

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE ROLE THAT
HIGH SCHOOL TEACHERS CAN PLAY IN REDUCING TRUANCY IN THE
GALESHEWE AREA, WITH SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO TLHOMELANG HIGH
SCHOOL

BY

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DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I declare that this dissertation is my own work and that all sources I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by complete references.

NEPO JUSTICE MASITHELA

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Masithela", with a large, stylized initial "M" on the left.

Durban

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DEDICATION

This research report is dedicated to my mother Mamohau Dorothy "Mum-Doh" Masithela. This is for all the love and care you have given me, over and above all, for the pains and worries that you have gone through.

ABSTRACT

This research report looks into the factors that cause truancy among secondary school pupils. The aim is to establish ways in which the African Secondary School teachers can manage the problem.

It is argued that the causes of truancy are multifaceted. Thus in attempting to understand these causes and to develop strategies to manage truancy, several approaches are considered, which focus on the individual truant, the family, the community and, in particular school, related factors.

Empirical research was undertaken in the Galeshewe, Kimberley area with particular reference to Tlhomelang High School. Questionnaires were administered with the staff and interviews were conducted with both staff and pupils. Data was also obtained from official records.

It is concluded that a major cause of truancy is the absence of a culture of teaching and learning. A number of recommendations are proposed to manage these problems.

List of Abbreviations

COSAS	:	Congress of South African Students
DET	:	Department of Education and Training
HOD	:	Head of Department
HPTC	:	Higher Primary Teachers Certificate
JSOC	:	Junior Secondary Teachers Certificate
NECC	:	National Education Co-ordinating Committee
PASO	:	Pan Africanist Students Organisation
PTD	:	Primary Teachers Diploma
PTSA	:	Parents Teachers Students Association
SRC	:	Students Representative Council
STD	:	Secondary Teachers Diploma

CHAPTER ONE: BACKGROUND TO THE RESEARCH REPORT.

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This report looks into the factors that cause truancy in the African schools. Black Educationists, Prof E Mphahlele and Prof T Khambule, believe that the solution can be found in the African teachers. It is important when one wants to do justice to the problem under investigation, that one must locate the problem in its historical context. Having decided upon the problem, we need to be clear that what is termed truancy is understood in a similar manner by other researchers investigating the causes and the solution. This is important because such an understanding facilitates a concerted effort in managing the problem.

1.2 AIMS AND MOTIVATION

The reason why I have involved myself in this research is my growing concern with the deepening crisis in African education. The purpose of this report is to investigate the role the African high school teachers can play in reducing or eliminating truancy. The culture of teaching and learning, that is, a culture where teachers through interaction with pupils construct knowledge that will enable the pupils to make sense of the world they live in, can and must be brought back. This is conditional upon the removal of the teachers' apathy, an area that is still to be investigated. The teaching and learning culture is necessary because it will curb the high rate of truancy, which is not only an educational problem but also a socio-political problem.

Apathy can lead to a laissez-faire situation, that is, a situation where there are practically no rules in the school, the teachers and pupils are free to do what they want. "In such a situation one finds anarchy or chaos because people are not guided by the leadership" (Musaazi, 1982, 62). This in my opinion defeats the aims of any role education is supposed to play, for example, we can't talk of transforming the present education system under a laissez-faire climate.

Zwier and Vaughan (1984, 264-265) and Reid (1985, 64) argue that the related delinquency problems such as: vandalism and violence in the school will be eliminated if truancy can be managed. Too much theorising has been done and unfortunately this has been accompanied by little if any practice. The idea of praxis in Grundy (1984, 176-183), which is cherished by Paulo Freire is lacking. It is hoped that the research findings will help in reducing truancy.

1.3 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND TO SOUTH AFRICAN BLACK EDUCATION

Any teaching-learning situation takes place within socio-economic, political and cultural relations and these guide policy formulation.

The coming into power of the National Party in 1948 was to have a significant bearing on African education a year later. The government appointed the Eiselen Commission to look into African education and on its recommendation the Bantu Education Act of 1953 was passed. The act necessitated the registration of all

Black schools under the Department of Bantu Education. This inaugurated the system of Bantu Education.

The Bantu Education system from the onset met with resistance from the teachers, pupils and the community at large. The resistance reached greater heights with the June 1976 school uprising. This time, unlike in the 1950's, the secondary pupils were in the forefront in demonstrating their anger and frustration against the type of education that was being provided. The point is further illustrated by the continuing frustration in African secondary pupils that resulted in the 1980, 1984 and 1985 school boycotts. Today the pupils are roaming the streets in multitudes and ditch classes for rapping in the taverns. The belief in the African community is that the curriculum is irrelevant and does not meet their needs.

In an effort to make education more relevant, the De Lange commission was set up in 1981 to conduct a thorough investigation. The aim behind the commission was explicitly to satisfy the industrial labour market and to appease the majority of the African people. It was after this period that we witnessed the mushrooming of the Technikons, technical schools and other vocationally oriented schools. Wolpe and Unterhalter (1991, 5) argue that it was the interests of those in power that came first and the result was resistance in the form of class boycotts and now recently school absenteeism.

1.4 THE POSITION OF SECONDARY SCHOOLING

Hartshorne (1992, 59) asserts that the lack of clarity in African education has confused both teachers and pupils , and that African teachers have done little to clear the confusion.

Historically secondary schooling in South Africa has been characterised by a great respect for academic achievement which in return over-emphasised examination. Hartshorne (1992, 60) and Sonn (1989, 5) agree that secondary education in South Africa has been authoritarian, teacher dominated, content oriented and knowledge based. This type of Education has been influenced by Fundamental Pedagogics, (Kallaway 1984, 139 ff).

1.5 THE PERIOD 1975 - 1990: THE DISINTEGRATION OF BLACK SECONDARY EDUCATION

The change in 1975 to a twelve years schooling structure resulted in an expansion in secondary school enrolment numbers, without a proportionate increase in the number of classrooms. This resulted in overcrowded classrooms. Hartshorne (1992) asserts that it is crucial to realize that even under more acceptable and legitimate political circumstances, and even under a much better equipped school system, the number explosion would have placed almost unbearable stress and strain on the provision and quality of secondary schooling.

The growing concern about the disintegrating Black secondary school system saw the establishment of education crisis committees. The pupils were asked to go back to school but

responded to the call in a different manner. The pupils came to school at different times, left school when they felt like it, didn't bring their books to school and increasingly began to reject any kind of authority.

The deteriorating learning environment together with demotivated and burnt out teachers brought about conditions in which violence and intimidation reign supreme. Most Black pupils, because of their lack of qualifications, have joined the ranks of the unemployed. Disillusioned about the value of education and suffering from a sense of failure, they have become alienated from their communities and have turned to crime, violence and the disruption of the society which has rejected them.

