

# The Perception of Absenteeism at School from View of the Teachers at Primary Schools in Cabinda in Angola

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## Abstract

The information which this article wishes to clarify is the teachers' perception of truancy. The objective of this study, using an exploratory field research, with quantitative treatment, is to analyze the levels of perception of primary school teachers in rural areas in Cabinda regarding school absenteeism, causes and measures of overcoming this problem. In 10 primary schools, 27 questionnaires were applied to 5th and 6th grade teachers. The questionnaires were divided into three parts that allowed characterizing school absenteeism, causes and measures for overcoming, through interrogatory phrases. The data obtained was treated by descriptive statistics, with the aid of SPSS Software version 22. The problem of study is, what perception of primary school teachers in rural areas in Cabinda have on school absenteeism. The results indicate that the teachers' perception of absenteeism is: deliberate absence from school activities, lack of attendance at classes even at school and the absence at school without justification. The causes of school absenteeism are due to lack of motivation due to work conditions and low salaries, floods of people at the time of wages, rainfall, boredom due to bureaucracy of managers, personal problems and health. Measures of overcoming, opening up of more banks, improving wages, improving roads and placing public transportation in school zones with higher need.

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**Keywords:** School absenteeism, causes of absenteeism, overcoming measures.

## Introduction

The subject of school absenteeism stereotypes the thought of the physical absence of the student or teacher from the school. This absence has

implications in the realization of the process of teaching and learning at a desired quality. The focus theme is on the Perception of School Absenteeism from the Point of View of the Primary Teachers in Cabinda. The development of societies and the improvement of the quality of life begins with the process of education of its members. "The school conveys knowledge, builds the individual, provides the necessary support for the individual to become independent from the family and integrate into society. Provides the necessary tools for its internal and external members, such as students and their parents, to cope with Difficulties of society and accompany the rapid social evolution" (CARDOSO, 2014, p.9). The behavior of school absenteeism, does not facilitate the school to fulfill its social duty, influencing even the emergence of certain problems that lead to "social consequences, psychological and that can have lifetime effects, can affect the economy of a country, Making it difficult for the individual to enter the world of work" (Idem).

If the Angolan Education and Teaching Law, Law nº17 / 16 says that primary education and I cycle of secondary education is free and obligatory (REPÚBLICA, 2016), as teachers react in this obligation, since there are absentee behavior in schools? Why this behavior and how to overcome it?

The motivation for carrying out this study has to do with these formulated questions and because during some work visits, carried out in some primary schools in rural areas, it was found that in normal period of classes, some of these schools were without and, in other schools present pupils but absent teachers.

## **1. School absenteeism**

Absenteeism is the absence at the place of the activity or form of withdrawal due to dissatisfaction of small undesirable situations, such as: working conditions, type of support, forms of leadership, participation in decision making, type of relationship between colleagues Eriksen quoted By (PENATTI, 2006). School absenteeism is the constant absence of the student in the school premises during the period in which the classes take place, it is the absence in which the absentee does not justify the reasons that led them to absent themselves, is the state by which at the moment of control, If and when someone is missing and no one knows where they are located, it is a deliberate absence of the student or teacher in the activities of the school. Absenteeism is also the lack of attendance classes within the school day (MALLAD, 2007) and is the lack of attendance in the fulfillment of a school duty (FERREIRA, 1999).

Absenteeism is the absence of the person engaged in the place of work or in the classroom, causing negative effects to the worker or the apprentice, besides being a discreditable behavior and has a double effect: For the

worker, the possibility of suffering a salary cut, resignation or related and administrative problems from the organizational point of view makes it difficult to perform work and losses. For students' it has the effect of not continuing with the studies, not being evaluated, and not having school success and hindering the pedagogical work of the teacher (PENATTI, 2006).

Well, if no one reacts to absenteeism, it is a sign that behavior is seen as normal. The approach around this subject is one of the ways to react against this behavior, which is not normal due to its negative effects and constraints.

Absenteeism is equivalent to non-participation, loss of course or course in relation to others, delay in the process and in the accomplishment of the activities and in the fulfillment of previously established programs and determined by the schedule, in addition to sometimes being a disobedience to the law.

In order, not to remain as a defaulting and disobedient agent, it is necessary for the absentee to collaborate with the law, so that the act of absenteeism does not become a punishable disorder and contestation of those that have an embarrassing effect.

