and 567 class teachers. The sample size comprised 256 individuals, consisting of 24 head teachers, 45 pupils and 205 class teachers, selected using a stratified random sampling technique. Data were collected through validated questionnaires and interview guides, with instrument reliability confirmed via a pilot study, demonstrating a Spearman's rank correlation coefficient of 0.74. Quantitative data underwent descriptive and inferential statistical analysis, presented in tables, while qualitative data were analyzed for common themes, organized, and discussed within the study's main objective areas, with relevant quotations used to present findings. The research findings indicated a statistically significant correlation (p=0.00 at α = 0.05) between causes of family-related truancy and pupils' academic performance in public primary schools. Therefore, it is recommended that education policymakers devise and execute comprehensive guidelines and support systems to effectively manage and mitigate the various causes of truancy stemming from family. The information provided by this study will benefit policymakers, community members and academicians.

Key words: Academic Performance, Family-Related Cause, Truancy

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I. INTRODUCTION

Education involves a comprehensive and continuous process of structured instruction aimed at realizing Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through pupils' academic performance (Ferrer-Estévez & Chalmeta, 2021). Subsequently, fulfilling SDGs through pupils' academic performance involves educating them beyond traditional subjects, emphasizing sustainability, global citizenship, and critical thinking to foster the values and skills needed for sustainable development (Al-Kuwari et al., 2021). Despite the global effort to enhance pupils' academic performance, concerns persist regarding low grades, behavioral issues, lack of engagement, and struggles with mastering basic academic skills (Govindarajoo, et.al 2022). This phenomenon can be attributed to a range of maladaptive behaviors that detrimentally affect the academic performance of affected pupils, all rooted in the causes of truancy (Klein et al., 2022).

In developed countries, causes of truancy have been comprehensively addressed to boost academic success, but in Sub-Saharan Africa, it's a rising concern affecting current schooling and future prospects, indicating a substantial gap in addressing this challenge (Kadio, 2023). This suggests that addressing causes of truancy is crucial for improving academic performance and achieving Sustainable Development Goals, particularly in regions like Sub-Saharan Africa where it poses a significant obstacle to education and future prospects. The causes of truancy are the various factors and circumstances such as family issues, school factors, economic impacts, and learner characteristics that lead to a learner's deliberate absence from school without a valid reason during the compulsory education age (Weathers et al., 2021). Family-related causes involve parents' education, occupation, supervision, and household income. This implies that understanding and addressing the multifaceted causes of truancy, are crucial for implementing effective interventions to reduce absenteeism and improve overall educational outcomes among students.

In China, pupil performance and truancy are closely linked issues that educational authorities and policymakers consistently address with truancy remaining a concern in some regions (Jiang et al., 2024). Similarly, despite significant progress in educational attainment and performance in Spain(Gómez & Morales, 2024), truancy

among primary school learners remains a major concern, with approximately one-third of children regularly skipping entire school days, neglecting homework, or being inattentive in class (Lázaro et al., 2020). This suggests that the ongoing issues of school failure, violence, and truancy among learners highlight the urgent need for global educational reforms and targeted interventions to address these pervasive challenges and improve student engagement and performance.

In Africa, pupils' academic performance is significantly undermined by causes of truancy, which impedes the success of educational reforms and leads to widespread underachievement in various regions (Sekiwu et al., 2020). Particularly, despite numerous reforms by the Ghanaian government to improve basic education, a significant number of primary school pupils still fail to achieve the required passes in the country's Basic Education Certificate Examinations (BECE), with truancy identified as a key factor (Essah, 2023). Similarly, in Nigeria, causes and consequences of truancy remains a major obstacle to pupils' academic success, prompting a closer examination of the quality and administration of primary education (Uguana, 2021). This implies that the widespread truancy in Africa significantly undermines pupils' academic performance, impedes educational reforms, and leads to underachievement, as evidenced by persistent low pass rates.

