

EXPLORING DYNAMICS OF UNEXCUSED LECTURER ABSENTEEISM IN
COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTRES IN THE JOHANNESBURG
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BY

RONNIE RISIMATI MACEKE

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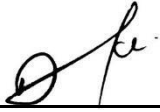
CO-SUPERVISOR: DR TACHAUKE

03 March 2025

DECLARATION

I Ronnie Risimati Maceke (Student No: 47519711) hereby declare that the research study:

“EXPLORING DYNAMICS OF UNEXCUSED LECTURER ABSENTEEISM IN COMMUNITY LEARNING CENTRES IN THE JOHANNESBURG METROPOLITAN MUNICIPALITY” is my own work and I acknowledged all the sources used by using the correct referencing method.

Signature:  _____ Date: 03 March 2025

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Inkomu,
Kangala wa leva, Matlhavani

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the complex issue of lecturer absenteeism at Community Learning Centres (CLCs) in the Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality. which is influenced by personal factors, socio-economic factors, and institutional factors. The research study used an interpretive research methodology to investigate the causes of lecturer absenteeism, how it affects teaching and learning, and how it is addressed. The study examined how management styles affect lecturer absenteeism and institutional effectiveness using Hood's four approaches (hierarchist, egalitarian, individualist, and fatalist), as well as investigating the root cause of absenteeism and direct operational efficiency impacts, teaching quality, and general learning experiences within these centres in relation to such absenteeism. In addition, Cultural Theory Framework of Public Management Styles (1998) examined the main reasons why lectures at Community Learning Centres (CLCs) in the Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality miss work. This research attempted to highlight the internal problems that allow for such absenteeism while also demonstrating the lack of substantial effectiveness in the current mitigation strategies. This investigation is situated within the larger academic discourse on lecturer absenteeism through a thorough analysis of the pertinent literature, paying special attention to policy documents and other related resources. The literature illustrates the prevalent and concerning nature of absenteeism in adult education settings by placing it within the local and global educational environments. It also emphasises that absenteeism is a systemic problem that is complicatedly woven into institutional and social contexts rather than just being a behavioural issue affecting individuals. The research used an exploratory research design based on qualitative methods. It used semi-structured interviews, observations, and extensive document analysis to create a comprehensive, triangulated dataset. A total of fifteen participants, which included centre managers, lecturers, and students, were drawn from three strategically selected Community Learning Centres in Johannesburg's metropolitan area, Gauteng Province, South Africa. The data were methodically interpreted using thematic analysis, which was guided by Hood's theoretical framework. This research study employed Christopher Hood's Cultural Theory Framework of Public Management Styles (1998) to examine the main reasons why lecturers at Community Learning

Centres (CLCs) in the Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality miss work. Finding the tactics used to reduce absenteeism and its implications on teaching quality and institutional performance, as well as investigating the underlying causes of absenteeism and its impact on student accomplishment, are the main goals. The study identifies personal, socioeconomic, and institutional factors as key contributors to lecturer absenteeism. The persistence of absenteeism is exacerbated by gaps in lecturer well-being and accountability, even in the face of institutional awareness of leave policies. The investigation contributes to the expanding body of knowledge on adult education absenteeism by applying Hood's theoretical framework to better understand management problems in CLCs centres. The findings of this study will have significant policy and practice consequences, with policymakers and education authorities being encouraged to strengthen managerial capacities and establish a suitable working environment. Future research should expand on this study by researching on how principles such as accountability, efficiency, and responsiveness are embedded in institutional policies, influence of lecturer absenteeism on students' academic achievement, and by conducting large-scale quantitative investigation to uncover nationwide trends and reasons can be conducted. The study recommends stricter policy enforcement, improved working conditions, and stronger institutional oversight. It also advocates for targeted support, including interventions for issues like alcoholism and to balance accountability with lecturer well-being.

Key Words: Dynamic, absenteeism, excused absenteeism, unexcused absenteeism, adult learning centre, effective monitoring, centre manager, lecturer, educator, leave policy

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LIST OF ACCRONYMS

ABET	-	Adult Basic Education and Training
ANC	-	African National Congress
ACET	-	Adult Community Education and Training
CET	-	Community Education and Training
CETC	-	Community Education and Training Colleges
CLC	-	Community Learning Centre
CMT	-	Centre Management Team
DBE	-	Department of Basic Education
DHET	-	Department of Higher Education and Training
ELRC	-	Education Labour Relations Council
LRC	-	Learner Representative Council
NDP	-	National Development Plan
PALC	-	Public Adult Learning Centre
PAM	-	Public Administrative Measures

CHAPTER 1: OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

Adult education primarily targets NEET (not in employment, education, or training) individuals who require skill development and reintegration into employment or training. In 2020, about 40% of South Africa's population aged 15 to 60, or around 17 million people, were categorised as NEET, highlighting the essential need for targeted educational initiatives (Khuluvhe & Negogogo, 2021). Community Learning Centres (CLCs) are essential for closing the educational gap because they offer inclusive and easily accessible learning options, especially for adults and youth who were previously shut out of high-quality educational routes and are classified as NEETs (Not in Education, Employment, or Training). In alignment with this, the White Paper on Post-School Education and Training (DHET, 2013) supports this by stressing the value of giving those who have not finished their education a second chance so they can continue their education and enhance their chances. Community Learning Centres are designed to equip unemployed youth and adults with practical skills through training aimed at enhancing their employability (DHET, 2015). Adult education in South Africa has developed within a complicated socio-political and legal context, affected by past injustices, post-apartheid reforms, and ongoing structural issues. In the Republic of South Africa's 1996 Constitution, Section 29(1) states unequivocally that "everyone has the right to basic education, including adult basic education." Chirowamhangu (2024) asserts that the constitution requires the state to provide accessible and equal education, subject to the fulfilment of all learning standards. As this clause represents a larger commitment to addressing historical injustices resulting from apartheid-era laws that routinely barred many South Africans from formal education, the inclusion of adult basic education (ABE) inside this right is noteworthy. In order to uphold citizens' constitutional rights, the government introduced legislation aimed at promoting equity and social justice in education (Vally & Dalamba, 1999). Furthermore, these efforts align with international human rights frameworks, particularly Article 26 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (United Nations, 2023). It also requires the state to create policies and provide funding to support adult education programs, especially in Community Learning Centres (CLCs), so that underprivileged populations can benefit from educational opportunities that can raise their socioeconomic standing.

The Bantu Education Act of 1953 purposely restricted Black South Africans' educational access, reducing their possibilities for advancement and promoting socioeconomic marginalisation. The purpose of Bantu education, according to Mthombeni, Shoba, and Kwanhi (2025), was to create a semiliterate Black labour force that could follow instructions from white superiors, boosting industrial production. This viewpoint is supported by Bhola (2004), who highlights that those who remained completely illiterate were confined to the lowest economic levels, reinforcing a racially classified labour system that limited the social and economic mobility of Black South Africans. This architecture had a long-lasting impact on schooling in Community Learning Centres today in addition to maintaining socioeconomic and political inequalities. Adult literacy programs and night schools were drastically reduced or discontinued during this period (Aitchison, 2012). The post-1994 administration attempted to address these imbalances by legislative and institutional reforms, most notably the passage of the Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) Act in 2000 and the subsequent formation of Community Education and Training (CET) colleges in 2015. While ABET focusses on basic literacy and numeracy skills, CET colleges were established to provide more vocational and lifelong learning options. Despite these achievements, the adult education industry still faces enormous socioeconomic, political, and educational hurdles. Furthermore, adult students themselves, frequently confront socioeconomic constraints such as poverty, job insecurity, and familial commitments that limit their capacity to participate in educational programs effectively. These centres not only provide basic education but also contribute to the empowerment and integration of marginalised individuals into society. Their establishment aligns with Section 29 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), which guarantees the right to basic education for all citizens, including adults, as part of efforts to redress historical inequities and promote socioeconomic justice.

However, despite their constitutional significance, Community Learning Centres (CLCs) face numerous challenges in delivering quality education. The inadequate infrastructure, which includes a lack of designated office space, as well as the lack of teaching and learning materials required for efficient teaching and learning, are some of the main issues Community Learning Centres (CLCs) confront (Land, 2021). Another challenge is the limited financial resources that often result in poorly maintained facilities and inadequate teaching materials, creating an uncondusive learning

environment for adult students. These challenges are compounded by systemic issues, such as weak institutional management and limited policy support, which exacerbate the difficulties in addressing the diverse needs of adult learners. Unexcused educator absenteeism is a significant issue in CLCs, defined as instances when educators fail to report for work without valid reasons or prior approval (Reddy et al., 2019). This behaviour often stems from personal negligence, insufficient institutional oversight, or weak accountability mechanisms. Absenteeism disrupts the flow of lessons, impedes student progress, and demotivates them, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds. Christopher Hood's public management paradigm demonstrates how poor accountability, and institutional cultures contribute to lecturer absenteeism, which has an influence on educational performance in Community Learning Centres (CLCs). This paradigm is very beneficial for analysing the administrative issues that cause absenteeism and impede teaching and learning processes. Numerous research has used notions of public management in educational settings. For example, high educator absences are examined by Miller, Murnane, and Willett (2008) as a sign of poor labour relations and management. Equally, this research employs a public management paradigm to investigate absenteeism in Community Learning Centres (CLCs), providing valuable perspectives on the institutional mechanisms that contribute to the problem.

Christopher Hood's Cultural Theory Framework of Public Management Styles will guide the analysis of absenteeism trends within Adult Education and Training (AET) centres by examining the underlying institutional factors that shape lecturer behaviour. Specifically, the theory will be used to assess how management styles, such as hierarchical versus participatory approaches, impact lecturer attendance and the enforcement of leave policies. This study did not only apply Christopher Hood's Cultural Theory Framework of Public Management Style to the context of AET centres but also critically engaged with its strengths and limitations. While Hood's framework offers valuable insights into the cultural and rhetorical aspects of management, its application to education, particularly in the South African AET context, will be scrutinised to highlight areas where the theory may fall short in addressing the unique challenges of lecturer absenteeism.

Mac Donald (2018) emphasises the critical research gap in the AET sector, pointing out how it differs from other sectors of education and how urgently more research is

needed. Due to the scarcity of data on lecture absenteeism in Community Learning Centres (CLCs), this study utilised data from traditional schools as proxy. This decision is informed by the recognition that traditional schools share similarities with CLCs in terms of their educational objectives and structures, making their data suitable substitute for exploratory purposes. By leveraging data from traditional schools, this study aims to provide preliminary insights into the phenomenon of lecture absenteeism, which can subsequently inform future research on CLCs. According to Chaudhury et al. (2006), for example, about 24% of educators in rural primary schools in India miss class, which has a major impact on students' performance. Similarly, over 30% of Uganda's public-school educators miss work on any given day due to poor supervision and unfavourable working conditions (Deininger & Mpuga, 2005). By referencing these figures from typical schools, this study highlights the importance of gathering specific data in CLC settings in order to develop targeted solutions.

While previous studies, such as Nsimbini (2024) and Maceke (2022) have identified sickness, family emergencies, and bereavement as primary causes of educator absenteeism, this research reveals additional factors, including prolonged weekends and payday leisure, which have not been widely reported in existing literature. It also examined the role of ineffective monitoring in enabling unexcused absenteeism within the CLC context, providing fresh insights into its implications for lecturer attendance. By focussing on the Johannesburg metropolitan area, the research hoped to generate insights that will help to inform improved absence management techniques and improve teaching and learning quality. The words lecturer and educator were used interchangeably in this research study to represent the changing language within Community Learning Centres (CLCs). While the current practice in CLCs is to refer to teaching professionals as lecturers, many sources and preceding literature still use the term educator. The study's objectives include identifying the key reasons of lecturer absenteeism, assessing its impact on educational delivery, and providing strategies to address these issues in CLCs.

In Ireland, educator absenteeism is also a serious challenge to education authorities. As a result, schools in the country are increasingly relying on unqualified individuals to cover temporary teacher absences (Irish Times, 2024). Ireland has responded to these issues by implementing measures including professional development programs and

more government financing to enhance educator retention and lower absenteeism (Department of Education, Ireland, 2019). But in spite of these initiatives, absenteeism is still a problem, especially in underprivileged areas.

Pakistan's Community Learning Centres programs continue to have a serious problem with educator absenteeism, especially in underprivileged and rural areas. According to Chaudhury et al. (2006), low pay, a scarcity of possibilities for professional growth, and inadequate accountability systems are major causes of this problem. Asim and Dee (2020) highlight the importance of community involvement and external accountability in reducing absenteeism, indicating that higher levels of community supervision are associated with higher educator attendance. Since gendered norms might limit their mobility and access to professional assistance, cultural hurdles further compound the issue, especially for female educators in conservative areas (Andrabi et al., 2008). Furthermore, systemic problems including inadequate monitoring and Community Learning Centres program resources foster an atmosphere where absenteeism continues, disrupting the flow of instruction and negatively impacting student performance. Absenteeism is a significant obstacle to the quality of education in Pakistan, despite attempts by the government and non-governmental organisations to address these issues through educator incentives and community-led projects.

In Kenya, there are significant regional differences in educator absenteeism, with urban areas reporting lower rates than rural areas (Teacher Task Force, 2018). Poor infrastructure, such as poor transit and long trips to school, is one of the primary reasons why rural educators are frequently absent from class (Teacher Task Force, 2018). Socio-economic problems such as low salary and unfavourable working conditions have an impact on absenteeism. To enhance attendance and hold educators accountable for their absences, the Kenyan government has undertaken changes such as those established by the Teachers Service Commission (TSC) (Teacher Task Force, 2018). Absenteeism rates at private adult learning centres in Kenya are far higher than in public schools, and the problem is exacerbated by a lack of funding. In addition to interfering with learning, absenteeism has a negative influence on student performance and undermines trust in the educational system.

In Uganda, school educator absenteeism is a well-known issue. Absence rates in some locations can surpass 19% (NORC, 2020). This problem is especially prevalent in rural areas, as educators commonly have to drive long distances to get to their schools, resulting in a high proportion of absences (NORC, 2020). The fact that educators endure financial insecurity and a lack of motivation, low pay and limited opportunities for professional development are key contributors to absenteeism. Furthermore, cultural factors such as personal obligations and community meetings may drive educators to miss courses, exacerbating the problem. Even though the Ministry of Education in Uganda has created monitoring measures to reduce absenteeism, the problem persists. Absenteeism has a significant impact on students' progress and the effectiveness of educational programs in adult learning centres by disrupting the flow of instruction (NORC, 2020).

In South Africa, educator absenteeism is a widespread problem that seriously impairs both the success of learning programs and the standard of education. Although, the following analysis is based on traditional schools, it is applicable to the AET sector due to a lack of reliable data on lecturer absenteeism in Community Learning Centres. The lack of reliable attendance statistics in AET makes traditional school data a helpful reference, as both sectors confront similar challenges. According to the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), 40,000 educators out of 400,000 in South Africa are reportedly absent from work, daily (HSRC, 2014). These statistics show how common absenteeism is, but they also point to underlying systemic problems like low educator morale, a lack of effective monitoring systems, and inadequate support. The entire institutional system may suffer from educator absenteeism, which can include harming the institution's reputation as well as lowering student attendance and achievement (Steiner-Khamsi, Harris-Van Keuren, Omoeva, & Shiotani, 2009).

Lecturer absenteeism is a serious challenge to developed and developing nations with economic, social, and political impacts. Tshekedi (2022) asserts that the repercussions of educator absenteeism in schools are huge, for example, they are associated with a loss of instructional time as well as a negative impact on the performance of students. The study's objective was to explore the dynamics that contribute to unexcused lecturer absenteeism in Community Learning Centres in the Johannesburg metropolitan municipality. This chapter presents the study's introduction, and background, discusses

the rationale, statement of the problem, research questions, objectives of the study and the significance of the study. Also, the chapter briefly discusses the research approach, population and sampling methods, data collection techniques, data analysis, research ethics, and definition of operational terms. The chapter concludes by presenting the research study plan as a chapter outline.

1.2 Background

Education is the basic human right that children, youth, and adults are entitled to and a powerful tool that can reduce socio-economic challenges such as unemployment and inequality (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation [UNESCO], 2023). The UNESCO (2020) highlights that about fourteen (14) per cent of adults around the globe do not possess basic skills in reading and writing. To contribute positively towards education in the 21st century, youth and adults who missed early years of education should be given an opportunity for self-development and access to Community Learning Centres (CLCs). Education has the ability to end the cycle of poverty by giving people the information, abilities, and chances they need to find better jobs and live better lives. According to Giovetti (2022), improved access to education can help decrease poverty, particularly in isolated places. Education improves employability, economic stability, and social mobility, allowing people to break the cycle of poverty and give back to their communities. Moyo (2014) laments that governments should eliminate all legal, social, demographic, racial, and economic barriers that hinder citizens from accessing opportunities to basic education.

The history of adult education is closely related to South Africa's sociopolitical evolution. According to Aitchison (2006), a historical analysis shows that adult and community education has often been disregarded or marginalised, particularly when it comes to African adults. During the apartheid era, regulations like the Bantu Education Act of 1953 Marginalised South Africans who were non-European, and education was intentionally created to maintain racial segregation and economic disenfranchisement. The lengthy history of adult education in South Africa is highlighted by Baatjies and Mathe (2004), who trace it back to the "night schools" movement, which sought to give adults access to basic education and reading. More than a century ago, the Communist Party of South Africa (CPSA), which is currently the South African Communist Party

(SACP), established the idea of night schools. According to Bird (1984), the CPISA was dedicated to helping its members become better leaders in the early 1920s, which emphasises the value of adult education in the historical setting of the nation. Many people were illiterate and economically disempowered at this time due to the severe absence of adult education. Adult education has been influenced by several important policy declarations and programs that attempted to alleviate the country's socioeconomic disparities and promote lifelong learning after democracy was established in 1994.

The following are some of the key policies and legislations that have shaped adult education in South Africa, which will be detailed in literature review chapter. They include the White Paper on Education and Training (1995), which outlined the vision for education and training in post-apartheid South Africa, the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) Act (1995), which established the framework for the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), the Strategy for Adult Education and Training (AET) (2003), which emphasised the development of literacy, numeracy, and vocational skills for adults, the Further Education and Training (FET) Colleges Act (2006), which created FET colleges to offer vocational and occupational training, the National Development Plan (NDP) 2030 (2011), which highlights the role of education and training in social and economic development, the White Paper on Post-School Education and Training (2013), which provided a framework for the growth of post-school education, including adult education, the Community Education and Training (CET) Act (2013), which focused on adult education in community-based settings, the Community Education and Training Act No. 3 (2016), which further strengthened the community education and training framework, The National Plan for Post-School Education and Training (NPPSET), released in 2023, which provides a strategic framework to transform South Africa's education system, with a strong emphasis on Community Education and Training (CET). These policies have had, and continue to have, a considerable impact on the development of adult education in South Africa.

Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) focusses on adult basic education and training, whereas Community Education prioritises community-based learning. These two initiatives represent the South African government's efforts to reduce educational inequality and promote lifelong learning. Although the goal of both strategies is to

empower people and communities, there are notable differences in their conception, implementation, and results. According to DHET (2013), Community Education is more adaptable and sensitive to community requirements, while ABET is more formal and structured and leads to national accreditation. In contrast to Community Education, ABET focusses on adults who did not receive formal education (DHET, 2016). Additionally, community education covers a broader range of subjects, including health, community development, and occupational skills, whereas ABET exclusively focusses on skill development.

The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) is responsible for providing adult education, an initiative aimed at reducing illiteracy. Programs associated with Community Learning Centres are instrumental in that they address illiteracy and equip unemployed youth and adults with practical skills that can be used to enhance their chances of employment (Tawiah & Quan-Baffour, 2021). Programs of these centres pave the way for adult students to enrol in institutions of education that provide skills. Forest (2010) cautions that most courses offered by the ABET are more academic oriented, meaning, they do not equip students with skills that prepare them for the job market. Additionally, Chombo (2014) indicates that there are numerous challenges in most learning centres, and these include a shortage of resources, inadequate funding, and absenteeism of educators.

Lecturer absenteeism which is common in most Community Learning Centres (CLCs) disturbs the normal operation of centres and contributes to poor performance by students. Ameeq, Hassan, Jabeen, and Fatima (2018) claim that regular educator absenteeism leads to poor achievement by students. In South Africa, the programmes of CLCs centres are delivered effectively through uninterrupted interaction and cooperation between lecturers, students, and the communities. Therefore, lecturer absenteeism is one dynamic that hinders the effective delivery of Community Learning Centres programs. Mgonja (2017) points out that educator absenteeism is a serious challenge that not only hinders the performance in institutions of learning, but it also undermines the delivery of services, across the world.

Lecturer absenteeism is a serious concern in the South African education system. For example, in some Community Learning Centres, there are instances where lecturers

report for duty but fail to meet their classroom obligations on purpose (DHET,2018). If poorly managed, lecturer absenteeism can disturb the operations of a centre and harm learning and teaching due to lost instructional time leading to poor educational outcomes. Bipath, Venketsamy, and Naidoo (2019) argue that educator absenteeism may have adverse effects on an entire educational system largely because it becomes a direct contributor to decreased achievements by students as well as their attendance and finally, tarnishes the reputation of the learning centre. Departments of Education across the globe lose significant financial resources due to high uncontrolled educator absenteeism resulting in wasteful expenditure.

There are numerous instances where educators who teach in schools in South Africa arrive at schools very late and depart from schools earlier than expected. Motshekga (2013) points out that in 2013, officials who visited 451 schools recorded that they observed 1000 absent educators in one day while the majority of their counterparts who were present, were not teaching. It is not surprising therefore that South Africa has the highest rate of educator absenteeism in the South African Development Community (SADC) region (Motshekga, 2013). Unaccounted educator absenteeism disrupts learning and undermines the goals of Community Learning Centres, affecting student motivation and lifelong learning efforts (UNESCO, 2020). The study focusses on lecturer absenteeism in South African's Community Learning Centres, specifically in the Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality, where socioeconomic disparities and institutional inefficiencies are urban-specific and exacerbate the issue (Department of Basic Education, 2017). Although the study is limited in scope, it captures more general problems in South Africa's AET system and offers insights that could guide national policy debates. Globally, absenteeism rates above 10% are deemed troublesome, in some countries, these rates might reach 20% in specific regions (World Bank, 2018). By contrasting South Africa's absenteeism rates with these international standards, the study aims to highlight the gravity of the problem and the necessity of focused efforts to lower absenteeism and enhance learning outcomes.

High rates of educator absenteeism are a major concern in South Africa, where absenteeism frequently surpasses 10%, with some rural areas seeing rates as high as 12% (Department of Basic Education, 2017). Absenteeism rates more than 10% are

widely recognised as a serious challenge for educational systems and their ability to achieve consistent learning results (World Bank, 2018).

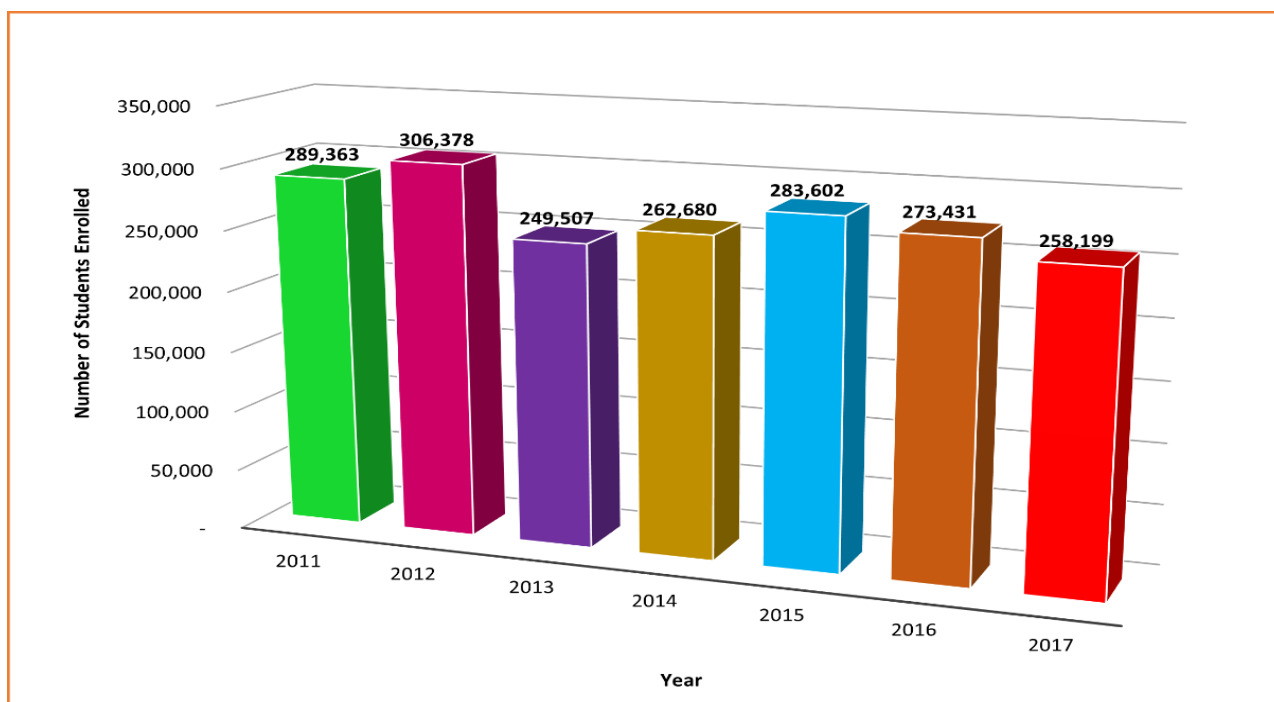
Human resource challenges in Community Learning Centres (CLCs) stem from low compensation and limited resources, which impede the recruitment and retention of experienced educators, eventually reducing motivation. The situation is exacerbated by a lack of professional development opportunities, which limits educators' ability to implement current teaching approaches (World Bank, 2018). Furthermore, understaffing leads to high workloads and fatigue, which increases absenteeism (Department of Basic Education, 2017). Efforts to address these concerns are hindered by confusing policies regarding lecturer absenteeism and performance monitoring, making effective intervention difficult.

Political, educational, and socioeconomic factors all have an impact on the quality of adult education. While socioeconomic reasons like family obligations and financial limitations frequently impact lecturers' attendance and involvement, political unpredictability and uneven government policies can jeopardise the stability of CLCs programs. Different learning outcomes are a result of educational inequities among centres, which are caused by unequal resources (World Bank, 2018). The quality of instruction varies amongst CLCs since lecturers may not have received formal pedagogical training and come from a variety of backgrounds. Adult students, many of whom are older than conventional learners, are attempting to enhance their literacy, numeracy, and vocational abilities in order to improve their employment prospects while juggling work and family obligations. Despite their best efforts, many adult students are unemployed, marginalised, and impoverished because they lack the necessary skills (Mayer, Gordhan, Manxeba, Hughes, Feley & Maroc, 2011). Their difficulties are exacerbated by structural obstacles in adult education, a lack of alignment with the demands of the labour market, and a lack of possibilities for upskilling. Community Learning Centres lecturers and students are primarily responsible for meeting the educational needs of South African adults. These pedagogical trainings prepare lecturers to teach adult students. Their primary goal is to promote lifelong learning and skill development by aiding people who have not completed formal schooling in developing reading, numeracy, and vocational abilities (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2020). CLCs students are typically 18 years old or older and

wish to develop their abilities for a variety of reasons, such as additional education, career, or personal improvement. CLCs diverse student body includes many individuals from impoverished backgrounds seeking second chances at education or professional growth opportunities. In these situations, lecturers must adapt their techniques to fit adult learners' distinct learning preferences and needs, while also considering their previous problems and experiences.

Johannesburg's specific social, cultural, and educational context, together with the researcher's location, make it an important focus of this study. The city is the economic centre of South Africa and draws a diverse population. For adult students, the city's sizable immigrant population, high unemployment rate, and socioeconomic disparity provide particular difficulties, such as obstacles to regular attendance and participation in CLCs programs. Certain parts of Johannesburg, South Africa, have particular urban problems that make educational inequality worse, such as packed classrooms and unequal access to resources and lecturer absenteeism. The Department of Higher Education and Training (2016) states that, depending on the type of program, the headcount enrolment for a certain skills program must be between 15 and 30 students per class. Figure 1.1 below presents the number of students enrolled in Community Learning Centre programs in South Africa for the indicated period.

Figure 1.1: Number of students enrolled in CET Colleges, 2010-2017



Sources: Statistics on Post-School Education and Training, 2017

About 14% of adults in South Africa are estimated to be illiterate, and many more struggle with functional literacy, making the country a country with comparatively low adult literacy rates (Department of Basic Education, 2017). According to the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET, 2019), student success and completion rates at AET colleges continue to be a major concern, with many institutions finding it difficult to reach targeted throughput levels. Despite a high desire to learn, low accomplishment levels remain and are mostly due to problems such as low lecturer attendance, which severely impedes student success and completion rates (World Bank, 2018). High lecturer absenteeism rates and structural problems in Community Learning Centres in Johannesburg exacerbate this problem, which also has an impact on adult students' performance and retention. Given these factors and others, the researcher highlighted the necessity for a study to investigate the dynamics that contribute to lecturer absenteeism in Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality Community Learning Centres.

1.3 The Rationale of the Study

Since 1994, academics have debated the reform of adult education in South Africa, particularly its effectiveness in addressing literacy and unemployment (Danke & Mkhize, 2021). While various initiatives have been undertaken to improve the adult education sector, including the strategic transfer of adult education responsibility from the Department of Basic Education (DBE) to the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), adult educators continue to face significant challenges. A lot of lectures expressed their displeasure with this transition, saying they felt the present department's climate and support structure differed significantly from the old one and provide less assistance (Land, 2019).

Given its significant effects on institutional efficacy and educational quality, it is imperative to investigate lecturer absenteeism in Community Learning Centres (CLCs). Educator absenteeism is extremely detrimental to any education institution's mission (Mgonja, 2017). This study focusses on the Johannesburg Metropolitan municipality because of its relevance in terms of the number of CLCs it has and its important position in South Africa's adult education situation. The researcher's professional experience in CLCs has also provided a window of exploration into how lecturer absenteeism emerges as a serious challenge for Centre Management Teams within the centres, making the investigation timely and relevant.

Despite DHET's well-established standards on educator attendance, absenteeism has remained a persistent issue in learning centres (Tshekedi, 2022). This challenge reveals a fundamental gap between policy and practice, exacerbated by the centre manager's insufficient management abilities. The above statement is supported by Naidoo (2017) who asserts that managers of learning centres lack adequate capabilities in management and leadership that can aid them manage effectively. Educator absenteeism has broader ramifications than just disrupting operations, it has a substantial impact on teaching quality and, as a result, learning outcomes. The value of this research study is from the evidence-based insights it may provide on lecturer absenteeism dynamics in adult education. The findings will be of interest to a wide range of stakeholders, including the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), Community Education and Training Colleges (CETC), policymakers, and

centre managers, who will then be in a better position to develop more effective strategies for managing lecturer absenteeism.

This study addresses a literature gap by focusing primarily on Community Learning Centres, which have garnered little attention in earlier research. The causes of lecturer absenteeism were investigated, and current management techniques assessed, allowing the study to come at more practical findings to this long-standing issue. The study's findings will inform evidence-based decisions to enhance attendance management and operational efficiency in the three strategically selected community learning centres in Johannesburg.

1.4 Statement of the Problem

Although lecturer absenteeism is a major issue that affects all educational institutions worldwide, it has particularly negative consequences in the context of adult education. Despite extensive study on educator absenteeism in traditional schools, there is a significant gap in understanding lecturer absenteeism in Community Learning Centres. Past literatures focused more on absenteeism that concerned educators and students in public and private schools only (Malatji, 2022).

Adult education remains grossly under researched domain, characterised by profound literature gap that warrants urgent scholarly attention. This sector has unique operational dynamics and andragogical characteristics that differentiate it from traditional schools. Adult education institutions face unique operational challenges that could exacerbate educator absenteeism, such as nighttime schedules, part-time jobs, and a wide range of academic needs from various students. Insufficient financial incentives, heavy workloads, and unfavourable working environment are the main causes of the high educator absenteeism rate (Mashaba, 2018). Furthermore, systemic issues that impede the efficacy of Adult Education and Training (AET) are the reason why its delivery is still dispersed and poorly carried out (Aitchison, 2018).

Tshekedi (2022) points out that educator absenteeism is disruptive to learning centres' operational processes and affects learning centres and governments directly and indirectly. This study investigated the dynamics of unexcused lecturer absence in the

Johannesburg metropolitan municipality's CLCs. Conducted through a combination of interviews, observations, and document analysis, the study examined, among other things, to understand the causes and impacts of lecturer absenteeism as well as to assess the current management strategies employed by Centre Management Teams (CMTs) in the management of lecturer absenteeism.

The findings of this study will add to the growing but still limited body of knowledge on lecturer absenteeism in adult education settings, as well as provide practical advice for centre managers and policymakers. However, there is a theoretical gap in the use of public management theories, specifically Christopher Hood's public management framework, to handle lecturer absenteeism in the CLCs. This gap demonstrates a scarcity of theoretical investigation into how public management paradigms might be adapted and used to the specific issues of adult education. Methodologically, there is a noticeable lack of in-depth qualitative research that investigates the complex, context-specific elements that contribute to absenteeism, particularly in adult education settings. This study seeks to close theoretical, methodological, and knowledge gaps by offering a complete, contextually grounded examination of the causes and impact of absenteeism in Community Learning Centres, as well as meaningful and actionable intervention for improvement.

1.5 Aim and Objectives of the Study

This study sought to explore the dynamics that contribute to unexcused lecturer absenteeism in Community Learning Centres in the Johannesburg metropolitan municipality. This aim was realised through the following objectives:

1. To explore the contribution of personal, socio-economic, and institutional challenges to unexcused lecturer absenteeism in Community Learning Centres.
2. To determine the impact these dynamics, have on teaching and learning.
3. To ascertain the role of centre management teams in managing dynamics of unexcused lecturer absenteeism in Community Learning Centres. and
4. To make recommendations that address lecturer absenteeism in Community Learning Centres.

1.6 Research Questions

What are the dynamics that contribute to unexcused lecturer absenteeism in Community Learning Centres in the Johannesburg metropolitan municipality?

The research question was divided into the following sub-questions:

1. In what ways do personal, socio-economic, and institutional challenges contribute to unexcused lecturer absenteeism in Community Learning Centres?
2. What impact do these dynamics have on teaching and learning?
3. How could centre management teams address the dynamics that contribute to unexcused lecturer absenteeism in Community Learning Centres?
4. What strategies can be deployed to address the challenge of lecturer absenteeism in Community Learning Centres across South Africa?

1.7 Significance of the study

This study is expected to make a meaningful contribution to the global discourse on educator absenteeism in adult education, aligning closely with UNESCO's Sustainable Development Goal 4, which seeks to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all (UNESCO, 2023). It aims to generate localised insights into how Community Learning Centres navigate systemic challenges, thereby informing global education policy, particularly in developing nations. By focusing on educator absenteeism, the study seeks to complement international initiatives to strengthen adult education systems through strategies aimed at enhancing motivation, retention, and engagement (Evans & Yuan, 2018). Furthermore, it will offer a uniquely South African, Johannesburg-based perspective, enriching the broader dialogue on education management in under-resourced contexts and bridging gaps between global strategies and local realities.

The findings are anticipated to provide actionable strategies for managers of CLCs to improve institutional effectiveness by addressing the individual, social, and institutional factors influencing lecturer absenteeism. Naidoo (2017) highlights the importance of

attendance as a cornerstone of educational success, and this study seeks to offer practical, evidence-based approaches for fostering a culture of accountability and support. This complicated approach aims to address absenteeism challenges while fostering long-term institutional resilience and sustainable attendance practices.

