



Surveying Reasons for Not Taking Annual Vacation Leave by State Teachers in Selected Primary Schools in Lusaka District, Zambia

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Authors' contributions

This work was carried out in collaboration between both authors. Both authors read and approved the final manuscript.

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ABSTRACT

The study surveyed the reasons for not taking annual vacation leave by government primary teachers. This study employed qualitative and quantitative research strategies. Random sampling was used to draw samples of participants. A total of ninety-four participants took part in this study. Out of ninety-four, ten were head teachers and eighty-four were teachers. Data was collected using questionnaires for teachers and interview guides were employed to interview head teachers. The interviews were aided by the use of field notes and smart phone recorder. Data was analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative methods of analyzing data. The study revealed that the reasons teachers don't take annual vacation leave was because of teacher's lack of knowledge about terms and conditions of service on annual vacation leave. The role of school administration on teacher's perception about annual vacation leave was mostly on giving enough and accurate information to teachers relating to annual vacation leave. Head teachers, standard officers, in-service training, teacher union haven't been helpful in giving adequate information to teachers about annual

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vacation leave, hence teachers found it difficult to take vacation leave regularly. The teachers also individually were unable to read literature on leave in general, hence developing poor perception about taking annual vacation leave. Other findings revealed that the benefits of taking vacation leave by primary teachers were in two folds. The first one was the benefits to administrators and teachers when teachers took vacation leaves. The second one was the benefits to administrators and teachers when administrators took annual vacation leave regularly. Based on the findings, it was recommended that head teachers, teacher unions, school in-service training and standard officers should give teachers enough and accurate information about annual vacation leave. In addition, head teachers should stop managing DEBS in relation to vacation leave, hence, the DEBS should take to task every head teacher who don't submit teacher vacation leave forms for approval.

Keywords: Annual leave; state teachers; primary school.

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Zambia Terms and Conditions of Service for the Public Service [1] states that annual vacation leave for government primary teachers in Zambia is the total number of off days an employee is entitled to annually and it excludes Saturdays and Sundays as well as gazette public holidays. The total numbers of days accrue monthly, for instance, two days per month or it depends on the division the teacher belongs to. Annual leave is often paid leave unless otherwise stated. Annual vacation leave is taken by government teachers in Zambia [1].

The government of Zambia has provided for teachers to go on annual vacation leave [1]. Despite the government providing for primary teachers to go on vacation leave, some teachers still have gone for years without taking leave. The assertion that government workers or teachers in Zambia have challenges in taking leave is supported by public service management division circular number B23 and cabinet office circular number 15 of 2018 that were encouraging government workers including primary teachers to go on annual vacation leave [2]. The two circulars were in line with the government of the Republic of Zambia's austerity measures to administer and manage vacation leave. These measures are intended to prevent worsening the current debt situation in Zambia related to emolument. Moreover, these measures of encouraging workers to take vacation leave are for the wellbeing of workers, primary teachers inclusive [2].

A study done by Bennell, Hyde & Swainson [3] showed that teachers have not been taking vacation leave regularly due to impact of the HIV /AIDS epidemic on the education sector. That was because the few teachers that remained in schools were not allowed to take vacation leave

by their administrators. The absence rate of 5% to 12% in most developing countries was a clear indication that primary teachers do not take vacation leave regularly (Benn, Hyde & Swainson, 2002).

In addition, there were various reasons public primary teachers don't take annual leave among them was due to government interference. In 2016, the government of Zimbabwe recalled over 2000 teachers who were on annual vacation leave to report for work because of a shortage of teachers in that country [4]. This is a typical example of Government interference that makes teachers not to take annual vacation leave regularly. The other reason some primary teachers fail to take vacation leave was because of the lack of funds that can facilitate the employment of untrained teachers or temporary teachers to work while permanent teachers are on vacation leave [4]. This is simply because of shortage of teachers in schools especially in rural areas.