When the absentee does not collaborate, or materialize the statute, it conflicts with the law. In Angola, Law nº17 / 16 in paragraphs 1 and 2 of article 12, it states that "the obligation of education translates into the duty of the state, society, families and companies to ensure and promote access and attendance to the System Of Education and Teaching to all individuals of school age, from the initiation to the primary education and I cycle of the secondary education " (REPÚBLICA, 2016).

If the law says that education is compulsory, then no one should fail to fulfill this obligation, so as not to be considered disobedient since absenteeism is disobedience in fulfilling an obligation. Tolerance and impunity for absenteeism is a clear gap between the law (obligation to fulfill duty) and absenteeism (disinterest in duty) that becomes a habit every year.

## **2. School absenteeism causes**

For the absentee usually has his justification, of the cause that causes them to absent themselves. In many situations, absenteeism has known causes and others unknown. The known causes of absenteeism are: "vacations, marriages, births, deaths, changes of address, in some cases diseases". (PENATTI, 2006).

The process of schooling is a responsibility of all, which begins with the individual's willingness to participate in the activity. It is also the responsibility of families, society, institutions (schools, churches, organizations) and the state. If these social strata do not fulfill their

responsibilities, truancy will certainly be a fact. Personal and intrinsic problems can determine the unknown causes of absenteeism such as: illness, family problems, intentional delays or involuntary reasons or force majeure, voluntary misconduct for personal reasons; Financial difficulties, lack of transportation, poor motivation, poor leadership oversight, and inadequate organizational policies. According to Souto (1980) cited by (PENATTI, 2006).

Other causes of school absenteeism depend on the context or the environment where the absentee is located, since absenteeism in the city can be determined by the traffic congestion factors that influence the lack of transportation, the very demanding pedagogical work, the vandalism in the school and The in operation of administrative services, sanitation and accommodation conditions, while in the rural context the causes of school absenteeism have to do with the involvement in community activities at the time of classes, the prioritization of domestic activities and the field for subsistence Family, as well as the fulfillment of a traditional ritual etc.

The causes of school absenteeism have to do with: unattractive, uninteresting and uncaptivating teaching, lack of integration and social marginalization of the student, bad family influences, excessive family responsibilities and precarious economy, involvement of minors in family business, lack of School attendance of parents, little value given to school education (MALLAD, 2007). Other factors of school absenteeism are:

Poor teacher competence and training, poor pedagogical planning, poor student and teacher evaluation and performance, poor school management, learning difficulties of students with special educational needs, demotivation and job dissatisfaction, weak language learning, violence Domestic work, domestic occupation, lack of teaching aids and teaching materials, difficulty in transportation, and lack of education inspection services beyond school supervision (Idem).

For quality education, it is necessary that many of the problems that have caused the absentees behavior are to be overcome. The purpose of teaching is seen in article 14 of Law 17/16, which shows that in the "exercise of educational activity, educational institutions must observe high standards of performance and achieve the best scientific, technical, technological and cultural results and Promotion of school success, quality, excellence, merit and innovation "(REPÚBLICA, 2016, p. 3955), Since in primary education one of the objectives is "[...] to ensure a harmonious and comprehensive quality training that enables the development of intellectual and labor skills.

If absenteeism is the physical absence of the student or the teacher from the school, these goals cannot be reached and in each moment that the objectives are not achieved the quality of the process of teaching and learning is low.

### **3. Overcoming measures**

In order to overcome absenteeism, the procedures to be taken into account are: control, identification and registration of the absentee, communication to the authorities (police, managers, inspectors, guardians or others responsible) the existence of absentee behavior, contact the members of Families, to request the collaboration of social services (Psych pedagogues, Social Animators, Psychologists, Supervisors) tutors and the family, to carry out play activities at school and extracurricular activities, to record the frequency of absences and Call attention and publish the administrative measures (ESTEBAN, LOPEZ, & PERIS, 2001). These procedures can be come to any area or stratum of absenteeism.

There are also other measures that can be taken to overcome this behavior, since it preserves the idoneity of the institution and the people who depend on it, guarantees confidence for the public and improves quality in the various dimensions.

Some measures are:

Procedural, administrative or disciplinary measures, hindering or facilitating the behavior of absence (such as the precariousness of employment, loss of salary and / or attendance premiums, supplementary sickness benefit paid by the company or not, (Eg periodic medical examinations, vaccination, training, personal protective equipment against occupational hazards, health education), preventive measures aimed at the environment Physical and psychosocial work in order to neutralize, reduce or minimize the discrepancy between the demands imposed by the work and the individual's capacity for response (such as the sustained creation of a healthy, safe and productive work environment, participation in work organization and In management, participation in the people management system) (PENATTI, 2006, P.4).