At the policy level, the study is expected to provide recommendations to the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) based on authenticated data and the unique challenges of CLCs centres. By aligning theoretical frameworks with practical recommendations, this research will serve as a valuable resource for policymakers and practitioners working towards improved outcomes in adult education.

Finally, this study hopes to fill a critical gap in adult education research, as identified by addressing the under explored issue of lecturer absenteeism in Community Learning Centres (CLCs). The empirical findings of this study are expected to provide fresh insights and up to date evidence that accurately reflects the complexities and realities of South Africa's adult education systems. In doing so, the research will strengthen scholarly understanding of adult education management, its contribution to the global knowledge base, and support localized, evidence-driven approaches to addressing systemic challenges in this vital sector.

1.8 Research design and methodology

The research design and methodology followed in this research study are delineated in this section.

1.8.1 Research paradigm

A research paradigm provides the philosophical basis for research design, including how knowledge is viewed and how data are collected and interpreted (Creswell & Poth, 2018). This study used an interpretivist paradigm, which views reality as socially constructed and seeks to understand how individuals experience and interpret social phenomena (Aspers & Corte, 2019). Interpretivism is appropriate for exploring the complex, context-specific nature of lecturer absenteeism, allowing for rich insights into

how it is experienced and understood by students, lecturers, and centre managers (Gunbayi & Sorm, 2018).

1.8.2 Research approach

This study was grounded in a qualitative research approach, which is well-suited for exploring complex social issues in real-world contexts. Creswell (2015) describes qualitative investigations as processes in which researchers develop an understanding of social phenomena by comparing, contrasting, categorising, and organising information. Qualitative research focuses on how individuals interpret and give meaning to their lived experiences (Mahajan et al., 2018). It does not depend on numerical data but instead aims to gain an in-depth understanding of behaviours, perceptions, and experiences (Cropley, 2019). This approach allowed the study to examine how students, lecturers, and centre managers perceive and respond to lecturer absenteeism within their everyday environments. Qualitative approaches are commonly used in research that investigates people's experiences in a range of social and institutional settings (Ling & Ling, 2020). In this study, the approach enabled a comprehensive understanding of the causes and effects of absenteeism, based on the perspectives of those most directly affected (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014).

1.8.3 Research design

Research design provides the overall plan for conducting a study and obtaining findings (Sundler et al., 2019). This study used an exploratory qualitative case study design, which allows for an in-depth investigation of lecturer absenteeism within its real-life context. Exploratory research is useful for identifying underlying factors, patterns, and relationships without starting from fixed assumptions (Yin, 2018). This design enabled the researcher to gain a detailed understanding of absenteeism as experienced by students, lecturers and centre managers, making it an effective approach for addressing the study's objectives and generating context-rich insights.

1.8.4 Population and sampling methods

The study population comprised centre managers, lecturers, and students within Community Learning Centres in the Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality. While the sample was drawn from three conveniently selected centres, the sampling methods

aimed to capture a range of perspectives from these key stakeholder groups. Although the sample is not statistically representative of the broader Community Learning Centre population, it provided sufficient depth to generate meaningful insights into the issues under investigation. According to Okeke and Van Wyk (2017), a population is the mass of people from which a researcher draws his sample to study. Sampling, as indicated by Mweshi and Sakyi (2020), is the key step which involve selecting a part of the population with the purpose of finding insights into the object of the study. The sample for this study included one centre manager, two lecturers, and two students from each of the three selected Community Learning Centres. These centres were chosen because they were easily accessible and willing to participate in the study, making them suitable for a qualitative approach. Lecturers were included as they are directly involved in, or affected by, absenteeism, while students were asked to share how it impacts their learning. Centre managers were involved to provide their perspectives on how they handle lecturer absenteeism and how it affects the daily operations of the centres. Although the sample does not represent all Community Learning Centres, it allowed for a focused examination of absenteeism from different angles and provided useful insights into the issue within specific.

1.8.5 Data collection techniques

Semi-structured interviews, observation, and document analysis were used to gather data for this study. According to McIntosh and Morse (2015), semi-structured interviews are useful for gathering data because they enable the interview to record diverse incidents with a certain degree of uniformity across interviews. The researcher used an interview guide during the interview process to facilitate open-ended, structured discussions about the subjects while letting participants reveal as much of their experiences as they felt comfortable doing. For qualitative research, this approach is especially helpful since it allows the researcher to modify questions throughout the discussion and ask more questions (Taherdoost, 2021). Semi-structured interviews thus served as a basis for comprehending the lived experiences of the participants and provided firsthand knowledge of the dynamics of lecturer absence.

Another important data collection method used in this study was the method of observation. This made it possible for the researcher to covertly collect data by

observing the organic relationships and behaviours occurring within the chosen CLCs centres. The researcher then employed an observational schedule, adhering to a methodical procedure focused on particular components while taking attendance trends, classroom dynamics, and management techniques into account. In order to provide a more comprehensive knowledge of the problem of lecturer absenteeism, observational data provided supplementary narratives of what was discovered through interviews. As Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2017) note, researchers can use observation to study natural activities in their surroundings, which provides invaluable insights. Denscombe (2014) also emphasises how triangulating data sources, such as combining interviews and observations, improves the dependability of the results. Consequently, the researcher was able to triangulate data, which improved the reliability and credibility of the conclusions.

Document analysis was also used as a significant method of data collection. The examination of existing documents such as lecturer attendance registers and leave policy documents further broadened the researcher understanding of absenteeism patterns and how institutions responded. Document analysis as McMillan and Schumacher (2014) puts it, is a systematic process of reviewing and interpreting existing materials to derive sense from patterns and insights. The analysis of documents in this study provided objective data in complement to the subjective accounts derived from the interviews and observations. For example, attendance registers could quantify patterns of absence, while policy documents indicate what the institution has in place regarding the management of attendance. This method enhances data quality while offering a basis of validation and cross-referencing the results deriving from other sources so as to ensure robust analysis (Pandey & Pandey, 2021).

1.8 Data analysis

Thematic data analysis was adopted for this research study as it enabled the sorting and selection of data to assist the researcher in identifying identical patterns (Lester, Cho, & Lochmiller, 2020). This process allowed the researcher to analyse a sizable amount of data that had been collected. In this research study, the researcher prepared, produced, shortened, and presented the data to make sound and profound conclusions

(Caulfield, 2019). Thematic data analysis was conducted by systematically coding the data, identifying recurring patterns, and grouping these into themes that addressed the research questions. This structured approach enabled the researcher to organise and interpret the data meaningfully. Thereafter, the findings, along with the steps taken to arrive at them, are clearly presented to ensure they are accessible and comprehensible to readers.

1.9 Dependability and credibility

To ensure the credibility of qualitative research, the researcher must engage meaningfully with participants and strive for fairness in interpreting data across all participants and research instruments. Dependability is established by allowing others to assess whether similar results could be obtained under comparable conditions. This is accomplished by having clear and open documentation of protocols (Wild & Diggines, 2013). In qualitative research, credibility refers to how well the results represent the viewpoints of the participants (Wild & Diggines, 2013). Triangulation and prolonged engagement are strategies that can enhance the trustworthiness and credibility of qualitative research (Creswell, 2014). By promoting open communication and reassuring participants that all ideas were appreciated, the researcher created a safe, respectful environment that provided a supportive study environment. This allowed participants to express their actual beliefs without feeling pressured or judged. This approach ensured that interpretations closely aligned with participants' viewpoints, thereby enhancing the study's credibility. However, the social interactions among participants during data collection may have introduced the risk of influence or conformity. To minimise this potential bias, the researcher maintained a neutral stance during engagement with participants.

1.10 Research ethics

This section details the methods employed to monitor ethical practices. Detail information is provided in the research methodology chapter of this research study

1.10.3 Ethical considerations

An expressly defined ethical framework has been designed for the research that demands the research to be conducted under ethical principles and standards. Ethical considerations link with the entire research process from the planning stage, right through to the execution phase. The researcher first got a clearance certificate from the University of South Africa (UNISA) - Ethics Research Committee (REC) before he can start data collection. This ethical approval ensured that the study adhered to institutional guidelines and ethical norms that govern research involving human participants. Permission was also obtained from the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), Gauteng Community Education College, as part of the formal approval process. These steps are considered in the commitment of the ethical integrity as emphasized by Kirtley (2022), who mentioned institutional oversight for the safeguarding of the rights of participants in the research.

1.10.4 Informed consent

Informed consent was a major element of the ethical framework for the study. The participants were given the consent form together with oral explanations about the objectives and procedures of the study. The consent form was written in English because it was a language that everyone understood. The researcher made it clear to the participants that they were at liberty to withdraw at any time, and there would be no penalties or repercussions. Taherdoost (2021) asserts that participants should be empowered through informed decision making. Through an indication of what rights, they hold concerning their nature of participation, a foundation of trust and mutual respect has been established with the participants. The ethical emphasis on ensuring that participants are informed and have the opportunity to make their own decisions ensures that every person actively participates in the study and understands its implications.

1.10.5 Protection from harm

Another major pillar in the development of the research ethics protocol is prevention of harm to the participants. Despite the research being identified as low risk, the

researcher had already put in place strategies that ensured participants were kept safe from any possible harm caused to them physically, psychologically or emotionally. Participants were assured that their well-being would be top priority for the research process and measures were taken to provide an increasingly safe and supportive environment for collecting data. This ethical posture is also consistent with what Kostere and Kostere (2021) argue, that researchers have to anticipate and manage any risk that is associated with their studies regardless of how low such risk may appear. Thus, by focusing on harm avoidance and establishing the safety of participants, the researcher abides by the best ethical practices in research. This was accomplished through the use of pseudonyms, informed consent, ensuring confidentiality, and explicit communication of participants' right to discontinue participation at any time without incurring penalties. All participants involved therefore felt secure and respected while taking part.

1.10.6 Confidentiality and anonymity

The study ensured utmost confidentiality and anonymity to all participants. They were told their personal information would be kept private because of the Protection of Personal Information Act 4 of 2013 (RSA, 2013), which is a legal framework to define and therefore enable personal privacy. I took extensive measures to anonymise all data collected and kept them securely stored from unauthorised access and disclosure to third parties. This assurance not only satisfied the legal mandate but also generated trust among participants, thus encouraging honest and open participation in the study. As noted by Pandey and Pandey (2021), maintaining confidentiality is imperative for the building of ethical relations in research as well as keeping the validity of the data collected. By assuring anonymity as well as data protection from outside parties, I created a condition that respected the privacy of participants while upholding the integrity of the research process.

1.11 Definition of key concepts

The Definition of key terms section is critical for conceptual clarity, as it provides a shared understanding of the language used throughout the study (Creswell, 2014). It grounds the research in applicable theories, such as Christopher Hood's Public

Management Theory, which aids in the investigation of lecturer absenteeism and its impact on institutional management. Furthermore, it situates the research within the socioeconomic and institutional reality of CLCs centres, addressing distinct problems. Finally, it improves methodological rigour by requiring systematic data collection and analysis.

1.11.3 Centre manager

Is the person responsible for the overall management and administration of a community education and training centre (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2016).

1.11.4 Supervisor

A person who oversees and guides the work of lecturers, trainers or facilitators in a community education and training centre or public learning centre (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2016).

1.11.5 Lecturer

A person who teaches or instructs students in a community education and training centre or public learning centre (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2016).

1.11.6 Explore

To investigate or examine something in order to gain better understanding or knowledge of it often involving a process of discovery and learning (Gay ,2017).

1.11.7 Absenteeism

Unscheduled employee absence from the workplace (Mampane, 2013). This includes teachers who are away from the school or who are in the school but not attending to their scheduled teaching duties (Mthombeni, 2018: 21).

1.11.8 Adult learning

According to ABET (2020), the fundamental conceptual basis for lifelong learning and development includes knowledge, skills, and attitudes essential for participating and effecting change in various social, economic, and political environments.

1.11.9 Learning centre

Is physical or virtual space where students can access educational resources, support, and guidance to facilitate learning (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2016).

1.11.10 “Ubuntu”

An African concept of humanity towards others (Ramose, 1999).

1.11.11 Educator

Educator is defined as anybody who professionally teaches, educates, or trains others or offers educational services at an institution (SACE ACT 31 OF 200: E-3).

1.12 Chapter Outline

This study consists of six (6) chapters as outlined below:

Chapter 1: Overview of the research study

This first chapter focused on the study's introduction and background. Also, the chapter engaged with the rationale of the study, the problem statement, the study's objectives, the research questions and the significance of the study. The chapter also briefly discussed the research approach, population and sampling methods, data collection techniques, data analysis, research ethics and definition of major concepts and chapter outlines.

Chapter 2: Literature review

A review of the literature on educator absenteeism is given in this chapter, along with explanations of excused and unexcused absences, an examination of the reasons for unexcused absences, and an examination of international and South African viewpoints on the issue. The chapter also looks at how South Africa's Adult Education and Training (AET) policies have changed over time, how unexcused lecturer absences affect instruction and learning, how centre management teams handle lecturer absences, and how managers and lecturers can work together to reduce absenteeism in CLCs.

Chapter 3: Theoretical framework

This chapter shows how the Public Management Theory of Christopher Hood can be applied to the issue of absentee lecturers in Community Learning Centres. Hood's theory is applied in this study to provide a thorough knowledge of how managerial practices and organisational culture affect absenteeism. No one management style, hierarchical, egalitarian, individualist, and fatalist can successfully lower absenteeism on its own, according to the analysis of the four types. To reduce absenteeism and improve lecturer involvement, a well-rounded management approach that includes organised oversight, participatory governance, and individual empowerment is crucial.

Chapter 4: Research methodology

Chapter four (4) of the research study starts by discussing the research approach the researcher employed in this study. In addition, the researcher details the research design used. The researcher also describes the data collection instruments employed, the population and sampling procedures, data analysis, validity, dependability, and ethical processes followed in the research study.

Chapter 5: Data analysis and presentation

The fifth (5th) chapter details the process of data analysis used in the research study. Research findings are also presented.

Chapter 6: Findings, discussions, limitations and recommendations

Chapter (6), which is the final chapter of this study, discusses the findings, looks at the study's limitations and proposes recommendations for the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), Centre Managers, Centre Management Teams (CMTs) and the lecturers. The chapter concludes by suggesting recommendations for further research studies.

1.13 Conclusion

This chapter provided a comprehensive introduction to the study, encompassing the background, rationale, problem statement, objectives, research questions and significance of the study. Additionally, it offered a concise overview of the research approach, including the population and sampling methods, data collection techniques, data analysis procedures, research ethics, and the definition of key concepts. The chapter further outlined the structure of the research by outlining the content of the subsequent chapters. The following chapter delves into literature review of this research study.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The previous chapter thoroughly described the study's background, objectives, research questions, significance of the study, research methodology, definition of operational terms and chapter outline. Building on that foundation, this chapter examines the literature on lecturer absenteeism, makes a distinction between excused and unexcused absenteeism, and investigates the reasons behind them. Additionally, it discusses the evolution of Adult Education and Training (AET) regulations, the social, political, economic, and cultural ramifications of Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) programs. It further discusses absenteeism from both global and South African viewpoints. A major emphasis is on how teaching and learning are affected by unexplained lecturer absences, and how Centre Management Teams (CMTs) deal with absenteeism.

This study draws on data from traditional schools to provide a comparative perspective on absenteeism patterns, institutional responses, and management strategies. Traditional schools have been extensively studied in this area, offering a robust foundation for understanding the trends and implications of absenteeism, as well as the effectiveness of various interventions. This comparative approach enhances the analytical depth of the research and strengthens its contribution to ongoing discussions on educational management. The current study explores the phenomenon of unexcused lecturer absenteeism in Community Learning Centres (CLCs) through the lens of Christopher Hood's Public Management Theory. It examines the underlying causes of absenteeism, its effects on students, and the potential role of Centre Management Teams (CMTs) in addressing the issue. The following studies provide critical insights into management styles, institutional cultures, and methodological strategies relevant to this research, particularly through the application of Hood's (1998) Cultural Theory Framework.

An earlier study by Bipath, Venketsamy and Naidoo (2019) examined how different management styles influence educator absenteeism in independent primary schools in Gauteng Province, South Africa, through the lens of Hood's (1998) Cultural Theory

Framework. Their study found that management approaches characterised by hierarchical and individualist traits, which rely on formal rules and incentive systems, were more successful at reducing absenteeism than those adopting egalitarian or fatalist styles. While their research was conducted in a better-resourced, independent school setting, their application of Hood's framework offers a valuable theoretical foundation for this study. The significant contrast between these independent schools and Community Learning Centres, which operate under more constrained governance and resources, highlights the importance of assessing the adaptability and relevance of Hood's categories within community-based educational environments.

A second relevant study in Zambia applied Hood's framework to public secondary schools, demonstrating that management responses to absenteeism vary according to institutional culture (Chanda, Daka, Mulenga-Hagane, & Kalimaposo, 2023). This research is particularly pertinent as it investigates absenteeism within an under-resourced public education system, providing a useful comparative lens for understanding how similar management frameworks might function within Community Learning Centres. Although the national and organisational contexts differ, both studies demonstrate the relevance of Hood's theoretical concepts across a variety of institutional settings.

Thirdly, Narayan and Mooij (2010) employed a comparative case study methodology to investigate educator absenteeism in low-income contexts. Their work supports the methodological approach adopted in this study, which examines absenteeism patterns and management responses within Community Learning Centres. Narayan and Mooij (2010) focused on cross-institutional comparison, emphasising the value of a multi-contextual perspective that enriches understanding of absenteeism phenomena and informs the research design.

Together, these studies provide a comprehensive conceptual and methodological foundation for the current research. They collectively inform the application of Hood's theoretical framework and enhance insight into educator absenteeism by drawing on multiple contexts within community education settings, thereby supporting a detailed analysis tailored to the specific challenges of Community Learning Centres.

2.2 Definition of educator absenteeism

Cikes, Ribari, and Crnjars (2018) define educator absenteeism as excused or unexcused temporary absence from work for various reasons. Educator absenteeism is when an educator does not show up at a teaching and learning centre as required by the employment contract. Educator absenteeism refers to absence from the place of work, and it also includes late coming (Grogan, 2017). Mthombeni (2010) differs from earlier definitions and argues that the concept of educator absenteeism includes educators who are at school but who are not engaging in actual teaching. Absenteeism is the singular or habitual failure of an employee to report for duty or to remain at work as scheduled due to personal interests and a poor sense of duty (Cucchiella, Gastaldia & Ranier, 2014).

Educator absenteeism is classified into two categories: Excused educator absenteeism and unexcused educator absenteeism.

2.2.1 Excused educator absenteeism

Msosa (2020) defines excused educator absenteeism as planned behaviour that an employer is made aware of and granted permission for. Excused educator absenteeism, in the case of Community Learning Centre, is when an educator does not report for work after informing the management of the centre. This type of absenteeism involves situations when management in a centre of education grant official permission to an educator or worker to be away from work. Educators may be granted permission to attend matters such as in-service training, and cluster meetings, if a family member passes on, for health reasons, or for private matters that need urgent attention. Educators who are permitted to be absent sometimes plan activities for students so that it is administered in their absence. They also devise intervention programs to catch up on lost instructional time.

2.2.2 Unexcused educator absenteeism

An unexcused absence is when the educator decides to be absent from work without giving a reason or an explanation to the manager. Msosa (2020) explains unexcused

educator absenteeism as absenteeism where permission to be absent is not given, for example, moonlighting and educator strikes. Mothibeli (2017) defines unexcused educator absenteeism as when a worker is off duty without an official or recognised reason given to the employer. Unexcused educator absenteeism is when the educator or worker is absent without being permitted by the centre manager or supervisor. Educators who practice unexcused absenteeism normally have a negative attitude toward their duty, lack self-confidence, and are demotivated. Educators' negative attitude toward their work normally comes out during teaching and learning sessions. These educators hardly plan intervention programs for lost instructional time and are not easily accessible to the students. Unexcused educator absenteeism poses a serious operational challenge to managers as some students may remain unattended and, in the end, the academic performance becomes poor. Absenteeism by educators is a global problem that drains state resources and needs to be addressed by all stakeholders to minimise causes.

2.3 Causes of unexcused educator absenteeism

This section presents the causes of unexcused lecturer absenteeism through the lens of socio-economic issues, personal issues, and institutional arrangements. If not properly managed, these causes can adversely affect the smooth functioning of educational institutions and impede students' academic participation.

2.3.1 Socio-economic causes

2.3.1.1 Low salaries

Low pay is a key issue in Community Learning Centres (CLCs) and a major contributor to low motivation and absenteeism among lecturers. Lee, Goodman, Dandapani, and Kekahio (2015) established a direct correlation between absenteeism and pay systems, including professional grading, contractual agreements, and educator remuneration models. Since CLC lectures occasionally earn far less than their mainstream school counterparts, financial difficulties force many of them to seek other employment, which increases absenteeism. According to Hamlin (2020), job security is the certainty that workers will continue to be employed for the foreseeable future or, at

the very least, until they decide to quit their post. For lecturers, job security means having faith that their professional requirements and concerns will be recognised and addressed by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET).

Evans and Yuan (2018) assert that educators who struggle to sustain themselves and their families are less likely to be committed to their teaching responsibilities. This issue is particularly apparent at Community Learning Centres, where lecturers usually find it difficult to keep up with their pay. This is why many lecturers have secondary jobs in private schools, sometimes from 7 a.m. to 3 p.m., before reporting to CLCs in the afternoon or evening. The stress of balancing multiple jobs often causes fatigue that directly affects lesson planning and the overall quality of instruction. If lecturers are too exhausted to deliver interesting and well-structured classes, adult students may be left without instruction, in the worst cases, they may even fail to attend their lessons.

Thorough lesson planning is crucial to effective teaching and learning in community education settings. In South Africa, the majority of provinces devote about 1% of their budget to adult education (Aitchison & Land, 2019). Therefore, the remuneration of lecturers in this area remains significantly lower than those in the Department of Basic Education. The stress of balancing multiple jobs often causes fatigue that directly affects lesson planning and the overall quality of instruction. In severe cases, lecturers may not even attend their CLCs, leaving adult students without instruction if they are too exhausted to deliver lessons. Since effective teaching and learning in community education settings depend on meticulous lesson planning, absenteeism caused by financial constraints jeopardises academic outcomes.

2.3.1.2 Transport issues

Global conflicts and economic disruptions after the COVID-19 pandemic have made the rising cost of fuel even more of a financial burden for both car owners and public transport users. In Community Learning Centres, where many educators must travel long distances to get to work, this financial strain is especially noticeable (Mageni, 2017). One of the main causes of lecturer absenteeism is the high cost of transport, which makes it difficult for educators to pay for their daily commute. In a similar vein, educators in marginalised groups are disproportionately impacted by transportation-

related budgetary restrictions, which cause irregular attendance and disruptions to their work.

Transport-related issues are significantly more problematic in rural locations. Many educators are forced to leave their teaching responsibilities early to prevent missing the final available transport home, and many leave their houses before daybreak in order to get transport (Mageni, 2017). This early departure lowers instructional time, which has a detrimental effect on the quality of education that students receive. Furthermore, low incomes compound the financial burden of transit expenses, making it more challenging for educators to maintain consistent attendance. In the days before payday, when many educators are financially exhausted and unable to pay for travel, the situation is especially dire. Ultimately, a structural obstacle to efficient teaching and learning in CLCs centres is the combination of long commutes, low pay, and growing transportation costs.

2.3.1.3 Community service delivery protests

In developing countries such as South Africa, areas categorised as townships and informal settlements do not receive the best services, if services are delivered at all, by the government and municipalities. The poor and infrequent delivery of services leaves community members dissatisfied; hence they embark on destructive protests related to poor delivery of services. Netswere and Nealer (2020) point out that the effect of violent community protests on educators is a very serious concern. On occasions, people embark on protests, and their activities affect various stakeholders in communities, for example, lecturers and students may find it difficult to attend teaching and learning centres on such days as roads get blockaded. In 2022, some educators were prevented from monitoring grade 12 examinations and students could not sit for their end-of-the year examination in some learning centres in Gauteng Province, South Africa (Kanjani, 2022). When such disturbances happen, students become losers as educators miss their contractual obligations.

Unauthorised service delivery-related protests by communities have long-lasting implications, particularly on institutions of learning, including CLCs given that most operate with skeleton staff members. McCain (2023) notes that protesting community

members prevented educators in some learning centres in Gauteng province from going to work to teach students. Some habitual absentee educators often take advantage of the fact that South Africa experiences ongoing community service delivery protests, among other reasons, to be away from work, even if there is an opportunity for them to go to work despite the protest. Blockading the public, including lecturers and students, from accessing places of work or learning, is discouraged by the government, political parties, and civil society movements amongst others. Leaders of these protests are convinced that if lecturers and students are not at their learning centres, effective teaching and learning would not take place, therefore government leaders would be forced to meet with them to address their concerns. Some of these leaders care less about the impact lecturer absenteeism has on teaching and learning.

2.3.1.4 Bereavement

Bereavement in a family may cause members, including lecturers, not to partake in certain activities, including teaching and learning. Bennell, Karin, and Swainson (2002) state that the death of a parent, particularly the mother in a family is a very big loss as by nature, mothers are associated with nurturing and offering emotional support. Death in a family contributes a lot to lecture absenteeism in CLCs. A lecturer who loses a family member may be absent from work to take five (5) to seven (7) working days, to attend to a death in the family. This means instructional teaching and learning time are not observed. Lecturers are eligible for family responsibility leave (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2011). Even though there is a provision for lecturers to attend bereavement, most of them abuse the family responsibility leave as some may go beyond the five (5) days officially given to them by their employers. Some lecturers may decide to extend their family responsibility leave by adding a sick leave to be officially off duty. Despite this official or non-official arrangement by absentee lecturers, the recipient of education, the learners, continue to bear the consequences as instructional teaching and learning time is not observed.

2.3.2 Personal causes

2.3.2.1 Sickness

The sickness of a lecturer or that of an immediate member of the family has the potential to interfere with the daily work of a lecturer. Badubi (2017) mentions that HIV/Aids are one of the major causes of educator absenteeism in most learning centres. Lecturers are sometimes compelled by situations to take care of their family members affected by HIV and Aids. They are sometimes expected to take this extended responsibility as there would be no one else to do it, hence leading to their absence from work. In certain instances, lecturer absenteeism happens due to illness caused by various factors, such as accidents or gender-based violence, which is rife in some countries.

Sickness ranks among the main factors that cause lecturer absenteeism in Community Learning Centres. Sickness is categorised into short, medium, or long-term illness. Despite the nature of the sickness, lecturer absenteeism has negative implications for the education of the learners. In some centres, substituting a lecturer who is absent for a few days is not possible due to financial constraints, especially in government CLCs. Most private CLCs find it easy to substitute lecturers whether for hours, a day, a week, or a month as they have all the power to control their human resource unit and finances unlike in state-funded CLCs. Public CLCs must follow long appointment processes to hire a substitute lecturer unless they have adequate finances through their initiatives such as fundraising. Sick leaves, if not properly managed by Centre Management Teams (CMTs), have the potential to negatively affect the curriculum delivery in the centre.

2.3.2.2 Personal needs

Al-fudail and Mellar (2018) assert that educators, as employees or human beings, have personal needs to be attended to and sometimes it may need to be done privately. Lecturers at times may decide to absent themselves from work to focus on other urgent personal matters without giving prior explanation to their managers or supervisors. This happens because the normal official leave may not be adequate for the worker to attend to urgent personal matters hence some workers would be absent from work without giving any valid reason to their superiors (Al-fudail & Mellar, 2018). Lecturers who decide to be absent due to personal needs are strategic in choosing their days as they normally target between Tuesdays and Thursdays. Educators use these days to attend to personal needs, such as going to the shopping malls to pay accounts, some may

decide to stay home to do other tasks or only to take a break from work to re-energise. Maceke (2022) notes that sometimes absenteeism reasons given by educators to their centre managers or supervisors are not truthful or convincing. Most Community Learning Centres start operating in the afternoon, it is easy for lecturers to forget to honour their contractual obligations.

2.3.3 Institutional causes

2.3.3.1 The working relationship between centre managers and lecturers

Gold and Roth (2013) articulate that a good working professional relationship is essential as it reduces the anxiety levels of educators as it could lead to less exhaustion and ultimately minimise educator absenteeism. Unhealthy interaction between lecturers and managers contributes to low self-esteem, morale, and lack of self-motivation by lecturers, which has a negative effect on their ability to execute their daily work. In Community Learning Centres where teamwork is not encouraged, demotivation, poor lesson planning or not planning at all, and lecturer absenteeism become the order of the day. This unhealthy relationship does not only affect the managers and the identified lecturers but learners as well.

Absenteeism is rife in CLCs, where managers do not encourage a healthy working relationship. UNESCO (2022) indicates that centre managers who interact well with their staff members and show good leadership can reduce and control lecturer absenteeism in their institutions. Most lecturers are not free to open up to their managers and share challenges that hinder them from maximally performing their duties. In CLCs where a good healthy professional relationship exists, lecturer absenteeism is less compared to the contrary as lecturers are free to communicate with the managers. Academic results in such learning centres are good unlike in centres where a healthy relationship between managers and lecturers does not exist.

2.3.3.2 Centre or organisational culture

Organisational culture also causes lecturer absenteeism, in one way or the other, in a learning centre. If Centre managers easily permit leave for absence, lecturers and

nonteaching staff members tend to regard sick leave as a benefit they must enjoy and they know that failure to do so, the leave will be forfeited probably within a year. Singh, Chetty, and Karodia (2016) argue that in institutions where absenteeism is regarded as a permissible culture, workers see sick leave as a benefit to be used regularly. In such Community Learning Centres, lecturers or workers tend to misuse their sick leave. CLCs that have effective staff management systems in place easily manage lecturer attendance compared to those with ineffective systems or no systems at all. In CLCs where attendance monitoring systems are effective, the sick leave policy is adhered to by staff members. The organisational culture of Community Learning Centres (CLCs) has a considerable impact on their ability to provide high-quality education. Clear policies, such as codes of conduct and tight time management, a common vision, and regular oversight by the Centre Management Team (CMT) distinguish centres with strong organisational cultures. Proactive approaches, such as leave policy seminars, staff meetings, and clear communication routes, help to increase accountability and cohesion. Schein (2010) emphasises the necessity of shared norms, values, and leadership in developing effective cultures, whereas Morgan (2006) emphasises the relevance of mechanisms that promote unity and accountability. In contrast, centres with poor organisational cultures may lack clear visions, operational processes, and effective monitoring methods. Poor communication, low staff involvement, and rampant absenteeism among lecturers and senior management all contribute to a disorganised and inconsistent atmosphere. Schein (2010) links such dysfunction to inaccurate standards and a lack of leadership commitment, whereas Morgan (2006) identifies fragmented communication and insufficient responsibility as major hurdles to success.

2.3.3.3 Lack of infrastructure

Overcrowding in Community Learning Centres, caused by inadequate infrastructure and funding, poses substantial issues for both learners and lecturers. Development Bank of Southern Africa (2023) found that bad infrastructure not only has a negative impact on learning but also violates learners' educational rights. Limited classroom space puts large numbers of learners into cramped spaces, which not only reduces the quality of instruction by lowering individual attention and it also affects overall academic performance. The efficiency of teaching and learning is severely hampered by the lack of sufficient infrastructure in many community learning centres (Akintolu, Uleanya, &

Letseka, 2022). The absence of sufficient ventilation, cleanliness, and decaying facilities impede learning and pose major health concerns to learners. Furthermore, overcrowding causes greater stress among lecturers, which adds to higher absenteeism, reduced morale, and a decreased dedication to teaching. This has a detrimental impact on the learning environment, exacerbating the problem. Inadequate funding often prevents infrastructure expansion and maintenance, resulting in overcrowded and inadequately equipped classrooms. Without immediate investment in both facilities and funding, the quality of education in CLCs would deteriorate, and adult learners' educational needs will not be served effectively.

2.3.3.4 Lack of lecturer learner materials

In Community Learning Centres, the availability and quality of lecturer-learner materials are critical to improving the learning experience. Many centres face resource and funding constraints, making it difficult to provide lecturers with the tools they need to teach effectively (South African Institute for Distance Education, 2023). Lecturers struggle to give successful lessons due to a shortage of resources, as they frequently do not have access to adequate materials for their learners. Furthermore, the lack of diverse and culturally relevant materials hinders the ability to meet the varying demands of adult learners, who frequently come from different educational backgrounds and have distinct learning styles. Aitchison and Land (2019), assert that the ministerial committee found that many learning centres are devoid of sufficient teaching and learning resources, some of them only have one copy of a resource material. The quality of lecture learner materials has a substantial impact on learning outcomes, as adult learners rely on practical and meaningful resources to grasp complicated concepts. Addressing these inadequacies by providing relevant and accessible materials is critical to enhancing teaching quality in Community Learning Centres.

2.3.3.5 Shortage of lectures

The scarcity of lecturers in Community Learning Centres is a major issue that undermines the effectiveness of adult education in South Africa. The impact of lectures on learners' life is immeasurable, learners could never learn without lecturers. Despite

the fact that many people are qualified to instruct adult learners, there are still relatively few adults employed in this profession (Baatjies & Baatjies, 2019). This problem is mostly caused by poor incomes, insufficient training opportunities, and the high levels of stress and burnout associated with the responsibilities of educating adult learners. As a result, many CLCs struggle to attract and retain skilled educators, resulting in understaffed classrooms and increasing strain on current educators. The shortage exacerbates overcrowding and lowers educational quality, as educators are frequently compelled to manage large groups of learners with insufficient help. Furthermore, a lack of trained lecturers contributes to gaps in adult literacy and numeracy, weakening CLCs mission of providing adult learners with important skills for personal and professional growth.

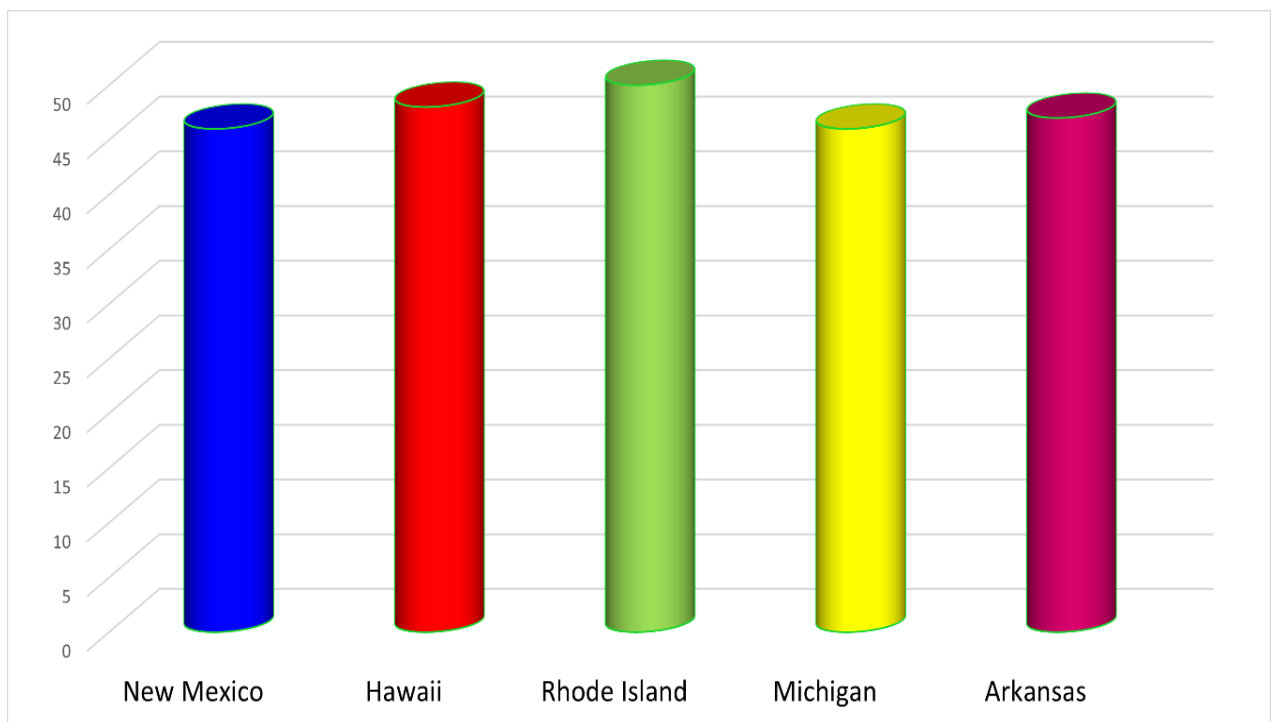
2.4 Global perspective on educator absenteeism

Around the world, education ministries strive to solve the severe issue of unexcused educator absences. Absence from the classroom disrupts the learning process and limits learners' ability to receive a high-quality education. Numerous countries have conducted research that has shed light on the extent of this issue and its detrimental effects on student outcomes and the effectiveness of education, including the United States, England, the Netherlands, India, and Nigeria.