In addition, some government workers do not take annual vacation leave in Zambia particularly because workers hope to commute their days for compensation at the time of retirement [2]. The Terms and Conditions of public service provided for the limit of 230 days for officers in division one, 205 days in division two, and 160 days in division three (Secretary to the Cabinet, 2003). However, the commuted days that are over limitation are forfeited by the government of Zambia and result in teachers losing resting time as well as money for the forfeited days [2].

1.1 Statement of the Problem

The government of Zambia has made a provision for primary teachers to go on annual vacation leave [1]. Despite, cabinet office circular number 15 of 2018 of the Government of Zambia for

outlawing commuting of accumulated days, teachers have still gone on for years without taking annual vacation leave.

Therefore, the failure by teachers to go on leave for many years could be detrimental to the effective delivery of quality education services. If that situation was not checked, it has the potential to affect the achievement of Zambia Vision 2030 as well as the accomplishment of EFA goals. Hence, the study made an effort to explore the reasons for not taking annual vacation leave by government primary teachers.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Annual Leave Policy in Zambia

There are several laws in Zambia that support workers to take annual vacation leave. Among government policies that provide for teachers to take vacation leave is the Employment code Act 2019, the Zambia Education (Amendment) Act (2003) and Terms and Conditions of Service for public service of 2003 [5]. The Employment Code Act of 2019 of the Republic of Zambia provides that a full-time worker is entitled to at least 2 days of annual leave/paid holidays for one month of service. The total annual leave is 24 calendar days per year and is independent of weekly rest days and Public Holidays [6].

The Zambia Education (Amendment) Act [5] also provides that, all leave is to be subjected to the exigencies of the service and no employee is entitled to demand leave as a right. Despite the Zambia Education (Amendment) Act (2003) limiting the right of the worker to annual leave, it still provides for the workers to take vacation leave. In addition, the Terms and Conditions of service for public service providers for the teacher to take vacation leave every after 2 years during the school holiday [1]. This means that a teacher should always or otherwise start annual leave during the period when pupils are not in session. Terms and conditions of service for public service also provide that, full-time workers who are in divisions 1, 2 and 3 are entitled to at least 3.5, 3, and 2.5 days respectively of annual leave/paid holidays for one month of service [1].

2.2 Concept of Annual Vacation Leave

Annual leave or vacation leave is paid time off work granted by employers to employees to be

used for whatever the employee wishes. In addition, other types of leave include maternity Leave, sick Leave, local leave, compassionate leave and many more. Annual leave in the context of this research means that it is an entitlement that is qualified for after a one-year continuous service or employment in an organization. According to Employment Code Act 2019 of Zambia, a full-time primary teacher is entitled to 24 days of paid vacation leave annually. However, the trend for primary teachers working in public schools is that vacation leave is taken every after two years [1]. This is one of the ways in which primary school teachers are delayed and denied to take annual vacation leave as per their entitlement.

The Zambia Education (Amendment) Act [5] states that all leave is subject to the exigencies of the service and no employee is entitled to demand leave as a right. The observation from the researcher is that, whether or not there are education policies in Zambia that manage primary teachers' annual vacation leave, government teachers deserve protection as provide by Employment Code Act 2019 relating to annual vacation leave. Primary teachers working in private schools follow the guidelines about taking leave yearly as provided by the Employment Code Act 2019 of Zambia and government primary teachers must not be subjected to annual vacation leave that comes every after 2 years.

2.3 Teacher's Perception about Annual Vacation Leave

The perception of the teacher concerning the annual vacation leave has a bearing on whether to take leave or not. According to Yolanda [7], perception is the recognition and interpretation of information that has been gathered through our senses and this includes how people respond to a certain situation with the given information. In addition, perception is often influenced or even based on people's expectations, experiences, temperaments, and sometimes cultural norms [7]. In this case, the perception of the teacher about the annual vacation leave is vital. The way the teacher perceives annual vacation leave may be a determinant of whether to take annual vacation leave or not. Personal expectations of the teacher have a crucial role in enhancing the decision on taking annual vacation leave or not.