The solution to minimize absentee behavior should not only be taken by measures, but above all by raising awareness through meetings, conferences, so that both teachers and students are aware of the dangers and other disorders that can cause absenteeism.

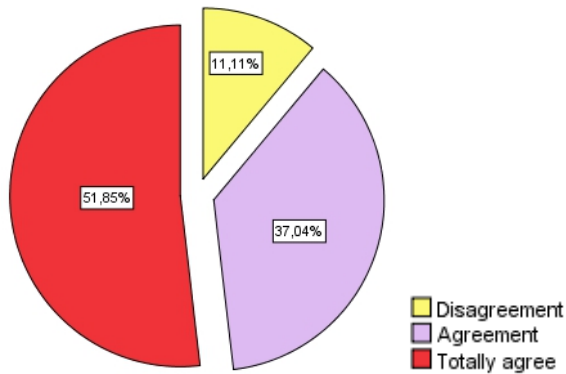
#### **4. Methodology**

The main issue that arose in this study was, What perception do primary school teachers in rural areas in Cabinda have on school absenteeism? The objective is to analyze the level of perception of primary school teachers in rural areas in Cabinda on school absenteeism, causes and measures of overcoming. It is an exploratory field research, with quantitative treatment. In 10 primary schools, 27 questionnaires were applied to 5th and 6th grade teachers. The questionnaires were divided into three parts that allowed characterizing school absenteeism, causes and measures of overcoming, through interrogatory phrases. The data obtained were treated by descriptive statistics, with the aid of SPSS Software version 22.

#### **5. Results**

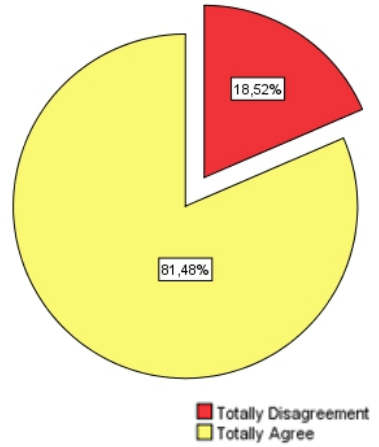
The results show that primary school teachers in rural areas in Cabinda perceive school absenteeism as the absence of school activities, the lack of attendance in classes; even while in school and absence at school without justification. School absenteeism has causes due to lack of motivation, due to working conditions and low salaries, lack of banks, time of salary, constant rain, annoyance for the excessive bureaucracy of school management in solving problems, especially health problems, especially malaria, Typhoid fever, stomach pain and hemorrhoids. The measures to overcome these situations in the view of teachers are: opening of banks branches in villages and communities, improving salaries and compatible with the cost of living, conducting radio and television programs for competitions of knowledge or general culture because it will increase responsibility for the teacher and students, placement of playground equipment in the school to attract students, improvements of the roads and placement of public transportation in school zones with greater need and play games in schools.

Graph 1- Result of the answers about the absenteeism as a purposeful absence.