1.6 BACKGROUND TO TLHOMELANG HIGH SCHOOL

The school was established in 1979 and the reasons cited in Tlhomelang Tenth Anniversary Magazine (1989, 5) for its establishment are the following:

- 1 There was an explosion of the Black population in Kimberley and a thirst for education in the Black society. Galeshewe was no exception.
- 2 During the riots and boycotts since 1976 one of the main complaints was a lack of high schools in the townships.
- 3 The major problem in Galeshewe was that there are more primary schools than secondary schools, as a result pupils passing Std Six had nowhere to go to further their studies, and they became permanent drop-outs.

4 Prior to 1976 there were only two public high schools and one private high school in Galeshewe.

The school started with fourteen teachers who were all taken from the primary school. The total enrolment was 565, and this was for both the Std 6 and Std 7 classes. The subjects offered followed the arts and the science streams. In the 1980's the commerce stream was introduced. The school started with sixteen classrooms and presently there are twenty-six classrooms with 1460 pupils and 36 teachers.

The school has witnessed a shift from the prefect system in 1979 to an SRC in 1989. There has also been a shift from school committees in 1979 to a management council in 1987 to PTSA's in 1991. The period 1979 to 1991 has seen a corresponding increase in the drop-out rate and truancy. The motto of the school is "Only the best is good enough".

1.7 DEFINITION OF TRUANCY

May's (1985, 97) assertion that truancy is difficult to define and even more difficult to measure with accuracy is supported by Reid (1986, 28) and Rumberger (1987, 108), who argue that truancy is a multicausal, multidimensional problem and that each absentee is unique with various combination of social, psychological and institutional factors contributing to a pupils' non-attendance. The implication here is that truancy can't be studied in isolation but there are social, educational, political and psychological problems associated with it.

Initially I had accepted May's (1975) definition that truancy is an unjustifiable or unlawful absence from school, even if the parents know and approve the absence. This definition poses a problem. Furlong (1985, 32) and the Scottish Education Department (1977, 17 and 18) argue that the difficulty in May's definition involves distinguishing justified from unjustified non-attendance, and voluntary from involuntary causes of absence. After my pilot study I realized that the problem revolves around who defines an "unjustifiable absence".

The Scottish Education Department's (1977, 18) definition of truancy is an "unauthorised absence from school for any period as a result of premeditated or spontaneous action on the part of the pupil, parent or both". Do we have one agreed definition of the concept truancy? No, but for the purposes of this report, my working definition of truancy is: absence from school during accepted and agreed times as set in the school policy for any period as a result of premeditated or spontaneous action on the part of the pupil.

1.8 CONCLUSION

Bantu Education was political from its inception. The people who were to bear its consequences were the large number of Blacks living in the urban and rural areas of South Africa. Bantu Education reinforced and encouraged the inequalities between Whites, Indians, Coloureds and Blacks. Even when the number of the last swelled in secondary schools, there was no corresponding

increase in educational resources and classrooms. The matric certificate received failed to get them the jobs they aspired to. This has resulted in teachers and pupils adopting an indifferent attitude towards education, clearly evidenced in the high truancy rate in Black schools.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE SURVEY

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The subject of truancy has gained a lot of attention over a period of fifty years. An acknowledgement is made in all the research conducted that truancy is a social problem. The methods of analyzing the problem have changed with the times, for example, Brown (1983, 226-233) sees the emphasis shifting from (i) the individual truant, through (ii) families that produce truants and (iii) the influence of the community to (iv) the contribution made by the school. Furlong (1976) emphasizes (i) social factors, (ii) family relationships and (iii) educational factors. What is common in Brown and Furlong is a focus on the school as a contributing factor to truancy.

2.2 THE APPROACHES

2.2 I THE INDIVIDUAL TRUANT

The approach posits that the problem lies within the individual and it is for this reason that the adherents of this approach will look to psychological theories to find the cause and solution to truancy. Nicholls et al (1985, 683) contend that the problem of truancy came to be seen in terms of deficiencies of individuals. The belief in this approach is that truancy as a problem is derived from inadequate childhood socialization such that super-ego control is undeveloped and that a rebellious attitude to authority figures emerges.

The claim is supported by theories that believe that persistent truancy and truancy in general correlates with unhappiness,

unsociability and failure to persevere. Consistent with the psychodynamic approach is Bear and Richards' (1981, 664) view that truant behaviour was related to the pupils' intellectual capacity. One of the findings in this approach is that anxiety is said to be related to non-attendance, and pupils with low self-esteem tend to be regular absentees. I acknowledge the contributions made by this approach but it views truancy in isolation. The act of truancy must be seen in a social context, that is, we need to consider the other people that the truant interacts with, namely teachers and other pupils.

The approach fails to acknowledge that the aim of education is to develop the child as a totality, that is, the pupil's social, moral, aesthetical and religious aspects need also to be developed. The emphasis should not be on the intellectual aspect only. Failure to develop other aspects might result in a pupil truanting. The problem with the approach is that the total scores derived from personality inventories are merely convenient vehicles for researchers and psychologists because they permit generalisations forgetting that each act of truancy is unique. Human beings alter their behaviour according to circumstances they find themselves in hence, psychological features should not be given too much attention as they might tend to overshadow more serious causes of truancy.

2.2 II FAMILY INFLUENCES

Blythman (1975, 80-84) and Rumberger (1983, 104) agree that truants come from homes with low income. The point is stressed

by Dell (1974, 19-22) who argues that single parent families cause truancy. It can be asserted that where there is one parent, there is too much pressure put on the individual to the extent that one may not be able to bring up the children to the best of the community expectations. In the case of low income families, the logic is that the pupil will not be able to afford all the learning-aids he requires and may lose interest in the school and start to truant. Other factors include the following:

- a Where the father is either unskilled or semi-skilled or irregularly employed, the chances are that the pupil will truant.
- b Overcrowding.
- c Alcoholism.
- d Violence in the family and general family disorganisation.

Marjoribanks (1984, 690-700) summarizes the family influences and shows that within each occupational status group the adolescent's perception of their parents' support for learning had a strong association with their educational aspirations and generally moderate to strong relations to occupational aspirations. Brown (1983, 228) contests the above claim by citing the studies of Blythman (1975) and Fogelman and Richardson (1974) who used indirect methods to judge lack of parental interest. Mitchell and Sheperd (1980, 20) indicate to the contrary that parents of truants are interested in the education of their child and that they do not collude in the child's absence. Hence the parents' attitude as a contributory factor to truancy remains a debatable one. Family background factors play a role in the generation of truant behaviour, however, school factors are also important.

2.2 III THE INFLUENCE OF THE COMMUNITY

Our education system operates in a society controlled by powerful cultural, political and economic forces. Bowles and Gintis (1976) and Bourdieu (1976) argue that the social stratification of our society encourages a diversity of opinions as to the utility of education. Brown (1983, 231) in the analysis of this approach says that truants' anti-social values, provided by their parents, are reinforced by similar values found in their wider working class community. Galloway (1976, 22-27) finds that schools with the highest rates of absenteeism were those in deprived areas. Consistent with the argument is the high absentee rates in Black secondary schools, on the grounds that in most cases the pupils are from economically disadvantaged communities.