2.4 Role of School Administration on Teacher's Perception on Annual Vacation Leave

According to Dunphy and Scoott [8], leadership styles can be regarded as how a person in authority leads. The terms and conditions of service and adopted administrative leadership style in respective learning institutions play an important role whether teachers can be allowed to take annual leave or not [8].

The kind of leadership exercised by school head teachers is reflected in how they communicate with teachers, how they exercise their authority and power, this, in turn, affects teachers about annual leave-taking. Moreover, the leadership styles articulated by school administration influence how they command and motivate teachers to realize the set academic goals. However, the head teacher characteristic about influence is that he or she takes action to persuade, influence indirectly, and uses sophisticated influencing approaches (Dunphy and Scoott, 2000).

This is the reason why primary teachers in government learning institutions are easily influenced by their head teachers either to take leave or not. In addition, school administrations develop a scalable vacation leave management plan in consultation with teachers, however, at the end of the day, the head teacher has a final say whether or not one should go on leave. The school administration in most cases use the education act to deny the teachers to take annual leave. The Zambia Education (Amendment) Act (2003) states that all leave is subject to the exigencies of the service and no employee is entitled to demand leave as a right, and this act disadvantages teacher to take leave regularly (Zambia Education (Amendment) Act, 2003).

2.5 Reasons Some Workers Don't Take Annual Leave

According to Eric [9], there were various reasons some workers don't take AVL, among them, wanting to show job dedication, sometime was due to organizational culture that discourages vacation and the inability for some workers to disconnect. It is true that, the most effective employees aren't the ones who work nonstop like robots. Individuals who work hard but also make time for vacations away from their jobs are the ones who can maintain high levels of work efficiency and remain healthy.

Furthermore, some government workers do not also take annual vacation leave in Zambia for various reasons among them; workers hope to commute their days for compensation at the time of retirement [2].

2.6 Benefit of Taking Annual Leave Regularly

According to Gary [10], the benefit of annual leave is that it gives workers the right to be absent from a regular occupation, usually for recreation or tourism. People often take a vacation during specific holiday observances, or for specific festivals or celebrations. Annual leave is believed to preserve workers' human capital because it provides a period of rest and recovery that enables them to remain healthy. It, therefore, contributes towards reducing absenteeism [10].

2.7 Specific Objectives of the Study

The specific objectives of the study were;

- i. To examine teacher's perception about annual vacation leave.
- ii. To establish the role of school administration on teacher's perception about annual vacation leave.
- iii. To explore the benefit of taking annual leave regularly
- iv. To identify reasons some government primary teachers don't take annual leave.

3. METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out in ten selected primary schools of Lusaka District. Lusaka district is found in Lusaka province of the republic of Zambia. This study employed qualitative approach which provides a lens according to Mukalula-kalumbi & Pitsoe [11], to represent any particular reality from a range of perspectives and quantitative research strategies. Data was collected using questionnaires for teachers and one-on-one interview with head teachers. The questionnaire was preferred because as Gay [12] puts, it would give respondents freedom to express their views or opinions and also to make suggestions. The questionnaire that was used in the study had both close-ended and open-ended questions. Moreover, interview was used in this study for its ability to allow clarification from both the respondent and interviewer. Interview is defined as a two-way systematic conversation between the investigator and an informant, initiated for the purpose of obtaining information

to a specific study [13]. The interviews were aided by the use of field notes and smart phone recorder. Random sampling was used to draw samples of participants. Data was analyzed using both qualitative and quantitative methods of analyzing data. A total of ninety-four participants took part in this study. Out of ninety-four, ten were head teachers and eighty-four were teachers [14,15].

4. FINDINGS

The study was on exploring reasons for not taking annual vacation leave by government teachers in selected primary schools in Lusaka district, Zambia.

4.1 Head Teacher Response

The following were responses from head teachers relating to reasons why some government primary teachers don't take annual leave.