2.4.1 Educator absenteeism in the USA

A research study conducted in the United States of America states that educator absenteeism was a serious challenge in public schools as one in three educators missed more than ten days of school each year (Greg, 2013). Greg continues that the first-ever figures from the USA's Department of Education's Office for Civil Rights which were compiled in 2012 show that in a few states in the USA, half of the educators miss more than ten days in a typical one hundred and eighty-days in a school year. The figure below presents statistics on educator absenteeism in the United States of America.

Figure 2.1: Statistics on educator absenteeism in the USA



Source: USA Department of Education: 2012

Absenteeism among educators is a major issue in many countries around the world, with the US and the Pacific Region having the most prominent cases. Educators are more likely to miss work on Mondays and Fridays, according to Hassen and Quintero (2020), who also highlight that absenteeism is excessive and voluntary in the United States. A lot of these absences, particularly those caused by illness, usually take place on weekends or holidays, when employers frequently do not demand medical certification. Questions concerning the overall effect on the educational system are raised by this pattern of absenteeism, which implies that factors other than actual illness may affect educators' attendance patterns.

In the Pacific Region, substantial absenteeism rates among educators have also been noted. According to Duflo, Hanna, and Ryan (2012), absenteeism in this area poses problems for the learning environment. Learners in the Pacific region were denied between 850 and 1,000 hours of instruction per year as a result of significant absenteeism (UNICEF, 2010). The loss of these crucial teaching hours has a significant

impact on learners' academic performance and growth, leading to inequalities in learning opportunities.

2.4.2 Educator absenteeism in England

In England, educator absenteeism is a serious problem. Weale (2022), say more than one-third of schools' struggle with absence rates above 10%. This issue is so serious that some schools have been forced to send learners home to learn online, while others have had to combine classes in order to meet the demand for educators. The increasing demand for replacement educators highlights the severity of the issue and indicates that the educational system is having a difficult time to properly handle absenteeism. Educator absenteeism lowers the quality of education and disrupts the continuity of instruction, which has a detrimental effect on student learning. Absence has an impact on teaching efficacy, whether in combined classrooms or online learning. Furthermore, systemic problems in the education workforce, such as educator retention and the availability of competent personnel, are reflected in the difficulties in finding substitute educators (World Bank, 2023).

2.4.3 Educator absenteeism in the Netherlands

In the Netherlands, teaching and learning environments are disastrous in both primary and high schools for both educators and learners (Zonderland, 2018). Temporary educators are appointed to replace absentee educators, unfortunately, they struggle to maintain order in classrooms as well as to guide learners. Educator absenteeism impacts negatively on schools' operational processes and learners' academic performance. Zonderland (2018) purports that in the absence of educators, learners are allocated to other educators, and this disturbs the learning and teaching process. In high schools, absent educators are replaced with unqualified educators (Zonderland, 2018). Unqualified educators may not attain the objectives of a lesson plan as they may lack adequate subject content knowledge, hence depriving learners of their right to quality education. Gaziel (2004) conducted research using the Organisational Climate Description Questionnaire and confirmed that the level of educator commitment and the culture of the school influenced educator absenteeism. In the Netherlands, highly committed and dedicated educators are less likely to be absent from work compared to

less committed educators. There is a positive relationship between the restrictive school principal and the high rate of educator absenteeism in the Netherlands.

2.4.4 Educator absenteeism in India

Kremer, Chaudhury, Murahdharan, and Hammer (2005) highlight that India also experiences serious challenges of educator absenteeism. The country experiences a direct relationship between educators' salaries and educator absenteeism (Kremer et al., 2005). The high rate of educator absenteeism in learning centres of the country is due to a lack of educator motivation stemming from some of the following (Naraj & Mooij, 2010): Lack of incentives for the educator, overcrowded classes, unfilled vacancies, lack of adequate educator training, multi-ability classes, multi-lingual classes and declining educator professionalism.

India has a challenge of monitoring educator absenteeism at both primary and secondary schools. This is due to a lack of human resource personnel to closely monitor this situation regularly. Unfilled principal positions in some learning centres make it difficult for education officials to monitor educator absenteeism. This lack of supervision in some centres makes educator absenteeism in India to be a serious challenge and difficult to minimise and costs the state a lot. Davies (2021) reveals that educator absenteeism alone costs the Indian government \$1.5 billion annually.

2.4.5 Educator absenteeism in Nigeria

Nigeria, like most countries, face a serious challenge of educator absenteeism in their learning centres. Poor leadership and the absence of managers in some learning centres make it very difficult to study the pattern of educator absenteeism in some regions. Orionode (2022) notes that the state government is concerned about the late coming and absenteeism of educators and sent a strong warning to educators and managers for this unlawful act to come to an end. Ejere (2010) asserts that absenteeism is a major workplace problem and that educators not showing up for work when they must be is a very serious human capital risk. Not showing up for work when one ought to, does not only create a problem for managers on operational matters but affects learners as they will miss out on learning, and educators at work would have to double

work to cover for absent educators. Lack of job satisfaction, low morale, lack of financial rewards, and lack of motivation contribute a lot to educator absenteeism in Nigeria (Ejere, 2010). At times, educator absenteeism is encouraged by a school management team's unwillingness to address absenteeism. The Nigerian Commissioner for Primary Education (Onoriode, 2022) points out that the state is worried about the high rate of educator absenteeism and would not think twice about sanctioning the culprits.

2.5 Evolution of the Adult Education and Training (AET) Legislation in South Africa

The way that South Africa's educational system has changed after apartheid ended is indicative of a concerted and ongoing attempt to rectify past injustices. In this endeavour, Adult Education and Training (AET) has become a pillar, supported by laws and policies that promote inclusive, equitable, and high-quality adult education. Adult education's development story is intricately linked to South Africa's larger social and economic goals, highlighting it as a way to attain sustainable development as well as a fundamental right. The following are some of the key policies and legislations that have shaped adult education in South Africa:

2.5.1 National Adult Basic Education and Training Framework: Interim Guidelines (1995)

The first significant step in addressing adult illiteracy was the introduction of the National Adult Basic Education and Training (NABET) Framework in 1995. This framework aimed to equip adults with foundational literacy and numeracy skills, especially for those marginalized by the apartheid education system. The government recognized that for South Africa to truly achieve social cohesion and economic development, it was essential to empower adults with the basic skills needed to participate fully in society. Public awareness campaigns such as *Ithuteng* ("Ready to Learn") highlighted the government's intention to prioritize adult education as a vehicle for empowerment. However, the framework's implementation faced significant challenges, including limited training for educators and lack of adequate materials. These issues contributed to its limited reach and effectiveness, particularly in rural and disadvantaged communities. Despite these challenges, the introduction of NABET marked an essential

first step in recognizing the importance of adult education in post-apartheid South Africa.

2.5.2 Section 29(1) of the Bill of Rights (1996)

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, adopted in 1996, explicitly guarantees the right to basic education for all citizens, including adults. Section 29(1) of the Bill of Rights affirms that everyone has the right to a basic education, including adults. This legal assurance represented a watershed moment in the country's education policy landscape, establishing education as a fundamental human right and setting the stage for the broader integration of adult education into national policy.

This constitutional provision also emphasised the government's commitment to improving literacy rates and educational outcomes for adults who had been deprived of formal schooling during apartheid. Adult education programs, particularly those targeting literacy and numeracy, began to multiply, reflecting the constitutional emphasis on lifelong learning and accessible education for all.

2.5.3 The National Education Policy Act (1996)

The National Education Policy Act (NEPA) was pivotal in the post-apartheid restructuring of South Africa's education system. This Act focused on decentralizing the governance of education, giving provincial education departments the responsibility to tailor education policies to their regional contexts. The NEPA aimed to increase responsiveness and efficiency in the management of resources for adult education, thus enhancing service delivery and responsiveness to local needs.

For adult education, this meant greater flexibility in designing programs suited to specific community needs. However, the decentralized nature of the Act also led to disparities in the implementation of adult education programs across provinces. In some regions, adult education programs flourished, while in others, they struggled due to insufficient funding, limited capacity, and poor infrastructure. Despite these challenges, the NEPA laid the groundwork for more localized and context-specific strategies in adult education.

2.5.4 The Adult Basic Education and Training Act (2000)

The Adult Basic Education and Training Act (2000) formalized the operations of Public Adult Learning Centres (PALCs), which were pivotal in providing basic education to marginalized adults. This legislation sought to regulate the delivery of adult education by creating a more structured and formalized environment for learning. It allowed for improved resource allocation and institutional oversight, while also addressing gaps in adult education delivery.

The Act had a significant impact on resource mobilization, ensuring that these centres were equipped with the necessary materials and educators to carry out their mandates effectively. However, while PALCs became more formalized, challenges remained, particularly in under-resourced rural areas, where access to quality education was still limited. The Act also sought to expand the range of subjects offered, providing opportunities for adult learners to engage in more varied and comprehensive learning programs.

2.5.5 The South African National Literacy Initiative-SANLI Project 2003

Baatjies (2003) points out the Ithuteng ("Ready to Learn") program's organisational flaws and criticises it for lacking a unified national approach. In spite of the flawed approach, the program significantly contributed to the advancement of adult learning, especially in metropolitan areas. To demonstrate the campaign's broader impact on lifetime learning, the 2003 South African National Literacy Initiative (SANLI) Project helped to increase educational access and awareness of adult literacy. Notwithstanding these achievements, the project encountered a number of significant obstacles. The overall quality of education was hampered by a lack of trained educators, persistent educator absenteeism, and a lack of opportunities for professional development for educators. Rural communities still faced obstacles because of inadequate infrastructure and resources, even if SANLI was successful in raising literacy rates in some areas. Furthermore, the shift to vocational or higher education was not sufficiently addressed by the project's emphasis on basic literacy. These difficulties highlight the necessity of professionalising adult education and providing additional long-term

support. The project also showed that many educators lacked proper training, despite the fact that adult education demands specific pedagogical skills. According to Baatjies (2003), the South African National Literacy Initiative (SANLI) campaign was eventually scaled back to underfunded provincial initiatives due to its disappointing outcomes. This reduction in scope was a direct result of the campaign's failure to achieve its intended goals, leading to insufficient financial resources to support its original ambitions. The long-term effects of SANLI's activities have been undermined by this lack of proper funding, which has also led to significant student absence rates. The government of South Africa has developed well-meaning programs to combat adult illiteracy, but there have been challenges in putting them into practice (Baatjies, 2003). Due to these programs' poor implementation, which has restricted access to reading materials and instructional support, learners were unable to fully engage in their education. According to Bhola (1999), certain governments use educational initiatives as political tools to further their ideological agendas, particularly during times of social change. This strategy has serious repercussions for both individuals and society at large in addition to undermining the integrity of education.

2.5.6 Continuing Education and Training Act (2006)

The Continuing Education and Training (CET) Act (2006) marked a significant shift in the South African adult education landscape. It established Community Education and Training (CET) Colleges, which were designed to serve as hubs for lifelong learning. These colleges aimed to integrate both vocational and academic learning, offering adults opportunities for skills development, personal growth, and academic advancement.

The CET Act positioned CET Colleges as critical institutions for adult education, providing a clear pathway for learners to transition from basic education to vocational or tertiary education. The establishment of CET Colleges reflected the country's evolving focus on skills development and the need for a workforce capable of contributing to national economic growth. The Act, however, faced challenges regarding funding and infrastructure, which limited the effectiveness of these institutions, particularly in more remote areas. Nevertheless, the Act signified a new era of inclusive, accessible adult education in South Africa.

2.5.7 Khari Gude Campaign (2008)

In 2008, the Khari Gude campaign, which translates to "Let Us Learn" in Tshivenda language, was started as a nationwide effort to abolish adult illiteracy in South Africa. Targeting underprivileged populations like women, people living in rural areas, and the elderly, this ambitious program aimed to offer free reading and numeracy instruction in all eleven official languages. In view of its community-based strategy, which encouraged volunteerism and local involvement, a wide spectrum of persons, including those with disabilities, were able to receive basic education. The Khari Gude volunteers included 250 assistants for the blind volunteers, 44 monitors, 203 co-coordinators, 3703 supervisors, and 38,407 volunteer educators (Motshekga, 2013).

According to McKay (2012), about 4.7 million South Africans aged 15 and older who were illiterate or semi-literate were effectively reached by the Kha Ri Gude initiative, which was designed to align with Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) Level 1 and focused on foundational literacy and numeracy skills. Its main target audience was those who had never gone to school, providing them with a chance to acquire vital knowledge that could improve their everyday lives and economic prospects. Dichaba and Dhlamini (2013) claim that the Kha Ri Gude project has equipped many South Africans with a range of skills, including numeracy, literacy, and entrepreneurial abilities.

Despite having a good intention, the program had many challenges, for example, poor training for volunteer educators, a lack of organised post-literacy opportunities, and poor infrastructure all threatened its long-term viability. Millions of people acquired basic literacy skills, but many did not have access to opportunities for additional education or skill development, which limited the initiative's overall impact. Despite these hurdles, Khari Gude was an important milestone in South Africa's efforts to address adult illiteracy and promote lifelong learning.

One of the biggest challenges of the Khari Gude program was funding. Aitchison (2018) claims that R4 billion was invested in Khari Gude, however the program was shut down in 2017. Those who depended on this program to gain essential educational skills were essentially disempowered when it was discontinued, leaving many adult learners

without access to literacy programs. In addition to undoing some of the campaign's accomplishments, this cessation brought to light more significant structural problems with South Africa's approach to lifelong learning and adult education.

Khari Gude was a major step towards tackling adult illiteracy in South Africa. Millions of people were effectively taught basic literacy skills, but its challenges and final termination highlighted the need for a more robust, integrated framework for adult education. Given that literacy is essential for social inclusion, economic engagement, and personal empowerment, maintaining continuity in literacy programs continues to be a critical policy problem.

2.5.8 The Higher Education and Training Laws Amendment Act (2010)

The Higher Education and Training Laws Amendment Act (2010) marked a significant restructuring of adult education governance in South Africa. This Act transferred the responsibility for adult education from the Department of Basic Education to the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), aligning adult education more closely with national development strategies. The Act aimed to streamline oversight, improve coordination, and allocate resources more efficiently across the adult education sector.

By bringing adult education under the DHET, the Act ensured that adult learning was better integrated with broader national policies on education and training. It also supported the development of more cohesive strategies to promote lifelong learning and skills development. However, the restructuring process raised concerns regarding the capacity of the DHET to fully oversee the diverse needs of adult learners, particularly in rural areas.

2.5.9 The White Paper for Post-School Education and Training-WPPSET (2013)

The White Paper for Post-School Education and Training (2013) sought to provide a more comprehensive framework for the development of post-school education, including adult education. It envisaged the transition of Public Adult Learning Centres (PALCs) into Community Education and Training Centres (CETCs), emphasizing a more integrated and holistic approach to lifelong learning. The policy aimed to provide adult learners with flexible pathways to academic, vocational, and technical education, thereby contributing to personal and economic development.

The White Paper's focus on inclusivity, skills development, and lifelong learning aligns with South Africa's broader social and economic objectives. By recognizing the importance of adult education in shaping a dynamic and skilled workforce, the policy aimed to address the legacy of apartheid's educational inequities. However, its implementation has been uneven across the country, with resource constraints and infrastructure limitations affecting the realization of its full potential (DHET, 2013).

2.5.10 The National Development Plan (NDP) – 2030 (2012)

The National Development Plan (NDP) – 2030 provides a comprehensive blueprint for South Africa's development, emphasizing the need for a highly skilled and educated workforce to drive social and economic transformation. In relation to adult education, the NDP stresses the importance of lifelong learning, skills development, and the eradication of illiteracy. It envisions a South Africa where all adults, regardless of their background, have access to high-quality education and training opportunities.

The NDP highlights the role of adult education in achieving national development goals, particularly in fostering social cohesion, improving economic participation, and reducing poverty. The plan calls for a more integrated approach to adult education, focusing on improving the quality of learning, ensuring access to lifelong learning opportunities, and strengthening the linkages between education and the labour market. By focusing on skills development and inclusivity, the NDP envisions a future where adult learners contribute meaningfully to the country's growth and development.

2.5.11 The National Plan for Post-School Education and Training (NPPSET)- 2023

The National Plan for Post-School Education and Training (NPPSET) is a policy framework created by South Africa's Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) to transform the post-school education and training (PSET) system from 2021 to 2030 (DHET, 2023). It aims to promote access, quality, efficiency, and responsiveness in education and training, in accordance with the National Development Plan (NDP) and the PSET White Paper. Key goals include increasing access to higher education, improving integration and coordination across universities, TVET colleges, CET colleges, and SETAs, and fostering workplace collaboration to boost employability. The strategy prioritises quality improvement, student assistance systems such as NSFAS, and compliance with labour market expectations. It also advocates for lowering dropout rates, raising graduation rates, and improving institutional efficiency (DHET, 2023).

2.6 Challenges, Opportunities, and Alignment of Adult Education in South Africa

In order to bridge skills gaps and foster equitable economic growth, South Africa's post-school education and training (PSET) system significantly depends on adult education (DHET, 2023). The National Development Plan (NDP) highlights the importance of adult education in addressing poverty and unemployment. Access is nevertheless hampered by socioeconomic inequality and geographic limitations in particular, which affects learning results and participation rates, particularly for disadvantaged populations. Despite these initiatives, a large number of adults who ought to have benefited from adult basic education are nonetheless illiterate, and those who have learnt the fundamentals frequently do not have jobs (Baatjies & Baatjies, 2019).

The purpose of policy measures has been to strengthen the adult education sector by enacting legislation that improve accessibility and are in line with national objectives. The White Paper on Post-School Education and Training (2013) established the groundwork for increasing post-school learning alternatives by highlighting lifelong learning and community-based education. The Community Education and Training

(CET) Act of 2013 also legalised CET colleges, which offer free educational programs to individuals and those who are not enrolled in school. By guaranteeing that learning opportunities are community-focused and in line with national growth objectives, these policy actions have improved the role of adult education in promoting socioeconomic development.

Major policy concerns have also included the professionalisation and stability of lecturers. The National Qualifications Framework (NQF), which established professional standards and standardised qualifications for lecturers, was developed by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) Act (1995) to enhance the quality of instruction. The National Plan for Post-School Education and Training (NPPSET) (2023) more recently created strategic measures to support the CET business, including improving working conditions, professional development, and career promotion for adult lecturers. These developments have been essential in directing efforts at professionalisation, retention, and recruitment in the adult education sector to guarantee that lecturers are equipped to fulfil the evolving demands of adult learners. Some of the advantages of these include the formalisation of governance systems, the integration of occupational skills with basic education, and the alignment of learning pathways with national credentials to promote development. They also created connections between workplace training and classroom education and centralised monitoring to increase uniformity.

In South Africa, a number of programs seek to give adult learners employment options once they finish their education, despite these obstacles. The Community Education and Training (CET) system, which replaced the adult education and training system, aims to improve employability and lifelong learning by providing non-formal and vocational training that is in line with community requirements (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2013). Programs like the Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) and the Commercial Advancement Training Scheme (CATS) help integrate theoretical learning with real-world work experience, giving adult learners employability-enhancing skills that are relevant to the industry (AHK Südliches Afrika,nd). Nevertheless, despite these initiatives, problems such a lack of money, poor infrastructure, and lax enforcement of policies still make it difficult for these programs to effectively address adult learners' unemployment. Lolwana, Ngcwangu, Millenaar,

Mertin, and Jacinto (2015) states that while most individuals in poverty find this challenging, obtaining meaningful and ongoing job seems to be a reliable way to rescue people and their families from financial difficulties.

2.7 South African perspective on educator absenteeism

Every day in South Africa, 10% of educators do not arrive for work, and this means that more than 135,000 learners go untaught daily, and this has a serious long-term impact on learners' education (Mbiza, 2019). Msosa (2020) states that 10 to 12% of educators do not report for work, and this amounts to 39,000 educators daily. Obiero, Mwebi, and Nyangara (2017) indicate that educator absenteeism is a serious challenge that goes beyond borders. Centre managers grapple with the challenge of educator absenteeism. Msosa (2020) reveal that South Africa has the highest rate of educator absenteeism in the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) region. Educator absenteeism directly leads to poor academic performance by students and has the potential to lower the energy level of hardworking lecturers. Centre managers try to address lecturer absenteeism, some are successful, and some are not. Limpopo province, Kwa Zulu-Natal province, and the Western Cape Province had the highest rate of educator absenteeism, while Northwest province had the lowest between 2011-2017 (Msosa, 2020). While sourced from traditional schools, the provided data serves as a proxy to inform understanding of absenteeism trends.

2.8 Academic Impact of lecturer absenteeism on students' performance

A study on educator absenteeism and student learning in Zambia found that a 5% increase in educator absence rates reduced student learning by 4% to 8% of the average gained over the year (Das, Dercon, Habyariamana & Krishnan, 2007). In Community Learning Centres, most students are adults who perform other non-academic related activities prior to reporting to their learning centres. If lecturers do not pitch for work, students are discouraged from attending future lessons if absenteeism continues unchallenged by CLCs authorities. Students at CLCs are youth and adults, so when lecturers are absent, they not only miss teaching and learning but feel they waste their time. Lecturer absenteeism also influences student absenteeism, and they are likely to perform poorly in their academic work.

Continuous lecturer absenteeism is detrimental to the academic performance of students, particularly at the end of the year. Lecturer absenteeism does not only affect students, but colleagues are also burdened as they are often required to substitute or supervise unattended classes. This not only increases stress for present staff but also disrupts instructional continuity, as substitutes are typically less experienced and therefore less effective at promoting student learning (Hansen & Quintero, 2020). Lecturers who do not honour official instructional contact time massively contribute to poor student performance in their respective CLCs. On the other hand, lecturers with low-level subject content knowledge always find valid and invalid reasons not to attend their classes. Hansen and Quintero (2020) argue that a high rate of educator absenteeism in schools has negative consequences for students, particularly in terms of their academic performance.

Table 2.1: Number of students in CET Colleges by programme who registered, wrote and completed the GETC: ABET Level 4 qualification, 2011 to 2018

YEAR	NUMBER REGISTERED	NUMBER WROTE	NUMBER COMPLETED	COMPLETION RATE (%)
2011	107 780	39 856	13 924	34,9%
2012	109 883	55 735	23 325	41,8%
2013	109 518	52 501	19 945	38,0%
2014	133 363	102 534	38 592	37,6%
2015	117 224	91 603	34 125	37,3%
2016	100 490	78 105	28 024	35,9%
2017	85 136	65 225	24 757	38,0%
2018	89 644	64 700	28 154	43,5%

Sources: National Examinations Database, November 2018

Between 2011 and 2018, there were varying patterns in student registrations, examination participation, and completion rates for the GETC: ABET Level 4 certificate, as shown in table 2 above. Registrations peaked in 2014, but 2018, they had decreased, and completion rates had only marginally increased to 43.5%. Challenges like socioeconomic conditions and academic preparedness are shown by this disparity.

These problems are made worse in Community Learning Centres (CLCs) where lecturer absenteeism is rife. Lecturer absenteeism reduces student participation, and lead to demotivation. It has a detrimental effect on the quality of education, harming CLCs' reputations and depriving students of their fundamental right to an education, as is guaranteed by Section 29 of the South African Bill of Rights (1996).

A research study carried out in the USA by Medrano (2019) highlights the following as the impact of educator absenteeism on student achievements:

Reduction of instructional intensity

Instructional intensity may be highly decreased when the permanent educator is not at work. When the regular educator is absent, learning centre leadership finds a replacement for the absent educator so that students are not left unattended. A substitute educator may sometimes take a long time to familiarise himself or herself with the teaching methods of a particular learning centre. By the time they become familiar, a lot of teaching and learning time could have been wasted.

Disruption of the regular classroom flow

Student achievement may be affected in several ways, for example, while an absent educator may be replaced by many substitute educators, it becomes a challenge for students to form meaningful relationships with many substitute educators. Also, different educators have different styles of teaching, so it becomes a challenge for students to always change and adapt to a new teaching method.

2.9 Recruitment of lectures and their current conditions

Over the years, the employment landscape for lecturers at Community Learning Centres has undergone significant change. The recruitment of lecturers in South Africa's CLCs sector is governed by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) policies, which stipulate that a minimum qualification of NQF Level 6 is necessary to ensure professional competence (Department of Higher Education and Training, 2015). This action by DHET is a significant step towards the industry's

professionalisation and support of adult lectures. However, the hiring process has been hindered by a lack of qualified candidates and a decline in the number of state-employed adult lecturers, which further strains attempts to reduce absenteeism and improve the quality of teaching. A notable gap in the lecturers' academic credentials was brought to light in 2017 when half of them had no official post-school qualifications (Baatjies & Baatjies, 2019). The transition from basic education to higher education and training was intended to increase teaching quality by providing lecturers with chances for professional growth. The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) (2018) reports that there are 2,643 Community Learning Centres spread among the nine provinces, with 14,259 employees. Lecturers make up 12,975 of these, with management and support personnel making up the remaining portion (DHET, 2018). However, this transformation has been fraught with difficulties, most notably a shortage of trained lecturers, particularly in vocational training, as well as a lack of debated topic, as adult education necessitates unique pedagogical skills that differ from regular schooling. Specialised educator training is critical for increasing school quality and lowering absenteeism. These challenges contribute to a high percentage of absenteeism among lecturers, which is exacerbated by the presence of lecturers who are not qualified. Adult education lecturers' professionalism remains a major concern due to the sector's continual challenges. Aitchison (2018) highlights the pressing need for institutional adjustments to raise educational standards, which can be achieved through the proper implementation and development of the adult education sector.

The Department of Higher Education and Training's (DHET) 2015 policy on the minimum credentials for CLCs lecturers emphasises the need for suitably qualified, versatile, and competent lectures. This regulation states that only educators with NQF Level 6 or higher are considered professionally competent. According to data from the DHET and studies by Land et al. (2021), only 64% of currently working educators fit this condition. Lecturers' employment has also declined. Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) lecturers and adult educators were categorised as "lecturers" upon their transition to DHET in 2015. Daniels (2022) supports this by asserting that the term was created to elevate adult educators' status and align them with their counterparts in the TVET college sector. However, this title does not accurately reflect their role as educators providing school-equivalent education to adult

students. The shift of educators from DBE to DHET led to demotivation and absenteeism due to uncertainty and changes of departments (OECD, 2019).

The work schedules of lecturers at Community Learning Centres (CLCs), formerly known as Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) centres, are determined by institutional standards and employment agreements. According to the Policy on Staffing Norms for Community Education and Training (CET) Colleges (DHET, 2016), CLCs must maintain operational flexibility and offer full-time and part-time learning options to accommodate the diverse demands of adult students. To increase accessibility for students who are unable to attend lessons during regular hours, community learning centres with specialised infrastructure are expected to be open from 8:00 to 21:00.

2.10 Policy for managing lecturer' absenteeism

Ready et al. (2010), as mentioned in Naidoo (2017), claim that little is known about the extent, nature, and forms of leave that educators in the country take, thus, leave taking in this context needs to be explored more. In the same breath, the Department of Higher Education and Training stated that sick leave in the public sector must be closely regulated (DHET Annual Report 2017/18:155). Community Learning Centres adopt the Leave Policy Document, which was approved and signed by Director General Qonde G.F. in 2011. The above statement derives its statutory underpinnings from the following: The Public Service Act, 1994, as amended. The Public Service Regulations of 2001, the Basic Conditions of Employment Act, and the PILIR (Procedures for Incapacity Leave and Ill-health Retirement). The policy applies to all Department of Higher Education and Training personnel and is based on justice, confidentiality, equity, and professionalism.

The DHET's leave policy indirectly increases lecturer absenteeism. According to the leave policy, lecturers can only be substituted if they are gone for longer than twenty (20) days, which is considered a fully compensated month. A lecturer's absence from a Community Learning Centre for less than twenty (20) days may not be considered a violation of contract by the lecturer. The leave policy indirectly encourages lecturer absenteeism by promoting the notion that leave is a privilege rather than a requirement (Clotfelter, 2009). Lecturers are more willing to take time off when they know their leave

is safe and unlikely to have serious implications. This lessens the deterrent to frequent absences, resulting in higher absenteeism rates. At addition to teaching, lecturers are responsible for attending other job-related events such as training workshops or cluster meetings, which contribute to absenteeism. Lecturers who take time off work should sign leave forms. According to the DHET-Leave Policy (2011), managers should provide absent lecturers with form 1(Z1) to complete and submit to the department whenever they take days off. The centre manager should recommend the absentee lecturer's leave before submitting it to the department for capture and approval. According to the Department of Higher Education and Training (2011), lecturers can take the following types of leaves:

2.10.1 Adoption leave

Adoption leaves for lectures, which allows for 45 working days to adopt a kid under the age of two, displays a forward-thinking approach to supporting family needs and child welfare. This strategy encourages early bonding, inclusion, and work-life balance, particularly when shared by couples working in public service. However, its shortcomings include a limited leave period, restrictive shared leave arrangements, and a lack of post-leave reintegration assistance. To improve its effectiveness, the leave term may be extended, sharing arrangements made more flexible, and post-leave support programs implemented to enable an easier return to work. These adjustments would better address adoption's unique problems while also creating a more inclusive and supportive atmosphere for educators and their families.

2.10.2 Maternity leave

Maternity leave for female lecturers, which provides four months of paid leave with the possibility of an extension for medical issues, is an important policy for promoting maternal health and early child development. This provision gives lecturers enough time to recover physically, adjust to new duties, and bond with their babies, which is critical for the child's cognitive and emotional development. However, the policy's strict length may not entirely accommodate particular circumstances, such as premature births or postnatal health issues. Furthermore, it does not include options for

reintegration support, such as flexible work arrangements or lower workloads, which could help lecturers return to work more effectively.

2.10.3 Family responsibility leave

The availability of family-related leave for lecturers, which includes three days for delivery or caregiving and five days for bereavement, demonstrates a commitment to supporting lecturers' personal and emotional well-being. Such rules recognise the important link between family dynamics and professional performance, as personal stress can have a substantial impact on a lecturer's productivity and mental health. However, the number of days may be insufficient for complex family situations, such as long-term illness or severe caregiving demands, potentially leaving lecturers feeling isolated. Furthermore, strict leave limitations may disproportionately affect lecturers in socioeconomically deprived communities, where external support systems are frequently lacking. To make such leave policies more successful, institutions should consider flexibility and extended support alternatives, as well as cultivating a work atmosphere that promotes work life balance work.

2.10.4 Leave (Quarantine)

In South Africa, quarantine leave is critical for controlling public health hazards, particularly during pandemics like COVID-19. Paid leave for quarantine during health emergencies is critical for reducing the spread of dangerous diseases in a variety of contexts, including educational institutions. Although quarantine leave is a preventative measure, its implementation in South African schools can be difficult, particularly in resource-constrained settings. To ensure paid leave and a sustainable framework for regulating lecturer absenteeism during health crises, the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) would need to provide significant institutional support as well as clear policies.

2.10.5 Normal sick leave

Sick leave rules in South African learning centres are critical for keeping lecturers well and avoiding disease from spreading in the classroom. Sick leave rules in South Africa

are administered by the Basic Conditions of Employment Act (BCEA), which assures that employees, including lecturers, can take time off due to illness. However, learning centres frequently face operational obstacles in regulating absenteeism, especially in rural areas where competent lecturers are in short supply.

2.10.6 Special leave for study purposes

Special study leave is critical to furthering the professional development of South African lecturers. Investing in lecturer development enhances both teaching methods and student outcomes. However, there are difficulties in guaranteeing fair access to these opportunities across learning centre types, particularly in underserved centres. More sophisticated study leave management and support systems might be useful to lectures' professional development.

2.10.7 Special leave for professional development

In South Africa, professional development leave is essential for lecturers to stay current with pedagogical developments and improve their lecturing quality. Professional development leave improves both the lecturer and the institution by improving teaching skills. In South Africa, initiatives like the National Professional Teacher Development Framework (NPTDF) strive to help educators improve their skills. However, there are issues in offering, similar opportunity for professional development across public learning centres, with rural learning centres frequently having fewer options for such leave. Addressing these gaps can lead to a more equitable development of teaching quality across the country.

2.10.8 Special leave for studies

Special leave for studies enables lectures to advance their qualifications, improving their teaching effectiveness and career opportunities. In South Africa, DHET encourages lecturers to seek additional education through various leave opportunities. However, a shortage of financial resources and the requirement for lecturers to balance their work and studies present problems. Community Learning Centres in remote places or less affluent communities may struggle to provide such chances due to

financial constraints. To make special leave for studies more accessible, there should be a comprehensive national policy to promote equitable access to leave for educational advancement.

2.10.9 Special leave for examination

Special leave for examination allows lecturers to take time off work to attend examination without losing income. This form of leave is vital for lecturers pursuing further academic degrees, since it allows them to continue their professional growth while still fulfilling their teaching responsibilities. By providing financial assistance throughout this time, the leave promotes ongoing academic advancement.

2.10.10 Special leave for occupational injuries and diseases

This form of leave is available to lecturers who have been injured or contracted a sickness as a direct result of their job-related duties. It is critical to promote lecturers' health and safety by giving them enough time to properly recover before returning to work. Furthermore, this is critical in ensuring that lecturers can recover without experiencing financial difficulty.

2.10.11 Temporary incapacity leave

Temporary incapacity leaves give lecturers extra time off when their illness exceeds the usual sick leave allowance, as long as it is accompanied by a valid medical certificate. This regulation is critical in ensuring that lecturers have enough time to recuperate from long-term illnesses without the extra stress of financial uncertainty.

2.10.12 Permanent incapacity leave

Lecturers who are permanently incapable owing to medical reasons are entitled to up to 30 days of paid leave while the incapacity process is completed. This policy acknowledges the difficulties that lecturers encounter while transitioning out of the teaching profession due to health concerns.

2.10.13 Special leave for quarantine purposes

Lecturers who have been exposed to contagious diseases may be allowed leave while they are quarantined. This policy prioritises the health and safety of lecturers and the larger educational community, allowing lecturing to take essential time off without incurring financial penalties while reducing the danger of illness spread. This work-life balance is very important in promoting educators' well-being and creating a good work environment.

2.10.14 Special leave in extraordinary circumstances

This sort of leave permits lecturers to engage in cultural, athletic, or other permitted activities that promote personal growth and development. The leave recognises the significance of balancing professional and personal growth. This means employers allows lecturers to participate in meaningful activities outside of work, eventually improving their overall well-being.