A common mistake in educational research is to view pupils from low social groups as a homogeneous class, whereas in actual fact they are not. The view that truants are a homogeneous group only helps to increase the rate of truancy because individual truants are not given special attention and sometimes the remedial strategies employed fail to take note of the unique nature of each pupil labelled as truant.

The other problem is that evidence in this research is drawn from students labelled as chronic truants. Bowles and Gintis (1976) offer an alternative view of the cause of truant behaviour in

pupils. They assert that lower social class youth are more likely to be psychologically alienated from schooling processes because of the structure of the school rather than the community factors. They do, however, acknowledge that these factors, namely community ethos and social class, have an influence on truant behaviour.

This approach also contributes to our understanding of truancy, but alone it will not answer all the questions that we need to know about truancy.

2.3 PROBLEM IN METHODOLOGY

One thing which is common in the three approaches discussed previously is that their research methodology is influenced by the positivist school of thought and this raised serious questions as to whether the pupils' interests are being entertained.

Furlong in raising the problem claims that positivism has become a major influence in the field of indiscipline at schools and as a result the problem is always found to be in the pupils. An issue that is pertinent at this stage is the claim that "positivism tends to serve the interest of practitioners, administrators and politicians" (Furlong 1985, 70).

Pupils' opposition to schooling is seen as irrelevant or illogical and instead the teachers' own perception of the world and their place within it is reconfirmed. The positivist

researchers, unaware that their theories are value laden, claim that their scientific observations are neutral. Fay (1975, 41) dismisses the idea and argues that one can not remain neutral where there are power relations involved. In short, the three approaches discussed suppress the pupils' own perceptions of the causes of truancy.

Furlong (1985, 29-32) contends that in searching for the causal laws of truancy, positivists deny the consciousness of the individual pupil and unfortunately by so doing they fail to acknowledge that the world has a subjective meaning for the pupil which is critical in how they decide to behave.

The behaviourist, taking a more deterministic stance, argues that truancy is more related to the child's immediate environment and once again this strips off the individual autonomy to think rationally. The behaviourist believes in conformity, but what we need to realise is that individuals make meaning of their reality from their actions. An argument that can be advanced is that when the pupil decides to truant, he is not governed by impulse, but instead makes a choice, for example, between staying at school listening to a boring teacher or going home.

2.4 SCHOOL RELATED FACTORS

Reynolds and Murgatroyd (1980) cite the school as a major contributor to truancy. Reid (1986, ch 7) goes on to say that schools are beginning to lose their credibility with many youngsters today. All these support my assertion that schools

are to blame. The reasons are found in various institutional factors.

2.4 I TEACHERS

It will do us good to acknowledge that truancy is a multi-faceted act. The failure of teachers to have a thorough knowledge of the causes of truancy and the methods employed to manage it has in the past contributed to high truancy rates. The teachers' behaviour in the classroom and on the school premises becomes important for our analysis.

Najpakkitis and Mayer (1985, 362-364) in their study of the natural rates of teachers approval and disapproval and their relation to student behaviour found out that the amount of disruptive and off-task student behaviour, such as missing classes, was clearly related to the teachers' use of approval and disapproval. For example, they found out that the higher the inappropriate approval, the lower the student on task behaviour, and higher rates of approval of off-task behaviour were associated with higher rates of disruptive behaviour. What becomes evident in this report is that so long as teachers do not know or pretend not to know what is off-task behaviour, truancy is unlikely to be reduced.

Brophy et al (1983, 543) in their study found out that contrary to their expectations, student engagement in class was generally higher when teachers moved directly into tasks than when they began with some presentation statements. Teachers who come

unprepared to class have been found to be contributing to students missing classes.

Reid (1986, 53), Reynolds (1987, 8) and Kahn et al (1981, 51) assert that the teachers' general attitude to school had a significant influence on how the pupils were going to behave. For example, Brophy et al make the assumption that teachers who believe that schoolwork is inherently interesting or enjoyable, may shape similar beliefs in their students if they consistently project the expectation that the student will enjoy their assignments. The question remains: what happens if the teacher is required to teach a subject he does not like, which is a common phenomenon in the Department of Education and Training schools. Feldman and Theiss' (1982, 223) conclusion that student performance was the function of the teachers' expectations becomes important for our analysis.

The teachers' strategy of labelling pupils becomes important for our analysis. White (1980, ch 4) asserts that often our immediate response to a problem is to search for a label to categorise it. This holds equally true in the school situation, where teachers are quick to label the students as truants. In elaboration of his assertion he claims that to describe a boy as someone who will not go to school invites the question why as an inevitable response. An explanation is anticipated and expected. On the other hand to describe a boy as "school-phobic" is to pre-empt further discussion because the labelling itself contains a reason. It could further be argued that labelling in

itself disguises the causal factors, in this case of truancy and the real situation. The teachers and the school system, by being quick to label pupils, inadvertently end up being the cause of the problem. The pupils negatively labelled will behave accordingly.

2.4 II SCHOOL

Galloway (1974), Reynolds (1977) and the Scotland Education Department (1977) concern themselves with what they call objective factors, that is, the size of the school, the adequacy of its buildings and the turnover of staff. The implication is that where there are not enough desks, teaching-aids and qualified teachers, pupils will tend to absent themselves as the environment will not be conducive to effective learning.

The school's emphasis on streaming pupils also contributes to truancy. The school assumes that there are pupils with the potential to follow the Arts, Science and Commerce streams respectively and within these categories there is an assumption that there are intelligent and dull pupils. The science pupils and the "intelligent" pupils are accorded higher status. Hargreaves (1967, 55-58) notes that streaming has an influence on the rate of pupils' attendance. This is clearly related to the subject labelling that was touched on earlier. The truant behaviour can be justified under these circumstances because the truants feel rejected by the school thus they reckon it is only fair for them to reject the school.

Hargreaves (1967, 94-98) and Reid (1985, 104) agree that the schools are more rewarding places for academic pupils than for those in the lower streams. They found out that when pupils perpetually receive low grades in school their academic self-concept may be reduced to such a point that to absent themselves from school becomes a source of relief.

Truancy is related to a considerable extent to any overtly competitive school system, which manifests itself in an overemphasis on competition, and on the lack of relevance of much of what is taught in school to a child's future. (Wilson and Braithwaite, 1977,95).

Reid (1986, 53) contends that schools which do not have clear aims and objectives and managerial strategies are likely to be those in which pupil and staff dissatisfaction ferments and grows, and hence may contribute to truancy.

2.4 III STYLE OF LEADERSHIP

Some aspects of traditional teaching with insistence on the maintenance of certain rules, use of corporal punishment, the emphasis on factual acquisition and academic learning and an adoption of an authoritarian style of teaching, increases the chances of pupils absenting themselves from school. The authoritarian style of teaching by its nature instills fear in the subordinate and it is this fear that gives them a reason to truant.

Bowles and Gintis (1976) and Apple (1979) agree that the political, cultural and social objectives engendered through the structure and practices of schooling are often inconsistent with the values of a particular social strata. It is unfortunate that students' behaviour in these schools will be seen as anti-authority. There is the likelihood that such inconsistencies can lead to non-conforming student attitudes and behaviours, including truancy.