There are various reasons primary teachers don't take vacation leave among them, due to school leave plan, prescribed maximum accumulation leave days, condition for teachers to take annual vacation leave every after 2 years, shortage of teachers in learning institutions, employment act and many more. The findings indicated that, one of the reasons teachers don't take vacation leave was because of the terms and condition of service in public service that states that, teachers should take vacation leave every after 2 years. One of the head teachers stated that:

"The terms and condition of service for public service that states that, teachers should take vacation leave every after 2 years helps in delaying teachers to take annual leave. By the way, how is it called annual vacation leave when it is always taken every after two years?"

Normally, the teachers discover later that, they have been delayed to take their vacation leave because of the leave policy. This is a typical example of the terms and conditions of service in public service supporting primary teachers not to take vacation leave regularly. Another reason teachers don't take vacation leave was because of the terms and condition of service in public service that allowed prescribed maximum accumulated leave days. In support of that, one head teacher said:

"If the officer was to be allowed a maximum accumulation of 210 leave days, that particular officer will be reluctant to take vacation leave knowing that it was acceptable by law. For instance, in order for the teacher to accumulate 210 days, it means that, the officer might not have gone on leave for over 4 years."

This is another typical example of the terms and condition of service in public service assisting primary teachers not to take vacation leave regularly. Another reason teachers don't take vacation leave was because of the school leave plan. One head teacher said:

"The school leave plan is there to satisfy institution needs not individual teacher needs in most cases. School leave plan is rotational and the teacher will be delayed to take vacation leave depending on the number of teachers at that particular primary school. Hence, teachers should come up with individual leave plan that should be presented to school management. In this case, a teacher should follow individual leave plan and if the school administration cannot allow the teacher at that time to take vacation leave, let them give a reason as to why they cannot allow the teacher through the office the DEBS. This is very important for record keeping."

This again is another education guide line that helps primary school teachers not to take vacation leave regularly. The school leave plan pays much attention to institution needs while individual leave plan concentrates much on individual needs for that particular teacher.

Other reasons why teachers don't take vacation leave, among them was because of the employment act for 2019 which states that, an employee can only take annual vacation leave after working for 12 months. According to the officer at labour office, the Employment code act 2019 also has helped in delaying workers to take a break. The officer explained that, the employment act in some ways denies workers to take vacation leave not until one has worked for 12 months. This gives an opportunity to employers to deny vacation leave to their employees before they clock one year in service. That sentiment was supported by one of the head teachers who stated that:

“Employment acts are there to protect both the interest of the employee and that of the employers “

Teachers also don't take vacation leave because of a shortage of teachers in schools. This indicated that, head teachers in schools were able to convince teachers not to take vacation leave based on that fact. That notion was supported by all the head teachers who participated in this research. Shortage of teachers in schools was key as to why some teachers were not given the opportunity to take vacation leave regularly. The findings showed that indeed some schools that were visited by the researcher were experiencing serious shortage of teachers despite the many teachers who were in the streets waiting to be recruited by the government of Zambia.

4.2 Teacher Response (in Some Cases Supported by Head Teachers Comment)

1. 88% of the participants gave shortage of teachers in schools as the reason teachers do not take vacation leave in primary schools while 12 % were against that notion. This indicated that, head teachers in schools were able to convince teachers not to take vacation leave based on that fact. However, it is important to note that the findings also showed that in some schools' teachers were not just interested to take vacation leave. One head teacher said:

“Some time back, the school had enough teachers but teachers never wanted to apply to take vacation leave especially women who confused maternity leave for vacation leave. Other teachers have a peace of mind when they are at school away from home problems and pressure at home”.

2. 74% of the participants stated that, the reason teachers don't take vacation leave was because teachers were not aware that at retirement time, they might not receive annual leave allowance for the accumulated days beyond the prescribed maximum limits while 26 % were against that idea. This implies that, most teachers were ignorant about terms and condition of service pertaining to annual vacation leave in relation to compensation of forfeited leave days at retirement. That was supported by all the head teachers who were interviewed who stated that,

teachers don't take vacation leave due to ignorance about the terms and condition of service for public workers.