The demand for quality in the 21st century has prompted the Kenyan education system to rethink its approach to improvement (Inyega et al.2021). The goal is to enhance academic performance and other areas in line with established policies. However, pupils' academic performance is significantly undermined by truancy (Kukali, 2023) impeding educational reforms and leading to widespread underachievement in various regions (Evans & Acosta, 2023). Despite numerous reforms by the government to improve basic education in various parts of Kakamega County, a significant number of primary school pupils still fail to meet the required standards (Malack, 2020), with truancy identified as a key factor (Kotiano et al., 2022). This implies that despite efforts to enhance the Kenyan education system's quality and address academic performance issues, truancy remains a significant obstacle, hindering educational reforms and contributing to widespread underachievement, particularly in regions like Kakamega County. In this regard, the current study adopted descriptive survey research design to assess how causes of truancy influence the academic performance of the primary school pupils in Kakamega central Sub County, Kenya.

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The essence of effective academic performance for primary school pupils is to achieve comprehensive mastery of foundational knowledge and skills, while nurturing critical thinking and a lifelong passion for learning, with success dependent on mitigating factors contributing to truancy (Keppens & Spruyt, 2020). Kenyan primary schools face persistent challenges such as low grades, behavioral issues, lack of engagement, and difficulties in mastering basic academic skills, prompting significant concerns. These issues may stem from underlying causes of truancy, which impede schools from realizing their educational objectives effectively, especially in different sub-counties within Kakamega County, Kenya. In the study area, the schools have continued to suffer truancy among pupils, the performance of these students is dismal. Schools that record low academic performance are attributed with those that pupils do not attend the school regularly. Most pupils have failed to attend the school on 100 % attendance. For instance, twenty schools in Kakamega Central Sub-County recorded low academic performance in the past three years (Kakamega County Education Report, 2023). Despite global governmental efforts to advance education through policies and strategic plans, challenges persist, often exacerbated by a lack of triangulation in empirical studies. In this regard, the current study adopted cross-sectional research design to assess the influence of family-related truancy on pupils' academic performance in public primary school in Kakamega Central Sub-County, Kenya.

1.2 Research Objective

To establish the influence of family-related truancy on pupils' academic performance in public primary school in Kakamega Central Sub-County, Kenya.

1.3 Research Hypothesis

Ho₁: There is significant no significant association between family-related truancy and pupils' academic performance in public primary school in Kakamega Central Sub-County, Kenya

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical Review

This study employed Social Control Theory, which was put forth by Hirschi in 1969. The theory emphasizes the importance of connections with individuals or organizations that uphold conventional principles and standards. Weak connections increase the likelihood of engaging in risky behaviors. Social Control Theory identifies four elements that determine the strength of attachment bonds: A) emotional attachment to close individuals like relatives,

mentors, and peers, B) commitment to societal engagements, C) participation in community affairs, and D) belief in communal norms (Costello & Laub, 2020). Emotional connectedness to important individuals guides one's actions according to the wishes and expectations of significant others. For a truant to change, they must form attachments with significant others. The family holds the greatest responsibility for encouraging good behavior, and the school environment must reinforce social rules.

Social Control Theory is highly relevant to a study on the causes of truancy and pupils' academic performance. This theory posits that individuals refrain from deviant behavior, such as truancy, when their bonds to society are strong. These bonds include attachment to family, commitment to school, involvement in conventional activities, and belief in social norms (Vadivel et al., 2023). By applying Social Control Theory, researchers can explore how the weakening of these bonds due to factors like family issues, disengagement from school, lack of extracurricular involvement, or diminished belief in the value of education contributes to truancy (Da Fonseca et al., 2024). Understanding these dynamics can help in developing interventions that strengthen these social bonds, thereby reducing truancy and improving academic performance.

2.2 Empirical Review

Family-related causes of truancy are diverse and deeply interconnected with familial dynamics and socio-economic factors. These causes include insufficient parental supervision or involvement in their child's education, parental conflicts or neglect, financial hardships preventing access to essential schooling resources like uniforms or transportation, and unstable family environments marked by domestic violence, substance abuse, or mental health issues. Poor communication and strained relationships between parents and children, along with inconsistent discipline or harsh parenting styles, can lead to disengagement from school and increased absenteeism. Additionally, intergenerational patterns of truancy may emerge from familial attitudes towards education, potentially perpetuating these behaviors across generations. These factors highlight the complex interplay between home environments and academic outcomes, emphasizing the need to address familial challenges to reduce truancy and promote regular school attendance (Knage, 2023).