2.10.15 Unpaid leave

Unpaid leave allows lectures to take prolonged time off after their annual leave allowance has been exhausted to address personal or family concerns. This leave type ensures that lecturers may handle extended absences without jeopardising their employment status. The Department of Basic Education (2017) emphasises the significance of flexible leave policies in assisting educators with work-life balance and promoting staff retention, particularly during personal or family situations.

2.10.16 Annual leave

Lecturers are permitted to yearly leave during their CLCs' scheduled holidays, promoting a healthy work-life balance. This form of vacation is critical because it helps lecturers to relax and recover, ensuring that they return to their duties energised and ready to continue creating a constructive learning environment. Certain types of leave, such as Normal Sick Leave and Special Leave for Study Purposes, may be misused. For example, sick leave can be abused when lecturers take unjustified short-term

absences without citing acceptable medical grounds, especially if a certificate is not necessary. Additionally, lectures who adopt a child under the age of two are eligible for adoption leave, which is limited to 45 working days. If both the lecturer and their spouse or life partner work for the public sector, they are both eligible for adoption leave, albeit their total leave days cannot exceed 45. This leave is necessary for workers going through substantial life changes and helps them balance personal and professional commitments (Department of Basic Education, 2017).

2.11 Strategies to curb lecturer absenteeism

Paton (2006) argues that there is a great need of commitment and responsibility on the part of managers, in managing lecture absenteeism as well as structured interventions. At a centre level, the Management Team is a structure that plays a very crucial leadership and managerial role in managing lectures, other staff members and students. This structure consists of the managers and supervisors. It is the team's role to make sure that centres are managed in a manner that is as professional and effective as possible. The manager should oversee the day-to-day operation in the centre (DoE, 2002). In centres where centre management teams demonstrate good leadership, controlling lecturer attendance becomes easier. Managers and supervisors at CLCs centres should consistently deal with lecturer absenteeism and be able to come up with intervention strategies to minimise it. Centre management in community learning centres tracks lecturer absenteeism solely through the time book. Traditional schools, on the other hand, keep track of daily educator attendance using the time book, late-coming register, and early departure register (Nsimbini, 2024). Making use of class representatives to record lecturer time in and lecturer time out assist track contact time. The Policy Brief for the Association of the Development of Education (2014) recommends the following in order to help reduce lecturer absenteeism: Working with local health facilities to facilitate health-related education topics to lecturers, by improving the working conditions of lecturers and the use of technology such as biometric systems may assist in curbing and monitoring lecturer attendance.

2.12 Role of management team

Naidoo (2017) argues that managers must make sure that they manage educator absenteeism by applying different approaches and strategies. Ejere (2010) suggests the following leadership and management strategies to reduce educator absenteeism: Application of existing rules and regulations, cultivating a culture that does not tolerate excessive absence, improving the economic and social status of educators, promotion of a conducive working environment, rewarding attendance, empowering lecturers, empowering management committees, developing wellness programs and increased professionalisation of teaching.

Reddy, Prinsloo, Netshitangani, Moletsane, and van Rensburg (2010) highlight that it is the manager's responsibility to ensure conducive working conditions and that leave administration systems are always up to date, to reduce absenteeism. Educator absenteeism is higher in learning centres where managers are often absent from work (Bipath, 2019). Centre Managers and supervisors should lead by example. For instance, they should minimise their absenteeism and be the first ones to report to work and be the last to leave the learning centre. According to Naidoo (2017), centre managers who consistently show up for work provide a good example for other employees, motivating them to follow suit and be dedicated to their jobs. This implies that establishing a culture of accountability and lowering absenteeism within the organisation depend heavily on the presence of leadership.

2.13 Conclusion

This chapter presented the literature review. It defined educator absenteeism, explained excused and unexcused educator absenteeism, and explored the causes of excused and unexcused educator absenteeism. Global and South African perspectives on educator absenteeism were investigated. Furthermore, the chapter explored the evolution of the Adult Education and Training (AET) Legislation in South Africa. The chapter further investigated the impact of unexcused lecturer absenteeism on teaching and learning, the role of centre management teams in managing dynamics of unexcused lecturer absenteeism, and how managers' and lecturers' relationships can minimise lecturer absenteeism in community learning centres. The next chapter details the theoretical framework employed in this research study.

CHAPTER 3: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter included a thorough analysis of the literature. Christopher Hood's public management theory is presented in this chapter, which serves as the foundation for this study. This chapter explains the main ideas of the theoretical framework, gives an overview of it, and explains why Christopher Hood's framework was chosen. It provides more context for Hood's theory, investigates how it relates to Mary Douglas' Cultural Theory, and looks at how it applies to lecturer absenteeism. The chapter also examines the significance of public management ideas in adult education and explores its implications for Community Learning Centre management. Ultimately, it assesses Hood's framework's strength and weaknesses and offers a conclusion.

3.2 Overview of the theoretical framework

This study's theoretical framework is based on Christopher Hood's Public Management Theory, which explains how organisational cultures and management practices influence lecturer attendance and absence. This paradigm assists in analysing how different management styles affect responsibility, decision-making, and institutional culture in Community Learning Centres (CLCs). Hood's model comprises four core management approaches: hierarchist, egalitarian, individualist, and fatalist, each with their own unique perspective on organisational behaviour and absence management. The hierarchist strategy focusses on structured authority, regulations, and severe enforcement mechanisms to ensure lecturer accountability and prevent absenteeism. The egalitarian method emphasises participatory decision-making, shared duties, and collective accountability, with the assumption that a collaborative work atmosphere promotes commitment. The individualist approach prioritises personal incentives, rewards, and performance-based outcomes, frequently relating attendance to professional advancement and financial gain. The fatalist perspective contends that external causes, unpredictability, and a lack of control over conditions shape absence trends, rendering managerial intervention ineffective. By combining these viewpoints, the framework allows for a more detailed analysis of how CLCs centre management teams (CMTs) approach absenteeism as well as balancing disciplinary penalties with

supporting measures. It also serves as a lens through which institutional limits, resource limitations, and policy enforcement issues can be critically scrutinised.

3.3 A guiding theoretical framework for analysing lecturer absenteeism

Christopher Hood's Public Management Theory (1998), provides an important framework for analysing management practices in public-sector organisations, including educational institutions. The approach emphasises the link between culture, management styles, and the success of public entities. While the theory was originally established to examine public administration, its application to adult education, particularly in CLCs centres, is useful in understanding how different leadership and management styles influence lecturer attendance patterns. Hood's theory provides a complete paradigm for investigating how adult education institutions are structured and administered. The idea is particularly useful for analysing how rigorous or flexible management techniques affect lecturer morale and absenteeism. Participatory management approaches that support Hood's egalitarian viewpoint have been shown to improve lecturer involvement and lower absenteeism. On the other hand, as Hood's research on bureaucratic societies suggests, hierarchical educational methods might lead to disengagement.

3.4 Defining the theoretical framework

A theoretical framework forms the structural foundation of a study, influencing its research design, data interpretation, and analytical technique. Van Der Walt (2017) defines theory as a systematic articulation of previous research findings that serves as a structured foundation for scholarly study. Similarly, Adon, Hussein, and Agyem (2018) argue that a theoretical framework serves as a strategic blueprint, providing consistency to the research process. Kivunja (2018) emphasises its importance in determining the organisation of a study and maintaining alignment between research topics, methodology, and analysis. This study uses Hood's Public Management Theory to examine absenteeism at community learning centres (CLCs). By including Douglas' Cultural Theory, the study accounted for the socio-cultural variables that drive absenteeism, strengthening the idea that institutional governance cannot be separated from broader cultural and systemic influences. Through this theoretical lens, the study

systematically explores absenteeism patterns, presenting a comprehensive explanation of the interaction between administrative practices, institutional culture, and lecturer behaviour.

3.5 Justification for using Christopher Hood's public management theory

Theoretical frameworks are crucial for influencing management and leadership strategies in education. According to Moyambo (2023), theories help improve institutional performance by directing decision-making and organising activities. Using pertinent management theories can improve accountability and institutional efficiency in Community Learning Centres (CLCs), where leadership is crucial to lecturer commitment and institutional success. Although educator absenteeism has been extensively researched in traditional schools, there is still little data on the subject in CLCs. Studies on lecturer absenteeism at Community Learning Centres (CLCs) rarely make use of Christopher Hood's Public Management Theory. As a result, there is still little scholarly research on institutional control, administration, and leadership in adult education.

Hood's public management framework offers a structured method for comprehending the relationships between decision-making, organisational culture, accountability, and institutional conduct. This theory can be applied to CLCs because of its emphasis on institutional control and leadership, which has a direct bearing on lecturer attendance trends and the general efficacy of teaching and learning. Hood (1998) emphasises how crucial it is for managers to gain a thorough awareness of their workplaces in order to guarantee efficient supervision and the application of policies.

Christopher Hood's public management framework enables a more accurate investigation of the ways in which institutional policies and leadership affect lecturer absenteeism by categorising various management styles. When Bipath, Venketsamy, and Naidoo (2019) applied Hood's theory to private school environments, they discovered that although accountability measures increased attendance, their efficacy was frequently undermined by institutional and cultural impediments. This disparity between legislative goals and actual implementation further emphasises the need to

modify public management theories to CLCs, whose management challenges are unique and frequently more complex.

Hood's Public Management Theory, in spite of its shortcomings, offers an engaging and useful perspective for analysing absenteeism in Community Learning Centres (CLCs). It forms the foundation of this research, directing the gathering and analysis of data, defining the research design, and influencing the development of conclusions and recommendations to improve absence management techniques. The study fills a significant theoretical gap by using this framework, providing a more thorough and in-depth explanation of the ways in which institutional culture, management styles, leadership dynamics, and policy enforcement all work together to affect lecturer absenteeism in adult education settings.

3.6 Contextualising Christopher Hood's public management theory

Christopher Hood's Public Management Theory arose in the 1990s, a period of major change in global public administration, including a shift away from traditional bureaucratic paradigms. This management theory challenges these established paradigms by bringing cultural viewpoints into public service management (Hood, 1998). The paradigm investigates how various management styles, influenced by cultural norms, affect public service delivery and decision-making processes. This is especially relevant in South Africa, where historical inequities still have an impact on educational institution management, particularly in the Adult Education and Training (AET) sector.

The South African AET sector faces a unique mix of issues, including limited resources, low lecturer morale, and inefficient management systems. Lecturer absenteeism in these centres is frequently caused by broader socioeconomic factors such as job unhappiness, a lack of professional development opportunities, and ineffective accountability systems. By situating Hood's theory in this setting, the study recognises the crucial role that cultural and organisational management concepts may play in reducing lecturer absenteeism. This method guarantees that the theoretical framework is not applied in isolation, but rather thoroughly researched and contextualised within

the unique difficulties of the South African education system, making it more relevant and practical for managing absenteeism in Community Learning Centres.

3.7 Integration of Mary Douglas' cultural theory

Mary Douglas' Cultural Theory, which divides organisational cultures into fatalist, egalitarian, individualist, and hierarchist types, is an important addition to Hood's Public Management Theory. Hood's incorporation of Douglas' study improves the knowledge of how cultural norms influence public sector management and, by extension, lecturer attendance at CLCs centres. Hierarchical systems, which are commonly prevalent in educational institutions, impose tight authority and accountability processes to ensure policy conformity. While such systems might help to ensure that policies are followed, they can also lead to undesirable consequences including low lecturer morale and disengagement, both of which are linked to greater absenteeism rates.

Egalitarian cultures, which emphasise shared responsibility and participatory decision-making, offer an alternate model that may assist minimise absenteeism by instilling a sense of ownership and collaboration in employees. By combining Douglas' cultural theory with Hood's framework, this study provides a more comprehensive account of absenteeism, noting that organisational behaviour is influenced by the institution's cultural norms and values rather than just laws and rules.

3.8 Application of the public management theory to lecturer absenteeism

Christopher Hood's Public Management Theory offers a sophisticated framework for analysing the various management styles and their effects on lecturer absenteeism in Community Learning Centres. Hood divides management styles into four types: hierarchist, egalitarian, individualist, and fatalist, each offering unique insights into accountability, decision-making, and institutional culture. Applying these models to CLCs allows for a more in-depth investigation of absenteeism, examining how organisational behaviour and leadership practices interact with absentee trends.

3.8.1 Hierarchist approach

Hood (1998) defines the hierarchist model as one centred on inflexible authority structures and tight adherence to policies and procedures. This method ensures compliance by employing monitoring systems, clear chains of command, and well-defined norms. While this strategy can be helpful in maintaining discipline, it may unintentionally alienate lecturers in CLCs. Overreliance on bureaucratic processes and enforcement can lead to lecturer disillusionment and passive resistance, perhaps increasing absenteeism. Punitive tactics may fail to address the underlying causes of absenteeism and can undermine employee morale. In CLCs, where lecturers may already be disillusioned due to resource constraints and job dissatisfaction, hierarchical rigidity can exacerbate the situation by fostering a top-down culture that restricts lecturer initiative and participation.

3.8.2 Egalitarian approach

Unlike the hierarchical method, the egalitarian model promotes a collaborative environment in which decision-making is shared, and accountability is divided across all levels of the organisation (Hood, 1998). This model prioritises inclusivity, respect for lecturers' perspectives, and participatory governance, all of which can lead to increased lecturer involvement and reduced absenteeism. When lecturers participate in decision-making processes, they feel more ownership over their work, which enhances dedication and reduces absenteeism. In CLCs, where lecturers confront various problems such as minimal resources and limited professional development, building a culture of shared responsibility can help increase morale, foster a sense of community, and inspire lecturers to stay in their jobs.

3.8.3 Individualist approach

The Individualist approach emphasises personal responsibility, autonomy, and self-regulation within an organisation. Employees in this paradigm are supposed to take the initiative and work autonomously, with minimum intervention from authority figures. Hood (1998) emphasises that the individualist approach is effective in circumstances where employees are highly driven and have a strong feeling of personal commitment.

However, in CLCs, where lecturers frequently face high levels of stress, limited resources, and low morale, the individualist model may be less effective. Lecturers who work alone may feel unsupported, and the absence of a coherent team atmosphere may contribute to a greater sense of disengagement. Individualistic cultures in educational environments might cause lecturers to feel separated from their colleagues and management, potentially worsening absenteeism. As a result, while autonomy can be beneficial, it must be matched with mechanisms of support and collaboration to ensure lecturers do not feel isolated from the learning centre.

3.8.4 Fatalist approach

Hood (1998) describes the fatalist viewpoint as one of resignation and powerlessness. Individuals in this model regard decisions as random, unmanageable, and out of their hands. This mindset is especially prominent in bureaucratic institutions, when lecturers believe that their presence or departure has no meaningful impact on the institution's performance. Fatalism can contribute to absenteeism in Community Learning Centres with little resources, ineffective management, and a lack of professional growth chances. Lecturers who have a fatalistic approach may assume that no matter how hard they try; they will not achieve substantial change. Disengagement is especially visible in under-resourced educational environments, where lecturers may believe their efforts are not respected or acknowledged, leading to absenteeism. Lecturers who see their job as meaningless are less likely to feel driven to attend classes or interact with students, continuing the absence cycle.

3.9 Implications for community learning centres management

This study highlights the importance of striking a balance between different management philosophies in order to effectively address lecturer absenteeism, using Hood's paradigm. As emphasised, a sophisticated strategy that adjusts to situational obstacles is necessary for effective leadership in education (Bush, 2018). Although the hierarchical approach encourages accountability, if excessively rigid standards are used, lecturers may become aggrieved. Wider participation is encouraged by the egalitarian worldview, yet strict management is required to avoid a lack of discipline. The fatalist paradigm highlights the detrimental impacts of disengagement. Individual

autonomy, efforts to combat fatalism, egalitarian involvement, and hierarchical accountability are all necessary for the effective management of absenteeism in CLCs. While maintaining an adequate degree of supervision, centre managers must make sure that lecturers feel empowered and supported. According to Bush (2018), a flexible management plan that incorporates elements of each model can offer a more thorough strategy for reducing absenteeism and raising lecturer involvement.

3.10 Relevance of public management theory for adult education

Hood's Public Management Theory is relevant to adult education since Community Learning Centres are part of the larger public sector and are liable to state laws, funding mechanisms, and bureaucratic management. It is important to acknowledge that, due to the variability of human conduct, Hood's approaches may be used in a single learning centre, even though the theory is applicable to this inquiry (Naidoo, 2017). Effective governance, leadership, and accountability mechanisms are the cornerstones of public management. These mechanisms also have a direct impact on lecturer conduct, institutional efficiency, and student's results. Given that absenteeism is both an individual and systemic issue, public management theories offer a framework for evaluating how organisational structures and leadership styles influence lecturer attendance and institutional performance.

3.11 Strengths and weaknesses of Hood's public management theory in adult education

Hood's Public Management Theory has been widely used in public administration to examine bureaucratic efficiency, accountability, and governance systems, including its application to education. One of the theory's main strengths is its systematic approach to organisational behaviour, notably in accountability and governance, which categorises management styles hierarchist, egalitarian, individualist, and fatalist that affect institutional culture and decision making. This is especially effective at CLCs, which operate under state mandated policies and bureaucratic structures, allowing for a systematic evaluation of management approaches to lecturer absenteeism.

However, a significant shortcoming is its exclusive focus on education, particularly adult learning contexts, which ignores socio-emotional and pedagogical elements that influence absenteeism. Furthermore, while the hierarchist paradigm encourages severe policy enforcement, it may not be appropriate for CLCs, where collaborative and flexible management practices are frequently more effective. Public management models frequently overlook the informal and community-driven nature of adult education institutions.

3.12 Criticism of the public management theory

Despite its effectiveness, Hood's Public Management Theory has been criticised, particularly in its application to adult education settings. One noteworthy criticism is that Hood's theory does not address the specific issues of educational settings, particularly the complexities of adult learning environments and the various demands of lecturers in these situations. The theory fails to account for the distinctive cultural and socioeconomic obstacles that educators encounter in their institutions, which are widespread. Ball (2003), however, warns that managerialist strategies, like those advocated by New Public Management, might result in undue performativity expectations, subjecting educators to strict performance standards that erode their professional autonomy and raise stress levels.

For example, Hood's fatalist approach, may fail to address the underlying structural issues that contribute to lecturer disengagement, such as low pay, a lack of professional development opportunities, and unsupportive leadership. When applied to adult education, Hood's theory should be enlarged to account for how these contextual factors influence educator absenteeism. Furthermore, while the hierarchical approach's emphasis on authority and rigid rule enforcement may be effective in some public sector settings, its applicability in the dynamic and sometimes informal surroundings of CLCs is restricted. Hood's inflexible frameworks may fail to convey the flexibility and adaptive management approaches that are frequently required in these educational situations.

Hood's theory may benefit from a greater emphasis on the human side of public administration, such as the emotional and psychological causes motivating educator absenteeism. These issues, such as burnout, stress, and morale, are especially

important in adult education, lecturers frequently work under difficult conditions and may not feel sufficiently supported or valued

3.13 Conclusion

This chapter demonstrated the applicability of Christopher Hood's Public Management Theory to lecturer absenteeism in Community Learning Centres. By combining Hood's theory with Mary Douglas' Cultural Theory, the study provides a thorough knowledge of how organisational culture and managerial practices influence absenteeism. The analysis of the four management styles: hierarchical, egalitarian, individualist, and fatalist, shows that no single method can effectively reduce absenteeism on its own. A balanced management approach that includes organised oversight, participatory governance, and individual empowerment is required to reduce absenteeism and promote lecturer engagement. The subsequent chapter elaborates on the research methodology and design employed in this study.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

4.1 Introduction

The study's theoretical framework, which used Christopher Hood's Public Management Theory to investigate the causes of lecturer absenteeism, was introduced in the preceding chapter. Of importance, the chapter gave comprehensive analysis of the four management styles: hierarchical, egalitarian, individualist, and fatalist approaches. There is a scarcity of research examining institutional documents from Community Learning Centres (CLCs), such as time books and leave policy files, to provide unbiased insights into absenteeism trends. Additionally, the scarcity of theoretical grounding, particularly in public management theories, limits the depth of analysis. Through the integration of qualitative methods, institutional documentation, and Christopher Hood's Public Management Theory, this study bridges these methodological gaps and provides a more comprehensive and contextually appropriate understanding of absenteeism threads in CLCs. This chapter describes the research design, methodology, data collection tools, population and sample techniques, data analysis, credibility, dependability, and ethical aspects of the study.

4.2 Aim and objectives of the study

This study sought to explore the dynamics that contribute to unexcused lecturer absenteeism in Community Learning Centres in the Johannesburg metropolitan municipality. This aim was realised through the following objectives:

- To explore the contribution of personal, socio-economic, and institutional challenges to unexcused lecturer absenteeism in Community Learning Centres.
- To determine the impact these dynamics, have on teaching and learning.
- To ascertain the role of centre management teams in managing dynamics of unexcused lecturer absenteeism in Community Learning Centres
- To make recommendations that address lecturer absenteeism in Community Learning Centres.

4.3 Research questions

What are the dynamics that contribute to unexcused lecturer absenteeism in Community Learning Centres in the Johannesburg metropolitan municipality?

The research question was divided into the following sub-questions:

- In what ways do personal, socio-economic, and institutional challenges contribute to unexcused lecturer absenteeism in Community Learning Centres?
- What impact do these dynamics have on teaching and learning?
- How could centre management teams address the dynamics that contribute to unexcused lecturer absenteeism in Community Learning Centres?
- What strategies can be deployed to address the challenge of lecturer absenteeism in Community Learning Centres across South Africa?

4.4 Research paradigm

A research paradigm provides the philosophical foundation guiding the entire research process, including data collection, analysis, and interpretation (Kamal, 2019). This study adopts an interpretivist paradigm, which views reality as socially constructed and best understood through individuals' lived experiences. Interpretivism recognises that meaning is shaped by human interaction and context (Schwandt, 2014), enabling researchers to explore how people experience and assign meaning to social phenomena (Aspers & Corte, 2019; Gunbayi & Sorm, 2018).

Within this paradigm, epistemology concerns how knowledge is constructed and understood (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007), while ontology relates to beliefs about the nature of reality, which interpretivism sees as multiple and subjective rather than fixed (Richards, 2003). Axiology highlights the role of values and ethics in research, emphasising respect for participants' perspectives and the importance of researcher reflexivity throughout the study (Lincoln, Lynham & Guba, 2011).

Lecturer absenteeism is a complex issue influenced by personal, socio-economic, and institutional factors. The interpretivist paradigm is particularly suited to this study as it facilitates an in-depth exploration of the underlying dynamics of unexcused

absenteeism, aiming to generate rich, context-specific insights grounded in participants' lived experiences.

4.5 Research approach

This study was grounded in a qualitative research approach, which is well-suited for examining complex social issues in real-world contexts. Creswell (2015) describes qualitative investigations as processes in which researchers develop an understanding of social phenomena by comparing, contrasting, categorising, and organising information. As Creswell and Poth (2017) note, a research approach provides a structured plan guiding data collection, analysis, and interpretation. This focus on qualitative data allows for capturing rich, detailed insights into participants' lived experiences and social realities, rather than relying on numerical data (Leavy, 2020).

The qualitative approach was chosen to explore how students, lecturers and centre managers perceive and experience lecturer absenteeism within Community Learning Centres, focusing on how they make sense of their social realities (Mahajan et al., 2018). This approach privileges individual meaning-making and the use of natural language, enabling participants to express their experiences openly and authentically (Hennink & Kaiser, 2022; Cropley, 2019).

Qualitative methods are widely used to investigate experiences within various social and institutional contexts, effectively revealing how individuals interpret their roles, relationships, and challenges (Ling & Ling, 2020). By collecting non-numerical data such as narratives, observations, and institutional documents, the study gained a comprehensive understanding of absenteeism's causes and consequences, grounded in participants' everyday realities (Creswell, 2015). As McMillan and Schumacher (2014) emphasise, even minor details can significantly contribute to understanding human behavior in context.

4.5.1 Characteristics of Qualitative Research

Qualitative research seeks to understand human experiences as they occur in real-world contexts, shaped by social, cultural, intellectual and physical environments (Muzari, Shava & Shonhiwa, 2022). It emphasises the meanings individuals assign to

their experiences and how these meanings are interpreted within specific settings (Lune & Berg, 2017). In this study, I acted as the primary research instrument by conducting interviews, observing participant behaviour and reviewing relevant documents. As is typical in qualitative research (Zohrabi, 2013), this role required a close and sustained engagement with the data. Such involvement, as noted by Fujii (2017), adds depth to the analytical process and enhances the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings.

4.5.2 Advantages of Qualitative Research

Qualitative research offers several advantages, particularly when investigating complex social issues. Creswell (2007), Mahajan et al. (2018) and Lune and Berg (2017) highlight its strength in exploring behaviours, relationships and social interactions in everyday life. It is also flexible and cost-effective.

Zohrabi (2013) notes that qualitative research allows for an in-depth exploration of participants' feelings, experiences and motivations. By engaging closely with participants, I was able to uncover nuanced insights into lecturer absenteeism and its impact on teaching and learning. Techniques such as triangulation enhanced the credibility of the findings (Muzari, Shava & Shonhiwa, 2022).

Another advantage is that qualitative research accommodates unexpected findings, as interviews are not limited by rigid questionnaires. By grounding the study in lived experiences, I was able to gather rich and persuasive data that highlighted the human dimensions of absenteeism.

4.5 Research design

A research design provides the overall plan for conducting a study and explains how findings will be obtained (Sundler et al., 2019). It acts as a blueprint for collecting and analysing data (McMillan and Schumacher, 2010). This study adopted an exploratory qualitative case study design, which offers flexibility and depth in investigating lecturer absenteeism within a specific context. Although case studies are sometimes criticised for their limited generalisability, the aim of this research was to gain a detailed, contextual understanding of the issue rather than produce broadly applicable conclusions.

According to McKenney and Reeves (2018), a case study involves collecting data from various localised sources to investigate a defined system. This approach enables in-depth insight into people, events, and their interactions within a particular environment. Similarly, Yin (2018) notes that case studies provide rich, context-specific analysis of real-world phenomena. In this study, the case study design allowed for a focused examination of lecturer absenteeism across three Community Learning Centres in Johannesburg, Gauteng Province, South Africa. It helped uncover key patterns and contextual influences, laying a foundation for future research and practical interventions.

4.6 Research population

Majid (2018) defines population as the large number of individuals targeted by a study, to whom the study conclusions are meant to apply, while only a sample of this group is selected to participate in the research study. This study was conducted within Community Learning Centres (CLCs) located in the Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality, focusing on students, lecturers, and centre managers as key participants. Although the broader population of CLCs is large, comprising approximately 200 lecturers and 1500 students, this study focused on three selected centres to allow for an in-depth, context-specific exploration of lecturer absenteeism and its effects. Convenience sampling was employed to select these three centres based on accessibility and the willingness of participants to be involved. According to Rahi (2017), convenience sampling refers to the process of collecting data from a population that is readily accessible to the researcher. In qualitative inquiry, particularly under practical constraints, convenience sampling is widely used for exploratory or in-depth case studies (Etikan, Musa, and Alkassim, 2016). From each centre, one centre manager, three lecturers, and three students were purposively selected, resulting in a total sample of fifteen participants. The aim was not to achieve statistical generalisability but rather to generate rich, qualitative insights. To address concerns about the broader relevance of the findings, Lincoln and Guba's (1985) principle of transferability was applied through the provision of thick descriptions of the research context, participants, and processes. This allows readers to determine whether the findings may be applicable to other similar contexts.

The rationale for choosing centre managers is that I believe they have valuable experience in leadership and management through overseeing lecturers and students. Centre managers had to possess one year of experience managing lecturers, non-teaching staff members, and students in the same CLCs. Lecturers with one year of teaching experience were asked to participate to get their perspectives. To be eligible to participate in this research study, students had to have been enrolled at the same learning centre for at least six months. Since I believed that their viewpoints and experiences could provide important insights into how lecturer absence affects the learning environment and academic outcomes, their participation was considered crucial. Additionally, their inclusion aimed to highlight the wider effects of lecturer absences on the educational process as a whole.

4.6.1 Sampling procedure

Sampling is the process that researchers use to select individuals from a large population (Leavy, 2017). Bhardwaj (2019) defines sampling as the method of choosing a sample from a population, targeting a particular research type. The quality of a research study can only be determined by selecting the appropriate sample and sampling techniques. Busetto, Wick, and Gumbinger (2020) assert that the objective of qualitative sampling is the incorporation of all variations of the objects that are observed and believed to be relevant to the study in the sample.

Convenience sampling was employed to select three Community Learning Centres for this study, based on their accessibility and proximity to the researcher. This approach allows for the collection of meaningful data without compromising feasibility and is commonly used in qualitative research where logistical and practical constraints must be considered (Etikan, Musa, & Alkassim, 2016). Following the selection of the centres, purposive sampling was utilised to identify participants. These included students, lecturers, and centre managers who were directly involved in the functioning of the centres and could offer relevant insights aligned with the objectives of the study. According to Crossman (2020), purposive sampling ensures the collection of rich and directly pertinent data by selecting individuals with specific knowledge and experience related to the research topic. Given (2008) further asserts that purposive sampling

enhances the focus and relevance of qualitative research by allowing researchers to exclude participants who do not meet the study's criteria. Purposive sampling does require a lot of time to conduct. By doing research in this manner, expenses are decreased, and the study is easier to handle with the resources at hand.

Using purposive sampling, I was able to select participants from the three learning centres, who provided sufficient information, which ultimately answered the research question. As was already indicated, convenience sampling was used to select the three Community Learning Centres based on how close they were to me. The total sampling size of this research study is fifteen (15) participants. To increase the study's credibility and possibility of transferability of results, the sample size was carefully selected to include a range of viewpoints, such as those of managers, lecturers, and students. To ensure that the study included a wide range of experiences, participants were specifically selected based on their attendance patterns. In order to provide a fair and comprehensive examination of the variables affecting lecture absenteeism, this selection comprised both lecturers with excellent attendance records and those with a history of chronic absences. Since it includes perspectives from individuals in charge of governance, instructional delivery, and learning engagement, this broad representation makes it possible to have a thorough and multi-sided understanding of the causes influencing unexcused lecturer absenteeism. Multiple points of view are included in the study to provide a detail examination of the problem, enabling a more comprehensive assessment of its causes, implications, and possible solutions. The study included document analysis, systematic observations, and in-depth interviews in a multi-method approach to guarantee a comprehensive and well-rounded analysis. A thorough and in-depth comprehension of the studied phenomenon was provided by this triangulation of data sources, which enhanced the study's conclusions.

The problem of absentee lecturers in community learning centres is complicated and impacted by a number of interrelated issues. The health issues that lecturers frequently deal with, like chronic illnesses or stress at work, can be made worse by excessive workloads and a lack of necessary resources. Ongoing difficulties in preserving stable learning environments are exacerbated by institutional limitations that centre managers also face, such as under-funding, understaffed, and high lecturer turnover rates.

Students also face major socioeconomic obstacles, like unemployment, poverty, and low motivation, which can cause them to stop attending learning centres.

4.6.2 Description of the centres

The Johannesburg Metropolitan municipality boost 16 Community Learning Centres and numerous satellites centres. This study focussed on three selected Community Learning Centres within the municipality. Convenience sampling was employed to select the Community Learning Centres, as they were easily accessible and within the researcher's geographic reach. Table 4.1 summarises the characteristics of the study's centres, including the gender of the managers, the distribution of male and female lecturers, the total number of lecturers, student enrolment, premises ownership, and working hours at each centre.

Table 4.1: Description of centres

CENTRE	GENDER OF CENTRE MANAGER (M/F)	MALE LECTURERS	FEMALE LECTURERS	TOTAL	NUMBER OF STUDENTS	OWN PREMISES	WORKING TIMES
A	MALE	3	9	13	135	YES	8H00-15H00
B	MALE	4	6	11	112	YES	8H00-15H00
C	MALE	3	7	11	89	NO	16H00- 20H00

4.6.3 Description of participants

Having selected the three learning centres, purposive sampling was further used by the researcher to recruit participants for this investigation. To improve comprehension of the research study and its transparency, researchers must provide a brief description of the research participants. The table below provides an overview of the study's participants, including their roles, genders, and years of experience. To maintain confidentiality and anonymity, each participant was issued a pseudonym based on their

function and centre connection. To distinguish between persons within the same category, Centre Managers use the code "CM," Lecturers use "L," and Students use "S," followed by a numeric identifier. This technique provides for clear separation of participants while respecting privacy and promoting an organised approach to data display.

Table 4.2: Description of the participants

CENTRE	PSEUDONYM	POSITION	GENDER	EXPERIENCE
A	CM-A	Centre Manager	Male	3 years
	CA-L1	Lecturer	Male	6 years
	CA-L2	Lecturer	Male	5 years
	CA-S1	Student	Female	1 year
	CA-S2	Student	Female	2 years
B	CM-B	Centre Manager	Male	10 years
	CB-L1	Lecturer	Female	14 years
	CB-L2	Lecturer	Male	1 year
	CB-S1	Student	Female	2 years
	CB-S2	Student	Female	3 years
C	CM-C	Centre Manager	Male	6 years
	CC-L1	Lecturer	Female	7 years
	CC-L2	Lecturer	Female	10 years
	CC-S1	Student	Male	2 years
	CC-S2	Student	Male	1 year

I purposefully chose participants based on their wealth of experience and understanding of the factors influencing unexcused lecturer absences in Community Learning Centres (CLCs) in the metropolitan municipality of the City of Johannesburg. This selection increased the study's depth and reliability by guaranteeing that the data gathered represents both mature viewpoints and extensive experiences. As their perspectives add to a more thorough comprehension of the phenomenon being studied,

choosing participants with substantial experience in the research setting enhances the validity of qualitative studies, claims Yin (2018).

Although the goal of this study was to treat all participants equally throughout the research process, regardless of race or gender, absenteeism in Community Learning Centres may still be influenced by characteristics such as gender, race, and socioeconomic position. For example, women may have additional duties such as childcare, which might affect their attendance, but people from higher socioeconomic origins may have greater means to avoid taking time off.

4.6.4 Permission to conduct the research study

I sought and obtained an ethical clearance certificate from the Research Ethics Committee (REC) at the College of Education (CEDU) at the University of South Africa (UNISA) before asking permission to conduct research from the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET). The permission from the Department of Higher Education and Training enabled me to approach Community Learning Centres and potential participants under the Johannesburg metropolitan municipality for their consent to participate. I contacted individual potential participants through the Centre Management Teams. Participants were briefed about the purpose of the research study and that there were no monetary benefits expected as it was done voluntarily. The briefing made it easy for participants avail themselves and gave consent to this research study.

4.7 Instrumentation and data collection techniques

Grove, Gray, and Burns (2015) assert that collecting relevant data is one key criterion researchers may use to successfully answer the research question. The process of data collection plays a crucial role as the data that were collected assisted the researcher in answering the research question of the study. Kabir (2016) argues that all data collection is aimed at capturing quality evidence that translates to rich data analysis and allows the building of a convincing and credible answer to questions asked. Kabir (2016) further argues that researchers should be very careful when deciding on the research tools to be employed. I used data collection instruments that

assisted in achieving the research goal. Brough (2019) purports that researchers should use the correct techniques to collect data. Selecting a research data collection instrument is not a matter of preference but a careful process where the researcher needs to bear in mind the research aims and suitable data collection instruments that can assist in producing the desired results.