The authoritarian nature of the traditional school allows little room for pupils' creativity and this inhibits pupils' development of their self-esteem. A disrespect of the pupils' self-esteem forms sufficient grounds for a pupil to resist school. In brief the school system that encourages or views pupils as passive receivers of knowledge is likely to encounter the problems of school absenteeism.

2.6 SOLUTIONS

There is no single cause of truant behaviour thus in our attempt to manage the problem, we should look into those strategies that cover most of the causes of this behaviour.

1. On the psychological side Kahn et al (1982, 60-65) advise that there is a need for a trained school counsellor and the provision of a well-staffed remedial department. They suggest that there should be a school psychological service.

2. Stott (1966) argues that the traditional remedies of

punishment, namely, admonition of culprits and fining their parents, could exacerbate rather than ease the situation.

3. Teachers need to give more thought to the way in which they mark their pupils' work in schools. Derogatory remarks should be avoided.

4. Better teacher-pupil relationships are absolutely essential if the self esteem of truants is to be raised.

5. The prevalence and incidence of truant behaviour would be reduced if schools were to undertake curriculum and pedagogical changes commensurate with democratic schooling.

6. Knight (1985) suggests that school initiatives to address truancy should be grounded in alterations to everyday school practices, procedures and curriculum policies such that all students are integrated into the educational life of schools.

7. Rutter et al (1979, 108 ff) found that schools with low truancy rates were marked by: (i) high expectations of academic achievement; and (ii) high total teaching time per week; in addition teachers who ended their lessons early were generating an atmosphere conducive to truancy; and high levels of pupils included in caring for their own resources in the school were truancy-preventive measures.

8. Reynolds & Murgatroyd (1977, 1980) offer the following

findings :

(i) Schools with high levels of attendance had a school uniform to promote pride in the school and a sense of corporate identity. (e.g. St. Boniface in Kimberley)

(ii) Low truancy schools also had a high degree of co-option of pupils into positions of responsibility within the school.

9. In addition to this Reynolds gives the advice that schools should publish their attendance rates. This would give parents and others the basic information required to begin the process of assessment of how individual schools are performing.

2.7 CONCLUSION

The literature acknowledges that the causes of truancy are multi-faceted: the factors range from family background and community background to pupil's personality and educational background. In the study of truancy the approaches have shifted from a behaviourist approach to an interactive approach. The latter acknowledges that the pupil's interpretation of the subjective reality is a source that can be used to enhance regular attendance. In conclusion there is agreement that the school is a major contributing factor to truancy and as such solutions should where necessary be school based.

To implement this, the school administration should be open, that is, it should encourage its staff and pupils to interact freely and at the same time where possible and practical involve the staff and pupils in the decision making-process.

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The research involved both qualitative and quantitative methods. Where the two are used together the accuracy of the findings will be increased and improved. In choosing a particular method the following were taken into consideration: duration of the research; subjects to be interviewed; setting; reliability and validity of the research and the limitations of the research.

3.2 DATA COLLECTION

3.2 I PARTICIPANT OBSERVER

I decided to be a participant observer because I strongly believed that this would offer me the opportunity to be in direct contact with the teachers and the pupils. For ethical reasons I opted to be an overt observer so that it should not appear as if I was spying on them. One other advantage of this type of observation is that it gave the respondents the opportunity to interact freely and openly with me.

3.2 II CO-RESEARCHERS

Two secondary school teachers voluntarily offered their services after they had learnt about the aims of the research. They have requested me not to disclose their names. The two teachers were the contact people whilst I was not at the school. The two teachers are qualified and one holds a post-graduate degree, thus putting them in a position to gather data by virtue of them

having a theoretical background to research methodology.

3.2 III SCHOOL RECORDS

The school records being referred to here include: class attendance registers, summary attendance registers and the school staff-minutes. The purpose of looking into the records was: to find out the rate of absenteeism; and to judge how the problem was perceived and how staff hoped to managed it.

The problem faced with the staff-minutes was lack of objectivity on the part of the recording secretary, because on the two occasions in the minutes the staff pointed out that the minutes were not the true reflection of the meetings. Subsequently the secretary pointed out that he noted only those aspects of the meeting he reckoned were important. This is a clear indication of subjectivity. This however does not imply that the minutes can not be used in the report because the little information we gather from them also contributes to our understanding of the causes of truancy.

3.2 IV INTERVIEWS

Unstructured interviews were conducted with both teachers and pupils. In most cases the interviews were conducted outside the classroom provided that the teaching-learning process was not disturbed. The recording of the interviews were done immediately after the interview. There were however times when the recordings were done whilst the interview was in progress. The minimum duration of the interviews was fifteen minutes. Related to interviews were the comments which were picked up in passing

from the teachers and pupils. I would often stop the individual/s concerned and start probing in a friendly manner.

3.2 V TELEPHONIC COMMUNICATION

Apart from the information supplied by the two teachers, I used to have fortnightly telephonic communication with one staff member. The purpose of the exercise was to supplement what could have been left out by the two teachers. The topic that was discussed was how the teachers were managing the problem of truancy.

3.2 VI GRAFFITTI

This served as a source of valuable information. It is from these writings that one can to a reasonable extent make inferences about the behaviour of pupils. Desks were also scrutinised to see if there was any information that could be gathered from them. Indeed a considerable amount of information was obtained. Some of the writings included: "to hell with Bantu education" and "I hate teacher X, he is a bore".

Coincidentally in the week I spend at the school teacher in September, Teacher X had the highest number of absentees in his class.

3.3 DURATION

The period from December 1991 to February 1992 was targeted for interviewing the teachers, pupils and members of the school committee. One week in July and another in September 1992 were spent at the school whilst I involved myself in the actual act of teaching.

3.4 SELECTION OF THE SCHOOL, TEACHERS AND PUPILS

A simple random sample was used to choose one secondary school from the four in the area. Each school had an equal chance of being selected. The importance of random sampling is that it eliminated the chances of one being biased in the selection of the school. It was a coincidence that the school selected happened to be the school that I had taught in before. As a result it was not difficult being accepted by the teachers and the pupils. I selected all the teachers who were responsible for the Std Nine classes. The pupils selected ranged from Std Six to Std Ten. I however paid a lot of attention to the Std Nine pupils, as I did not have enough time to cover the whole school adequately.

3.5 QUESTIONNAIRES

The teachers were the only group given questionnaires to complete and were asked to return them the following day. The issues raised were:

- a The causes of truancy
- b The management of truancy
- c The rate of truancy
- d Related problems of violence, apathy among teachers, authority and political conscientisation.

3.6 LIMITATION

The time constraint had implications for the research. During December, January and February, pupils are preparing for the examinations and registering for the new academic year and there is little teaching or learning taking place.

The other problem was in getting access to the respondents. I had to rely on the information provided by the teachers as I was eight hundred kilometres away from them. What compounded the problem were the financial constraints. Even if I had the time to be with the subjects I did not have the financial means to reach them. These limitations were serious but they did not invalidate the research.