Fornander and Kearney (2019) explored family environment variables as predictors of school absenteeism severity at multiple Levels: Ensemble and Classification and Regression Tree Analysis. The study utilized ensemble and classification and regression tree analysis to identify potential family environment risk factors among youth (i.e., children and adolescents) at different levels of school absenteeism severity. Higher levels of absenteeism were also examined on an exploratory basis. Participants included 341 youth aged 5–17 years (M = 12.2; SD = 3.3) and their families from an outpatient therapy clinic (68.3%) and community (31.7%) setting, the latter from a family court and truancy diversion program cohort. Family environment risk factors tended to be more circumscribed and informative at higher levels of absenteeism, with greater diversity at lower levels. Higher levels of absenteeism appear more closely related to lower achievement orientation, active-recreational orientation, cohesion, and expressiveness, though several nuanced results were found as well. Absenteeism severity levels of 10–15% may be associated more with qualitative changes in family functioning. These data may support a Tier 2-Tier 3 distinction in this regard and may indicate the need for specific family-based intervention goals at higher levels of absenteeism severity.

Sanchez et al. (2022) examined the prospective associations between 17 individual, family, and community level youth assets and truancy among adolescents living in 1-parent and 2-parent households. Five waves of data were collected annually over a 4-year period from a racially/ethnically diverse sample of adolescents (N = 722, 51.5% female, mean age = 14.1 years). Generalized linear mixed models were used to identify prospective associations between youth assets and truancy while stratifying by family structure and controlling sociodemographic characteristics. The study revealed that the significant asset/truancy associations were stronger for adolescents living in 1-parent households, whereas for adolescents living in 2-parent households, more of the community assets were significantly protective (p < .05) from truancy.

Seidu et al. (2022) examined truancy: How food insecurity, parental supervision, and other factors influence school attendance of adolescents in Seychelles. Utilizing data from the 2015 Seychelles Global-based School Health Survey, this study examined factors associated with truancy among 1,833 in-school adolescents. Employing descriptive statistics and binary logistic regression, the analysis aimed to model these factors. The findings indicated a truancy prevalence of 25.9% among in-school adolescents. Notably, students whose parents monitored their activities during free time exhibited reduced odds of being truants (AOR = 0.78, 95% CI = 0.61, 0.89).

Lázaro et al. (2020) analysed the prevalence and types of truancy in a population of students with high social risk in Madrid City, studying the relationship between truancy and their school performance. Mentor teachers from both preschool and primary stages participated in answering a questionnaire (N = 120), providing insights on a total of 433 students across 12 different schools. The findings unveiled a concerning prevalence of various forms of truancy (Active and Passive). Notably, 46.86% of students were found to skip entire days without valid excuses, while 42.51% habitually neglected their homework. Moreover, the study revealed that high truancy rates were common, especially in

children of low-income households. Therefore, the study revealed meaningful correlations between truancy and academic performance.

Anim et al. (2023) examined the relationship between family characteristics and Junior High School students' absenteeism in selected schools in the Asante Akyem Central Municipality of Ghana. This study comprised 408 students and sheds light on the pivotal role of family dynamics, parental economic status, maternal income, and parental-teacher association meeting attendance in shaping student absenteeism. Notably, the research revealed that higher maternal income was associated with a reduction in the frequency of student absenteeism from school. This underscores the importance of recognizing the impact of family-related factors on student attendance patterns, emphasizing the need to foster a supportive family environment to enhance student attendance and engagement in school.

Nasution and Fadillah (2024) determined and analyzed the relationship between parental attention and learning motivation and the expected behavior of Alwashliyah MAs students in Tebing Tinggi City. This research uses a quantitative research method, namely the method for collecting research data using a questionnaire with respondents to obtain information about the variables studied using a questionnaire. The research results show a significant negative relationship between parental attention and supportive behavior as seen from the coefficient value (Rxy) = -0.572 with p = 0.000 < 0.050. the terminate coefficient (R2) value is 0.327, meaning that parental attention contributes 32.7% to students' correct behavior at MAs Alwashliyah, Tebing Tinggi City. Steve et al. (2022) determined the causes and consequences of truancy among in-school adolescents in Oyo North Senatorial District of Oyo State. The study employed a descriptive survey method to select 400 in-school adolescents, utilizing purposive, stratified, and simple random sampling techniques. Reliability was established through the test-retest method, yielding a coefficient of 0.89. Hypothesis testing utilized t-tests and ANOVA at a significance level of 0.05. The findings revealed that high levels of poverty, lack of discipline, and inadequate guidance and counseling were the primary causes of truancy among students. The consequences included poor academic performance, class repetition, and school dropout.