Hood's (1998) theory of public management supports the idea that diverse management approaches can address institutional challenges such as absenteeism. His framework highlights how different management styles, including hierarchical and participatory approaches, may influence decision-making processes. In this study, the choice of data collection instruments reflects a balanced approach to capturing the complexities of lecturer absenteeism, in line with Hood's emphasis on adaptable management.

I used multiple techniques to collect qualitative data, and such an approach is confirmed by Kalu and Bwalya (2019) in that researchers should employ data instruments such as interviews, document analysis, and observation to collect data from the research participants. Creswell and Creswell (2018) purport that researchers may employ a variety of data collection techniques such as observations, interviews, audiovisual digital content, and document analysis. However, researchers must make sure that all data collection techniques used are explicitly defined.

In this research study, I employed a multi-method approach to collect data, comprising semi-structured interviews, observation, and document analysis. The application of these diverse methods enhanced the credibility and validity of the findings and significantly improved the overall quality of the research study, providing a comprehensive perspective that strengthened the validity of the data collected (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). The triangulation method was purposefully used to improve the study's validity and rigour by combining in-depth interviews, observation, and document analysis. I used triangulation to produce a comprehensive, contextually grounded, and understanding of the phenomenon being studied, while acknowledging the sample size's inherent limits. This method boosted the overall conclusions by utilising a variety of data sources. The use of triangulation ultimately resulted in a more thorough investigation of the research question, offering a well-rounded and methodologically sound study.

4.7.1 Semi-structured interviews

Cohen, Marion, and Morrison (2019) define interviews as a technique where questions designed are open-ended, and the language used is adapted to each participant. Interviews are one of the most used data collection instruments researchers use in their research studies. Barret and Twycross (2018) argue that interviews are data collection instruments that are a direct and straightforward method of gathering precise and rich data. I used semi-structured interviews as one of the data collection techniques. The rationale behind the use of a semi-structured interview technique was that it ensures flexibility for the researcher to be able to seek clarity and depth so as to develop themes that are going to emerge from the responses of the participants.

Semi-structured interviews give an interviewer the flexibility to structure questions and the sequencing in a way that may suit the interviewee (Cohen et al., 2018). The interviews used in this study involved open-ended questions. Weller, Vickers, Bernard, Borgatti, and Gravlee (2018) state that open-ended questions are questions that hold similar meanings but allow participants the freedom to provide unique responses.

According to Dubey and Kothari (2022), there are a number of advantages and disadvantages of using interviews as a data collection technique.

4.7.1.1 Advantages

Interviews are a useful method for qualitative research because they allow the researcher to obtain detailed information directly from participants. A representative sample of the general population can be generated more easily since the interviewer keeps control of the session. The approach is also adaptable, enabling questions to be rearranged to fit the needs of the research or the direction of the discussion.

4.7.1.2 Disadvantages

Despite their strengths, interviews also present notable challenges. Conducting interviews over a large geographical area can be expensive, and the method is susceptible to potential biases from both the interviewer and the participants.

I was aware of certain restrictions that come with semi-structured interviews. Occasionally, participants may become distracted or give answers meant to appease the researcher, which could jeopardise the data's validity (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The research procedure may also be delayed if some participants don't show up for their appointments. Additionally, time-consuming, semi-structured interviews may encounter situations in which participants are not entirely honest while disclosing particular facts. In order to mitigate these constraints, I tried to ensure that the goal of the study was communicated clearly, built rapport with the participants, arranged flexible interview times, and utilised probing approaches to promote focused and honest answers (Patton, 2015).

All fifteen (15) research participants willingly consented to take part in this study. The interviews were conducted on a one-on-one basis with the participants, in the community Learning Centre's offices to allow the process privacy and to avoid interruptions. Where participants opted for another venue other than the office, it was granted if the venue was conducive to the research purpose. I used pre-planned interview questions. Baloyi (2023) asserts that pre-planned questions enable researchers to make sure that all participants are asked the same questions. Even though the questions were pre-planned, follow-up questions were asked where necessary for clarity, and interviewees were also allowed to elaborate more on their responses. Crossman and Bordia (2021) advise researchers to probe for further information and clarification to test interviewees. The interview was recorded, and participants were allocated thirty minutes each. All interview sessions were conducted outside instructional time to avoid disturbing teaching and learning. The interviews were later transcribed.

4.7.2 Observation

Observation is another data collection technique used to collect data. I used it in this research study. Cohen, Marion, and Morrison (2019) define observation as a data-gathering technique noting individuals, behaviour, and settings instead of only looking.

Queiros, Faria and Almeida (2017) define observation as a process of gathering information on the occurrence of an event. The rationale for using observation as a data collection tool is that it complements other methods and contributes to the triangulation and validation of research findings, enhancing the overall credibility of the study (Creswell, 2014).

Two centres operate from 8:00 AM to 3:00 PM, while one centre operates from 4:00 PM to 8:00 PM. I spent approximately three hours at each centre daily. For example, if Centre A was visited at 7:30 AM on a day, the subsequent visit would occur at 11:00 AM the following day and vice versa. This schedule alternated between Centres A and B, while Centre C, operating from 4:00 PM, maintained a consistent time slot. In total, sixteen days were dedicated to the research study. A challenge I faced was occasional fatigue. However, I managed this by regularly reviewing my progress and adjusting my approach as needed to maintain both physical and mental well-being. Measures were taken to ensure complete and efficient data collection, reducing the possible influence of short observation time on data quality. To address this, I created a structured observation schedule that was followed during the observation sessions at the three CLCs chosen for this study. Detailed field notes were taken to capture essential patterns in a methodical manner, ensuring that important aspects of the centres' functioning were documented despite limited time. The obtained data were analysed using qualitative content analysis.

Through observation, I thought to understand the dynamics that contributed to unexcused lecturer absenteeism in the CLCs in the Johannesburg metropolitan municipality. This method is effective because it provides the researcher with first-hand information on the research problem. The triangulation of data utilising document analysis and interviews enhanced the study's credibility and provided a more comprehensive understanding, despite the researcher's concerns that this approach might compromise the scope and accuracy of the observations. Among the issues observed at the CLCs were challenges related to lecturer punctuality, such as late arrivals and early departures, as well as inconsistent class attendance. Additionally, various other operational matters that contribute to disruptions in the smooth functioning of these centres were also observed. My non-intrusive presence at the

centres included mentioning these issues, even if they weren't explicitly discussed with the participants.

During the observation sessions, I was a non-participant observer. Creswell (2013) states that during the observation process, the researcher merely observes and takes notes from a distance. During the observation process, I took on the role of a passive participant. The following guidelines are suggested by Leedy et al. (2005) for researchers to take note of while conducting site observation: I took field notes and used a notebook to record my observations and interpretations. I made a conscious effort to remain neutral and to accurately document my interpretation of what I observed and heard. I was careful to distinguish between actual observations and my attempts at clarification. I adopted the role of a passive observer. While this approach helped minimise interference with the natural setting, I acknowledge that it may have limited my insight into some underlying issues.

Observation has both clear advantages and disadvantages as a method of gathering data. An interesting study of these is given by Prasanna (2022), who highlights both its advantages and disadvantages. Observation has both clear advantages and disadvantages as a method of gathering data.

4.7.2.1 Advantages of observation

One of the easiest and most accessible ways for academics to gather data is through observation. Observation is one of the simplest and most accessible methods for researchers to collect data. Unlike other data-gathering techniques, observation is natural and enables researchers to depict events accurately and truthfully as they occur. Nevertheless, I assigned interpretations to the observations. Since this method relies on direct observation rather than participant self-reporting, it frequently produces more precise data. This allowed me to gather first-hand information on the dynamics of the learning centres. Although the interpretations of the learning centres' dynamics were not formally verified through participant member checking, the study employed multiple data collection methods, including interviews and document analysis which enhanced the overall credibility and dependability of the findings. The use of triangulation allowed me to cross-check and corroborate observational insights with

data from other sources. This methodological diversity helps to reduce potential bias and supports a more balanced and trustworthy understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. Additionally, because participants are not required to actively offer information about themselves, observation requires little participation from respondents. This helped minimise disruptions to the normal functioning of the Learning Centre.

4.7.2.2 Disadvantages of observation

While observation offers valuable insights, it is not without limitations. One significant disadvantage is that not all aspects of human behaviour or events are readily observable, particularly private experiences or activities that fall outside the researcher's access. For example, I could not observe underlying personal or familial challenges that might have contributed to lecturers' absenteeism at Community Learning Centres. Observation is also inherently limited in its ability to capture past experiences or historical events, as it only records occurrences in real-time.

Moreover, the method is often time-consuming, requiring extended periods of fieldwork to gather sufficient data. This is particularly demanding in contexts such as late-afternoon learning sessions, where researcher sometimes remain on-site until as late as 9:00 PM. In addition to time constraints, observation entails considerable financial and logistical planning, which can be burdensome.

Another concern involves the potential for researcher bias in interpreting observed behaviours. As Lincoln and Guba (1985) argue, traditional positivist paradigms, which aim to eliminate subjectivity, are not suited to qualitative inquiry. Instead, they advocate for intersubjective validation through strategies such as member checking, whereby participants are invited to review and confirm the findings and interpretations to enhance credibility. In this study, I submitted recommendations to participants for feedback and verification to improve trustworthiness.

Furthermore, although qualitative findings are not statistically generalisable, Lincoln and Guba (2013) maintain that they can be transferable if sufficient contextual detail is provided. Accordingly, I aimed to offer rich, thick descriptions of the research settings

and observed dynamics to enable readers to assess the applicability of the findings to their own contexts.

Despite these limitations, I believe that the observation method provided valuable insights into the contextual factors contributing to unexcused lecture absenteeism in Community Learning Centres.

4.7.3 Document analysis

Finally, I used document analysis to collect data in this research study. Busetto, Wick, and Gumbinger (2019) state that document analysis is a research study of records of past events that are written or printed. Busetto et al. (2019) further indicate that policy documents, diaries, annual reports, and letters are examples of personal and non-personal documents. The rationale behind the use of documents is that they provide useful information that assists the researcher in understanding the central issues being investigated whilst presenting a good source of text and words in qualitative studies.

O'Leary (2014) mentions the following three basic types of documents:

Firstly, public records, which refer to official documents of an institution, such as policy documents, the institution's code of conduct, and its mission statement, serve as valuable sources of information. Secondly, personal documents, which provide insight into an individual's actions, experiences, and beliefs, include examples such as duty logs and journals. Lastly, physical evidence, encompassing tangible objects related to the study context, includes materials such as meeting agendas and training resources.

Document analysis provides useful information that assists the researcher in understanding the central theme being investigated whilst presenting a good source of text and words in qualitative studies. Baloyi (2023) notes that document analysis assists the researcher in exploring more than one voice and various interpretations. Document usage is so efficient, effective, and easy to manage; however, one needs to always keep in mind bias risks that may arise either from the documents or the researcher. Researchers are always careful when it comes to document choice. Documents selected should, in the end, assist the researcher in drawing conclusions.

O'Leary (2014) mentions the following step process that researchers should follow when evaluating documents:

It is crucial to gather all relevant documents. The aim is to: develop a management plan to work on; make sure that the documents to be used are authentic; explore the document's background information; and to explore the content of the document.

Cardno (2018) emphasises the advantages and disadvantages of using document analysis as a data collection method, highlighting its usefulness while also recognising its limitations.

4.7.3.1 Advantages of document analysis

Analysing documents has many advantages. In general, documents are clear and simple to comprehend. Because of the method's high efficiency, information may be retrieved and analysed quickly. In addition, it is less expensive than alternative methods of gathering data and easier to handle and arrange. Documents are also frequently accessible and simple to find.

4.7.3.2 Disadvantages of document analysis

Document analysis has significant disadvantages despite its advantages. There may not be enough information in the documents to fully answer the research topic. They may not be as relevant as they may be because they are frequently produced for objectives unrelated to the particular requirements of the study. Additionally, accessing some records may be difficult for researchers, which would limit the analysis's breadth.

I requested that all three CLCs selected for this study give him their time books and leave policy files. At the end, three-time books and three leave policy files were reviewed and examined. These records were critical because they allowed the researcher to investigate attendance trends and institutional leave policies. I was able to track absenteeism trends by studying the time books, whilst the leave policy files gave context for each centre's formal leave procedures and entitlements. This

extensive research provided essential insights into the underlying causes of absenteeism and greatly improved the study's findings, allowing for a more in-depth knowledge of institutional procedures and their impact on lecturer attendance. Below is the summary table of the collected and analysed documents.

Table 4.3: A summary table of documents collected and analysed

	Name of document	Areas analysed
1	Time book	To check lecturer attendance at the centres.
2	Leave policy file	Checking if the centres have policy files and relevant documentation Checking if lecturers fill in their leave forms.

4.8 Data analysis

Nassaji (2015) defines data analysis as the process of interpreting collected data, identifying repeated themes, and gaining an understanding of the phenomenon being investigated. Hardhan (2018) argues that qualitative data analysis is a complicated process due to the large volume of data generated, requiring thorough analysis while ensuring logical presentation of findings. The researcher analyses data with the aim of providing a comprehensive description of the phenomenon (Flick, 2018).

The obtained data were analysed for this research study using thematic analysis, which made it possible to find recurrent themes and patterns. Additionally, an organised method for identifying trends in lecturer absenteeism was ensured by using content analysis to methodically evaluate observation notes and document data. Lester, Cho, and Lochmiller (2020) suggest that thematic analysis allows the researcher to sort and sift collected data, helping to identify patterns and themes relevant to the research. Through the incorporation of content analysis, the study made sure that qualitative data from document reviews, non-participant observations, and interviews were thoroughly examined. The following data analysis phases were applied by the researcher:

4.8.1 Phase 1: Familiarising with the data

I carefully examined the gathered data to guarantee a thorough familiarity before beginning the data analysis process. This required going over the audio recordings several times, reading field notes and methodically going over institutional records like time books and leave policy files in order to fully immerse oneself in the observational data. It is very crucial for researchers to thoroughly familiarise themselves with this approach in order to discover important concepts and get ready for coding (Brown & Stockman, 2013). Repeated interaction with data promotes data interpretation and adds depth to analysis (Javadi & Zarea, 2016). I was able to classify absenteeism patterns in documents, spot behavioural trends in observations, and compare them with interview responses thanks to the incorporation of content analysis. By offering insights on the presence of lecturers, levels of engagement, and centre management's reactions to absenteeism, observational data were essential in enhancing interview responses. This procedure was reinforced by document analysis, which enabled me to track the application of the policy, find enforcement loopholes, and derive quantitative insights from attendance data.

Hood's (1998) Public Management Framework served as a guide for me as I examined how administrative structures affected lecturer absenteeism. By emphasising institutional elements that contribute to absenteeism in Community Learning Centres (CLCs), this theoretical lens enabled an investigation of public management dynamics including accountability, efficiency, and managerial responsibility.

4.8.2 Phase 2: Generating initial data

Coding is a crucial stage in qualitative research that entails classifying data according to the study's goals (Clarke & Braun, 2013). Hood's Public Management Framework (1998) served as a guide for the coding procedure in this study, guaranteeing that the analysis stayed in line with the research topics. I built on the familiarisation phase by methodically organising the data and giving segments generated from observations, interviews, and document reviews descriptive and interpretative codes. Document-

based data were thoroughly examined using text analysis to find trends in policy enforcement, and attendance patterns. In order to identify typical behaviours and management responses, observational notes were also analysed using a structured approach. Broader themes and sub-themes emerged as a result of iteratively improving the coding to improve analytical coherence. The several aspects of lecturer absenteeism, such as its causes, effects, and management strategies, were covered by these subjects. By combining coded document and observational data with interview responses, absence patterns might be analysed in a more comprehensive and contextually rich way.

4.8.3 Phase 3: Searching for themes

This stage involved grouping pertinent codes to find broad trends in the data (Braun & Clarke, 2012). The robustness of earlier coding stages is critical to the success of theme identification, according to Labra, Castro, Wright, and Chamblas (2020). I methodically organised related codes into separate themes, making certain that every category was substantiated by information gathered via observations, interviews, and document analysis. Through the use of content analysis, I was able to verify themes with the help of observed behaviours and documentation evidence, making sure that patterns found were backed up by field data and institutional records rather than just subjective accounts. When it came to putting issues with managerial responsiveness, bureaucratic processes, and accountability gaps in absenteeism control into context, Hood's theoretical framework was crucial.

4.8.4 Phase 4: Reviewing themes

I then critically analysed the identified themes by revisiting the coded data extracts. This stage was essential for ensuring the validity of the themes and their logical consistency (Braun & Clarke, 2012). I first confirmed that the themes reflected observable patterns, and then evaluated the systematic coherence of these patterns across the entire dataset. In order to ensure that thematic results were supported by empirical evidence, content analysis was essential in helping to refine themes by giving objective frequency counts of absence patterns from time books and policy records. An extensive examination of public management concerns like administrative accountability,

institutional inefficiencies, and reform challenges was made possible by this review process, which was enhanced by Hood's approach. Themes were further supported by observational and document data, which offered concrete proof of CLC management procedures and absenteeism-related regulations.

4.8.5 Phase 5: Defining and naming themes

I developed and gave the themes meaningful names throughout this stage. According to Braun and Clarke (2012), theme names ought to be understandable, instructive, and representative of their main idea. By combining data from observations, interviews, and documents, I made sure that every theme covered the most important facets of public administration and absenteeism. Data from observations and documents reinforced the theme development process by highlighting the frequency of particular absenteeism reasons, such as irregular leave approvals, pay day leisure patterns, and managerial control deficiencies. Hood's framework offered extra direction for identifying themes and matched them with important ideas in public administration, like accountability, efficiency, and transparency. Through this procedure, it was made sure that the themes found not only addressed the research questions but also added to the larger conversation on governance and lecturer absenteeism in adult education centres.

4.8.6 Phase 6: Writing up a report

In the final phase, I ensured that every step of the research process was methodically documented by synthesising the data into a cohesive and well-organised report. A thorough analysis of lecturer absenteeism at Community Learning Centres was made possible by the data gathered through semi-structured interviews, non-participant observation and document analysis. By using content analysis, the results were backed up by institutional data that was methodically coded, confirming the accuracy of the absenteeism trends that were detected. Key participants' in-depth qualitative observations from the interviews illuminated the institutional, socioeconomic, and personal elements that influence absenteeism. I was able to confirm attendance trends and evaluate the degree of institutional policy enforcement through document analysis, particularly the examination of time books and leave policy files. Furthermore, by using non-participant observation, I managed to evaluate the responsiveness of Centre

Management Teams (CMTs), compare attendance records with the presence of lecturers in real time, and watch how absenteeism affected student learning. Integrating thematic and content analysis enhanced the study's rigour by combining narrative depth with systematic interpretation. Although member checking was not conducted, every effort was made to ensure that the findings accurately reflected the participants' genuine responses and were presented in a respectful and ethical manner. The findings were connected to Christopher Hood's public management theory through a thorough thematic analysis in the report.

4.9 Integration of theory and methodology in data analysis

A deeper level of analysis and interpretation is achieved by combining Hood's (1998) Cultural-Theory Framework with the study's qualitative technique. Patterns in absenteeism management and governance efficacy are identified by the study's classification of findings using the four public management approaches: fatalist, egalitarian, individualist, and hierarchy. For example, Finlayson's (2009) study on educator behaviour in under-resourced schools highlights how varied leadership styles affect educator attendance, which is consistent with hierarchical models where stringent oversight lowers absenteeism.

Observations also highlight the practical ramifications of absence by demonstrating whether organisations have strict policy enforcement or lax governance. Based on actual institutional records, document analysis provides verifiable proof of absenteeism trends, supporting or contradicting theoretical hypotheses. The study's analytical framework is strengthened by this alignment of theory and methodology, which guarantees that conclusions are supported by both reputable public management theories and empirical data (Creswell, 2014).

4.10 Trustworthiness of the Study

Rasekgoala (2022), following Lincoln and Guba (1985), defines the soundness of a qualitative research study as the degree to which the research processes and data gathered by the researcher can be deemed trustworthy. Credibility, dependability, confirmability, transferability, and authenticity are some of the requirements researchers

should pay attention to establish the trustworthiness of the research study. To ensure the trustworthiness of this study, I used Lincoln and Guba's (1985) five indicators, credibility, dependability, confirmability, transferability, and authenticity (Lincoln & Guba, 1994).

4.10.1 Credibility

In this research study, credibility was attained by ensuring that there is a link between the views of participants and the research findings (Korstjens & Moser, 2018). Noble and Heale (2019) assert that credibility is how the research study demonstrates its trustworthiness and believability. Centre managers with one year of management experience, lecturers with one year of teaching experience, and students who have been with the centre for more than six months were interviewed to ensure the credibility of the research study. To ensure that participation in this research study was optional, individuals were given the chance to choose whether or not to do so. This strategy was used to urge participants to be truthful and to provide high-quality information. The absence of member checking during the data collection phase is acknowledged as a limitation of the study. Nonetheless, credibility was enhanced through triangulation, which involved gathering data from three distinct participant groups: students, lecturers, and centre managers. The inclusion of direct quotations further preserved the authenticity of participants' voices. To strengthen the study's credibility, the recommendations were subsequently shared with participants, who were invited to verify that their views had been accurately represented and appropriately considered. This retrospective approach to member validation reinforces confirmability and authenticity, while also enhancing overall credibility by allowing participants to review how their contributions were interpreted and applied (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

4.10.2 Dependability

Dependability refers to the extent to which the research process is consistent and can be replicated. According to Boru (2018), this involves providing detailed descriptions of the research procedures and clearly outlining how the instruments were used, enabling other researchers to replicate the data collection process and allowing readers to trace how the data were gathered. Similarly, Cohen, Manion, and Morrison (2019) argue that

ensuring consistency of findings under similar conditions is a key measure of dependability. In this study, dependability was enhanced by selecting participants based on transparent criteria and explaining how interactions with them informed the study's conclusions, thereby supporting the trustworthiness of the findings.

4.10.3 Confirmability

Confirmability is a process researchers use to demonstrate that the results of the collected data can be attributed to the views of the research participants and that the study is based on their expressions of meaning (Korstjens et al., 2018). To enhance confirmability in this research study, I transcribed the tape-recorded interviews to analyse the data. The information supplied by the participants was the only basis for the analysis; my opinions were not taken into consideration. To reduce prejudice and avoid misconceptions, I deliberately ensured that the interpretations aligned with the participants' expressions. Although member checking was not conducted during the data collection phase, the research recommendations were later shared with participants to help validate the findings and strengthen their credibility.

4.10.4 Transferability

Korstjens et al. (2018) purport that transferability in qualitative research relates to audiences believe that the findings that can be employed in other groups or settings, to the extent that they see similarities in these settings. I offered sufficient detail in the study so that audiences could decide to what extent the findings could be transferred to other settings with which they are familiar. That is so that readers examining the findings could easily associate with it in terms of their experiences. The provision of efficient information and context of the research is crucial so that readers can assess if there is a transferability of research findings or not. The study's data were presented so that readers may evaluate to what extent the research conclusions might apply to their own situation.

4.10.5 Authenticity

Polit and Beck (2012) define authenticity as the capability and the degree to which the researcher expresses the feelings and emotions of his or her research participants in a fair manner. To ensure the authenticity of this research study, a researcher created a conducive environment for participants to freely vent their honest viewpoints and ideas. Klenke (2016) states that research projects should be educative and empower the participants and all who would have an interest in the research. Although participants were not directly questioned about whether the process was empowering or educational, the study was designed to allow them the opportunity to openly discuss their experiences and reflect on the challenges associated with the topic. The research may have fostered participant empowerment by providing a forum in which they could express their views and feel both heard and appreciated (Klenke, 2016).

4.10.6 Triangulation

In a research endeavour, triangulation can be defined as the use of many data gathering methods or sources to cross-check information at the researcher's discretion. Triangulation is the process of gathering data from various sources, such as various people and environments, using a range of techniques, according to Creswell (2014). In order to accomplish triangulation in this study, I employed a number of data gathering methods, including individual interviews, observation and document analysis. This approach was taken by the researcher in order to lessen potential biases and flaws related to using just one data collection instrument. Triangulation, according to Bricki and Green (2007: 27), is a technique for enhancing the validity of results by consciously looking for evidence from a variety of sources and contrasting the results from those other sources.

I triangulated or compared the findings of the interviews, observation and document analysis to make sure the data gathered for this study was trustworthy and legitimate. According to Patton (2002), triangulation enhances a study by integrating many techniques for gathering data. In qualitative research, it serves as a means of guaranteeing trustworthiness, as emphasised by Lincoln and Guba (1985), who argue that concepts such as credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability are more appropriate criteria than reliability. To enhance the credibility of the study, I spent sixteen days at each research site, observing daily activities and gaining an in-depth

understanding of the operational context. I believe that using a variety of techniques, including observation, interviews, and document analysis, can result in a more genuine, trustworthy, and varied creation of realities for this study. To ensure that the results were comparable across participants, I used the same instruments for each respondent. I followed all of the aforementioned steps to make sure that the findings of the study aligned with the data collected.

4.11 Research Ethics

Research ethics are professional guidelines that govern the researcher's conduct as far as the dignity of participants and the integrity of published results are concerned (Akaranga & Makau, 2016:2). Qamar (2018) points out that researchers should adhere to ethical rules from the start to the end of the research study and even beyond that. There are ethical and legal requirements that researchers should follow when conducting research studies. Baloyi (2023) warns that researchers should be fully aware of ethical and legal requirements they should follow before they commence with their research studies. Researchers must familiarise themselves with all ethical and legal requirements that need to be followed before they embark on the research journey.

Tracy (2020) outlines the following research principles that researchers must follow:

Researchers should respect participants, for example, participants should be made aware that they are participating voluntarily. The investigation was considered low risk, meaning that the likelihood of harm or adverse effects to participants was minimal. Although absenteeism is a sensitive subject that might cause some discomfort, there were no physical or psychological risks involved. To address this, participants were assured of confidentiality and anonymity, and they were free to withdraw from the study at any time without any repercussions. These precautions minimised risk and supported ethical engagement.

I commenced the research study after obtaining permission from various stakeholders. Permission to conduct the research study was granted by the University of South Africa (UNISA) and the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET). UNISA and DHET issued and granted me an ethical clearance certificate after meeting certain

research requirements (Appendices A and H). Therefore, this research study was guided by UNISA's Research Ethics Committee and DHET Research Ethics Committee regulations and laws. Community Learning Centres (CLCs) leadership, lectures, and students were also consulted seeking their permission. Meetings were held with centre managers, lectures, and students of the three selected CLCs in the Johannesburg metropolitan municipality. The main purpose of the meetings was to outline the purpose of the research study as well as to answer clarity-seeking questions from the participants.

In this research study, the following ethical standards guided my actions:

4.11.1 Informed consent

Sobočan, Bertotti, and Strom-Gottfried (2018) point out that informed consent is an ethical requirement for researchers to advise participants of the purpose, processes, and risks of a research study and to obtain participants' voluntary consent based on the provision of sufficient information. Research participants should be made aware of what the research study is all about, what are questions to be asked, how data is going to be analysed and what are the expected results of the investigation (Fleming & Zegwaard, 2018). In this research study, I issued consent letters that contain all research procedures and processes to all prospective participants through centre management teams (Appendices C and D). The participants were given consent letters in English, which they could all understand. This made sure they understood the purpose of the study completely. Sufficient time was given to all prospective participants to read and comprehend the procedures and processes of the research study as well as to ask clarity-seeking questions. I clearly outlined the role of the research participants.

4.11.2 Voluntary participation

Before participants gave their consent, I clearly explained that participation was voluntary and that no monetary compensation would be provided after the research process. Fleming et al. (2018) warn that researchers should explicitly explain to participants what the study entails and how it will be carried out. Participants were made

aware that they are at liberty to withdraw their consent at any time they may feel doing so without a penalty. Researchers should make all research participants aware of their rights (Tracy, 2020).

4.11.3 Privacy

The researcher is the only person who has the considerate potential to invade the privacy of the participant (Cohen, Marion & Morrison 2018). I made sure that sensitive information remained confidential and protected. The 15 participants were informed that their personal information would not be disclosed to anyone.

4.11.4 Protection from harm

In this low-risk research study, I assured all prospective participants that they would not in any way be harmed or exposed to any danger during the research process. A slight risk of emotional discomfort may have existed due to the sensitive nature of absenteeism, although no physical or psychological harm was anticipated. Therefore, I implemented ethical safeguards by ensuring participants' anonymity, confidentiality, and the right to withdraw at any stage without any repercussions, even in the absence of significant risks. To minimise even the slightest potential harm and uphold the ethical integrity of the study, several precautionary measures were taken, including creating a respectful and non-judgmental interview environment, avoiding intrusive questioning, and providing participants with clear information about the study's purpose and procedures through informed consent. Sage (2017) contends that the researcher must minimise participants' exposure to any possible harm. Fleming et al. (2018) argue that one crucial precaution to protect participants from potential harm is anonymity and confidentiality. The fact that any possibility of harm may happen is of serious concern to researchers because it may come in different forms and shapes and is not easy to identify (Traianou, 2020). While I assured participants that no harm or danger was expected during the research process, it is acknowledged that the possibility of harm can exist in different forms and is not always easy to identify (Traianou, 2020). Therefore, ethical safeguards such as confidentiality, anonymity, and the right to withdraw were rigorously applied to minimise any potential risks, including emotional discomfort related to the sensitive topic of absenteeism.

It was expected that some centre managers, lecturers, and students might be concerned about potential harm to the reputation of their learning centres or to their own status as research participants, particularly in cases where absenteeism rates were high. This concern was taken into consideration during the planning of the study to ensure ethical sensitivity and maintain participant confidentiality. I established a cordial relationship with the participants and gave a comprehensive description of the study's objectives, including its possible benefits. These benefits included supplying insightful information to manage lecturer absenteeism in Community Learning Centres (CLCs) and guiding measures to raise educational standards. Additionally, this strategy lessened the possibility that research participants would feel taken advantage of or underappreciated. I also made sure that participants remained anonymous. In order to create a sense of neutrality and lessen any apparent power imbalance during the encounters, participants were told that the researcher's only aim was to engage with them in order to gather data.

The following are Neuman's (2017) classifications of harm:

Participants may suffer psychological damage, for instance, stress, and emotional distress. Participants may endure physical injury and permanent disability. Material damage of some sort. Damage to a participant's status or reputation. Unisa's ethical research guidelines are clear on the issue of protecting the research participants from any possible harm. I made sure that all possible precautions were taken to prevent or avoid any possible harm during the interview process. Yin (2018) cautioned that researchers should at all costs protect all the research participants from any possible harm during the research process.

4.11.5 Anonymity

Researchers are duty-bound to ensure the anonymity of the participants in social research. I did not disclose the identity of the research participants or their centres as it would be unethical to do so. Rubin and Babbie (2016) point out that researchers should conduct interviews in a private space and should always keep the collected data

in a safe space. Anonymity was ensured by making sure that interview notes, audio recordings, and gathered data were not linked to any participant's identity. I therefore, used codes to affirm the issue of anonymity and data is kept in a safe place.

4.11.6 Confidentiality

Fleming and Zegwaard (2018) indicate that researchers are the only people who know or have access to the identity of research participants, however, they should always keep their identities confidential. I assured the participants that no one's identity would be disclosed. Pacho (2015) notes that confidentiality requires that the data obtained is solely used for research study purposes and that no third party should have access to it. Esposito and Evans-Winters (2022) indicate that researchers should respect the confidentiality of the research participants and that collected data, and other sources remain confidential. Confidentiality was ensured by making sure that shared information remains between the researcher and the participant. This ensured that the data provided by participants was protected.

4.12 Data storage

The information I gathered is securely stored in a password-protected digital file, accessible only to me. This guarantees that ethical research standards are followed by protecting participant confidentiality and sensitive data from illegal access. The integrity and security of the research process depend on this technique, which guards against misuse or unintentional disclosure of personal information.

4.13 Limitations and delimitations of the study

This study's limitations are mostly related to its methodology and scope. The scope of the study was limited to three Community Learning Centres (CLCs) located within the Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality. The key participants in the research comprised adult learners, lecturers, and centre managers. Although only three centres were sampled, the participants represented a range of experiences and perspectives within the selected sites, contributing valuable insights. While the findings are context-specific, the insights gained may be transferable to other CLCs operating under similar

conditions within the municipality or in comparable settings elsewhere. A convenience sampling method was employed to select three readily accessible centres, primarily due to their accessibility. Although the study does not permit statistical generalisability, it sought to achieve transferability by providing rich, contextualised descriptions and a transparent methodological account (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This approach allows readers to make informed judgements regarding the applicability of the findings to comparable settings.

The study used purposive sampling, selecting students, lecturers, and centre managers who were directly involved in the day-to-day functioning of the Community Learning Centres and were therefore well-positioned to provide in-depth, context-specific insights into the issues under investigation. While this method allowed for focused data collection and reduced sampling bias, it does not aim for statistical representativeness of the broader population. Instead, the goal was to achieve transferability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) by providing a thick description of the experiences and perspectives of participants within their specific contexts, so that others may judge the relevance of the findings to similar settings. Although every attempt was made to establish a nonjudgmental atmosphere so that participants would feel free to offer honest analysis, response bias may still exist since some participants might have been reluctant to speak up. I probed participants using follow-up questions to encourage them to elaborate on issues; however, it cannot be assured that their responses consistently supported the credibility and interpretation of the data. Despite these weaknesses, the study was conducted within clearly defined boundaries. The findings may be transferable depending on how readers relate the results to their own contexts.

4.14 My role

Researchers should lay a relationship of trust with their research participants, and this makes it easy to obtain data. Creswell and Creswell (2018) mention the following as the important roles of the researcher: To associate with the population of the research study; to adhere to ethical processes from the start of the research study to the end; and to make sure that data is gathered from the participants. It is my responsibility not only to draw conclusions from the study but also to ensure that these conclusions

accurately reflect and align with the experiences and perspectives of the participants. . This process enhances both the ethical integrity and credibility of the research. To this end, participants were given the opportunity to review and provide feedback on the recommendations derived from the study. Sharing the recommendations allowed participants to confirm that their views were accurately represented and considered in the proposed course of action. This approach ensures that participants have input into the final recommendations and contributes to validating the research outcomes.

I understand that qualitative researchers should be involved in the study and therefore interact well with the participants during the data-gathering stage. According to Lin (2015), effective multitasking in research involves managing multiple stages concurrently while maintaining rigor and coherence, ensuring that each phase informs and reinforces the others. This approach enabled me to smoothly integrate the findings and maintain a holistic understanding of the subject throughout the research process. During this investigation, I faced three main obstacles. Firstly, it was initially challenging to get an interview appointment with one of the centre managers, but the manager eventually agreed to meet. Secondly, two lecturers expressed reluctance to take part in the interviews. However, as those who declined were replaced by other volunteers who fulfilled the study's inclusion requirements, this had no effect on the research process or its findings, and thirdly one student participant, was obviously uneasy and hesitant while sharing personal experiences. Nonverbal clues like avoiding eye contact and pausing frequently before responding were signs of this uneasiness. I acknowledged this and used active listening strategies, remained calm yet sympathetic, and reaffirmed promises of anonymity and privacy. By creating a sense of psychological safety, these intentional techniques eventually allowed the participant to calm down and offer more in-depth, open-minded thoughts.

In order to answer the research question, I used a qualitative research approach that included participant in-depth interviews, observations, and an analysis of leave policy files and lecturer attendance registers.

4.15 My positionality and its impact

As a researcher working within the interpretivist paradigm, I recognised that neutrality or objectivity in the positivist sense was not achievable. I accepted that my own perspectives, experiences and assumptions would inevitably influence both data collection and analysis. While my goal was to create a welcoming and open environment for participants to share their views, I was aware that this familiarity could introduce bias, especially in the way I designed interview questions and interpreted responses. This was shaped by my prior professional experience and expectations related to challenges commonly faced by Community Learning Centres.