3. 70% of the participants gave lack of information about terms and condition of service on annual vacation as the reason teachers don't take vacation leave in primary schools while 30 % were against that idea. This implies that most teachers don't read documents like employment acts, education acts, collective agreements, terms and condition of service and other education policies relating to annual vacation leave.

4. 31% of the participants stated that conducting private business within the school for example tuitions, selling of school uniform, working from school tuck shop and so on where the reason teachers do not take vacation leave in primary schools while 69 % were against that idea. This implies that most teachers fail to take annual vacation leave not because of conducting private business within the school.

5. 70% of the participants stated that poor view about the importance of taking vacation leave by teachers was the reason teachers don't take vacation leave in primary schools while 30 % did not support that idea. This implies that, teachers undervalued the importance of taking annual vacation leave.

One of the head teachers explained that:

“Some teachers don't take vacation leave because they feel free to be in school all the time with their fellow teachers. In short, socialization in schools made some teachers not to take vacation leave”.

6. 73% of the participants stated that, head teacher's influence was the reason teachers do not take vacation leave in primary schools while 27 % did not like the idea. This implied that head teachers use administrative influence not to allow teachers to take vacation leave.

In support of that, the head teachers who were interviewed emphasized on institution needs such as a possible shortage of teachers being a major deciding factor preventing teachers from going on leave. If the school is understaffed in a particular area, then it becomes a challenge to allow a particular teacher take their vacation leave.

7. 52% of the participants stated that regular school holidays helped to relieve the stress of work for teachers as the reason teachers do not take vacation leave in primary schools while 48% were not in favor of that idea. This implies that, regular school holidays were enough to relieve stress of teachers and encouraged them not to take vacation leave. However, the number of participants who agreed with that notion were almost the same as those who disagreed and that denotes that regular school holidays also can encourage teachers to not take vacation leave.

8. 51% of the participants stated that, the reason teachers do not take vacation leave in primary schools was because some teachers want to continue with their classes to the next grade. This is viewed as a means of monitoring the academic performance of their learners. Teachers fear that pupil's performance might be disrupted if another teacher takes over from them should they go on vacation leave while 49% of the participants did not like the idea. This implies that, some teachers want to continue with their classes to the next grade for fear that pupils might be spoiled by other teachers, hence not taking vacation leave regularly.

9. 77% of the participants stated that a teacher being dependable in school was the reason that particular teacher doesn't take vacation leave while 23% were against that idea. This implies that some teachers are not allowed to take vacation leave by their head teachers because they are dependable in school. They likely perform more than one duty and are very effective in their entire assigned task and don't mind taking on extra responsibilities.

10. 81% of the participants stated that not being confirmed in appointment as a teacher was the reason some teachers don't take vacation leave while 19 % did not agree. This implies that, head teachers take advantage of teacher's ignorance to deny them to take annual vacation leave. However, according to terms and condition of service, teachers can take annual vacation leave even if they are not yet confirmed teachers.

11. 42% of the participants stated that having nothing to do at home during annual vacation leave was the reason teachers don't take vacation leave in primary schools while 58% were against that idea. This implies that having nothing to do at home during annual vacation

leave was not a good reason for teachers not to take vacation leave.

12. 48% of the participants stated that the reason some teachers do not take vacation leave in primary schools was because of head teachers who don't go on vacation leave, hence also don't allow their teachers to take annual vacation leave while 52% were against that idea. This implies that head teachers who don't go on vacation leave, may not allow their teachers to take vacation leave.

13. 69% of the participants indicated that, because of local appointments in acting positions (e. g d/head teacher) made some teachers not to take annual vacation leave while 31% were against that idea. This implies that, because of local appointments in acting positions was a good reason teacher don't take vacation leave regularly.