3.7 CONCLUSION

The methodology followed both the qualitative and quantitative approaches. The latter method was employed to find out the incidence of truancy, violence in the school and the management of these problems. On the other hand the qualitative approach in the form of participant observation, interviews and school records was used to find the depth of truancy at the school. The approach enabled me to establish the cause of truancy as perceived by the pupils and the staff. The collection of data had its problems but these were never allowed to disturb the whole research process.

CHAPTER FOUR: OBSERVATIONS AND THE ANALYSIS OF DATA

4 OBSERVATIONS

These are the observations covering the periods January to February, July and September 1992. The observations focused on the following areas: Principal and Administration, Teachers and Pupils.

4.1 THE PRINCIPAL AND THE ADMINISTRATION

The Principal is supposed to be assisted by his deputy and five Heads of Departments. There are no particular criteria employed for the appointment of the Heads of Department. A common denominator in the five Heads of Department is that they happen to be the longest serving members on the staff. Their professional qualification is the Higher Primary Teachers Certificate. Of the five, only three have a Matric certificate.

HEADS OF DEPARTMENTS

- A Tswana and Auxiliary services
- B English
- C Biblical Studies and Geography
- D General Science and Registers
- E Mathematics

The knowledge of HOD B, C, D and E is limited to Std 7, and their limited ability to help other teachers has the potential to cause the pupils to truant.

The deputy Principal and his friend (a staff member) are responsible for drawing up the time-table. This has caused a lot of tension amongst the staff members as the workload is not evenly distributed. For example,

Head	:	15	periods/week
Deputy	:	22	"
H.O.D A:		27	"
B:		32	"
C:		28	"
D:		36	"
E:		34	"

The motivation behind this low number of teaching periods is attributed to the administration work they are alleged to be doing.

The time-table is poorly organized; in one instance one teacher on Wednesday appears thrice on the fourth period. What the teacher does is choose any of the classes he/she wishes to go to. The implication is that for the fourth period, two classes will remain unattended.

The allegedly unfair drawing up of the school time-table has resulted in some members of the staff reducing the number of teaching periods to conveniently suit them, by erasing their teaching periods from the school time-table which is pinned in the staff-room. Once again this has resulted in some classes

being left unattended. The time-table problem helps to create an uncondusive teaching-learning environment.

4.3 TEACHERS

Of the fourteen Standard Nine teachers, only eight have the required Professional Teachers Diploma for teaching in a Secondary school. The other two have University degrees but no professional certificates and the three other teachers are offering subjects that they did not specialise in at college.

In the fifteen periods where I visited classes, no teaching aids were used. Another method common in most teachers was that of giving notes. The teacher will spend forty minutes writing notes on the chalkboard or alternatively might ask one of the pupils to write them for him. Usually these notes are accompanied by little or no explanation from the teacher.

A voice of dissent was raised by the whole of Std 9f that they did not favour the style of taking notes with no explanation. Std 9f happen to be the most unruly class in the school. I came to know about their problems in September 1992 when the Principal asked me to intervene because rumour had it that this class was going to disrupt the whole school. They have refused to write monthly tests in Biology, since they felt that they have never been taught.

The teachers have on numerous occasions been cautioned about the manner in which they dress. This is recorded in three of the

school's Staff Meeting Minutes. It appears, however, that the call for presentable dressing has fallen on deaf ears. These are some of the incidents observed:

- In February, a male teacher, 27 years old, came in a full soccer outfit. The only item missing was the soccer boots.
- Another male teacher, around 40 years old, wore a filthy shirt and jacket for the whole week without changing them.

The teachers' irregular class attendance was confirmed in the classroom representatives meeting held at the school. According to my observations for the period 07 September to 11 September 1992, on Monday, nine teachers were absent from school. On Tuesday and Wednesday, two teachers were absent. On Thursday and Friday, three teachers were absent.

Apart from teachers who absent themselves for the whole day, there are those who dodge their teaching periods. For example on 09 September 92, in the fifth period, seven teachers were not in their classes but were present on the school premises. The implication is that during the fifth period about three hundred and fifty pupils were left unattended. There is one case where a teacher was only seen once in three months and this was confirmed by a member of staff and this is also recorded in the staff-minutes of 09 September 1992.

Concern about the irregular attendance of teachers was raised by the local NECC letter which read:

This Committee has received a lot of allegations against teachers who do not teach on Fridays and month ends and some teaching staff come to school being under the influence of alcohol and other related misconduct (Kimberley Education Co-ordinating Committee, Letter 07 September 1992).

A growing concern raised by some members of the community, teachers themselves and the pupils was how the teachers were relating to pupils. In the class representative meeting mentioned earlier, the pupils agreed that there needs to be a clear distinction between a teacher and a pupil. A situation had arisen where teachers and pupils were seen as friends because they drink together in shebeens.

Male teachers were harassing school girls and in Tlhomelang high school nine male teachers, 25-32 years old, had girlfriends in school. This was common knowledge amongst all members of staff. Twenty teachers confirmed this. In August 1992, a male teacher was hospitalised after being assaulted by the boyfriend of a school girl. The teacher concerned has now been booked off until the first of December. It is unlikely that the Department of Education will employ a person temporarily for two months.

The unprofessional conduct of some of the staff members is cause for concern. Pupils have on numerous occasion gone to the principal and complained about teachers gossiping about him and other staff members in front of them. Over a period of one week

I saw a female teacher on four occasions defying the principal without the principal following the matter up. The male teachers are indifferent to the principal. They spend most of their time chatting amongst themselves and this includes the deputy principal and one Head of Department. One of the teachers had boasted that he dodges school often and has never been caught. On this particular day this teacher was drunk.

The language of teachers leaves much to be desired. The pupils have complained about the teachers' use of vulgar language. It also appears in the schools staff minutes that two female teachers were reprimanded.

4.4 PUPILS

The general tendency of pupils is to arrive at school in the middle of the second period and to leave for home immediately after the twelve o'clock break, that is after the fifth period. During my January and February 1992 visit to the school it was a common practice to start the day with fifty pupils out of the total of 1400. During my visit in September I observed and recorded the following:

Class Std 9A

<u>period</u>	<u>expected No of pupils</u>	<u>absent</u>
1 Tswana	35	20
2 Biology	"	23
3 Religious education	35	0

Period	Expected No of Pupils	Absent
4 Chemistry	"	0
5 Mathematics	"	14
6 Tswana	"	3
7 Tswana	"	3
8 English	"	9
9 Afrikaans	"	17
10 Afrikaans	"	17

Class Std 9C

<u>period</u>	<u>expected No of pupils</u>	<u>absent</u>
1 Tswana	51	17
2 Tswana	"	10
3 Geography	"	4
4 Geography	"	4
5 Biblical studies	"	9
6 Afrikaans	"	18
7 Afrikaans	"	18
8 Biology	"	23
9 Biology	"	23
10 English	"	30

The two examples cited above indicate pupils tend to miss classes during the first and second periods and during the last five periods. The pupils' reasons for their irregular attendance ranged from personal problems, through teachers and subject-related problems and the general school setting. What is most

surprising is that the pupils blamed the teachers and themselves but they appealed to teachers to give them direction. This, unfortunately, was not forthcoming.