To manage these potential biases, I engaged in ongoing reflexivity throughout the research process. I continually questioned how my assumptions might influence the findings. For example, when a participant linked absenteeism to family responsibilities, I consciously challenged my own bias towards attributing absenteeism mainly to work-related issues to better reflect the participant's perspective. This approach aligns with Holmes (2020), who emphasises the importance of acknowledging and reflecting on positionality in qualitative research. Similarly, Neuman (2014) highlights that researchers are embedded in the research context and that meaning is co-created through interactions between researchers and participants.

4.16 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the research methodology, design, data collection instruments, population and sample procedures, data analysis, validity, reliability, and ethical protocols used in the study. It also addressed technical and quality concerns, such as ethical considerations, constraints, and the research study itself. Additionally, the researcher's role was explained. Hood's theoretical framework helped shape the approach by guiding the investigation of institutional responses and management methods to lecturer absenteeism in CLCs. The following chapter will present the data analysis and findings of the investigation

CHAPTER 5: DATA ANALYSIS AND PRESENTATION

5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter examined the study's research methodology, research design, data collection instruments, population and sample techniques, data analysis, validity, reliability, and ethical processes. This chapter discusses the analytical strategy, give presentation of the study themes. The collected data were analysed and deliberated in accordance with Christopher Hood's cultural theory framework of Public Management Styles (1998), which served as an overview for the study on "Exploring dynamics that contribute to unexcused teacher absenteeism in ACET centres in the Johannesburg metropolitan municipality." I am of the view that this study's findings shed light on the research aims and questions.

5.2 Analytical Strategy

An analytical methodology is required to understand the underlying dynamics of lecturer absenteeism in Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality Community Learning Centres (CLCs). Hamilton (2022) defines this technique as the process by which researchers hypothesise about how evidence was obtained and used to inform their findings. In this study, the researcher conducted semi-structured interviews, observations, and document analysis to explore lecturers' unexplained absenteeism. These techniques shed light on the day-to-day operations and issues that centre managers, lecturers, and students encounter. Additionally, documents such as times book and leave policy file revealed substantial tendencies, providing explanation for the absenteeism patterns found.

The theoretical basis for this analysis is based on Hood's (1998) Public Management Theory, which emphasises the importance of culture and rhetoric in public sector management. Hood's approach helps to understand how institutional norms, symbols, and managerial narratives influence absenteeism and accountability inside CLCs. Using Hood's technique, the study exposes how management styles and institutional culture determine lecturer behaviour, as well as how cultural and managerial practices influence absence rates. Through this viewpoint, the study provides a more in-depth

knowledge of the intricacies of absenteeism in these locations. The framework provides a useful lens for analysing how management rhetoric, cultural norms, and administrative controls influence absence trends. However, Hood's theory is useful in studying these dynamics. This chapter examines these processes using Hood's theory but recognising its limits in adequately addressing the complex reality of lecturer absenteeism in CLCs centres.

Christopher Hood's Public Management Theory informed the research design, data analysis, and interpretation of the study. Through observation, document analysis, and semi-structured interviews, it informed the choice to look into absenteeism, management styles, and accountability. In the course of the investigation, the framework helped to categorise management techniques and assess how they affected attendance regulations. It became evident how different public administration ideologies affect absence patterns by using this lens to the analysis of the data, guaranteeing a systematic and theoretically supported approach.

5.3 Presentation of themes

I employed semi-structured interviews, observation, and document analysis to gather data for the research study "Exploring the dynamics that contribute to unexcused lecturer absenteeism in CLCs centres in the Johannesburg metropolitan municipality". The study was carried out in three Community Learning Centres (CLCs) which were less than eight (8) kilometres from each other. In each CLC centre, the centre manager, two lecturers and two students were interviewed. I observed the operational processes in each centre for sixteen (16) days, spending three hours a day in each centre. The following documents were analysed by the researcher during the visits, the time book, and the leave policy file. During the interview, observation and document analysis stage, I was guided by the interview guides. Interview Guide for Centre Managers (Appendix F), Interview guide for lecturers (Appendix G), Interview guide for Students (Appendix H, Document analysis schedule (Appendix I) and Observational Schedule (Appendix J). I grouped the shared responses from the semi-structured interviews for logical data analysis. Observational and document analysis findings from the three (3) Community Learning Centres were also grouped for analysis and discussions. Data were grouped into various themes. The responses from the interviews, findings from

the observation and document analysis led to the emergence of the following themes and codes:

Table: 5.1 Main themes and codes that emerged from the data.

THEMES	SUB-THEMES	CODES
Theme 1	Sub themes	PCLA
Personal causes of lecturer absenteeism	➤ Leave patterns and trends ➤ Health and personal issues	
Theme 2		SECLA
Socio-Economic causes of lecturer absenteeism	➤ Pay day leisure and extended weekends	
Theme 3		ICLA
Institutional causes of lecturer absenteeism	➤ Unsupportive working environment ➤ Policy awareness, understanding and discrepancies	
Theme 4		AILASP
Academic Impact of lecturer absenteeism on students' performance	➤ Instructional disruption ➤ Learning out comes and achievement gaps	
Theme 5		SCLA
Strategies to curb lecturer absenteeism	➤ Leadership capacity building ➤ Policy adherence and accountability ➤ Institutional intervention and support	
Theme 6		RCMT
Role of centre management team	➤ Attendance oversight and accountability ➤ Teacher capacity development ➤ Collaborative leadership and lecturer relations	

5.3.1 Theme 1: Personal causes of lecturer absenteeism

5.3.1.1 Sub-theme 1: Leave patterns and trends

Lecturer absenteeism at ACET centres is primarily driven by illness-related issues and family responsibility leave, as reflected in both interview data and document analysis. These two types of leave are most commonly used by lecturers, with certain leave patterns and trends becoming apparent across different centres.

Centre managers noted that the two most common reasons for lecturer absenteeism were sick leave and family responsibility leave. CM A explained: *“Yes, usually it's family responsibility and sick leave. Those are the two types that we usually experience. However, there are times of exams when people also take study leaves as well, because it's also catered for in the policy.”* CM B reinforced this, stating: *“The common one would be the normal sick leave, followed by family responsibility.”*

A more specific focus on sick leave was provided by CM C: *“More culprits here is the sick leave. You know with the sick leave, the policy says if you are sick for one day, you don't need a doctor's sick note. So, you cannot tell if that person is sick or not. Lecturers are aware that one day off does not need a sick note. This pattern is common to few lecturers.”*

Lecturers echoed similar experiences in their responses. CA-L1 mentioned: *“On my side, I take a sick leave. Sometimes I do take one-day sick. But when it is more than two days, I come with the proof from the doctor. That is the one that I normally take. Other lecturers usually take the same leave, sick leave. Even if it is a one-day leave, we do fill in the leave forms.”* This comment emphasizes that while some lecturers follow the procedure for longer absences, short-term sick leave remains prevalent.

Other lecturers also confirmed the prevalence of sick leave and family responsibility leave. CB-L2 stated: *“It is sick leave and family responsibility leave.”* Similarly, CC-T2 highlighted: *“Sick leave, some lecturers take maternity and the family responsibilities leaves.”*

Lecturer absenteeism was primarily caused by sick leave and family responsibility leave, with other types of absence being far less common, according to interview data validated by document analysis. Since there is no verification procedure in place, there is a significant risk of abuse and increased absenteeism, which makes the policy permitting short-term sick leave without paperwork vulnerable to exploitation. An analysis of time books and leave records revealed that leave was often taken without formal authorisation or valid medical certification. Interview responses confirmed the absence of a structured verification process, as reflected in the inconsistent documentation and inadequate follow-up found in the reviewed records.

Teaching may be disrupted, student performance may suffer, and colleagues who have to cover for missing lecturers may have to put in more effort, which could have an adverse effect on their own performance. Further contributing to absence dynamics, is the use of family responsibility leave, even if it is usually utilised for personal or family emergencies. Trends in absenteeism varied between centres, with some centres experiencing more absenteeism during specific periods, such as exam times. One centre, for example, showed a marked increase in the use of "other leaves" in the later months of the year. This shift implies that absenteeism is influenced by a complex interplay of personal, familial, and institutional factors. An analysis of absenteeism patterns, based on both interview responses and attendance records, revealed consistent trends among participants. Observational methods, provided direct, immediate insights into the behaviours and contextual factors contributing to absenteeism. The qualitative data indicated that personal stress, particularly during examination periods, alongside pressing family obligations such as caring for ill relatives or attending funerals toward the latter part of the academic year, were frequently cited as key reasons for absenteeism. These self-reported explanations were corroborated by the documented attendance data, suggesting a strong convergence between perceived and actual absenteeism behaviours. The triangulation of interview narratives and institutional records led to the conclusion that absenteeism in Community Learning Centres is the result of a multifaceted interaction of personal, familial and institutional factors.

Table 5.2. Monthly absentees per centre: February 2024

	CENTRE	SICKNESS	FAMILY RESPONSIBILITY	OTHER	TOTAL
1	A	3	3	-	6
2	B	2	1	-	2
3	C	4	3	-	7

Table 5.3 Monthly absentees per centre: March 2024

	CENTRE	SICKNESS	FAMILY RESPONSIBILITY	OTHER LEAVES	TOTAL
1	A	2	4	-	6
2	B	2	-	-	2
3	C	3	3	-	6

Table 5.4 Monthly absentees per centre: April 2024

	CENTRE	SICKNESS	FAMILY RESPONSIBILITY	OTHER	TOTAL
1	A	4	2	-	6
2	B	2	-	3	5
3	C	3	4	-	7

Table 5.5 Monthly absentees per centre: May 2024

	CENTRE	SICKNESS	FAMILY RESPONSIBILITY	OTHER	TOTAL
1	A	2	2	-	4
2	B	3	2	3	8
3	C	2	3	-	5

5.3.1.2 Sub-theme 2: Health and personal issues

Lecturer absenteeism in CLCs centres is significantly influenced by a combination of health-related and personal issues, as reported by participants. These causes range from chronic health problems, including sickness and emergencies, to personal issues such as alcoholism, fatigue from understaffing, and family responsibilities.

CM A highlighted that alcoholism is a prominent cause of absenteeism, stating: *“Right, thanks. There are two main causes of this absenteeism. What I've noticed, number one, is alcoholism. For a couple of times, I had about three lecturers who were requesting to be referred to the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) for help. So, I've done that. I don't know what stage they are in, but alcoholism is the main cause and fatigue as well because you'll realise that this centre has a smaller number of lecturers.”* This comment points to alcoholism as an ongoing issue affecting some lecturers, with interventions being sought, although the outcomes of these referrals remain unclear. Fatigue due to understaffing is also mentioned, suggesting that the workload in smaller centres may exacerbate absenteeism.

CM C echoed similar concerns, noting that both illness and family commitments are the leading causes of absenteeism: *“Okay. Thank you for allowing me to be part of your research study and about the question there are various reasons. Some are valid reasons; some are not valid reasons. The main reasons that contribute to unexcused lecturer absenteeism are illness and family commitment, so these are the main reasons that lead to unexcused teacher absenteeism.”*

It appears from the findings that both valid and invalid reasons can have an impact on educator absenteeism. The participant does, however, mostly blame illness and family obligations for unexcused absences, suggesting that these personal challenges frequently cause educators to skip work without permission. This viewpoint might suggest that lecturers take unexcused leave because of unforeseen personal challenges, but it doesn't specifically address whether job conditions, institutional factors, or policies play a role in absenteeism. The statement “some are valid reasons; some are not valid reasons” implies that although certain absences are acceptable, others may be inappropriate or even dubious.

Lecturers themselves reported a range of reasons for their absences. CA-L1 mentioned that some lecturers fail to report their absences due to technical issues like lack of airtime or data: *“What I can say is that most of those lecturers who became absent without reporting will give us the reason that they were running short of airtime or data. That is why they did not report. Those are the reasons they give.”* This indicates that communication barriers, such as limited access to mobile data, might contribute to unreported absenteeism.

Other participants pointed to personal reasons or family emergencies as contributing factors. For example, CC-L1 highlighted alcoholism and personal issues as common reasons for absenteeism: *“One of the reasons is alcoholism and at some points personal reasons.”* CA-S1 noted that lecturers often communicate their absences due to emergencies like illness via WhatsApp: *“Okay, some lecturers do inform us via WhatsApp that they won't be coming to school because maybe they have emergencies such as having flu or maybe they have personal reasons.”*

Some lecturers were believed to be absent due to personal struggles. CB-S1 stated: *“No, I don't know. But I think maybe they have certain problems that contribute to them not coming in, I think. But we think there might be other problems.”* Similarly, CB-S2 noted that personal reasons, such as taking care of a sick child, were frequent justifications for absence: *“It depends on the lecturers, the lecturer may have a sick child, sometimes personal reasons maybe the lecturer is sick and sometimes they attend to their child's school.”*

CC-S1 shared frustration, suggesting that some lecturers may be absent without valid reasons, stating: *“Maybe one or two reasons, maybe that they got sick, maybe, or they had family emergencies, but sometimes I feel like lecturers just absent themselves just because they want to. We think sometimes they are missing.”*

This viewpoint highlights how such conduct compromises the bonds and trust among lecturers. Unexplained absences foster conflict and distrust within teams, adversely affecting morale and teamwork. It also reflects a wider concern that some lecturers

might exploit personal circumstances to rationalise their absences, thereby undermining professional relationships in the workplace.

Overall, the findings suggest that lecturer absenteeism in Community Learning Centres is influenced by a complex interplay of health issues, personal challenges, and family commitments. Alcoholism and fatigue due to understaffing stand out as key concerns, while illness, family emergencies, and lack of communication infrastructure also contribute to the absenteeism patterns. The role of personal responsibility and accountability in managing absenteeism remains a point of contention, as some lecturers are believed to exploit their personal situations, leading to unexplained or unreported absences. The need for better planning and communication systems is clear, as these could mitigate the impact of personal and health-related absenteeism.

5.3.2 Theme 2: Socio-economic causes of lecturer absenteeism

5.3.2.1 Sub-theme 1: Pay day leisure and extended weekends

A recurring pattern of lecturer absenteeism at Community Learning Centres emerges, especially on Mondays, Fridays, and around paydays, as indicated by interviews, observations, and document analysis. This absenteeism is attributed to various socio-economic factors such as personal responsibilities, social events, and the desire for post-weekend relaxation.

Centre managers (CMs) consistently report that Mondays and paydays are particularly problematic:

CM A mentions, *“On Mondays and especially if we have a long weekend... but that's what I've experienced since I came into the office. Also, on paydays. That one, I don't know how we can address it, but on paydays, people, not everyone, but some, are usually absent.”*

The findings imply that specific days especially Mondays, long weekends, and paydays have higher absenteeism rates. The participant suggests that since he began working at the office, these trends have been noticeable. The participant admitted that not all lecturers are absent on pay days, but there is a pattern of some lecturers not turning

up for work. The participant's lack of clarity over how to handle the matter further suggests that it might be a chronic or deeply rooted issue.

CM B highlights, *“The paydays of the month. It's where you can see that lecturers could be missing... They're excited because they've got the money. These are not the same people every time, today is this one, the next is the other. My thinking is that lecturers are well-informed... they won't make it consistent because they know the outcome could be hurting them.”*

The statement identifies a trend of lecturer absences around payday, implying that some lecturers decide to skip class because they are excited about getting paid. However, different lecturers take turns being absent, thus the same people do not always display this absenteeism. CM B further suggests that lecturers avoid making their absences predictable since they understand the possible repercussions of chronic absences. This claim illustrates how financial considerations affect attendance trends and raises the possibility that lecturers are purposefully avoiding disciplinary action. However, CM B did not offer any specific suggestions on how this issue could be addressed and no further probing was done by the researcher in this instance.

Similarly, CM C observes that absenteeism peaks *“Monday and the 15th of every month, which is their payday. On the first day of the week, which is Monday. They will be having reasons saying I went to the bank.”* This statement suggests that Mondays and the 15th, which correspond with payday, are when lecturer absenteeism peaks. Many lecturers blame their absenteeism on bank visits, implying that attendance was disrupted by payday.

Lecturers and students also confirm this trend. For example, CC-L1 states, *“It is common on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. Also, in June because of examinations. I think lecturers are absent on Fridays due to personal problems.”* Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays are the days when lecturer absenteeism is most common, according to the findings. June month also sees a rise in absenteeism, most likely as a result of test season. The participant also makes the speculation that lecturers might be more absent on Fridays due to personal matters. This suggests that

both individual circumstances and institutional elements (such as exams) may have an impact on absenteeism trends.

CB-L1 remarks, *“Especially Mondays. And then the week after the payday, they don’t come. Also, Friday’s lecturers don’t come. And then during payday, the whole week... More than five lecturers may be absent on the indicated days. And to be honest, it discourages us as new lecturers. I’m thinking of going to TVET or basic education.”*

The statement highlights attention to the frequent absences of lecturers, particularly on Mondays, Fridays, and during payday week, which interfere with teaching and learning, and discourage new lecturers. The participant, who is fed up with the current situation, thinks about switching from AET to TVET or basic education. This raises concerns around attendance control and employee morale in Community Learning Centres. Several participants suggested that enhancing staff morale and reducing absenteeism could be accomplished by aligning working conditions more closely with those of traditional schools, particularly concerning working hours.

The cyclical nature of this absenteeism creates a predictable pattern, undermining the learning environment. The widespread absenteeism on Mondays and Fridays, compounded by the extra absenteeism surrounding paydays, reflects a broader socio-economic reality where lecturers may prioritise personal and social activities over professional responsibilities. These findings point to weak systems of monitoring and accountability in the centres, leading to reduced instructional quality. Interestingly, even though absenteeism is often excused as a personal issue, its consistency and impact on both teaching and student motivation suggest systemic challenges. Many lecturers face challenging working conditions, such as inadequate infrastructure and a lack of resources. As a result of these structural constraints, absenteeism has shifted from being an exception to becoming a widespread and normalised practice. This is discussed further under Subtheme 1 below.

Document analysis and observational findings corroborate these views, emphasizing that Mondays, Fridays, and paydays are prime days for absenteeism, further revealing a pattern of neglect in enforcing attendance. The implications of these findings are far-

reaching, especially considering the negative effects on student performance, new lecturers' morale, and the overall productivity of the CLCs centres.

5.3.3 Institutional causes of lecturer absenteeism

5.3.3.1 Sub-theme 1: Unsupportive working environment

The findings reveal that lecturer absenteeism in Community Learning Centres is intricately linked to an unsupportive working environment, which manifests in excessive workloads, poor infrastructure, and unfair working conditions. These institutional challenges negatively impact lecturers' motivation, morale, and overall commitment to their duties.

CM A highlighted the issue of understaffing, stating: *“We need more lecturers in our centre so that they can share the amount of work that we are faced with. So, we are kind of like overloading others. Yes, that's the complaint that I'm getting all the time. Fatigue is another main cause because they are being overworked. Last year when we closed in December, I decided to call a meeting just to see how we can help those who feel overworked.”*

While the centre manager's decision to call a meeting indicates an awareness of the problem and a proactive attempt to address concerns, short-term fixes may not be sufficient to address the long-term issues posed by understaffing without structural interventions like hiring more lecturers. The centre manager statement highlights the significant impact of understaffing on both workload distribution and lecturer well-being. Lack of lecturers results in an unequal division of responsibilities, forcing existing staff to take on excessive workloads. Over loading lecturers with work causes fatigue and diminished morale, which may contribute to reduced effectiveness in teaching and a higher likelihood of absenteeism.

Infrastructure challenges were also identified as a major factor contributing to absenteeism. CM B explained: *“The reasons could be different. One would be that we are using host schools. Since we are using host schools, sometimes when we come, we find that the classrooms that we are using are still occupied. Sometimes learners*

are still busy in the classes. So, for that reason, lecturers sometimes lose the energy to be always on time. If that thing goes for a long time without being attended to by our superiors, I'd say the main reason would be the lack of infrastructure. So, lecturers take advantage that the regulations are not that tight. So, they can just abscond."

This problem has a variety of causes. The fact that centres operate inside host schools is one significant element. Teaching and learning time is frequently disturbed by these circumstances, and lecturers become less motivated to attend to their work. The participant further pointed out that inadequate infrastructure may be the root cause of these issues if they continue without management's action. Additionally, some lecturers take advantage of the lax enforcement of policies, which allows them to skip class without facing consequences.

Unfair working conditions further exacerbate lecturer dissatisfaction. CB-L2 pointed out the disparity in teaching hours among staff, remarking: *"Most of the time, in terms of my reflection, first things first, the working conditions are not conducive for the lecture. But also, our hours are not the same, like others have three (3) hours, six (6) hours, and others have eight (8) hours. So obviously, that is also discouraging. And one should be honest the system is not fair. So, your hours are not the same. Most of the people who get eight (8) hours are our supervisors."*

This statement highlights how unhappy lecturers are with their working conditions and how unjust they think the workload distribution is. The lecturers are worried that the workplace is unsuitable for teaching could be a sign of problems like low institutional support, a lack of resources, or inadequate facilities. They also highlight differences in working hours, pointing out that some lecturers put in three, six, or eight hours a day, and they imply that managers are more likely to be given more hours. The arrangement may advantage individuals in higher positions, which could cause animosity among lecturers with fewer hours. This unequal allocation is perceived as demoralising and unfair.

The findings suggest that absenteeism is also facilitated by weak enforcement of regulations. CM B noted that the lack of stringent policies allows lecturers to abscond without facing significant consequences: *"Lecturers take advantage that the regulations*

are not that tight. So, they can just abscond.” This lax regulatory environment compounds the problem, as it undermines accountability and encourages absenteeism. Institutional factors like excessive workloads, poor infrastructure, unjust working conditions, and lax enforcement of regulations are the main causes of lecturer absenteeism in CLCs. The heavy schedule, which includes administrative responsibilities, makes it challenging for lecturers to regularly attend classes. Additionally, insufficient infrastructure and a lack of necessary resources result in an ineffective learning environment that deters lecturers from regularly attending. Lecturers' dedication to their jobs is further undermined by unfair distribution of working hours, working conditions, such as inadequate support and unfavourable working surroundings. By permitting absences to continue unnoticed, lax enforcement of attendance rules makes the issue worse. A newly appointed lecturer raised this concern, expressing his dissatisfaction with the lack of enforcement. The participant further indicated a desire to transfer to a Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) college, where he believes greater accountability is upheld.

5.3.3.2 Sub-theme 2: Policy awareness, understanding and discrepancies

The opinions expressed by both centre managers (CMs) and lecturers reveal a general awareness of the leave policy and its role in managing absenteeism. The policy outlines specific procedures for requesting leave, including the requirement for prior authorization, the presentation of supporting documentation, and compliance with relevant employment laws, such as the Basic Conditions of Employment Act. However, while the policy's existence and the expectations it sets are widely acknowledged, there are notable discrepancies in its application, as revealed through document analysis., which raise concerns about consistency and enforcement. The absence of supporting evidence for certain leave entries in the attendance registers raises concerns about consistency and compliance with established leave policies.

Centre managers demonstrate a clear understanding of the policy's provisions. CM A states, *“A leave policy is a policy or rather a document that regulates absenteeism. So, this is a document that outlines how people should be absent if they want to be absent or how we should handle absenteeism.”* CM B elaborates further, explaining the process: *“The policy that we have here is that a lecturer who needs to be absent should*

approach the office and apply for leave in time before he or she takes leave. Unless it's an emergency whereby the teacher may be unable to or was unable to know beforehand that they will not be able to go to work. But otherwise, there's a leave form that they must fill in. And when they come, they must bring the evidence of the reasons. The reasons will be attached to the leave form and be submitted to the department."

The finding suggest that lecturers must formally request leave in advance by applying to the office in compliance with the policies of the institution. An exemption might be given, nonetheless, in situations involving unanticipated emergencies where previous notice is not feasible. When lecturers return, they must fill out a leave application and submit documentation of their absence if the leave was not pre-approved. The relevant department then receives the completed leave form and the required paperwork for processing. This process guarantees adherence to institutional rules while permitting emergency flexibility. However, the implementation was found to be inconsistent across centres. In some cases, procedures were followed strictly, while in others, absences were tolerated without proper documentation or accountability, leading to confusion and unequal treatment. It also permits appropriate documentation and supervision to track leave patterns and guarantee equity in leave authorisations.

CM C adds that the policy is informed by the Basic Conditions of Employment Act, noting, *"Yes, we do have the leave policy that is informed by the Basic Conditions of Employment Act. The leave policy states the types of leaves that a lecturer qualifies for. Lecturers are reminded of the leave policy at the beginning of the year, to make sure they're still aware of what is expected from them in terms of complying with the policy."* This demonstrates a commitment to ensuring that staff remain informed about the policy, particularly regarding the types of leave available and the need for adherence to set procedures.

Lecturers, too, are generally familiar with the leave policy and its key provisions. For example, CA-L1 mentions, *"A leave policy for lecturers is to address the type of leave that they must take. This means we have got different types of leaves; we have sick leave, and we also have paternity leave. This leave is called unpaid leave. If a person decides to take unpaid leave, one must wait for the approval from the top management*

to approve that unpaid leave.” Similarly, CC-L1 confirms that the policy stipulates, *“If a lecturer is absent for three (3) days or more, they should provide evidence.”*

This statement describes the leave policy for lecturers, highlighting the many leave options, such as paternity and sick leave. It states that the manager must approve unpaid leave before it may be issued. Furthermore, the policy requires lecturers to present proof of absence if they miss three or more days of work. This implies a structured approach to leave management, guaranteeing responsibility and compliance with institutional policies.

Despite the widespread awareness of the policy, discrepancies emerge in its implementation. CB-L1 observes, *“At the beginning of every year, the centre manager updates us or reminds us of the leave policy for lecturers. I know that after you've been absent for over fourteen (14) days, which is called absconding, you're automatically fired. That's the leave policy, but they are not doing it. And again, if you are absent for more than two (2) days, you need to come and sign the leave form, and then you need to produce a medical certificate.”* This statement highlights a significant concern: while the policy mandates specific actions, such as signing leave forms and submitting medical certificates, the enforcement of these provisions is not always consistent. CB-L1's comment suggests that there is a gap between policy expectations and actual practice, particularly regarding the handling of prolonged absences and disciplinary measures for non-compliance. The document analysis findings, which showed that leave was routinely taken without formal approval or a legitimate medical certification, reinforce this issue. The examined time books and leave policy files revealed inconsistent leave application processes and inadequate documentation, supporting the idea that institutional procedures are frequently disregarded.

This variance in the application of the leave policy points to an inconsistency in enforcing accountability. Although both centre managers and lecturers are generally knowledgeable about the policy, the disparities in how it is enforced indicate weaknesses in monitoring and compliance. The inconsistency in disciplinary actions, such as the lack of follow-through on the "absconding" rule, can lead to a sense of impunity among staff, which, in turn, undermines the effectiveness of the policy in managing absenteeism.

Overall, while there is a shared understanding of the leave policy, its inconsistent implementation suggests a need for more robust enforcement mechanisms and a clearer approach to ensuring compliance. The policy itself appears sound, but its impact on absenteeism may be limited by lapses in accountability, which could contribute to ongoing challenges in managing lecturer absenteeism at CLCs centres.

5.3.4 Theme 4: Academic impact of lecturer absenteeism on student performance

Lecturer absenteeism at Community Learning Centres has significant implications for both the academic progression of students and the operational efficacy of the centres. The study highlights two primary consequences: instructional disruptions and the widening of achievement gaps, both of which are detrimental to the students' learning experiences and outcomes.

5.3.4.1 Sub-theme 1: Instructional disruption

The results reveal that lecturer absenteeism at CLCs centres leads to substantial instructional disruptions, affecting curriculum delivery, student motivation, and overall learning progress. While some lecturers attempt to mitigate the effects of their absence by using communication platforms like WhatsApp to share work, this approach does not fully compensate for the absence of face-to-face instruction.

CM A explains the challenges: *"It is very bad because look, we do not only serve the immediate community, which is around us. We also serve people who are coming from other places. So, you find that they don't even know that the teacher will be absent, and they will come here and complain. So, catching up becomes a problem for them."* This highlights how lecturer absence can cause frustration, particularly for students who may have travelled long distances and are then unable to continue their studies as planned. CM C also highlights the immediate impact on students: *"Obviously when a lecturer is absent, students are not attended. So, they get behind with their schoolwork."* The ripple effect of such disruptions is evident in the increasing difficulty of catching up with the curriculum, leading to frustration and loss of morale among students. CC-L1 supports this view, noting, *"It affects the finishing up of the curriculum. Every day that*

is missed, means that the lecturer should catch up. And it becomes some form of discouragement for our students. The more you become absent, the more they become discouraged, and they stay at home, whatever the case." This sentiment is echoed by other respondents who observed that frequent lecturer absences led to decreased student attendance and a growing disconnection from the learning process.

Despite attempts to engage students remotely, such as through WhatsApp messages, the lack of consistent lecturer presence disrupts the flow of lessons and ultimately impacts student retention.

As CC-L2 points out, *"Students will be left behind with their syllabus. Again, they might decide not to come to school because the lecturers are not there."* The observational findings also reinforce these insights, showing that when lecturers are absent, students often resort to loitering or disrupting other classes, exacerbating the negative effects of absenteeism on the overall learning environment.

5.3.4.2 Sub-theme 2: Learning outcomes and achievement gaps

Lecturer absenteeism not only affects instructional continuity but also contributes to significant achievement gaps and deteriorating learning outcomes. CM A highlights the broader impact on the operational stability of the centre, noting, *"The impact is very negative. So, in this centre, I'm just concerned, that we have a shortage of lecturers. It takes a very long time to get one lecturer. It took me a long time to replace lecturers who left here some time ago."* This shortage creates a situation where learning gaps become entrenched, as students are left without consistent instruction.

CM B expands on this, explaining how absenteeism leads to student attrition: *"It impacts negatively that the number of students drops most of the time. If we have learners who are unattended, they lose hope and they start to go away themselves, to abscond themselves. Because some of them are elderly people. Some of them are working. Some of them, they've got to walk long distances or to travel long distances. So, they cannot come to school only to find that lecturers are not there."* The long distances that many students travel to attend classes only to find that lecturers are absent further exacerbates the sense of frustration and disengagement.

In the context of absenteeism, the lack of lecturer supervision results in further disruptions. As CM C remarks, *“Then the issue will be controlling those students who will be making noise outside. If there is no lecturer, unattended students end up disrupting other classes as well.”* This chaotic atmosphere affects not only the students who are left unattended but also those in other classes, creating a ripple effect of disruption throughout the centre.

The impact on student learning outcomes is starkly visible. CC-S1 reflects on the personal toll of these disruptions, saying, *“I wake up to come to school, only to come here and sit. There is no learning. It becomes a problem when I must write my test because I didn’t learn as the teachers were absent. Other classes are even further than us in certain subjects. And I think we’re falling back and that stresses me out because I need to do what I want to do.”* This comment illustrates the psychological and academic strain on students who feel the consequences of missed lessons acutely, particularly when it comes to assessments and examinations.

According to observational data, the general learning environment and student involvement at ACET centres are significantly disrupted by lecturers' absences. Without organised instruction, pupils lack direction, which causes many to wander around or act disruptively, while very few try self-directed learning. This lack of organised instruction, lowers morale, promotes disengagement, and impedes academic progress. It is typified by the absence of scheduled learning activities, clear directions, and academic supervision. Persistent absences cause instability, lower student motivation, and higher dropout rates in addition to wasted instructional time. Although this study did not collect specific data on learner dropouts, the attendance registers showed frequent lecturer absences. This supports existing research linking teacher absenteeism to poor learning outcomes. It further erodes the academic ethos of the institution by undermining discipline because the lack of authoritative figures allows misbehaviour to go unpunished. During my unobtrusive observation, I noted that frequent absences caused instability and lowered student motivation. With fewer lecturers available, supervision was limited, leading to increased misbehaviour among students.

Additionally, when lecturers are absent, students lose faith in the educational system because repeated interruptions show that the lecturers are not interested in listening to their needs. Although not all students explicitly stated this, it can be inferred from the recurring expressions of frustration and disengagement that frequent lecturer absenteeism may contribute to diminished confidence in the educational system. The cycle of poor retention and academic underperformance could be perpetuated if students cease taking part altogether. Therefore, it is essential to handle lecturer absenteeism in order to maintain a structured, orderly, and academically productive classroom environment as well as to deliver information. Reducing lecturer absenteeism is critical to ensuring effective teaching and maintaining a disciplined, productive classroom environment. However, simply stressing attendance is insufficient when absenteeism stems from systemic issues like heavy workloads and lack of support. Implementing better workload management can help address these root causes and enable lecturers to perform their duties consistently.

5.3.5 Theme 5: Strategies to curb lecturer absenteeism in community learning centres

The Centre Management Teams (CMTs) at Community Learning Centres utilize a range of strategies to address lecturer absenteeism. These strategies include a combination of disciplinary actions, encouragement, and reminders about leave policies. While these efforts have had some success, their effectiveness is limited by institutional constraints, such as insufficient funding, and the need for more significant intervention from higher authorities, particularly the adoption of a “no work, no pay” rule to ensure greater accountability. The problems of understaffing and structural inefficiencies causing excessive workloads continue to persist. What is particularly concerning is that most solutions emphasise personal accountability rather than confronting deeper institutional flaws. Although the lecturers did not prioritise teamwork or sharing tasks, these methods are still worth exploring as potential ways to manage workload and decrease absenteeism.

5.3.5.1 Sub-theme 1: Leadership capacity building

The results indicate that CMTs adopt a multi-faceted approach to managing absenteeism, involving both formal disciplinary measures and more supportive interventions. Centre Management Teams (CMTs) primarily concentrate on addressing absenteeism at the individual level, employing personalised interventions such as counselling, referrals, and disciplinary actions. However, their approach lacks systemic solutions, which would require broader institutional changes, including improvements in staffing, resource allocation, and consistent policy implementation across the centres.

CM A describes how the disciplinary committee plays an active role in addressing absenteeism: *“Okay, number one, this is the centre, we have the Centre Management Team (CMT) which has a disciplinary committee that attends to cases like this. Number two, I've indicated that if we identify that there is a problem like a person coming to us to say I am an alcoholic, we always refer them to the relevant to get help. So, the CMT is hands-on on this issue. Things have improved for now compared to the time I came in.”*

The statement emphasises how the Centre Management Team (CMT) takes the initiative to deal with disciplinary matters and assist lecturers who are dealing with personal struggles like alcoholism. The participant clarifies that the CMT deals with situations of misbehaviour, including absenteeism, through its disciplinary committee, making sure that the proper measures are implemented. Furthermore, lecturers who are dealing with personal challenges such as alcoholism are referred to appropriate support units by the Centre Management Team (CMT). This reflects an effort to address individual cases on a personal level. However, this approach does not tackle broader structural issues, such as understaffing and inadequate resources, which remain unaddressed. The management team's active participation in upholding accountability and providing required interventions is shown in this dual approach of support and discipline. The participant also mentions that things have gotten better since they started their job, which implies that the CMT's work has had a beneficial effect on lecturer attendance and discipline.

CM B adds that the centre has implemented awareness measures, such as memos that inform lecturers about potential consequences for absenteeism: *"We have been informed about the memo that came that talks about lecturer absenteeism in class. That made them aware of the possibility of them being punished, for being absent. And that they will face some disciplinary action if they are absent without permission in classes. That's what the department has done."* These reminders emphasize the seriousness of absenteeism and the consequences for non-compliance, which can help deter absenteeism to some extent.