14. 36% of the participants indicated that wanting to exchange leave days for money was the reason teachers do not take vacation leave in primary schools while 64% were against that idea. This implies that, wanting to exchange leave days for money was not a reason teacher don't take vacation leave.

15. 70% of the participants stated that, because funds were not immediately available for teachers who take annual vacation leave, hence most teachers don't take vacation leave while 30% were against that idea. This implies that, because funds were not immediately available for teachers who take annual vacation leave was the reason teachers don't take vacation leave regularly.

16. 68% of the participants stated that, the reason teachers don't take vacation leave was because teachers were undecided when to take annual vacation leave while 32% were against that idea. This implies that, teachers were undecided as to when they could take annual vacation leave.

17. 76% of the participants indicated that the reason teachers don't take vacation leave regularly was because annual vacation leave plan was not being followed in some schools while 24% were against that idea. This implies that, teachers don't take annual vacation leave because annual vacation leave plan was not followed in some schools.

18. 86% of the participants stated that the reason teachers don't take vacation leave regularly was because of head teachers who do not forward vacation leave application forms for teachers to DEBS for approval while 14% were against that idea. This implies that, teachers don't take annual vacation leave because of head teachers who do not forward vacation leave application forms for teachers to DEBS for approval.

19. 81% of the participants stated that the reason teachers don't take vacation leave regularly was because of lack of follow up by teachers to relevant authority after submission of annual vacation leave forms to their respective head teachers while 19% were against that idea. This implies that, the reason teachers don't take vacation leave regularly was because of lack of follow up by teachers to relevant authority after submission of annual vacation leave forms to their respective head teachers.

20. 76% of the participants stated that, the reason teachers don't take vacation leave regularly was because teachers were not aware about health risks associated with working for extended periods of time without taking time to rest, 24% were against that view. In support of this notion, one of the head teachers said:

“the benefit of taking annual vacation leave was for health reasons which most head teachers and teachers seem not to realize”

21. According to the findings, the head teacher is more influential than the DEBS in relation to vacation leave taking. This was another reason teachers don't take vacation leave because the DEBS was being managed by head teachers in relation to annual leave-taking. This has also given more room for the head teachers in denying teachers to take annual vacation leave.

22. Lastly, other findings revealed that, there weren't enough sensitization to teachers about the benefits of taking vacation leave especially on health risks. The majority of the participants were not aware about health benefits of taking vacation.

Further, the findings on the benefits of taking vacation leave by primary teachers were in two folds. The first one was the benefits to administrators and teachers when teachers took vacation leaves. The benefits to administrators when teachers took vacation leave were that,

administrators found it easier to deal with a teacher coming from vacation leave. It was common that, refreshed teachers through vacation leave made teachers to report to work in time, less teacher absenteeism, accepted with easy to be delegated, prompt in handing in teaching files and regular in writing lesson plans, increased good results for the pupils, performing as teacher on duty very well, no problems in attending staff meetings, teaching pupils about morals and flexible in carrying out day to day activities. However, some teachers after coming from vacation leave, they become problems and wished they did not take vacation.

The benefits to teachers when they took vacation leave were that, teachers were able to spend time with their families, improves good healthy, able to do personal business, boast happiness, helps to plan ahead, removes stress, prepare mentally for retirement, financial benefit through leave allowance and reposition in oneself in life.

The second one was the benefits to administrators and teachers when administrators take annual vacation leave regularly. The benefits to administrators when administrators took vacation leave were that, other administrators were given chance to act in their positions and gain more administrative skills and be able to enjoy some of the privileges that were associated with that particular office. Administrators on leave were also able to spend time with their families, improve on their healthy, able to do personal business, boast happiness, help to plan ahead, remove stress, prepare mentally for retirement, financial benefits through leave allowance and reposition in oneself in life and getting used to stay without authority and without enjoying privileges that go with the office. Administrators normally come back from leave ready to study the education act, reentry policy, terms and conditions of service for teachers, collective agreement, examinations guideline, financial guidelines and other education policies that every administrator must read for smooth running of their office. Most head teachers do not read these documents because of fatigue and stress resulting from their day to day running of learning institutions and hence some of them end up misleading their subordinates. Administrators taking leave was important to the Ministry of Education for head teacher accountability and transparency. Most head teachers don't take vacation leave because of fear of being transparent and accountable.