Ojewola (2022) investigated the influence of family and school types on truancy behaviour of secondary school students in Ogbomosho, Nigeria. Descriptive survey research design was adopted for this study. The population consisted of all the secondary school students in Ogbomosho; the sample was made up of 300 respondents from both the public and private schools in Ogbomosho. Simple and stratified random sampling techniques were used to select the schools and students that participated in the study. A self-designed instrument was used to collect information on the influence of family and school types on truancy behaviour of secondary school students. The result indicated that family types had influence on truancy behaviour among secondary school students in Ogbomosho. It showed that students from separated families were more influenced with truancy behaviour than those from intact families. The result also showed that school types influenced truancy behaviour among secondary school students. Onongha (2020) examined family type and truancy behaviour among secondary school students in Oriade Local Government Area (LGA) of Osun state, Nigeria. The study employed the descriptive survey design of the ex-post facto approach. The results revealed no significant variation in truancy behaviour among secondary school students from intact families, single-parent families and stepfamilies in Oriade LGA of Osun State. (f=1.19, p>70.05). The results further indicated significant gender difference in family type suggestion of truancy behaviour between: males in intact families and females in stepfamilies. Based on the findings of the study, it was recommended that, parents irrespective of family type should adequately supervise their children (biological or step) and sufficiently monitor both their indoor and outdoor activities.

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The study utilized a descriptive survey research design, which involves collecting data at a single point in time to analyze relationships between variables within a specific population (Orodho, 2005). This design was selected for its ability to quickly and effectively examine these relationships within a defined population at a single moment.

3.2 Study Area and Targeted Population

The study was conducted in Kakamega Central Sub-County, located in Kakamega County, Kenya.

A research population is generally a large collection of individuals or objects that is the main focus of a scientific query (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). The target population includes all members of a defined group or set of subjects to which a researcher aims to generalize the results of the study (Borg and Gall, 1989). In Kakamega Central Sub-County, there are 67 primary schools, comprising 567 class teachers 134 pupils and 67deputy head teachers. Therefore, the target population for this study consisted of 67 head teachers and 567 class teachers, totaling 634 individuals, as summarized in Table 1.

Table 1
Target Population

Category	Target Population
Head Teachers	67
Teachers	567
Pupils	134
Total	**768**

3.3 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

A sample size is the number of subjects or units included in a study, representing a subset of the larger population from which they are drawn. A formula as cited by Kothari (2004) was utilized to calculate the sample size as follows:

$n = z^2pq/d^2$

$n = \dfrac{(1.96^2)\,(0.5)\,(0.5)}{(0.05)^2}$

$n = 384$

Where:

n = the desired sample size

z = the standard normal deviation at the required C.I = 1.96

p = proportion in the target population is estimated to have characteristics of interest = 0.5

q=1-p=0.5, d=the level of statistical significance set = 0.05.

Since the target population is less than 10,000, the following formula will be used to determine the actual sample size:

$nf = \dfrac{n}{1+n/N}$

$nf = \dfrac{384}{1+384/634}$

$= 274$

Sampling is the method used to select a representative group of subjects from a defined population (Orodho, 2002). This study utilized a stratified random sampling technique to create strata comprising head teachers and class teachers. Simple random sampling was then used within each stratum to select head teachers and class teachers, who were considered to be well-informed about the causes of truancy and pupils' academic performance. As shown in Table 2, this gave sample sizes of 24 deputy Head teachers, 205 Class teachers and 45 pupils.

Table 2
Sampling Frame

Category	Target Population	Proportional Allocation $n_i=(N_i/N)*n$	Sample size (n)
Deputy Head Teachers	67	(67/768) *256	24
Class Teachers	567	(567/768) *256	205
Pupils	134	(134/768) *256	45
Total	**768**	**(494/768) *256**	**274**

3.4 Research Instruments

The study used questionnaires and interview schedules as data collection tools. According to Kumar (2014), these instruments enable respondents to freely express their views and make suggestions. Their advantages include establishing rapport, explaining the study's purpose, and clarifying unclear items. Questionnaires were administered to class teachers, focusing on demographic information and the factors influencing truancy. The instrument employed close-ended questions which provided response categories, requiring respondents to select specific answers. The instrument comprehensively addressed each study objective and was distributed to both students and teachers. The questionnaire comprised two sections: the first covered demographic data, while the second delved into the impact of truancy causes on pupils' academic performance in Kakamega Central Sub-County. Head teachers participated through interview schedules.