CM C highlights a more empathetic approach, emphasizing discussions and support before taking formal actions: *"Well before we implement policy, we use 'ubuntu' where we have discussions and try to find out and assist the teacher to find out the best possible solution of solving whatever problem that leads to absenteeism. But if it does not improve, then we implement the leave policy of the government."* This approach reflects the balance CMTs try to strike between compassion and enforcement.

Despite these varied approaches, some participants suggest that the CMTs are limited in their ability to address absenteeism on their own. CB-L1 comments on the challenges of addressing absenteeism within the scope of the centre's authority: *"There's nothing they can do because they're just teachers, like us. These are matters that can only be attended to, as I've said, by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET). And even the provision of teaching and learning material is very limited. The centre management team is only there as a framework for the authority. But anything beyond that, I don't think. The issue is this matter is bigger than the centre. They're only effective when it comes to the execution of formal duties."*

Lecturers' and the centre management team's (CMT) attitude of helplessness in tackling more general systemic problems in Community Learning Centres is reflected in this finding. The participant makes the argument that the CMT is essentially a formal authority structure with little actual decision-making capacity outside of standard administrative duties. They emphasise that important issues like policy modifications and the supply of instructional materials are under the Department of Higher Education and Training's (DHET) purview, which suggests bureaucratic restrictions and little institutional autonomy at the central level. The assertion confirms the idea that CLCs

operate in a constrictive environment with limited autonomy to bring about significant change.

In contrast, CC-L1 asserts that CMTs can have a greater impact if they are more active in their roles: *“I think they can play a role if they are active in their activities. Yes, because they can be able to intervene in such cases. They should implement a no work no pay rule.”* This highlights the importance of proactive leadership and suggests that a more hands-on approach from the CMTs, including stricter policies like “no work, no pay,” could lead to greater accountability and reduced absenteeism. Individual absenteeism is addressed by proactive leadership by CMTs; however, these initiatives have little effect if systemic problems like understaffing and a lack of resources are not addressed. Effective absenteeism reduction requires a combination of increased institutional assistance from DHET and a personal accountability strategy.

Other lecturers, like CA-L1, suggest that simple reminders and communication about the leave policy can help curb absenteeism: *“They can reduce lecturer absenteeism by talking to them and by reminding them about the leave policy. The centre management team reminds us of the leave policy if there's a tendency for people to be absent. They always tell us not to forget the leave policy.”* This consistent reinforcement of the leave policy serves as a preventive measure against absenteeism.

The strategies employed by CMTs vary, with some focusing on disciplinary actions and policy enforcement, while others emphasize supportive measures and open communication. These tactics work on a centre-wide and individual basis. While wellness check-ins and staff meetings are implemented throughout the centre to encourage attendance, disciplinary procedures are directed at individual lecturers. However, the overall effectiveness of these strategies is hindered by institutional limitations, such as funding and a lack of authority to implement broader changes. The addition of more proactive leadership, along with external support from DHET, is seen as essential for improving accountability and reducing absenteeism in the long term. To effectively monitor absenteeism on an ongoing basis across Community Learning Centres (CLCs), the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) could implement a centralised digital system for managing leave and attendance. Such a system would enhance accountability and transparency by enabling the identification

of absenteeism patterns and ensuring consistent adherence to leave policies across all centres.

5.3.5.2 Sub-theme 2: Policy adherence and accountability

The results indicate that while most lecturers generally adhere to the leave policy by applying for leave in advance, some hesitancy remains in promptly signing leave papers, particularly in non-emergency situations. This sporadic reluctance to fully comply with the policy is reflected in the interview responses and document analysis.

CM A describes the situation, noting that while the policy requires prior approval for leave, there are instances where this is not always possible: *“Yes, they do. It's just that in other instances, you'll find that the policy expects that leave should be applied and approved before it is taken, but there are instances where that is just not possible. But still, the policy accommodates all that. So, we try that every absenteeism is in line with this regulatory policy.”* This statement highlights an understanding of the policy's flexibility in emergency situations but acknowledges that compliance is not always perfect.

CM B emphasises that lecturers generally comply with the leave policy, as it is a requirement for taking leave: *“Yes, they do. They comply with the leave policy because anyway, the leave policy, like I mentioned, requires them to apply beforehand. And they go when they have already been granted the leave days.”* This response reinforces the idea that the policy is followed when leave is planned and granted.

However, CM C expresses some concern about inconsistent compliance, acknowledging that while some lecturers follow the policy, others do not: *“At a minimal stage because the leave policy says you must apply for it. It must be approved. There is compliance, but not at a satisfactory level. There are those who comply and some don't. The policy says you must apply.”* This suggests that adherence to the policy is not universal and that certain lecturers may not prioritize following the procedure.

Lecturers' perspectives also reflect a mix of compliance levels. CA-L2 states: *“We do comply. Although not all of us, but most of us, we do comply. Let's say, for example, that we have a lecturer who's pregnant, who's expecting. The lecturer will apply for*

maternity leave.” This response highlights that while there is general compliance, certain personal circumstances may require more flexibility or a different level of adherence to the policy.

CB-L2 also discusses the mixed compliance among lecturers: *“Some they do and some they don’t follow. For instance, those who follow, when they go for maternity leave, family responsibility, and so forth, they apply for a leave. I’ve never applied; I’ve never had anything that needed a leave.”* This comment suggests that while some lecturers follow the policy, others may not feel the need to or perhaps do not face situations that require them to take leave.

CC-L2 echoes the idea of compliance but also points out the occasional delays in completing leave forms, particularly in emergency situations: *“Yes, we do comply. We must report being absent before. When it happens that you have an emergency while you are home, you wait until you come to school and sign the leave forms. You would have reported that something happened.”* This response reflects a pragmatic approach to policy adherence, where reporting is done promptly, but completing the forms may be delayed due to the nature of the emergency.

The document analysis findings further support these views, revealing that all three centres have secure administrative offices where important documents, such as leave policy files, are safely stored. Some lecturers consistently adhere to the standard procedure of completing leave forms, showing a commitment to policy compliance. However, there are those lecturers who may struggle to complete the forms on time, which could be due to the perception of administrative tasks as less urgent compared to teaching duties.

These findings suggest that while lecturers generally recognize the importance of adhering to the leave policy, the hesitancy to complete leave applications on time may reflect a cultural norm that prioritizes teaching responsibilities over administrative tasks. This delay, though not widespread, may indicate a lack of urgency or a perceived burden associated with the process. Nonetheless, the dedication of the administrative teams to maintaining order and ensuring that required documentation is accessible

suggests that the issue lies more in process adherence than in serious violations of the leave policy.

5.3.5.3 Sub-theme 3: Institutional intervention and support

Participants in the study identified insufficient follow-up and a lack of accountability, particularly regarding medical leave requests, as significant factors contributing to unexcused lecturer absenteeism. To address absenteeism more effectively, participants recommended increased surprise visits from officials and greater investment in employee wellbeing.

CM A points to the problem of missing documentation, stating: *“Yes, you know, the challenge that I've noticed is you find people being absent, and then for the number of days that they are expected to submit a medical report as to their whereabouts or evidence to support their whereabouts, and they don't submit. And we submit the leave forms without attachments and expect that they will attend to that.”* This highlights a key issue: When absenteeism goes unchecked and documentation, such as medical reports, is not submitted, this suggests a lack of follow-up and accountability.

CM B echoes the call for better oversight, suggesting that unannounced visits from officials could help curb absenteeism: *“I think more visits from the officials, from the department unannounced could help in reducing unexcused lecturer absenteeism, more especially around the paydays.”* The mention of paydays highlights a known trend of increased absenteeism during these periods, suggesting that surprise visits could serve as a deterrent.

CM C also stresses the importance of institutional support, particularly with respect to lecturer wellbeing, stating: *“When we make recommendations to the department, they must implement those recommendations. So, the department must invest a lot in people's welfare in the workplace, I think so far, they are not doing enough. There is a unit that deals with welfare issues, but they are not effective. This may be due to the way our sector is structured.”* These findings suggest that staff shortages force existing lecturers to take on excessive workloads, which negatively affects their health. While a welfare unit exists, its perceived ineffectiveness, likely due to structural limitations,

further contributes to staff stress. Consequently, job overload, highlighted by managers, is both a symptom and a result of inadequate institutional support. Addressing staffing challenges must therefore form a central component of any broader strategy aimed at improving lecturer well-being within the CLCs sector.

The responses from participants suggest a structural weakness in the management of lecturer absenteeism, especially in terms of accountability and follow-up. When required documents, such as medical reports, are not submitted, absenteeism can go unnoticed, signalling a lack of enforcement mechanisms. The call for more surprise visits by officials, particularly during pay periods, highlights the need for more proactive oversight. Furthermore, the feedback about insufficient investment in lecturer welfare highlight the importance of better sector-wide management of lecturer wellbeing to mitigate absenteeism. This suggests that absenteeism may stem from broader systemic issues, including heavy workloads, lack of teaching resources, and limited opportunities for collaboration and support among lecturers. These concerns indicate that absenteeism could be reduced with improved institutional intervention, stricter enforcement of policies, and greater attention to lecturers' overall welfare.

5.3.6 Role of centre management team in curbing lecturer absenteeism

5.3.6.1 Sub-theme 1: Attendance oversight and accountability

Interviews, observations, and document analysis demonstrate discrepancies in administrative oversight of lecturer attendance throughout the centres. While some managers overlooked routine attendance checks, others took a more proactive approach to monitoring. On the other hand, students propose that the CMT can implement certain strategies to mitigate the challenges and improve the situation.

CB-S1 shared, *“Maybe when the lecturer is not around, they should tell us. Your lecturer is not coming. They should tell us that tomorrow they won’t be able to come.”*

CB-S2 echoed this, stating, *“Yes, I think they can manage to make lecturers come to school. They can follow up on them if they are not there.”*

The findings raise issues with communication and accountability when it comes to controlling lecturer absence. The significance of promptly informing students of lecturers' absences is one of the main points brought up, since this helps them adequately manage their academic activities. To guarantee accountability and attendance, there is also a request for greater proactive monitoring of lecturers. In order to increase transparency and reduce learning disruptions, these findings point to the necessity of better supervision and more robust communication channels between management, lecturers, and students.

CC-S1 suggested a more supportive approach: *"I feel like they can do something. I think they could offer counselling to them on their absenteeism and talk to them about what's happening. If it's personal problems, then it's personal problems. If it's work-related, then counselling, I think, is the best way to help them as well."* This comment suggests that the CMT should offer counselling to habitual absentee lecturers to address underlying personal or work-related issues. Systemic issues such as weak institutional support, inadequate staff wellness programmes, and a lack of training for managers to address absenteeism with empathy are reflected in the growing demand for counselling services from Centre Management Teams (CMTs). These structural deficiencies often leave underlying personal or workplace challenges unresolved, thereby contributing to ongoing patterns of absenteeism.

In contrast, CA-S1 commented, *"To be honest, I have never seen the manager coming to our classroom asking us, where is the lecturer? Why are you guys not in the classroom? He might be in his office. Maybe it is because he also teaches."* This suggests a lack of proactive oversight, with the manager's lecturing responsibilities potentially taking precedence over supervision duties.

CB-S1 and CB-S2 noted less frequent absenteeism, with CB-S2 observing, *"He is the manager; they might ask him why lecturers are not there. I think he checks."* This indicates some level of accountability, though it appears informal and inconsistent.

CC-S1 further noted, *"I think the manager himself; I feel like he's absent. I would say in a week; I see him at least two (2) to three (3) times. It is something like coming in and out situation. That's how I saw him doing it. I've never seen him come to class to*

monitor.” This reflects perceptions of minimal and sporadic managerial presence in classrooms, suggesting that attendance monitoring was not a consistent priority.

CC-S2 added, *“They don’t care, they don’t take the responsibility to ask why this lecturer is absent, why are we not learning. They continue doing their own business.”* This further highlights a sense of managerial disengagement, allowing absenteeism to persist without accountability or alternative arrangements for lecturing continuity.

Observations supported these conclusions. At one centre, the management routinely tracked both lecturer and student attendance. During the monitoring period, no evidence of managerial oversight was discovered at the other two centres. Lecturers were regularly late, some omitted to sign the attendance register, and others recorded incorrect arrival times. Early departures were also observed, however some lecturers requested permission and signed out properly. In contrast to traditional schools, there is no formal mechanism in place to track late arrivals and early departures, exacerbating these concerns. On the other hand, document analysis revealed additional differences in monitoring techniques. For example, one centre removed the time book at 8:30 a.m., requiring latecomers to report to the manager before checking in. In contrast, the other centres permitted lecturers to sign in at any time, resulting in lack of responsibility and monitoring.

5.3.6.2 Sub-theme 2: Lecturer capacity development

The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) organizes workshops aimed at educating staff on absenteeism and leave policies. However, these workshops are typically held once a year and have varying levels of impact on participants' behaviours. Centre managers shared their experiences with these annual workshops:

CM A explained: *“Yes, I wouldn’t say often, but they do it annually. I have been in the office for three (3) years now. Every year, DHET organizes workshops. I remember this year; they asked me to bring one administrative officer and one lecturer. I attended the event last year and did the same this year.”* This response illustrates that the workshops are regular, although their frequency may vary slightly from year to year.

CM B also noted: *“I would say annually. I remember that this year, just a day before we reopened, we had such a workshop. And then we also had some gentlemen from the labour who were elaborating on the leave form.”* This demonstrates that DHET remains active in attempting to address absenteeism, providing timely interventions before critical periods, such as reopening.

CM C added: *“Every year, DHET sends us people from the labour unit to train us on the leave policy, but these employees or teachers are also unionized. Their unions also conduct meetings and workshops to train them on the issues. The union also closed the gap in terms of awareness of the labour policy.”* This suggests that the unions play a complementary role in reinforcing the training, further emphasizing the need for collaborative efforts between DHET and union representatives.

Lecturer feedback also reflected varying experiences with the workshops. CA-L1 mentioned: *“They do organize those workshops. Normally, it happens once a year or when they see that people are just taking their leave unnecessarily, they come here and talk about how the leave works. Their workshops are effective, however, sometimes after the workshops, people go back to their normal behaviour of being absent unnecessarily.”* While these workshops were recognized as effective in raising awareness about leave policies, the short-term behavioural change was noted as insufficient, indicating the need for follow-up measures or more frequent interventions. CB-L2, with 14 years of experience, remarked: *“I only remember the department coming once, if I remember correctly, although I wasn’t present. In this 14-year period, that’s the only time they came.”* This indicates that, for some lecturers, the workshops are a rare occurrence, and there may be gaps in outreach or consistency.

CC-L2 reflected: *“They conduct them once a year. They lecture us on how the leave works. They talk about the importance of applying for leave. They also talk about the consequences of absenteeism.”* This highlights the key components of the workshops, focusing on leave procedures and the consequences of absenteeism.

The DHET workshops appear to be a persistent, albeit infrequent, effort to manage absenteeism by educating staff on leave policies. Although the sessions are generally effective in raising awareness, their impact on changing behaviour appears to be

limited. Even with the unions' involvement in reinforcing the training, absenteeism remains a significant challenge, indicating that a more consistent and sustained approach may be necessary to achieve lasting improvements in lecturer attendance.

5.3.6.3 Sub-theme 2: Collaborative leadership and lecturer relations

According to the research participants, mutual respect and professionalism were highlighted as the cornerstones of the relationships between centre managers and lecturers. These positive professional interactions foster a cooperative environment that aids in addressing challenges such as absenteeism.

Centre managers expressed the importance of maintaining a professional relationship with lecturers, as reflected in the words of CM A: *“The question is straightforward, professional relationship. If we keep it that way, to be professional, then things are easier to resolve. Because if you tend to become personal sometimes, then you will be taking it the wrong way. So, the relationship is good because we try to keep it professional”*. This suggests that keeping a professional relationship is the major concern. Problems are resolved much more easily when they concentrate on professionalism. Misunderstandings may occur, though, if the situation turns personal. They value professionalism, which keeps their partnership strong.

CM B emphasized: *“I think it's better if it was answered by the teachers themselves. But as far as my experience is concerned, with the group that I am with right now, we are related very well professionally in terms of respect. They respect me in terms of doing the job. When they are here, they do what they are supposed to do. And I haven't had any nasty situation where I would say teachers are not relating professionally to me. Except for the issue, the one that we are talking about, absenteeism.”*

According to this assertion, managers believe that their current group of lecturers has a respectful and positive professional relationship. When present, the lecturers seem to fulfil their duties, and the managers has not run into any significant professional disputes with lecturers. Absenteeism is the only noteworthy concern brought up, and it appears to be an exception in the otherwise professional relationship. This suggests

that absenteeism might be a persistent issue, even if it has no direct bearing on behaviour and respect for others.

CM C added: *"It's a professional relationship. It has boundaries, but also, it's an open relationship whereby if they have personal issues, they can also address them with me. My door is always open."* This reflects the balance between professionalism and open communication, creating a supportive environment for teachers while maintaining clear boundaries.

Lecturers similarly spoke to the importance of professionalism in their relationships with centre managers. CA-L1 noted: *"The centre manager has a good working relationship with the lecturers. No matter whether some are the right wings, you know everywhere there are some groups. Some don't want the centre managers. They will criticise whatever they are doing. But we do have a good relationship with the centre manager because whatever happens, he informs us in time."* This suggests that, despite occasional resistance, transparency and clear communication are vital for maintaining healthy relationships.

CB-L1 shared: *"It is very professional and there's a healthy relationship because he's open to everyone. Also, considering that before he became a centre manager, he was also part of us, he was a lecturer, so he understands our struggles. It's a very healthy relationship."* The centre manager's prior experience as a lecturer contributed to building trust and fostering a positive work environment.

CC-L1 affirmed: *"I would say it is pretty much good. I think it is good. Those lecturers who do their work properly, work well in the centre because of the good professional relationship between the centre manager and the lecturers."* This highlights the positive impact of professional relationships on teachers' engagement and performance.

Students also observed the professionalism in the relationships between centre managers and lecturers. CA-S1 mentioned: *"I would say it is good because they do communicate as lecturers. I do see the relationship; there is professionalism between them."* CB-S1 remarked: *"I don't know, but I think it's very professional because they respect each other."* CB-S2 noted: *"They are always professional because when they*

are here, you won't hear them talk about their personal life. They always talk of work." Finally, CC-S2 stated: *"I think the lecturers and the centre manager's relationship is professional, they don't discuss personal matters. They just discuss business; it is all about business."*

The findings show that lecturers and centre management have a very professional relationship. Participants emphasise how well lecturers communicate with one another, keeping a civil and productive atmosphere. The idea of professionalism in the workplace is further supported by the lack of private conversations. Furthermore, it is stated that the relationships between management and lecturers are solely work-related, guaranteeing a distinct separation of personal and professional affairs. Overall, the results indicate that the connection between lecturers and centre administration is defined by professionalism, respect for one another, and a strong work ethic.

The observations revealed that professional relationships were particularly strong in two of the centres, where regular briefing meetings were held, and all lecturers attended these sessions. This practice fostered an environment of collaboration and ensured that lecturers were well-informed and involved in decision-making processes. Despite these efforts, lecturer absenteeism remains a significant concern in these centres. This implies that deeper systemic problems such as a lack of institutional support, unfavourable working conditions, and weak policy enforcement may be the root cause of absenteeism.

5.4 Conclusion

This chapter provided an overview of the data analysis techniques, analytical methodology, and participants. Family obligations and sick leave were found to be major contributors to unexcused lecturer absenteeism in Community Learning Centres (CLCs). Absenteeism among lecturers had a major effect on operational efficiency, particularly on teaching and learning results. Lecturers' and students' frustrations with operational procedures and the Department of Higher Education and Training's (DHET) perceived lack of assistance were shared. According to Christopher Hood's public management theory, which served as the analysis's guide, organisational structures had an impact on absenteeism, and responsiveness and accountability systems were inadequate to address the problem. Using insights from Hood's framework, the study's specific findings, suggestions, and conclusions will be presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 6: FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS, LIMITATIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

6.1 Introduction

The previous chapter focused on the evidence generated from the analysis of this research study's data and the analytical strategy employed by the researcher. This chapter discusses the findings, as well as the limitations of the research. Furthermore, despite the limitations, the study proposes recommendations for the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), Centre Managers, Centre Management Teams (CMTs), and lecturers. The research study also offers recommendations for future research. This discussion aligns with the research objectives, which were to:

- To explore the contribution of personal, socio-economic, and institutional challenges to unexcused lecturer absenteeism in Community Learning Centres.
- To determine the impact these dynamics have on teaching and learning.
- To ascertain the role of centre management teams in managing dynamics of unexcused lecturer absenteeism in Community Learning Centres
- To make recommendations that address lecturer absenteeism in Community Learning Centres.

6.2 Discussion of the Findings

The occurrence of unexcused lecturer absenteeism in Community Learning Centres is influenced by a range of factors that are often interconnected. To fully understand this issue, it is essential to explore the underlying causes that drive absenteeism among lecturers in these centres. These causes can be broadly classified into three key categories: personal-related, socio-economic-related, and institutional-related causes, all of which contribute to the complex dynamics of absenteeism. Each of these categories reveals distinct yet overlapping challenges that affect lecturers' ability to fulfil their professional responsibilities. Based on Christopher Hood's public management theory (Hood, 1998), the analysis shows that absenteeism is linked to personal, socio-economic, and institutional factors. Hood's emphasis on public sector responsiveness highlights how the failure of management practices and the absence of clear

accountability mechanisms contribute to lecturer absenteeism. Moreover, the socio-economic-related causes reflect systemic issues within public institutions that affect the stability and effectiveness of the teaching workforce. This reinforces the need for reforms in management practices and policies to enhance the functioning and oversight of CLCs centres. In the subsequent sections, the personal factors that stem from individual circumstances will be examined, followed by an exploration of socio-economic pressures that hinder regular attendance. The discussion will then move to institutional challenges, including working conditions and management practices, which shape the professional environment of CLCs centres. The research findings are based on the viewpoints of the participants and directly answer the research questions, offering a thorough grasp of the underlying reasons of absenteeism and the necessity of strategic actions to reduce them.

6.2.1 Personal causes of lecturer absenteeism

6.2.1.1 Leave patterns and trends

The study findings show that leave patterns, especially sick leave and family responsibility leave, have a major impact on absenteeism in CLCs. Sick leave accounts for a significant amount of overall absenteeism, particularly short-term absences. This finding is consistent with previous research conclusions, including Mothibeli (2017), who found that the main causes of unexcused educator absenteeism were urgent personal matters, sick leave, and leave for family responsibilities. One important discovery is the widespread application of the one-day sick leave provision, which is unproven and raises questions about possible misuse of the policy. This provision may be being abused by lecturers to take time off without providing proof of illness. This statement is consistent with Al-Fudail and Mellar's (2018) assertion that educators, like all workers, have personal needs that sometimes call for one-on-one care. As a result, management finds it difficult to monitor absenteeism and maintain accountability.

Furthermore, absenteeism trends change throughout time, with higher absence rates observed during particular times. Given that lecturers are more prone to take time off during periods of extreme personal or professional stress, these variations may be linked to seasonal illnesses, particular personal problems, or work-related stress. One

centre showed a noticeable change in leave patterns, with a rise in "other leaves" in the later months. This suggests that the use of leave is flexible and subject to alter depending on a number of factors, including new personal or professional difficulties. Mampane (2013) supports this finding by pointing out that educators frequently deal with stressors like family problems, financial hardships, and the demands of constant curriculum changes. As a result, educators are more likely to miss work as they try to manage these difficulties. When formal leave categories are insufficient to suit their needs, educators may turn to other leave choices.

By demonstrating that leave patterns vary by centre and season, the study highlights the intricacy of absence. In reaction to certain situations or during particular months, some centres have a greater absence rate. The implication is that leave patterns are influenced by a combination of institutional factors, like stress or workload, and personal considerations, such family obligations or health. Therefore, a flexible and responsive approach that considers these shifting leave trends is necessary for effective absence management.

6.2.1.2 Health and personal issues

High absence rates at CLCs centres are largely caused by personal and health issues. From acute diseases to chronic health difficulties, lecturers frequently take time off for medical reasons. The study emphasises how absenteeism is influenced by personal health issues, as some lecturer's misses work frequently because of chronic illnesses. This research finding suggest that a major contributing cause to lecturer absenteeism is health-related problems, especially chronic or recurring diseases. This is particularly important when lecturers are dealing with chronic illnesses that interfere with their regular attendance at work. This conclusion is corroborated by Kwesi (2013), who points out that diseases like HIV and AIDS, in addition to other health issues, significantly contribute to lecturer absenteeism. Even while the need for sick leave in certain situations may be perfectly reasonable, it nonetheless causes interruptions in the classroom and makes it difficult to keep a regular teaching schedule.

Family obligations and health issues are two examples of personal situations that have a big impact on absenteeism. Family responsibility leave is often required for

unforeseen personal or family emergencies, such as taking care of a sick relative, attending to pressing family issues, or handling unforeseen domestic crises. Unplanned absences might occur when lecturers find it difficult to strike a balance between their personal and professional responsibilities. This conclusion is corroborated by Komoni (2015), who claims that compassionate leave, family health issues, and other familial responsibilities all play a role in unexcused educator absences, which eventually affect the continuation of teaching and learning.

Due to these erratic and even uncontrollable personal commitments, it might be challenging to anticipate or reduce absence in these situations. According to the findings, absenteeism is also influenced by personal troubles like drinking or other social problems (Mampane, 2013). Lecturers who struggle with addiction or personal crises may find it difficult to attend class regularly, which makes the absence issue worse.

The compounding effect of personal and physical problems can have a significant impact on lecturer attendance. Lecturers who frequently miss class due to family responsibilities or health issues may disrupt the flow of teaching and learning. Miller, Murnane, and Willett (2008) corroborate the conclusion that health-related issues are a major factor in lecturer absenteeism in the three Community Learning Centres examined in this study.

Lecturers may have a sustained cycle of absenteeism as a result of this combined load, as they struggle to attend work on a regular basis due to mental and physical issues. These personal problems frequently compound with institutional problems, like a lack of staff or resources, making it more difficult for educators to balance their personal struggles with their attendance (Mampane, 2013).

Christopher Hood's public management theory provides a useful framework for examining how different leave trends in community learning centres. Hierarchical systems do enforce punitive leave laws, despite the fact that bureaucratic inefficiencies sometimes delay or complicate their implementation, as the study shows. Egalitarian approaches prioritise the flexibility and well-being of lecturers, but they lack the structural enforcement necessary to effectively control lecturer absenteeism. The

findings show that a rigid, one-size-fits-all strategy is not enough for effective absence management and that a more adaptable, situation-specific strategy is needed.

6.2.2 Socio-Economic causes of lecturer absenteeism

6.2.2.1 Pay day leisure and extended weekends

The study's findings show a number of important features of lecturer absenteeism in Community Learning Centres, with a particular emphasis on the influence of payday leisure activities and socioeconomic considerations. This finding is in line with earlier studies, such as Malatjie (2022), which found that lecturer absenteeism is most prevalent on Mondays, Fridays, and paydays. Lecturers frequently utilise payday as a chance to take care of personal or family obligations that they can't do during regular workdays, such as shopping, banking, or social gatherings. When lecturers extend their weekends to accommodate recreational or necessary personal activities. According to Tshekedi (2022) absences around payday become predictable, especially on Mondays and Fridays. The aforementioned conclusion is also consistent with that of Juan, Moletsane, Netshitangani, Prinsloo, Reddy, and Van Resburg (2010), who found that educators are more likely to miss work on Mondays and Fridays in both high- and low-income countries in order to extend the weekend.

The structural difficulties in implementing attendance regulations and preserving uniformity in instruction and learning are highlighted by the cyclical and predictable character of absenteeism on these particular days. Although many lecturers use the weekend extension as a way to unwind from work-related stress (Malatjie, 2022), it interferes with the academic calendar and has a detrimental impact on students' motivation and participation. The normalisation of such absenteeism suggests a lack of effective institutional oversight, inadequate support mechanisms for staff well-being, and weak accountability structures all of which cumulatively impact the academic calendar and learner engagement.

Payday leisure is also frequently associated with socioeconomic stressors. Lecturers, especially those in lower pay levels, could utilise their income to solve past-due problems or take care of urgent commitments like visiting family members who live far away. This finding is consistent with Mashaba and Maile (2013), who pointed out that low financial incentives and insufficient resources are prevalent in many underprivileged centres and that they are a significant factor to unexcused educator absenteeism. Given the financial realities that many lecturers confront, these activities make sense, but they have unforeseen effects on how education is delivered. Despite having a personal purpose, the results also imply that this absenteeism is institutionalising. Students are not the only ones who find absence frustrating, new lecturers may become discouraged by a culture that condones such behaviour. In CLCs centres, this systemic problem makes it more difficult to deliver high-quality education. Observational data and document analysis support the high absenteeism rate around paydays, showing a recurring trend that degrades the quality of education. A lack of disciplinary actions, inadequate oversight, and inefficient monitoring mechanisms, and failure to address the problem of work-related stress resulting from a feeling of work overload and lack of sufficient support from the DHET, are some of the institutional flaws that exacerbate this trend (Brooks,2022). Absenteeism is frequently dealt with informally or inconsistently, even when it is acknowledged, which permits the behaviour to continue.

The public management theory of Christopher Hood offers an organised framework for examining absenteeism in community learning centres and demonstrates how various management theories influence leave trends. Strict policies are enforced by hierarchical models, but they are hampered by ineffective bureaucracy. Egalitarian strategies prioritise well-being but do not have any means of enforcement. Absenteeism is further sustained by institutional flaws such insufficient supervision, poor monitoring, uneven disciplinary actions and wider systemic issues outside of the learning centres that can lead to an experience of work-related stress. This dynamic, where individualist viewpoints interpret absenteeism as a personal choice, is highlighted by the Pay Day Leisure and Extended Weekends phenomenon. These findings highlight the need for a sophisticated, situation-specific approach to absence management.

6.2.3 Institutional causes of lecturer absenteeism

6.2.3.1 Policy awareness, understanding and discrepancies

Although most lectures are aware of the leave policy and how it helps control absenteeism, there are still serious issues with its inconsistent implementation. This finding supports Mothibeli's (2017) assertion that there is a significant issue with managers submitting leave requests beyond the deadline. Centre managers and lecturers are familiar with the specifics of the policy, such as the different kinds of leave, the approval procedure, and the required paperwork. The findings do, however, also show disparities in how the policy is interpreted and applied. The statement supports Nsimbini's (2024) s conclusion that institutions have policies in place to reduce educator absenteeism; the implementation process is the difficult part. Some lecturers have complained that disciplinary measures, like firing someone for avoiding leave policies, are not implemented consistently. This discrepancy raises the possibility of a weakness in the policy's implementation, which could compromise its efficacy. Lecturer absenteeism may continue if the regulation is not applied uniformly throughout since this could result in a lack of accountability.

6.2.3.2 Unsupportive working environment

The findings demonstrate the unsupportive character of the working conditions at CLCs centres by showing that a number of institutional and environmental factors influence lecturer absenteeism. This study supports Mashaba and Maile's (2013) assertion that a major contributing factor to the problem of educator absenteeism in townships and rural areas is a lack of resources and infrastructure. Absenteeism is largely caused by elements like heavy workloads, limited staffing, and bad infrastructure. Lecturers said they are overworked, which makes them tired and unhappy in their jobs. This suggests that punitive measures, such as stricter disciplinary action or a 'no work, no pay' system, are unlikely to address the root causes of absenteeism. Instead, such approaches risk intensifying stress and reinforcing feelings of being unsupported, which may further undermine morale and commitment. These difficulties are made worse by the need to use host schools and the disruptions that come with using shared infrastructure, which further lowers lecturer motivation and punctuality. The findings show that the unfair

distribution of work hours, which disproportionately benefits managers by giving them more hours than lecturers, exacerbates lecturers' complaints. This discrepancy erodes lecturers' morale by fostering a sense of unfairness and intensifying workplace conflicts. Their dedication to regular attendance is thus seriously jeopardised. These environmental stressors increase the likelihood of absenteeism by fostering disengagement in addition to contributing to discontent. This finding is consistent with Musyoki (2015), who claims that job discontent among educators and the unstable nature of their jobs are important variables that can contribute to absenteeism.

In community learning centres, the prevalence of lecturer absenteeism can be explained by the public management theory. While the egalitarian paradigm promotes teamwork, a lack of support systems encourages disengagement and raises absenteeism. Since inconsistent disciplinary actions result in non-compliance, the hierarchical approach which presumes tight policy enforcement, fails in practice. Absenteeism tendencies are eventually maintained by the unsupportive work atmosphere and lax enforcement of policies caused by these management flaws in these learning centres.

6.2.4 Impact of lecturer absenteeism on teaching and learning

6.2.4.1 Instructional disruption

Interviews and observations at Community Learning Centres have shown that lecturer absenteeism seriously disrupts the learning process. This statement supports Mampane's (2013) claim that students will be unruly and unruly when an educator is not present in the classroom or educational setting. For adult students, who frequently encounter several outside obstacles, the continuity of learning is disrupted by the absence of lecturers. A chain reaction occurs when classes are cancelled or postponed, delaying the completion of the program and leaving students unprepared for tests. Some lecturers are attempting to lessen the impact of their absence by using remote communication strategies. Nevertheless, the advantages of face-to-face interaction cannot be replicated by these techniques. Interaction and the flexibility to modify teaching strategies to meet the students' present needs are critical components of adult education efficacy that remote approaches are unable to sufficiently provide.

Furthermore, the observational data draw attention to concerns about accountability and professional dedication. The disruption is exacerbated by noncompliance with educational timetables, even when lecturers are present. The findings are supported by Banerjee, King, Orazem, and Paterno (2012), who state that that low educator attendance is linked to low student success, the consequences are severe and detrimental. This reveals a systematic problem that goes beyond physical presence and emphasises a disregard for professional standards. The quality of education provided to adult students is further reduced by such disparities in teaching methods, which also contribute to an unstructured learning environment.

6.2.4.2 Learning outcomes and achievement gaps

Due to the disruption of teaching and learning continuity, the limitation of information acquisition, and the decrease in student engagement, lecturer absenteeism significantly affects student learning outcomes and academic success. Miller (2007) backs this up by pointing out that absenteeism has a detrimental influence on both student performance and institutional efficacy. The reputation of the centre and student retention are eventually impacted by frequent lecturer absences, which also result in inadequate curriculum coverage, decreased student enthusiasm, and lowered academic standards. A lot of adult students see going to CLCs centres as a chance to use education to better their lives, whether it is by developing new skills, obtaining credentials, or being more employable (Korhonen & Portaankorva-Koivisto, 2021). However, students find it more difficult to stay focused and committed when there are frequent interruptions in their education because they lose confidence and drive. Prolonged durations without supervision are made worse by the difficulty to quickly replace absent lecturers. A disproportionate number of vulnerable groups are impacted, including working adults and senior students, who do not have the means or flexibility to make up lost instruction. The combined effects of these interruptions can be too much for some people, resulting in total disengagement and dropout (Daka, Chipindi, Phiri, Mulenga, Mvula, & Chirwa, 2021).

Disparities in student resilience are highlighted by this research. Without consistent encouragement and feedback, some student's development in self-study is restricted. This finding supports the claims made by Musasia, Nakhanu, and Wekesa (2012) that

institutions covering 100% of the syllabus outperform those covering less than 50%, indicating that full syllabus coverage greatly boosts performance in Kenya. Given that student progress is hampered by gaps in syllabus covering, this emphasises the effect of lecturer absence on learning. Additionally, unattended students frequently exhibit disruptive behaviours, which further undermines the stability of the learning environment and lowers its overall effectiveness. These actions, which are motivated by a lack of focus, make things more difficult for lecturers and other students.