It is a stated rule that the pupils must wear uniforms every school day. From the reports I gathered, and from what I observed, the wearing of the uniform was not enforced. The school premises looked more like a picnic spot. Pupils came to school wearing colourful T-shirts, jeans and political T-shirts, which were also common among teachers.

4.3 I HOW THE PUPILS RELATE TO TEACHERS

There is no professional distance between teachers and pupils. There is no respect for teachers because homework and classwork is never done, and pupils take some time before they carry out an instruction. A case in particular was in the class representative meeting I attended. The classes were asked to send four delegates, Std 10C however sent five delegates and when the teacher asked one delegate to be excused, they bluntly refused; instead, the five decided to march out in protest. Vulgar language is commonly used in front of the teachers, What is also disturbing is that the teachers are called by their nicknames and they accept this.

In the classroom situation there is little communication between the two parties. English, which is the medium of instruction, actually inhibits communication, since teachers and pupils have a poor command of the English language. Pupils tend to hate the

teacher who will ask them questions and supposedly embarrass them. The girls are fond of enticing the young male teachers and this has created rivalry between boys in the senior classes and the teachers.

There is total disrespect among the pupils themselves. For example, during break students are forced to carry their books along with them to prevent them from being stolen. A conducive climate for studying is not created for those pupils who would like to study. There is too much noise during school hours, pupils can be found running up and down, screaming and peeping through the windows.

There is a high level of violence and intimidation in the school. The pupils are justified to feel scared to come to school, more especially when there are no teachers to supervise them. Here are some of the incidents reported :

1 There were nine cases of assault reported between 01 and 11 September 1992.

2 36 of 50 boys I picked at random carried dangerous weapons with them. I reported this to the principal who noted it in his record book.

The 1992 SRC was rendered ineffective as there were political and ideological differences between COSAS and PASO. There is no political tolerance between these two student organisations. This was clearly evidenced in the meetings I attended with pupils in January, February and June 1992.

4.3 II THE PUPILS AND SCHOOL PROPERTY

In the six classrooms I visited I found that there was more broken than unbroken furniture. All the classrooms had broken windows, in some of the classes there were no doors and the desks were covered with all forms of graffiti. It is important that after the observations, we should look into the data available so that we can make meaningful analysis of the causes of truancy.

4.4 DATA

Composition of staff

male	20
Female	16
Total	36

Age

age group	Male	Female	Total
25 - 30 years	12	10	22
31 -35	4	4	8
36 - 40	0	2	2
41 & above	4	0	4
Total	20	16	36

Qualifications

Diploma/ Degree	Male	Female	Total
PTD	3	2	5
STD	9	7	16
HPTC	4	1	5
JSOC	2	4	6
Degree	2	2	4
Total	20	16	36

Teaching experience

Duration	Male	Female	Total
1 - 5 years	10	6	16
6 - 10 years	2	7	9
11 & Above	8	3	11
Total	20	16	36

Marital Status

Status	Male	Female
Single	7	8
Married	13	8
Total	20	16

The teachers' responses:

These are the responses of the 26 questionnaires returned.

Question: What cause pupils to truant ?

Reason	Response
Politics	21
Teachers	21
Friends	21
Parents	3
Principal	2

Question: Do you miss your classes?

Yes	20
No	4
Sometimes	2

Question: Do you mark the attendance register every period?

Yes	0
No	26

Question: How often do you punish the pupils?

Never	22
Rarely	4

Follow up question in the interviews of 14 teachers.
Why don't you punish pupils?

I do not care.	9
I am scared.	4
I do not know.	1

Question: Do you work as a team?

No. 26

Question: Are you aware that there are pupils carrying dangerous weapons?

Yes. 26

Question: Lack of discipline in the school is caused by:

	Reason	Response
I	Teachers' apathy	13
II	Lack of support from the staff	6
III	Inflexible rules	3
IV	Department of Education	4

Since I and II are related we can infer that 19 agreed that the teachers are to blame.

Question: What do you do when pupils come late into your class?

Answer	Response
I I ignore them.	23
II I chase them away	3

This confirms the teachers' apathy raised in the previous question.

Question: Do you check the pupils' classwork?

Category	Response
No	23
Yes	0
Sometimes	3

Question: Is there any role you can play to stop truancy?

Category	Response
Yes	19
No	7

Follow up question in the 20 interviews conducted.

Question: Why don't you stop truancy?

Reason	Response
The school administration does not involve us.	13
The politicians are in control.	5
We are not paid for that.	2

Question: Do you think you work as a team at present?

Category	Response
No	26
Yes	0

Question: Are the school rules and regulations strictly adhered to?

Category	Response
No	26
Yes	0

Questions asked during the interviews with thirty staff members.

Question: Who hampers your teaching?

Category	Response
Principal	13
HODs	10
Deputy principal	7

Question: How do they hamper your teaching?

Category	Response
Authoritarian	12
Unco-operative	8
Self-centred	10

Question: Do you get any support from DET officials?

Yes	6
No	24

Follow up question: what is the problem with DET officials?

Category	Response
Autocratic	2
Their timing of extra-courses is wrong	17
They are not realistic	7
They are not interested in our education	4

Question: How do you intend to manage truancy?

Category	Response
Democratising the decision-making process	17
Developing a healthy relationship with pupils	13

QUESTIONS DIRECTED TO 60 PUPILS

These are the key questions asked in the interviews with pupils.

Question: Why do you come late and leave earlier than the normal time?

Category	Response
Teachers also come late	43
I have work to do at home	10
School is boring	7

Question: Why do you come to school?

Category	Response
To have a bright future.	48
I am forced to.	7
I do not know.	5

Question: What is the cause of truancy?

Category	Response
Teachers	28
Political organisations	17
COSAS	5
Principal	7
NECC	3

Question: Are you aware that there are pupils carrying dangerous weapons?

Category	Response
Yes	60
No	0

Question: What should be done with pupils who misbehave?

Category	Response
They should be punished	48
Call their parents	6
Pray for them	1
No response	5

Question: Do you like schooling?

Yes.	49
No	11

Question: Why is your school not like St Boniface High School?

Category	Response
Our principal is weak.	37
The teachers are to blame.	12
That is a private school.	1

Question: What is that which you do not like in your teachers?