The benefits to teachers when administrators took vacation leave were that, ordinary teachers were given chance to act in administrative positions and learnt the skills associated with that office. The head teachers after coming from vacation leave were found also to be accommodating and very flexible to teachers and they were ready to allow teachers to take annual vacation leave in return. In most cases, head teachers from vacation leave worked very hard not to have tension with their subordinates.

5. DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of the study revealed that, some of the reasons that caused government teachers not to take vacation leave were due to teacher's perception about annual vacation leave. The positive teacher perception about annual vacation leave helped the teachers to take vacation leave. However, the negative teacher perception about vacation leave discouraged the teachers from taking annual vacation leave. The study also revealed that the role of school administration on teacher's perception about annual vacation leave was mostly about the head teachers giving enough and accurate information to teachers relating to annual vacation leave. Further, union leaders, standard officers, teacher group meetings, head teachers and many more should be able to help in giving enough and accurate information to teachers about annual vacation leave. The teachers, individually also should be able to read literature about leave in general so that they are kept informed. A teacher who has accurate information about annual vacation leave would always make correct decisions about leave taking.

The study also revealed some reasons teachers don't take annual vacation leave among them, because of lack of information about terms and condition of service on annual vacation leave. Most teachers were ignorant about their condition service relating to taking annual vacation leave. Head teachers, standard officers, in-service training, teacher union haven't been helpful in giving adequate information to teachers about annual vacation leave. Moreover, teachers have not taken keen interest in reading the literature relating to annual vacation leave.

Another reason teachers don't take annual vacation leave was because of head teachers who do not forward vacation leave application forms for teachers to DEBS for approval. Head

teachers have a tendency of not submitting leave forms for teachers, hence making it impossible for those teachers to take vacation leave.

Moreover, another reason teachers don't take annual vacation leave was because of lack of follow up by teachers to relevant authority after submission of annual vacation leave forms to their respective head teachers. Teachers do not make follow ups after submitting application leave forms to DEBS office through the office of the head teacher. And if the head teacher did not submit the leave forms to DEBS the teachers affected wait in vain. Additionally, teachers don't take annual vacation leave was because of teachers were not aware about health risks associated with not taking annual leave. Most teachers were not aware that, by not taking vacation leave one can develop heart complications. Furthermore, the teachers don't take annual vacation leave was because of sponsorship bonds or being in acting positions. Affected officers could only take annual vacation leave after prescribed period of time.

It was also noted that teachers don't take annual vacation leave because of education policies relating to annual vacation leave such as school leave plan, prescribed maximum accumulation leave days and the condition that required teachers to take annual vacation leave every after two (2) years.

The findings on the benefits of taking vacation leave by primary teachers were in two folds. The first one was the benefits to administrators and teachers when teachers took vacation leaves. The second one was the benefits to administrators and teachers when administrators take annual vacation leave regularly.

In view of the findings of the study, the following recommendations have been suggested;

- i) Government teachers should be able to submit to their head teachers *individual leave plan* covering from 24 months after the day of teacher appointment to the time of retirement.
- ii) Every government teacher who is not confirmed in appointment should be allowed to take vacation leave after being in service for a period of 24 months.
- iii) A teacher who has taken annual vacation leave should obtain a leave certificate from relevant authority.

- iv) Government teachers must consistently apply for vacation leave every after 2 years as per terms and condition of service.
- v) Head teachers should stop managing the DEBS office in relation to vacation leave, hence, the DEBS office should take to task every head teacher who does not submit teacher vacation leave forms for approval.

COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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