3.5 Validity

Validity refers to the extent to which a test measures what it is intended to measure (Mugenda, 2003). According to Bowling and Ebrahim (2005), content validity ensures that the items adequately represent the subject area and align with the concept as operationally defined. Face validity, on the other hand, examines the overall

appearance of the items in the instrument. The content validity of the instruments was assessed through expert judgments. The project supervisors thoroughly scrutinized the instruments to evaluate the appropriateness of their content and identify any necessary modifications to align with the study's objectives. They assessed whether the items in the research instruments sufficiently covered all the areas requiring investigation.

Moreover, the researcher ensured the validity of the collected data through various measures. This included personally administering the instruments and collaborating with well-trained field staff. To facilitate triangulation, ample time was spent by the researcher in the field with the participants, and distinct tools for data collection were utilized for each category of participants. Field assistants were also involved in the process. Employing different categories of respondents allowed for triangulation of gathered information, thereby enhancing the validity of the data. Ultimately, the researcher further verified the validity of the collected information by personally administering the instruments and collaborating with qualified field staff.

3.6 Reliability

Reliability as a measure of the degree to which a research instrument yields consistent results or data after repeated trials (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). During the pilot study, the reliability of the instruments was evaluated using the test-retest technique. According to Mugenda and Mugenda (2003), an instrument with a reliability coefficient exceeding 0.7 is deemed reliable. Spearman's rank correlation coefficient (r) was computed for the two scores, yielding a value of 0.74, indicating the instrument's reliability.

3.7 Data Collection Procedure

Upon receiving a letter from Mount Kenya University's graduate program, the researcher applied for research permission from the National Commission for Science, Technology, and Innovation (NACOSTI). Following this, the researcher visited the Kakamega County Director of Education to request an introductory letter for the intended respondents. Once the necessary documents were obtained, the researcher scheduled appointments with primary school head teachers to distribute and collect the questionnaires. On the scheduled day, upon visiting the schools, the researcher established rapport with the class teachers before administering the instruments and collecting the filled questionnaires. Furthermore, arrangements were made with the head teachers to facilitate interviews.

3.8 Data Analysis Procedure

According to Kombo and Tromp (2006) data analysis is the stage where the researcher interprets the information collected from the respondents. All collected data underwent editing to improve their quality and suitability for coding purposes. Subsequently, the processed data were entered into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software version 27.0 to generate tables for further analysis. Following data processing, a thorough review was conducted to identify and rectify any remaining or potential errors. Tabulated data were cross-referenced with information from the research instruments to ensure accurate representation. The analysis was then carried out to address the study's questions and objectives. Quantitative data obtained from the questionnaires were coded and entered into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software for analysis. This analysis encompassed calculating frequencies and percentages, while Chi-square was employed to scrutinize the relationship between variables, with the results displayed in tabular form.

Concurrently, thematic analysis was employed to analyze qualitative data, involving the identification, examination, and recording of patterns within the data. Themes were derived from each study objective, and questions addressing these objectives were analyzed and presented under corresponding themes or sub-headings. This approach facilitated the identification of meaningful patterns in the data. To ensure comprehensive analysis, qualitative data were quantified to create a unified dataset. This allowed for the generation of frequencies and percentages of similar responses. Quantification involved enumerating the frequency of themes within the sample, the percentage of themes associated with specific respondent categories, or the percentage of respondents selecting particular themes. The quantified data were then thematically presented, as discussed earlier.

IV. FINDINGS & DISCUSSION

The study employed both descriptive and inferential statistical analysis to establish the influence of family-related cause of truancy on the academic performance of the primary school pupils in Kakamega central Sub County, Kenya. Descriptive statistics, including frequency, percentage, and mean distribution, were used to establish the level of agreement on a five-point Likert scale for the variable, with family-related cause of truancy established and summarized in Table 3.