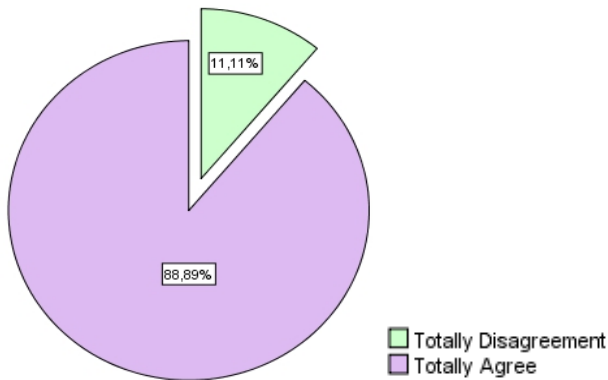
Source: Teacher consultation

Graph 2- Result of absenteeism responses such as lack of classroom assistance



Source: Teacher consultation

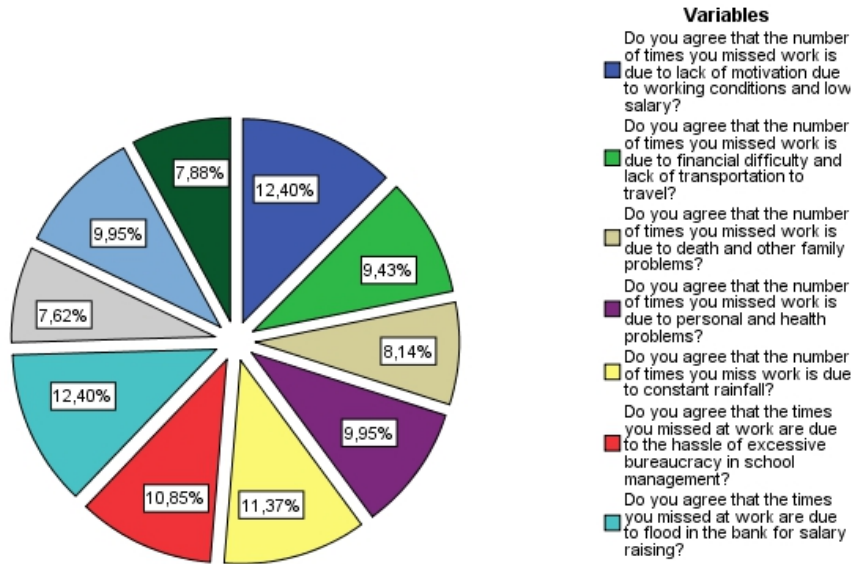
Graph 3- Result of responses on Absenteeism as absence without justification



Source: Teacher consultation

Figures 1, 2 and 3 present the results of the question that had the objective of knowing the teachers about their conception of truancy. Of the 27 questioned teachers, in graph no. 1, 51.85% of teachers completely believe that absenteeism is the purposeless absence in school activities and 11.11% disagree with the statement. In Graph 2 of the 27 teachers, 81.48% totally agree that school absenteeism is the lack of attendance classes even though they are in schools and 18.52% disagree completely and in graph 3 of the 27 teachers 88.89% fully agree that the School absenteeism is absence at school without justification and 11.11% disagree with this statement.