The impact of various management styles on absenteeism at CLCs was analysed using Christopher Hood's public management theory. Due to resource constraints, the hierarchical model which depends on standardised lesson planning has trouble being enforced, which leads to disruptions in the classroom. As a result, unsupervised students become disruptive, which further disturbs the classroom atmosphere. Lecturer commitment is impacted by deeper structural problems that are not addressed by the individualist approach, which uses rewards or penalties to encourage participation. Findings highlight how factors such as inadequate institutional support, unequal workload distribution, and limited professional development opportunities undermine sustained engagement. These findings suggest that more systemic interventions are necessary. Although the egalitarian model emphasises the value of community driven interventions and solid lecturer-student relationships in relation to learning outcomes, observational data show gaps in professional dedication and accountability. These observations demonstrate how, in community learning centres, absenteeism erodes instructional consistency and increases achievement discrepancies.

6.2.5 Strategies to curb lecturer absenteeism in CLCs centres

6.2.5.1 Leadership capacity building

The findings from the participants suggest that different leadership capacities are displayed by the Centre Management Teams (CMTs), which use a variety of tactics to combat lecturer absence. This finding is consistent with that of Mothibeli (2017), who claims that the majority of educators concur that if management discipline the offenders, unapproved educator absence can be decreased. When it comes to managing workplace absenteeism, Kaponda, Mweemba, Mukalula-Kalumbi, Lisulo, and Daka

(2021) stress that managers need to show a strong commitment and a high level of accountability. These acts show how important leadership is in upholding responsibility and guaranteeing that organisational policies are followed. On the other hand, other CMTs place greater emphasis on a more sympathetic approach, which includes offering support by making aid or counselling recommendations. This difference in leadership philosophies highlights how inadequate management techniques encourage educators to misuse their leave (Van Keuren, 2009). The belief that CMTs lack the resources necessary to adequately handle absenteeism, however, indicates leadership capacity issues that call for institutional reinforcement. In order to successfully lower absenteeism, the participants also recommend that the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) take the initiative. This could involve implementing targeted interventions to address work-related stress, such as offering wellness and mental health support programmes, reducing administrative burdens, and ensuring fair workloads. DHET could also introduce continuous professional development opportunities focused on stress management and work-life balance, thereby creating a more supportive and sustainable working environment for lecturers.

Unannounced inspections can improve attendance tracking and guarantee accountability, especially during paydays. In order to deter unexcused absences and foster a professional work culture within Community Learning Centres, the DHET should also strictly implement the "No Work, No Pay" policy. Accountability can be strengthened through unannounced inspections and strict enforcement of the "No Work, No Pay" policy. However, these measures must be complemented by meaningful support for employees facing stress, excessive workloads, and staffing shortages. Crucially, since diminished morale and lack of motivation are key contributors to stress-related absenteeism, interventions must also target these underlying issues. In the absence of a holistic approach, interventions may focus too narrowly on individual behaviour, thereby neglecting the broader systemic factors contributing to absenteeism. Khalabai (2012) is in favour of applying this regulation to educators who miss work without permission. Furthermore, Mampane (2013) supports the idea of deducting salaries for all educators who miss work without authorisation. However, uneven enforcement exposes gaps in follow-up actions and reduces the effectiveness of these efforts.

6.2.5.2 Policy adherence and accountability

Despite the fact that adhering to the policy is crucial for controlling absenteeism, the results indicate that issues persist with its execution. This is confirmed by Mothose (2017), who emphatically links poor absence management to the abuse of the leave policy, highlighting the gap between legislative frameworks and their actual execution. The uneven implementation of leave policies brought on by insufficient oversight processes may lead to employee exploitation. In addition, a lack of accountability systems weakens labour discipline in general by encouraging frequent absences with little to no consequence.

The majority of lecturers concur that it's critical to adhere to leave regulations, yet inconsistent reluctance to completing the leave application process suggests a procedural or cultural imbalance. A lack of urgency in administrative compliance or the perception that the process is too burdensome could be the cause of this reluctance. Despite these challenges, Centre Management Teams (CMTs) demonstrate their commitment to policy enforcement by ensuring that leave records are readily accessible and securely maintained in the administrative office. This finding is consistent with Gabuza's (2015) assertion that the absence of supporting documentation may sometimes lead to the denial of leave. Delays in submitting medical reports or other required paperwork demonstrate inadequacies in accountability and compliance, further highlighting the need for more efficient administrative procedures. These discrepancies cast doubt on the policy's ability to encourage constant compliance. Furthermore, the policy's supposed deterrent effect is diminished by the absence of penalties for noncompliance. The problem is made worse by structural flaws like uneven surveillance and inadequate oversight, which allow absenteeism to go unnoticed. This is corroborated by Komai's (2015) claim that occasionally, upper management completely skips work, leaving a leadership void where no one is present to oversee and control educator attendance. Absenteeism in Community Learning Centres persists because of ineffective control at several levels, which further reduces the ability to enforce attendance regulations.

6.2.5.3 Institutional intervention and support

The results of the study demonstrate how urgently institutional support and intervention are needed to help Centre Management Teams (CMTs) better handle lecturer absenteeism. Without sufficient support, CMTs find it difficult to manage absenteeism trends, enforce leave regulations, and put corrective measures in place. This is in line with Mampane (2013), who highlights the significance of giving management teams the power, information, and tools they need to understand leave regulations, enforce adherence, and promote an accountable culture in educational institutions. Participants emphasise that in addition to enforcing harsher policies, DHET ought to offer more precise instructions regarding leave administration and disciplinary actions. In order to guarantee adherence to attendance regulations, DHET is also being urged to improve monitoring systems, such as regular inspections and audits. Additionally, there is a need for DHET to consider exploring ways to reduce staff workloads by promoting task-sharing among personnel or streamlining responsibilities to eliminate non-essential duties. Some respondents argue that in order to lessen the interruptions brought on by absenteeism, DHET ought to provide more funding for substitute lecturers as well as other resources to assist CMTs. Participants also recommend that DHET implement workplace wellness programs and professional development activities to address root causes of lecturer absenteeism, like job discontent and burnout.

The observations made by the participants indicate that without proper institutional support, CMTs' efforts alone are insufficient. This observation aligns with Mampane's (2013) views that management teams should be prepared to handle leave policy-related systems and procedures. Lack of funds and resources is a major issue since it restricts CMTs' capacity to put effective absence management plans into place. The Department of Higher Education and Training's poor investment in workers' well-being also becomes a significant problem, highlighting the necessity of sector-wide changes to address the underlying reasons for absenteeism. The findings also indicate that CMTs may be more effective in lowering absenteeism if DHET support them and participate more actively. CMTs could be better equipped to handle absenteeism if interventions including training, administrative procedure simplification, and resource allocation are implemented.

The findings were analysed using Christopher Hood's theory of public management, which looked at the effects of egalitarian and hierarchical management styles on how community learning centres handle lecturer absenteeism. The study discovered that although hierarchical techniques are based on strict rules and sanctions, their implementation is weakened by structural inefficiencies such as insufficient supervision. Though they frequently lack adequate funding, egalitarian techniques place an emphasis on support systems including wellness initiatives and task modifications. These dynamics show that in order to improve CMTs' ability to successfully manage absenteeism, a balanced institutional strategy is required, combining resource-driven interventions with stricter policy adherence.

6.2.6 Role of centre management team in curbing lecturer absenteeism

6.2.6.1 Attendance oversight and accountability

One important conclusion drawn from the findings is that effective administrative supervision is crucial to reducing lecturer absenteeism. According to the perspectives of the participants, a lack of accountability among lecturers is correlated with the absence of continuous oversight at specific centres. The literature emphasizes the importance of consistent managerial presence in fostering a positive work environment. Naidoo (2017) argues that managers who regularly report for work set a strong example, promoting a culture of commitment and professionalism among their staff. However, this perspective stands in direct contrast to the reality observed in some Community Learning Centres, where managers frequently come and go, lacking a stable presence. Systemic flaws in monitoring procedures may have been indicated by observations of late coming, early departures, and irregular attendance registration on the time book. The study reveals a significant disparity in attendance tracking between Community Learning Centres (CLCs) and traditional schools. The three CLCs visited lacked time books to record early departures and late arrivals, raising concerns about lecturer attendance monitoring and accountability. This absence contrasts with traditional schools, which typically use time books, late-coming registers, and early departure registers to closely monitor educator attendance, promoting stricter adherence to schedules and greater accountability. Gabuza (2015) highlights that time

books are a standard tool in traditional educational settings. Nsimbini (2024) further supports this by explaining that traditional schools employ a more robust system that includes a time book, late-coming register, and early departure register. The records indicated above are an essential tool for ensuring adherence to institutional regulations and enforcing responsibility. The absence of similar procedures in CLCs suggests that uncontrolled absenteeism and shorter instructional time may be caused by a monitoring system gap.

Document analysis provided additional confirmation of these problems, exposing irregular attendance checks and insufficient or disjointed record systems. Unchecked absenteeism and decreased operational efficiency are the results of these shortcomings. Ineffective attendance tracking techniques make it more difficult for management to properly enforce rules, which leads to gaps that allow absenteeism to continue. This result is consistent with Khalabai (2012), who claims that the problem of reducing educator absenteeism is made worse by poor management techniques and a lack of accountability. Attempts to foster a culture of accountability and dedication among educators are further undermined when disciplinary actions are applied inconsistently in the absence of a strong monitoring system.

Maceke (2022) assert that the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) ought to provide managers and lecturers with the necessary training to fully comprehend leave regulations and learn how to implement them. Participants claim that although workshops on leave limitations are intended to increase awareness and lower absenteeism, their effectiveness is restricted because they are typically only held once a year. Additionally, the findings demonstrate that these workshops only raise temporary awareness rather than encouraging long-term behavioural change. In order to successfully address absenteeism in the long run, there is a need for continuous, and planned capacity-building initiatives that are overseen by management. The continued absence indicates that a more unified and all-encompassing strategy is required to strengthen the values discussed in these workshops, despite the labour unions' participation.

The Art of the State (1998) by Christopher Hood emphasises hierarchical public management, which depends on official control, inspections, and regulations to

guarantee compliance. For the purposes of this research study, community learning centres rely on administrative oversight and manual attendance records to track lecturer absenteeism. But as Hood points out, inefficiencies like inaccurate documentation and lax enforcement are common in hierarchical models. Strong supervision can lower absenteeism, but strict bureaucratic restrictions alone are insufficient. In order to improve accountability and efficacy, Hood argues that incentive based, and collaborative processes should be used in conjunction with hierarchical systems.

6.2.7 Collaborative leadership and lecturer relations

One important element in tackling absenteeism is collaborative leadership. The results emphasise how important mutual respect and professionalism are to creating a dynamic workplace. A respectful and professional culture fosters teamwork and adds to the general stability and effectiveness of the institution. This finding supports that of Naidoo and Petersen (2015), who contend that successful administration of teaching and learning institutions depends on a solid professional connection between managers and educators. Furthermore, trust, open communication, and shared accountability are fostered by healthy professional relationships, which eventually enhance learner outcomes and educator performance. Lecturer involvement and dedication are greatly increased by an environment that is open, courteous, and supported by clearly defined responsibilities and boundaries. The importance of holding frequent staff meetings that encourage openness and diversity in decision-making was highlighted by participants. This finding is supported by Gambuza's (2015) who claims that in order to lower educator absenteeism, the management team should make sure that all parties involved in a learning centre participate in decision-making. By ensuring that the majority of lecturers are aware, appreciated, and actively involved in organisational procedures, these sessions foster a sense of shared responsibility. This inclusive involvement could also lead to improved task distribution, minimising unnecessary tasks as previously experienced and encouraging the development of new, more efficient practices. In order to improve organisational performance, management should create an atmosphere where educators are inspired and seen as a cooperative team that can provide solutions rather than as a problem (Kaweesi, 2012). Nevertheless, some lecturers continue to disregard management directives in spite of these attempts

by the management teams. This inconsistency between good professional relationships and non-adherence to responsibilities may be due to a lack of clear expectations, accountability mechanisms, or effective communication.

Hood (1998) highlights the differences between egalitarian and hierarchical public management styles and how they affect the efficacy of organisations. In this study, egalitarian models encourage participatory leadership to boost motivation and cohesion, while hierarchical systems enforce strict authority, which can dampen morale and contribute to absenteeism. The findings support Hood's claim that absenteeism may be decreased, and accountability increased through collaborative leadership. But as Hood points out, hierarchical control by itself is frequently incompetent because some lecturers still disobey management orders in spite of initiatives to foster a welcoming and encouraging workplace.

6.3 Recommendations

The research offers several context-specific recommendations aimed at the three Community Learning Centres (CLCs) under study as well as the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET). At the centre level, the recommendations address institutional challenges, while those directed at the DHET advocate for broader systemic interventions to mitigate lecturer absenteeism. To enhance the trustworthiness of the study, a concept preferred by Lincoln and Guba (1985) over conventional notions of validity, the researcher invited participants to review and reflect on the final set of recommendations. All participants who were given this opportunity expressed support for the conclusions drawn from the study. This participatory process aligns with practices that promote credibility and authenticity and reflects the study's commitment to fair and balanced interpretation. By combining reflexivity with participant engagement, the researcher was able to construct findings that were both contextually grounded and firmly rooted in the lived experiences of those involved.

6.3.1 Leave patterns and trends

The study's findings indicate that sick leave accounts for a significant proportion of overall absenteeism, particularly in the form of short-term absences. In order to prevent

any misuse of the one-day sick leave policy, frequent absences should require medical certification. Establishing clear leave policies is essential to ensuring that employees are aware of what is expected of them. A leave management system should monitor absence patterns so that management may foresee periods of excessive absenteeism and take preventive measures. To lower absence from stress and seasonal diseases, prioritise wellness initiatives like stress management classes and flu shots. In addition, flexible leave policies for emergencies can aid in striking a balance between operational and personal demands.

6.3.2 Pay day leisure and extended weekends

The study revealed that institutional flaws including lenient disciplinary actions, insufficient supervision, and inefficient monitoring systems have an impact on lecturer absenteeism, especially on payday and long weekends. Strategies that minimise disruption to instruction and learning must be put into place in order to overcome absenteeism associated with pay cycles. Initiatives to promote financial literacy can aid in addressing the socioeconomic causes of absenteeism. Absenteeism can be further decreased by fostering a healthy work atmosphere that puts lecturers' health first through wellness initiatives and flexible scheduling. Student-led activities, such independent study and peer learning, can help ensure academic continuity in the case of a lecturer's absence. In addition, incorporating these approaches into regular practice could ease the workload on lecturers by enabling a more balanced distribution of responsibilities between staff and students. In order to maintain equity and stop the misuse of management techniques, centre managers should recommend to DHET so that they enforce the "no work, no pay" policy. The learning environment in CLCs will become more stable and productive as a result of these coordinated efforts.

6.3.3 Policy awareness, understanding and discrepancies

The findings indicated that although lecturers are aware of the leave policy, there are still significant challenges with its inconsistent implementation. It is essential to provide uniform enforcement procedures for all CLCs centres in order to overcome discrepancies in the leave policy's implementation. Centre managers should receive comprehensive, unambiguous instructions from the Department of Higher Education

and Training (DHET) on how to interpret and apply the leave policy, guaranteeing consistency in disciplinary measures. The implementation of monitoring tools to track on policy enforcement will encourage responsibility and discourage uneven implementation.

6.3.4 Unsupportive working environment

The study found that absenteeism is also driven by factors such as heavy workloads, inadequate staffing, and poor infrastructure. Reducing lecturer absenteeism requires improving working conditions at Community Learning Centres. To reduce disruptions from shared facilities, policymakers should give priority to filling in infrastructure deficiencies, such as making sure classroom spaces are sufficient and designated. To reduce stress and avoid animosity, tasks should also be assessed and divided fairly between managers and lecturers. Further reducing excessive workloads and creating a more encouraging atmosphere can be achieved by increasing workforce levels. Last but not least, putting in place an equitable and open mechanism for tracking attendance together with regular sanctions for absences would strengthen a commitment and accountability culture.

6.3.5 Leadership capacity building

The findings revealed that while managers are making every effort to combat absenteeism, their success has been limited. To improve their capacity to successfully handle absenteeism, Centre Management Teams (CMTs) are advised to participate in organised leadership development programs. In order to ensure accountability and preserve employee morale, these programs ought to concentrate on giving leaders the tools they need to strike a balance between disciplinary measures and compassionate ways. Employee engagement, policy enforcement, and conflict resolution workshops can improve their ability to make decisions. In order to enable continuous policy enforcement, including surprise inspections or other proactive steps, leadership activities should also include strategic planning. DHET should give funding and support systems that help CMTs carry out their plans efficiently top priority in order to overcome resource constraints.

6.3.6 Policy adherence and accountability

The findings indicate that although adherence to policy is essential for managing absenteeism, challenges with its implementation persist. In order to increase accountability and adherence to policies, efforts should focus on procedural clarity. Reluctance and delays can be decreased by streamlining the leave application procedure and offering administrative task training. Strict deadlines and frequent reminders for providing supporting documentation and medical records might improve adherence even more. In order to show how important, it is to follow processes; centres should apply penalties for noncompliance. However, they should also make sure that these consequences are applied fairly and consistently. CMTs should use reliable monitoring tools, and frequent audits, to improve accountability by quickly identifying and resolving absence cases.

6.3.7 Institutional intervention and support

Participants highlight that institutional action and support are crucial to reinforce the efforts of CMTs in managing lecturer absenteeism. To help CMTs effectively manage absenteeism, DHET must take a comprehensive approach. This entails providing enough funding, instruments for efficient oversight, and staff well-being programs. To address the causes and effects of absenteeism, supportive measures like professional development opportunities and counselling should be put in place. Collaboration and alignment can be promoted by streamlining administrative processes and guaranteeing consistent communication between CMTs and higher authorities. Last but not least, sector-wide measures that address systemic issues and invest in the staff are essential for fostering an atmosphere that deters absence and promotes lecturer retention in general.

6.3.8 Attendance oversight and accountability

Participants indicate that the absence of continuous oversight at specific centres is linked to a lack of accountability among lecturers. To address the systemic difficulties with attendance supervision and accountability, CMTs should develop rigorous attendance monitoring methods. This includes the implementation of strictly monitoring

attendance registers for real-time tracking and transparency. Regular audits of attendance records should be performed to detect and correct discrepancies. In addition, management must implement clear standards about lateness, early departures, and absenteeism, as well as consistent disciplinary procedures. Regular site inspections and performance reviews will help to strengthen managerial supervision and foster an accountable culture. Finally, the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) should create and implement a comprehensive oversight system that prioritises compliance while encouraging proactive behaviour among lecturers.

6.4 Limitations of the Study

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged when interpreting the findings. Firstly, although the study had concluded, participants were sent the final recommendations for their review and feedback. While full member checking of interview transcripts was not conducted due to time and logistical constraints, this post-study engagement allowed participants to reflect on the findings and contribute to enhancing the study's credibility and fairness of interpretation. However, this limited form of participant involvement may have reduced opportunities for deeper participant verification of the data.

Secondly, the study was conducted at only three Community Learning Centres (CLCs) within the City of Johannesburg metropolitan municipality. Convenience sampling was employed with centres selected based on their proximity to the researcher's location. Consequently, the findings may be confined to the specific centres involved and may not be generalisable to other CLCs within Johannesburg which might face distinct challenges not captured in this research.

A further limitation stems from the scarcity of rigorous and CLC-specific quantitative data on lecturer absenteeism. This lack of reliable statistical information limited the depth of the analysis. Due to the under-researched nature of Community Learning Centres, the study had to rely partly on proxy data and insights drawn from traditional schools. While some causes of lecturer absenteeism overlap between these contexts such as inadequate monitoring, poor working conditions, and socioeconomic

constraints, the unique environment of CLCs may not be fully represented by such comparisons.

Finally, the study's reliance on a four-month dataset represents a significant constraint. Employing a cross-sectional research design, data were collected at a single point in time which limits the ability to observe changes and trends over longer periods. A longitudinal approach would have offered a more comprehensive understanding of absenteeism patterns and their evolution.

6.5 Recommendations for future research studies

The research on unexcused lecturer absenteeism in Community Learning Centres in the City of Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality lays the groundwork for future research. Drawing on Christopher Hood's public management framework (Hood, 1998), future research should investigate how principles such as accountability, efficiency, and responsiveness are embedded in institutional policies and their impact on lecturer absenteeism. Furthermore, research could include the influence of lecturer absenteeism on students' academic achievement, future research could use a longitudinal design to explore long-term dynamics contributing to lecture absenteeism. Finally, a large-scale quantitative investigation to uncover nationwide trends and reasons for lecture absenteeism can be conducted.

6.6 Conclusion and reflection

Findings reveal that lecturer absenteeism is driven by personal, socio-economic, and institutional factors. Personal factors include sick leave, prolonged weekends, and payday leisure. Socio-economic factors relate to financial pressures and external obligations, while institutional factors stem from ineffective monitoring, unfavourable working conditions, and weak enforcement of policies. This points to a discrepancy between policy and practice, which is consistent with criticisms of ineffective accountability systems made by public management. Additionally, the fact that absenteeism persists in spite of current regulations points to more serious systemic problems, like the need for better institutional control and lecturer welfare. Stricter

enforcement of policies, improved working conditions, and focused interventions for individual problems like alcoholism are necessary to address these concerns while maintaining a balance between accountability and support.

Conducting research in community learning centers required me to use creative and flexible methods because there was limited data available. Managing challenges like rescheduling interviews and finding replacement participants helped me improve my communication and relationship-building skills. Working in an area with little previous research was rewarding and showed me how important it is to explore new topics further. I took full responsibility for leading the research, carefully considering ethical issues and building respectful, trusting relationships with participants. Throughout the study, I stayed aware of my own perspective and biases by reflecting regularly, making sure my findings truly represented the participants' views rather than my own assumptions. This experience taught me perseverance, respect, and the importance of being sensitive to ethical issues when working with diverse people. These lessons were important because they helped me grow as a researcher. I learned to work carefully and thoughtfully, to think critically, and to adapt when faced with challenges. These skills will serve as a foundation for my ongoing development as a researcher.

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APPENDIX A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE


UNISA
university
of south africa

UNISA COLLEGE OF EDUCATION ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

Date: 2024/03/13

Ref: **2024/03/13/47519711/13/AM**

Name: Mr RR Maceke

Student No.:47519711

Dear Mr RR Maceke

Decision: Ethics Approval from
2024/03/13 to 2029/03/13

Researcher(s): Name: Mr RR Maceke
E-mail address: 47519711@mylife.unisa.ac.za
Telephone: 083 671 7105

Supervisor(s): Name: Prof EM Nkoana
E-mail address: nkoanem@unisa.ac.za
Telephone: 012 429 4698

Title of research:

Exploring the dynamics that contribute to unexcused teacher absenteeism in ACET centres in the Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality

Qualification: PhD Adult Education

Thank you for the application for research ethics clearance by the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee for the above mentioned research. Ethics approval is granted for the period 2024/03/13 to 2029/03/13.

*The **low risk** application was reviewed by the Ethics Review Committee on 2024/03/13 in compliance with the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics and the Standard Operating Procedure on Research Ethics Risk Assessment.*

The proposed research may now commence with the provisions that:

1. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to the relevant guidelines set out in the Unisa Covid- 19 position statement on research ethics attached.
2. The researcher(s) will ensure that the research project adheres to the values and principles expressed in the UNISA Policy on Research Ethics.

3. Any adverse circumstance arising in the undertaking of the research project that is relevant to the ethicality of the study should be communicated in writing to the UNISA College of Education Ethics Review Committee.
4. The researcher(s) will conduct the study according to the methods and procedures set out in the approved application.
5. Any changes that can affect the study-related risks for the research participants, particularly in terms of assurances made with regards to the protection of participants' privacy and the confidentiality of the data, should be reported to the Committee in writing.
6. The researcher will ensure that the research project adheres to any applicable national legislation, professional codes of conduct, institutional guidelines and scientific standards relevant to the specific field of study. Adherence to the following South African legislation is important, if applicable: Protection of Personal Information Act, no 4 of 2013; Children's act no 38 of 2005 and the National Health Act, no 61 of 2003.
7. Only de-identified research data may be used for secondary research purposes in future on condition that the research objectives are similar to those of the original research. Secondary use of identifiable human research data requires additional ethics clearance.
8. No field work activities may continue after the expiry date **2029/03/13**. Submission of a completed research ethics progress report will constitute an application for renewal of Ethics Research Committee approval.

Note:

*The reference number **2024/03/13/47519711/13/AM** should be clearly indicated on all forms of communication with the intended research participants, as well as with the Committee.*

Kind regards,



Prof AT Motlhabane
CHAIRPERSON: CEDU RERC
motlhat@unisa.ac.za



Prof Mpine Makoe
EXECUTIVE DEAN
qakisme@unisa.ac.za



University of South Africa
Preller Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane
PO Box 392 UNISA 0003 South Africa
Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4150
www.unisa.ac.za

APPENDIX B: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION



The College Principal
Gauteng Community Education and Training College
100 Northern Parkway rd
Ormonde
2111
Tel:010 9001150

Date: 18 March 2024

Dear Mr Taumang

I, Ronnie Risimati Maceke, am currently studying towards a PhD Degree under the supervision of Prof. E.M Nkoana and Dr T.A Chauke a senior lecturer in the Department of Adult Community and Continuing Education at the University of South Africa. I hereby request permission to conduct a study entitled: Exploring the Dynamics that contribute to Unexcused Lecturer Absenteeism in Community Learning Centres (CLCs) in the Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality.

I anticipate conducting a qualitative study that will engage three (3) ACET centres in the City of Johannesburg. As part of the research study, I will conduct interviews with the centre managers, two (2) lecturers and two (2) students from each of the three (3) selected CLCs. Interview with each participant will last around 30 minutes. I will also carry out non-disturbing observations for 1 hour per week, over a period of three months. The interviews will be conducted outside of instructional hours and at the convenience of the participants to avoid negatively impacting contact times. As part of the observations, I will also request to analyse policy documents, and any other documents used in managing teacher absenteeism. This information will be used for research purposes only and will be kept in the strictest confidence. The research project

has been approved by the Ethical Clearance Committee of the College of Education at the UNISA.

In line with research ethics, I guarantee participants' anonymity / confidentiality, and participation is voluntary, and can be terminated without any penalty, and/or giving prior notice, and/or giving any reason as to why.

Should you have any queries, you are welcome to contact me on this number: 0836717105.

Email: 47519711@mylife.unisa.ac.za

Thank you very much for helping me to reach my goal.

Yours faithfully

RONNIE RISIMATI MACEKE

Student number: 47519711

Signed:



University of South Africa
Preller Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane
PO Box 392 UNISA 0003 South Africa
Telephone: +27 12 429 3111 Facsimile: +27 12 429 4150
www.unisa.ac.za

APPENDIX C: PERMISSION LETTER FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION



higher education
& training

Department:
Higher Education and Training
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



GAUTENG
Community Education and Training
CET COLLEGE

To: Mr RR Maceke UNISA Student
From: Ms A.S Taumang Acting Principal: Gauteng CET College
Date: 25 March 2024
SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH ON EXPLORING THE DYNAMICS THAT CONTRIBUTE TO UNEXCUSED TEACHER ABSENTEEISM IN ACET

Dear Mr RR Maceke

The above matter and your email dated 16 March 2024 refers.

We wish to indicate as follows:

1. The request to conduct research in our institution of learning is hereby granted.
2. We hope and trust that your efforts would contribute towards the development of our sector.
3. You are requested to liaise with Ms Matlhodi Lebodi on 010 900 1159 regarding the Community Learning Centre to be visited and the date, in order to notify the Centre Manager of your intention to visit the institution as well as the purpose thereof.

We trust that you will find the above in order. However, should you wish to discuss anything further to do with this matter please feel free to contact us.

Warm regards,

Mr A.S Taumang
Acting Principal: Gauteng CET College

APPENDIX D: PERMISSION LETTER– CENTRE MANAGERS



DEPARTMENT: ADULT BASIC EDUCATION

PO BOX 392

UNISA

0003

Date: 18 March 2024

To Whom It May Concern

I am a student at the University of South Africa and am presently enrolled for a PhD degree in education. To complete the requirements for the degree, I must carry out a research project in my discipline of specialisation. This study is titled: Exploring the Dynamics that contribute to Unexcused Lecturer Absenteeism in Community Learning Centres in the Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality.

I would like to request permission to conduct a qualitative study involving the centre manager, two (2) lecturers and two (2) students at your community learning centre. This will involve conducting interviews, each lasting approximately 30 minutes, as well as carrying out non-intrusive observations for 1 hour per week, over a period of three months. The interviews will be conducted outside of instructional hours and at the convenience of the participants to avoid impacting contact times. As part of the observations, I will also request to analyse policy documents, and any other documents used in managing teacher absenteeism. This information will only be used for research purposes and will be kept in the strictest confidence. The research project has been approved by the Ethical Clearance Committee of the College of Education at UNISA.

In line with research ethics, I guarantee participants' anonymity / confidentiality; participation is voluntary and can be terminated without penalty. You are welcome to

contact my academic supervisor, Prof. E.M Nkoana, at nkoanem@unisa.ac.za if you require more information. My contact details are:

Email: 47519711@mylife.unisa.ac.za

Cell: 083 671 7105

Thank you very much for helping me to reach my goal.

Yours faithfully

RONNIE RISIMATI MACEKE

Student number: 47519711

Signed:



University of South Africa
Preller Street, Muckleneuk Ridge, City of Tshwane
PO Box 392 UNISA 0003 South Africa
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APPENDIX E: INFORMED CONSENT FORM



I _____, agree of my free will to participate in this research study entitled: Exploring the Dynamics that contribute to Unexcused Lecturer Absenteeism in ACET Centres in the Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality. I understand that the information that I will share will be used for research purposes only and that nowhere will my identity be made known in any research report or publication. I am also aware of the fact that I can withdraw at any time during the study without incurring any penalty.

Research Participant: Signature: _____ Date: _____

Researcher name: Maceke R R Signature _____ Date: _____



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APPENDIX F: INTERVIEW GUIDE – CENTRE MANAGERS



Exploring the Dynamics that contribute to Unexcused Lecturer Absenteeism in Community Learning Centres in the Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality

CENTRE:

Participant Name: Pseudonym:

Date: Time:

1. What are the reasons that contribute to unexcused lecturer absenteeism in your centre?
2. How do these reasons play themselves out in this centre?
3. What days of the week or month is unexcused lecturer absenteeism rife?
4. What impact does teacher absenteeism have on teaching and learning in your centre?
5. What systems do you have in place to curb unexcused lecturer absenteeism?
6. What role does the centre management team play in addressing dynamics that cause lecturer absenteeism?
7. How could you describe your professional relationship with your lecturers?
8. Do you think an unhealthy relationship between the centre manager and lecturers can contribute to unexcused lecturer absenteeism? Elaborate.
9. According to your knowledge and understanding, what is a leave policy?

10. Do educators comply with the leave policies' provisions when applying for or taking days off work?
11. Which leave policy type do your lecturers normally take?
12. How often do you or DHET organise workshops on leave or labour matters?
13. Does the Department of Higher Education and Training monitor your learning centre?
14. If yes, how often?
15. What role do you think the Department of Higher Education and Training can play in curbing unexcused lecturer absenteeism in this centre?
16. What is the role of the Centre Management Team (CMT) in addressing lecturer absenteeism?



APPENDIX G: INTERVIEW GUIDE-LECTURERS



Exploring the Dynamics that contribute to Unexcused Lecturer Absenteeism in Community Learning Centres in the Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality

CENTRE:

Participant Name: Pseudonym:

Date: Time:

1. What are the reasons that contribute to unexcused lecturer absenteeism in your centre?
2. How do these reasons play themselves out in this centre?
3. In which days of the week or month is absenteeism by you or your colleagues rife?
4. What impact does lecturer absenteeism have on teaching and learning in your centre?
5. Which systems are used by your centre manager to monitor and minimise lecturer absenteeism?
6. What role does the centre management team play in addressing dynamics that cause lecturer absenteeism?
7. How could you describe the centre manager's professional relationship with the lecturers?
8. According to your own knowledge and understanding, what is a leave policy?
9. Do you and other educators comply with the leave policy's provisions when applying for or taking days off work? Elaborate.
10. Which leave policy type do you or other lecturers normally take?

11. How often does your Centre or DHET organise workshops on leave or labour matters?
12. What role do you think the Department of Higher Education and Training can play in curbing unexcused lecturer absenteeism in this centre?
13. What is the role of the Centre Management Team (CMT) in addressing lecturer absenteeism?



APPENDIX H: INTERVIEW GUIDE-S



Exploring the Dynamics that contribute to Unexcused Lecturer Absenteeism in Community Learning Centres in the Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality

CENTRE:

Participant Name: Pseudonym:

Date: Time:

1. What are the reasons that contribute to unexcused lecturer absenteeism in your centre?
2. How do these reasons play themselves out in this centre?
3. What days of the week or month is absenteeism rife amongst your lecturers?
4. How does teacher absenteeism impact your learning?
5. Do you think the centre manager monitors lecturer absenteeism? Elaborate your Answer.
6. How could you describe the professional relationship between the Centre Managers and your lecturers?
7. Does the department of Higher Education and Training monitor your learning centre? If yes, how often?
8. What role do you think the Department of Higher Education and Training can play to curb unexcused lecturer absenteeism in this centre?
9. What is the role of the Centre Management Team (CMT) in addressing lecturer absenteeism?



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APPENDIX I: DOCUMENTS



Exploring the Dynamics that contribute to Unexcused Lecturer Absenteeism in Community Learning Centres in the Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality

CENRE:Date.....

The following processes are the focal point of the observations:

Availability of the following documents:

- Time book
- Leave policy file.

Availability	Yes	No	Comments/ Reflective comments
Time book			
Leave policy file			



University of South Africa
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APPENDIX J: OBSERVATIONAL SCHEDULE



Staff attendance and punctuality:

Staff compliments..... Date.....

Number present..... The number of latecomers.....

Number absents..... The number of early departures.....

	Yes	No	Comments/reflective comments
Did some lecturers arrive late?			
Were all lecturers punctual to their classes?			
Did some lecturers leave early			
Were there lecturers in the centre but absent in their classes			
Do centre managers or supervisors monitor class attendance?			

Classroom instructional processes:

Date.....

	YES	NO	COMMENTS
Are lecturers punctual when they attended their classes?			
Do lecturers seem to be prepared?			
Are lecturers consistent with their instructional processes?			

Are classes without lecturers managed in their absence?			
During instructional time, do learners seem to be involved in lessons?			

Relational observations:

	DATE:	COMMENTS
Relationships amongst lecturers		
Relationships between lecturers and the manager		
Subtle factors		
Reflective Comments		



APPENDIX K: EDITING CERTIFICATE



STMbondvo editing services (Pty) Ltd

148 Aramburg (Mpumalanga)

Cell: 060 346 7091

email: mhlekazist@gmail.com

Proof of editing

STMbondvo editing services
148 Aramburg
Mpumalanga
South Africa
Cell.: 0603467091

Date: March 2025

This is to certify that I have edited the Thesis of the following candidate:

Names and Surname: R.R Maceke

Student number: 47519711

Title: Exploring dynamics of unexcused lecturer absenteeism in community learning centres in the Johannesburg Metropolitan Municipality.

Dr. S.T Maseko
Director
STMbondvo editing services

Confidentiality: *In editing academic documents, I understand that I have access to confidential data, that information contained in documents is confidential and for that, I agree not to divulge, publish, make known to unauthorized persons or to the public the data in documents.*

APPENDIX L: TURNITIN REPORT

Exploring dynamics of unexcused lecturer absenteeism in community learning centres in the Johannesburg metropolitan municipality

ORIGINALITY REPORT

12%	11%	8%	3%
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS

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