Table 3
Descriptive Statistics for Family-Related Causes of Truancy on the Academic Performance of Primary School Pupils

Statements		SD	D	U	A	SA	MEAN
Low parental education level causes truancy among pupils in primary schools	F	18	14	16	72	68	3.57
	%	9.6	7.4	8.5	38.3	36.2	
Parents occupation determine truancy among pupils in primary schools	F	3	38	14	77	56	3.61
	%	1.6	20.2	7.4	41.0	29.8	
Inadequate parental attention and supervision causes truancy among pupils in primary schools	F	6	4	40	54	84	3.51
	%	3.2	2.1	21.3	28.7	44.7	
Low parental household income causes truancy among pupils in primary schools	F	6	25	8	61	88	3.98
	%	3.2	13.3	4.3	32.4	46.8	

Table 3 indicates that 72 (38.3%) of the respondents agreed that low parental education level caused truancy among pupils in primary schools, while 68 (36.2%) strongly agreed, 18 (9.6%) strongly disagreed, 16 (8.5%) were undecided, and 14 (7.4%) disagreed with the statement. The study findings suggested that the respondents had a tendency towards agreement (Mean=3.57) that low parental education level caused truancy among pupils in primary schools. This was supported by an interviewee who had the following to say;

> *... I can confirm that low parental education levels contribute to truancy by hindering parental involvement and support in their children's education. As a school, we implement   initiatives   to enhance parental engagement, providing resources and support for families, and promote   community partnerships. This has so far helped us in addressing and fostering a supportive environment that encourages regular attendance ...Male Participant, 48 years, Head Teacher.*

This implies that when parents have low level of education their children tend to be truant. This supports the findings of Klein, Sosu, & Dare (2020) that social housing and parental education had the most pervasive associations with school absences across all forms of absenteeism.

Likewise, 77 (41.0%) of the respondents agreed that parent's occupation determined truancy among pupils in primary schools, while 56 (29.8%) strongly agreed, 38 (20.2%) disagreed, 14 (7.4%) remained undecided, and 3 (1.6%) strongly disagreed. The findings indicated the respondents tended to agree (Mean=3.61) that parent's occupation determined truancy among pupils in primary schools. This was supported by an interviewee who had the following to say;

> *... I have observed cases where parents' occupations contribute to truancy when work demands limit their ability to be actively involved in their children's education or oversee their attendance. We encourage, flexible communication channels, offer resources for time management and family support, and foster a partnership between school and parents to mitigate this issue, thus, ensuring that all pupils receive the necessary support to attend school regularly and succeed academically...Male Participant, 49 years, Head Teacher.*

This highlights that parent's occupation tends to determine truancy among pupils in primary schools. Armfield, *et al.,* (2020) that parents work in semi-routine and routine occupations had higher level of truancy and their peer with parents in professional and managerial positions. It is further supported by This is in line with the findings of Nasution and Fadillah (2024) parental attention and motivation reduces to truancy.

Moreover, 84 (44.7%) of the respondents strongly agreed that inadequate parental supervision caused truancy among pupils in primary schools, while 54 (28.7%) agreed, 40 (21.3%) were undecided, 6 (3.2%) strongly disagreed, and 4 (2.1%) disagreed. The study findings revealed that the respondents tended to agree (Mean=3.51) that parental supervision caused truancy among pupils in primary schools. This was supported by an interviewee who had the following to say;

> *... I can attest that inadequate parental supervision contribute to truancy as pupils may not have the guidance or accountabilityneeded to attend school regularly. Executing programs to support families in establishing routines, offering resources for parental involvement, and providing outreach and support to families facing challenges help address this issue, fostering a supportive environment where pupils are encouraged and empowered to attend school consistently...Female Participant, 46 years, Head Teacher.*

This implies that parental supervision tends to cause truancy among pupils in primary schools. This is in line with the findings of Urien and Enoje (2024) that in order to prevent absenteeism, parents should continuously monitor and inquire about their children's school activities to find out when they are being bullied, to prevent needless punishment and bullying by instructors and older pupils, the school administration should review its disciplinary policies and procedures.