Graph 4 - Results of the agreed answers on the causes of school absenteeism

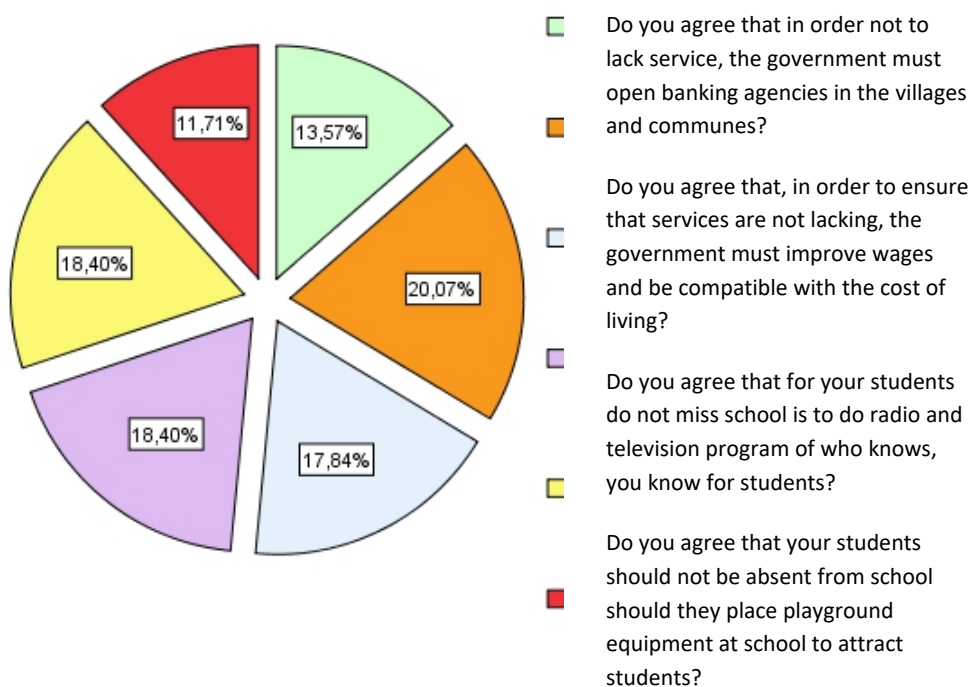


Source: Teacher consultation

Graph 4 shows the means of the descriptive analysis results through the SPSS Software, whose percentages highlight the degree of agreement of the question that had as objective the knowledge of the teachers the causes of school absenteeism. Of the 27 teachers questioned, 12.40% answered that the cause of school absenteeism has to do with the lack of motivation due to the working conditions and the low salary they receive, 9.43% are the financial difficulties and the lack of transportation to go to the school, 8.14% stated that for reasons of death and resolution of other problems in the family, influence to absenteeism 9.95% is due to personal problems mainly health, 11.37% is due to constant rainfall, 10.85% is due to the annoyance due to the excessive bureaucracy of school management in solving problems, 12.40% think that the cause of absenteeism has to do with crowds at the bank at the time of wages, 7.62% is due to the fatigue caused by intense political or religious activities, 9.95% believe that malaria and typhoid fever and 7.88% stomach and hemorrhoid pain are the diseases that influence school absenteeism.



Graph 5 - Results of the agreed answers on Strategies to overcome school truancy.



Source: Teacher consultation

Graph 5 presents the results of the descriptive analysis in SPSS, whose percentages the questions had as objective to know the strategies of overcoming truancy. Of the 27 questioned teachers, 13.57% said that one of the ways to overcome absenteeism, is to open banks in the villages and communities, 20.07% pay attention to improving wages and is compatible with the cost of living. , 84% suggest that radio and television programs should be conducted for knowledge or general education competitions, 18.40% believe that placing playground equipment at school to attract students. This may also increase teachers' responsibilities for the control of students in school. 18.40% suggest improvements in the roads and placement of public transportation in school zones with greater need help to overcome absentee behavior and 11.71% think that playing games in schools helps to overcome truancy.

## 6. Discussion of results

Considering the studies on school truancy, the application of questionnaires arouses the attention of teachers and motivates them to the

answer, because the reality they live in and that they find as an opportunity to expose what constitutes their problems and challenges.

The answers given by the teachers make it easy to understand from the results that their conception of school absenteeism is the purposeless absence in school activities, the lack of attendance at classes even at school and absences from school without justification. In addition to these and other reflections, what some absentee teachers may not know is the fact that when they are absent from school purposely, not attending classes and neither justifying or satisfying their absence, the absentee teacher can be considered as the uncompromised with science, ethics and professional deontology.

It is known that the profession of the teacher is a profession of pedagogues and being a pedagogue means being according to the etymology of the word "slave" and "servant". This means that the mission of being a teacher requires obedience, respect, responsibility, and dedication to serve. An absentee teacher is one who does not want to be obedient and does not want to serve. Are many who are teachers prepared for this? This profession requires accepting challenges and sacrifices so that the vicissitudes of life are overcome and bring benefit to the students who are the direct consumers of the services that the teacher provides.

However, the reasons for this behavior may be several, but an absentee teacher, who purposely does not attend classes and does not give reasons for their absence and simply disappears from school and their work environment, gives the impression of being a weak teacher and being irresponsible and without discipline. Absentee behavior can lead to evils that will later be reflected in the life of the families and in the life of the teacher themselves.

School absenteeism, influence on curricular programs, poor assimilation of contents, incompatibility in assessments, educational delay, and many other social problems, such as; illiteracy, poor quality of teaching and learning and consequently the quality of life of society may also be low. The leadership of school administrators and other oversights by officials of the education system must be strong, cohesive, organized, prudent and attentive so that once absentee behavior is identified, administrative and sanctioning measures are taken to minimize absenteeism.

The results also show that the causes of school absenteeism are due to demotivation due to working conditions and low salary. In fact, this is a matter of conscience, because when something disturbs someone, the most correct thing is to present an action demanding the situations that constrain life and work, so that through the discussions, solutions are found together, rather than opting for the absenteeism. It really is very disturbing when the working conditions do not facilitate those who want to do their job, but do you have to take into account what working conditions are necessary?

Knowing, that in addition to the conditions that the institution provides, the teacher also has the responsibility to create their working conditions, so, that with the school, no task is put aside.

Other reasons for teacher absenteeism in Cabinda have to do with queues at the banks at the time of salary. constant rains, annoyance for the excessive bureaucracy of school management in solving problems, especially personal health problems, especially malaria, typhoid fever, Stomach ache and hemorrhoids. Certainly, in Cabinda and in many other provinces of Angola, the banalization of workers' wages brought some benefits but caused new problems, because the banking system did not meet the demand of its clients and services did not extend to rural areas. Which causes certain constraints.