Category	Response
Vulgar language	18
Teachers missing classes	33
Teachers' favouritism	9

Question: Who is responsible for all the damage to the school property?

category	Response
pupils	60

4.5 ANALYSIS OF DATA

The data derives interviews, observations and official recorded data. The following issues came to the fore:

4.5 I CAUSES OF TRUANCY: PUPILS' VIEWS

The pupils' opinions toward schooling ran contrary to what the researcher claimed, namely, that the pupils do not like school. The pupils like school but in most cases the school system has rejected them. They cited the following contributory factors in pupils' truancy:

- i Teachers absenting themselves from classes.
 - ii Teachers using vulgar language.
 - iii Unprofessionalism on the part of teachers, for example, gossiping about other staff-members in front of them.
 - iv Teachers coming late to classes
- A great number of pupils agreed that they were also to be blamed because they sometimes skipped classes for no

apparent reasons. This has the potential of discouraging enthusiastic teachers from coming to class. The pupils also felt that they were to blame because they never discourage their friends from truanting, instead they joined them.

- vi The teachers openly favouring other pupils, and favouritism in the form of political affiliation and academic achievement.

4.6 II CAUSES OF TRUANCY: THE TEACHERS' VIEWS

- 1 The blame was placed squarely on the administration : The Head, Deputy Head and the four HOD's.
- 2 Senior staff members of the department were also blamed because they organise outside courses during school hours, often forcing teachers to leave the students alone.
- 3 The teachers blame unruly pupils, politics and friends.
- 4 The teachers agreed with the pupils that there are teachers coming to school under the influence of liquor.
- 5 The teachers were also dissatisfied with the unfair period allocation. The teachers felt that if the time-table was fairly drawn, there would not be a point for them to teach fifty periods per week. Five teachers confessed that they often miss the last two periods of the day and this tempt unattended pupils to truant.
- 5 The teachers felt that they were not getting any support from the parents of pupils.
- 7 Mass stay-aways organised by political organisations were contributing to truancy.

4.6 PROBLEMS WITH ADMINISTRATION

The Principal is failing to provide leadership in the school. He has no control over the staff and the pupils. The apparent unfair appointment of some staff members to the posts of HOD divided the staff, to the extent where the young staff members are uncooperative. The young staff felt that the administration was siding with the Nationalist education administrators thus they give it little support. The staff was further divided into the female and male staff and there were allegations that the principal was taking sides.

4.7 VIOLENCE AND TRUANCY

The teachers and the pupils agreed that the sporadic violence in the school was a contributory factor in truancy. The teachers and the pupils felt intimidated whilst they were on the school premises as they were aware that there were pupils carrying dangerous weapons. The pupils felt that in the absence of teachers to provide reasonable security, they would rather stay home. The form the violence takes is both physical and psychological. The physical violence refers to fairly vicious attacks on other pupils or members of the school staff, psychological violence refers to a situation where pupils and the staff are aware that there are pupils carrying dangerous weapons and this in itself instills fear.

4.8 POLITICS AND TRUANCY

Politics play a significant part in contributing to truancy. This occurs where teachers and pupils subscribe to different ideologies, for example , in this school, the PASO aligned SRC which won the election was not given support by the ANC- aligned teachers and this resulted in a split between the pupils and the teachers, and a split among the pupils themselves. The hostile climate is not conducive to an appropriate teaching-learning environment.

4.9 LANGUAGE AND TRUANCY

The English language as the medium of instruction posed a problem. In a classroom situation this often inhibited the pupils from expressing themselves except when being forced to by the teacher. The pupils' long period of passivity, listening to the teachers, resulted in them being bored and thus tempted to miss or skip lessons. There was a strong relation between the language used in the class and truancy, for in one class where the teacher continually asked the pupils to address the class there was a high absentee rate. The pupils' response to this was that they were shy to answer in class as some of the pupils will start mocking them if they make some grammatical errors. This does not suggest that teachers should not ask pupils questions, what the teachers need to do is to encourage pupils to be assertive, this is possible provided teachers can stop calling pupils idiots and morons everytime they make mistakes. The teachers should also at the same time punish those pupils who make a mockery of their classmates.

4.10 THE DIFFICULTY IN MEASURING THE RATE OF TRUANCY

It has been difficult to find the rate and pattern of truancy in the school. What compounds the problem is the unreliable source of data that is being used. Firstly the class-attendance registers are marked by the pupils once a day and depending on when it was marked, the pupils can often skip lessons and go unnoticed.

Secondly the teachers rely on the pupils to mark the attendance registers. This in most cases proved to be unreliable, for example, on June 16 there was no one at school but the class register for STD 9D had 80% attendance.

Thirdly, pupils skip some lessons depending on their liking of the subject or the teacher.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 DISCUSSION

The problem of truancy will never be understood and managed so long that there are people obsessed with the advancement of one particular approach to the study, for example, on its own a psycho-analytical approach to the study of truancy will not do. An eclectic approach should guide our study given that the causes of truancy are multifaceted.

It is important to acknowledge that the factors responsible for pupils playing truant change with time and accordingly the solution envisaged should be historically informed. In other words we need to note that the social setting in which education takes place influences the pupils' behaviour.

It still remains my belief that the teachers in Black secondary schools can help manage the problem of truancy. This is possible only if the teachers can be empowered, which means teachers need to be actively involved in the decision-making process.

Truancy can be managed by virtue of the teachers' powerful institutional position. Karabel and Halsey (1977, 58) assert that the teachers wield sanctions that not only delimit the boundaries of what may be negotiated but also give them a crucial advantage in determining whose definition will prevail. The very act of teachers living together with pupils in one community puts them in a privileged position to unpack the philosophy of life that the larger community is subscribing to.

I would like to argue that, that which determines the direction as well as the success of the evolution of education is the commitment of the people involved, that is, the teachers and the pupils. The teachers in their interpretation of the school curriculum need to be aware of the implicit and explicit aims of education, in other words teachers need to familiarise themselves with the aspects of the hidden curriculum, teachers need to be critical and at the same time they should also encourage this aspect in pupils.

How does this commitment come about? The starting point should be to get rid of the fear in teachers: the fear of losing their jobs in the event that they differ with the authorities and the fear to lose their homes which in most cases are paid through loans. This fear has resulted in pupils viewing teachers as puppets of the Department of Education and Training and politically this has tended to alienate teachers from pupils who see them as buttressing the status-quo, that is, reproducing the kind of manpower that will benefit the capitalists.

The flow of information in the school should cease to be top-down. The pupils need to be actively involved in the decision-making, more particularly in aspects that affect their daily lives at school. So long as the educationists are glued to theories that view pupils as immature and need an adult to guide them to adulthood, we are going to encounter problems. The teachers should start interacting meaningfully with the pupils who should be seen as co-constructors of knowledge.

It could be inferred from the findings that the pupils are interested in schooling provided that it is relevant. I still maintain that pupils can change the way they relate to their teachers provided that the teachers are exemplary in their conduct. The pupils still see teachers as their role models.

The parents need to be given more say in the running of the school, especially in the area of teachers' conduct. The issue of male teachers harassing school girls is a contentious one given that some parents have come out openly in support of such relationships. The argument in the past has been the male teachers as individuals have the right to freedom of association. To counter the argument I will assert that teachers do not have the right to exploit pupils left under their supervision.

I admit that it might be difficult to implement a recommendation that, for example, a teacher be suspended or expelled, when violence is so endemic in our society. In the past we have seen houses of school inspectors and principals bombed. This usually followed incidences when teachers were reprimanded and called to order. I know this is not easy but teachers who do not deliver the goods should be dismissed. This is not something new. This is done in other professions, for example, in nursing and in the legal profession.