Lastly, 88 (46.8%) of the respondents strongly agreed that low parental household income caused truancy among pupils in primary schools, while 61 (32.4%) agreed, 25 (13.3%) disagreed, 8 (4.3%) were undecided, and 6 (3.2%) strongly disagreed. The study findings suggested a strong tendency towards agreement (Mean=3.98) among respondents regarding parental household income and cause of truancy among pupils in primary schools. This was supported by an interviewee who had the following to say;

> *… Household income contributes to truancy when financial constraints limit families' ability to provide necessary support for their children's education, such as transportation or basic needs. We collaborate with community resources, and provide access to support services to help mitigate this issue, this ensures that all pupils have the resources they need to attend school regularly…Female Participant, 56 years, Head Teacher.*

This implies that low parental household income has a strong tendency to cause truancy among pupils in primary schools. This supports the findings of Bajon (2022) that the lower income class accounts for between one-third and half of truancy cases.

The study also sought the Kenya Certificate of Primary (KCPE) School academic performance for the last five years in the sub-county and the results were as summarized in Table 4.

Table 4
Kenya Certificate of Primary School academic performance from 2018-2023

Year	Mean mark
2019	251/500
2020	248/500
2021	243/500
2022	246/500
2023	239/500

This implies that the KCPE performance in the sub-county for the last five years has been below average which might have been a result of truancy among pupils in the public primary schools.

These descriptive statistics of objective one was followed by a Chi-square test of association. The Chi-square test at $p \leq 0.05$ significance level illustrating statistically significant association between family-related cause of truancy and the academic performance of the primary school pupils in Kakamega central Sub County, Kenya is as summarized in Table 4. To achieve this, the hypothesis below was tested.

HO_1: There is no significant association between family-related cause of truancy and the academic performance of the primary school pupils in Kakamega central Sub County, Kenya.

Table 5
Chi-square test of association between family-related cause of truancy and the academic performance of the primary school pupils

Chi-Square Tests			
	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	590.628[a]	160	.000
Likelihood Ratio	293.515	160	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	105.553	1	.000
N of Valid Cases	188		

a. 180 cells (96.3%) have expected count less than 5. The minimum expected count is .01.

Table 5 shows that the p value (p=0.000) for family-related cause of truancy was less than 0.05. Therefore, the hypothesis, "there is no significant association between family-related cause of truancy and the academic performance of the primary school pupils in Kakamega central Sub County, Kenya" was rejected. This implies that there is statistically significant association between family-related cause of truancy and the academic performance of the primary school pupils in Kakamega central Sub County, Kenya. These findings agree with that of Robinson, et.al (2018) who observed that truancy has a negative impact on kids' educational attainment. Similarly, Vercellotti (2018) claims that the link between attendance and achievement may be understood simply by using common sense, as kids who do not attend school struggle to understand what is taught. Students who miss school risk learning challenges, according to Nightingale, Anderson et.al (2019).

V. CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions

The study findings suggested that the respondents had a tendency towards agreement that low parental education level caused truancy among pupils in primary schools. Similarly, the findings indicated the respondents tended to agree that parent's occupation determined truancy among pupils in primary schools. Moreover, the study findings revealed that the respondents tended to agree that parental supervision caused truancy among pupils in primary schools. Lastly, the study findings suggested a strong tendency towards agreement among respondents regarding parental household income and cause of truancy among pupils in primary schools. Chi-square test of association revealed that there is statistically significant association ($p=0.000$ at $\alpha = 0.05$) between family-related cause of truancy and the academic performance of the primary school pupils in Kakamega central Sub County.

Based on the findings, the study concludes that family-related, school-related causes of truancy significantly influence the academic performance of primary school pupils. Thus, when family-related causes of truancy are effectively managed and minimized, primary school pupils experience notable improvements in their academic performance.

5.2 Recommendations

Based on the study objective and the results, the researchers herein recommend the following:

School management should prioritize supporting pupils from low socioeconomic backgrounds by ensuring access to resources, supervision, and academic assistance programs to address potential challenges and promote academic success.

School management should prioritize fostering a positive school climate, maintaining manageable class sizes, providing personalized support services, and enforcing truancy policies to promote attendance and academic success.

Education policymakers should prioritize the development and enforcement of comprehensive guidelines and support systems aimed at effectively managing and minimizing the various causes of truancy related to family, school, learners, and peer groups.

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