In Cabinda, most banking services are centralized in the city and many teachers, in order to get money or even their salaries, have to travel more than 40 kilometers in the hope of getting the money in a rather bureaucratic, time-consuming and system. Sometimes the teacher's day ends in the bank queue and return home with no avail. If you can get the money you will not return to your area without shopping, this can lead to losing a day of work or more. This is where one of the concerns of teacher absenteeism really lies.

Life should not stop at the bank, one thing is money, another thing is work, it is the job that comes from the money and the absentee according to the Law can suffer a discount on the salary when they are absent to go to the bank to raise the salary if it is not by authorization. Life should be planned jointly, you must share certain responsibilities so that you are not the only one doing everything because you run the risk of failing to fulfill the duty that the prime element of a worker and when placed in the background means devaluation of work. Absenteeism can be this too; The lack of appreciation of school work due to personal interests.

Natural phenomena are unpredictable at a time when forecasts of meteorological services are not known. In Angola, the rainy season lasts approximately eight months, but it should not be a drizzle that influences absenteeism. When you want to work, the rain will not stop you from getting to school, but on days when there are heavy rains, that flood Houses and streets it is a different story. Cabinda for being part of the humid tropical climate and due to the rains, there are also cases of tropical diseases, so it is necessary that certain personal care is adhered to so that the disease is not one of the causes of absenteeism. If the most prevalent diseases (malaria, typhoid, hemorrhoids, and stomach pain) that lead teachers to absenteeism, what has to be done to stop from getting sick? Well, health care does not only depend on health, but it starts with the person himself, taking care of the hygiene, the water you drink, the use of mosquito nets and respect for the type and time of meals according to the needs of the body.

Some reasons for truancy should be investigated by police or school or labor inspectors in order to establish their truthfulness, once the truancy caused by truancy it becomes a criminal offense due to negligence. Accordingly, truancy can be considered as neglect of schoolwork. There are administrative legal measures of labor negligence that must be disclosed and responsible for those who fail to do so, except in the case of absences provided for in the General Labor Law:

[...] Absence due to the worker's marriage, birth of the child, death of a direct family member, compulsory fulfillment of military service, provision of evidence in the case of worker-student participation in courses of improvement or professional qualification, impossibility due to illness, accident or Support to the direct family member in case of illness or accident, participation in sporting or cultural activities representing the country, participation in union activities as a member and the authorization of the employer. " Article 152 (ANGOLA, 2001, page 38)

The measures to overcome these situations in the view of teachers are: opening of more banks in villages and communities, improving salaries and compatible with the cost of living, conducting radio and television programs for competitions of knowledge or general culture because it will increase responsibility of the teacher and students, placement of playground equipment in the school to attract students, improvements of the roads and placement of public transportation in school zones with greater need and play games in schools.

## **7. Conclusion**

Regarding the study and discussions about the conception of school absenteeism from the point of view of teachers in Cabinda, it was concluded that:

School absenteeism is the deliberate absence from school activities, lack of attendance in classes even while at school and absence from school without justification. To say this seems normal, but the actions that cause this behavior, especially that lower the quality of the student's school life and the increase social problems, such as illiteracy, poverty, poor quality, badly trained professionals and the low quality of social life.

The causes of school absenteeism are due to lack of motivation caused by poor working conditions and low wages, queues, lack of banks, time of salary, constant rains, annoyance of the excessive bureaucracy of school management in solving problems, personal problems mainly health with

Malaria, Typhoid, stomach pain and hemorrhoids. During the discussion of the results, we found that school absenteeism is also caused by poor teachers', awareness of their responsibilities in the fulfillment of their professional duties, they avoid school problems, lack of appreciation of school work due to personal interests, lack of courage to confront problems, work difficulties and the lack of care for the maintenance of health and diseases.

The measures of overcoming would be the opening of banks in villages and communities, improving salaries and that is compatible with the cost of living, conducting radio and television programs for competitions of knowledge or general culture because it will increase responsibility to the teacher and students, road improvements and placement of public transport in the school zones with greater need and realization of games in the schools.

## **8. Results**

Fines and administrative, criminal, and judicial accountability should be intensified for the absentee teacher or manager who allows this behavior to be the norm in schools.

School absenteeism should receive special attention from school administrators, school and labor inspectors, the police and the government, so that this behavior can be overcome through an action project to solve the main problems that cause this behavior.

The constraints caused by school absenteeism should be addressed in conferences, lectures, discussions, public debates and even within churches so that they are seen not only an evil of the school but also of society itself and in order to change this evil habit.

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