In conclusion the interpretive approach should be adopted for the study of truancy because the approach focuses directly on the internal operation of the school themselves.

It will be simplistic to expect that teachers alone can solve the problem of truancy where initially we agreed that the causes of truancy are multifaceted. However, teachers can play a significant role in managing the problem of truancy.

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

1 Staff on promotional post should be under a period of probation so that when they do not deliver the goods they can be removed. I,ll recommend that teachers should do the evaluation rather than having a school inspector who comes only twice in a year.

2 School uniforms should be encouraged so that the pupils can identify themselves with the school. A typical example is the St Boniface pupils who can openly pride themselves on their school.

3 Attendance registers should be marked each and every period so that truancy can be checked. The teachers should mark the registers.

4 Punishment: Teachers should not punish the entire class for the actions of a few. Not only is it unfair to the innocent, who will harbour resentment, but it is also educationally unsound and indefensible. For punishment to be effective, it should be given immediately. There should be consistency in the meting out of punishment.

Suggested forms that punishment should take: teachers should take away tokens; privileges; and preferred activities. The suggestion may produce the desired effect without producing the destructive consequences of physical punishment.

5 The pupils should be encouraged to take responsible positions in the school, for example, on the SRC and in extra-mural activities.

6 Guidance teachers should try to become more relevant in their subject presentation. Topical issues should be objectively discussed.

7 An open school climate should be encouraged so that the teachers and the pupils are able to constructively criticise any aspect of the school. They should do this without any fear of being assaulted. Teachers should encourage pupils to openly discuss their problems.

8 Teachers harassing pupils should be suspended with immediate effect.

9 Regular parents' meetings should be held so that the parents are informed about the school's progress.

APPENDIX 1

QUESTIONNAIRE

1 High school pupils should be involved in the policy making of the school.

- 1 Strongly agree
- 2 Agree
- 3 Disagree
- 4 Strongly disagree
- 5 I do not know

2 Who is responsible for the pupils playing truant? (rank the items in the order you think to be most influential)

- Parents
- Friends
- Teachers
- Principals
- Politics
- Others (specify)

3 Lack of discipline in school is caused by (rank the items in the order you think to be most influential)

- 1 Lack of support from the staff
- 2 Inflexible rules
- 3 Apathy among teachers
- 4 Inconsistency in following the rules
- 5 Others (specify)

4 What do you do when pupils come late into your class?

- 1 Chase them away
- 2 Ignore them
- 3 Ask for reasons
- 4 Take note for future reference
- 5 Others (specify)

5 (i) Do you sometimes feel like not going to class?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

(ii) If yes, Why?

5 (i) Do you check if the pupils have done their classwork?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

(ii) How readily do the pupils carry out instructions in your classes?

- 1 Very quick
- 2 Quick
- 3 Fairly

- 4 Slow
- 5 Very slow

7 (i) Have you ever confiscated a dangerous weapon from your pupil?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

(ii) Are you aware that there are pupils carrying dangerous weapons?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

8 How often do you punish pupils?

- 1 Very often
- 2 Often
- 3 Never

9 Is there any role you can play to stop truancy?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 I do not care

10 Do you miss your classes?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No
- 3 Sometimes

11 Do you talk politics with pupils?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

12 Have you ever indulged in a political debate with your pupils?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

13 Did you specialise in the subject you are offering?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

14 How do you rate yourself in the subject presentation?

- 1 Very bad
- 2 Bad
- 3 Fair
- 4 Good
- 5 Very good

15 Do you mark the attendance register every period?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

16 What would you like to do during your free period?

- 1 Prepare for the next period
 - 2 Mark the classwork
 - 3 Chart to colleagues
 - 4 Be on my own
 - 5 Others (specify)
- 17 Do you use teaching-learning aids in your lesson presentation?
- 1 Yes
 - 2 No
- 18 Are you aware that there are pupils missing your classes?
- 1 Yes
 - 2 No
- 19 Are you aware that there is a lot of violence in the school?
- 1 Yes
 - 2 No
- If yes when does this occur?
- 1 After school
 - 2 During break
 - 3 In between lessons
- 20 Do you readily punish pupils?
- 1 Yes
 - 2 No
- 21 Do your pupils respect your authority?
- 1 Yes
 - 2 No
 - 3 I do not know
- 22 The school rules are not strictly adhered to?
- 1 Yes
 - 2 No
 - 3 I do not know
- 23 Do you discuss your school problems with your colleagues?
- 1 Yes
 - 2 No
 - 3 Sometimes
- 24 How much teaching support do you get from your colleagues?
- 1 Very little
 - 2 little
 - 3 Much
 - 4 Very much
 - 5 Average

PART TWO

- 1 Sex of the respondent?
 - 1 Male
 - 2 Female

- 2 How old are you?
 - 1 Below 20
 - 2 20 - 29
 - 3 30 - 39
 - 4 40 - 49
 - 5 50 - 59
 - 6 60 & above

- 3 Marital status
 - 1 Widowed
 - 2 Married
 - 3 Divorced
 - 4 Never married

- 4 Did you receive a matric certificate?
 - 1 Yes
 - 2 No

- 5 What is your professional certificate?
 - 1 Higher primary teachers certificate
 - 2 Primary teachers diploma
 - 3 Junior secondary teachers certificate
 - 4 Secondary teachers diploma
 - 5 Higher diploma in education
 - 6 Others (specify)

- 6 What degree/s did you obtain?
 - 1 Bachelor's degree
 - 2 Honours degree
 - 3 Master degree
 - 4 Doctorate
 - 5 None

- 7 Did you attend any other kind of school such as vocational school?
 - 1 Yes
 - 2 No

- 8 If yes what type of school?
 - 1 Business office work
 - 2 Nursing and other health related fields
 - 3 Trade and craft
 - 4 Engineering
 - 5 Agricultural or Home economics
 - 6 Others (specify)

- 9 How long have you been teaching in a high school?
 - 1 Less than 5 years

- 2 5 - 10 years
- 3 11 - 15 years
- 4 16 - 20 years
- 5 More that 20 years

10 Are you a member of a teachers' union?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

11 Have you ever considered leaving teaching?

- 1 Yes
- 2 No

12 How can high school teachers enhance regular attendance among high school pupils?

Thank you very much for completing the questionnaire.

APPENDIX 2

The type of questions asked.

To pupils.

- 1 Why do you come to school?
- 2 What makes you skip classes?
- 3 What is your opinion with regard to school rules?
- 4 Do you do your classwork regularly?
- 5 When do you want politics to be discussed at school?
- 6 What are the causes of truancy?

To Teachers

- 1 What is the cause of truancy?
- 2 What role can you play to manage truancy?
- 3 How do pupils relate to you?
- 4 How can the teaching- learning culture be brought back?
- 5 At what stage should politics be discussed at school?
- 6 What do you do to unruly pupils?

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