

The Impact of 2002 National Teacher Contract Policy Reform on Teacher Absenteeism in
Lahore, Pakistan

By Masooma Habib

B.A. 1978, Kinnaird College Lahore, Pakistan
M.A. 1986, McGill University, Montreal

A Dissertation Submitted to

The Faculty of
The Graduate School of Education and Human Development
of The George Washington University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Doctor of Education

May 16, 2010

Dissertation directed by
Yas Nakib
Associate Professor of Education Policy and of
Public Policy and Public Administration

The Graduate School of Education and Human Development of The George Washington University certifies that Masooma Habib has passed the Final Examination for the degree of Doctor of Education as of March 8, 2010. This is the final and approved form of the dissertation.

The Impact of 2002 National Teacher Contract Policy Reform on Teacher
Absenteeism in Lahore, Pakistan

Masooma Habib

Dissertation Research Committee

Yas Nakib, Associate Professor of Education Policy and of Public Policy and
Public Administration, Dissertation Director

Iris C. Rotberg, Research Professor of Education Policy, Committee Member

James H. Williams, Associate Professor of International Education and
International Affairs, Committee Member

© Copyright 2010 by Masooma Habib
All rights reserved

Dedication

To the memory of my parents

Miriam and Hassan Habib

Acknowledgments

I am most grateful to my adviser Dr. Yas Nakib for his invaluable guidance in providing insights, comments and all round support and encouragement throughout the dissertation process. I am also extremely thankful to Dr. Iris Rotberg whose analysis of my work has helped immensely in structuring and making sense of the study. I am especially thankful to Dr. James Williams for the meticulous feedback on my study at short notice that helped to tighten and clarify many issues. I am indebted to all three committee members for their support and encouragement at every stage of the dissertation.

I would also like to thank Dr. Gregg Jackson for encouraging me to carry out research on education in Pakistan and for his advice in the early stages of the research. I am especially grateful to Nancy Gilmore for her help during this process. Cindy Orticio and Mark Evans provided valuable assistance with formatting and editing.

I am obliged to many friends and family in Lahore and Washington: My brother Ali, Mamie and family; Riaz and Abida Hassan, Bambi and Farzana; the Nabi family, especially Naved Hamid, Zainab Khan provided continuous encouragement. I'm also thankful to Fareeha Zafar and Shahid Kardar for insightful discussions about the research.

Most of all, I want to thank my family, my husband Ijaz and my children Zeenat and Shehryar for their wonderful support, patience, good humor and cups of tea.

Abstract of Dissertation

The Impact of 2002 National Teacher Contract Policy Reform on Teacher Absenteeism in
Lahore, Pakistan

Teacher absenteeism is a persistent problem in Pakistani government schools. Under a new policy, teachers hired in Pakistani schools after 2002 are hired on fixed term contracts that are renewed, in part, based on low absenteeism. This study uses qualitative analysis techniques to assess the impact of contractual hiring on teacher absenteeism based on the perceptions of teachers and principals from a sample of schools in Lahore, Pakistan. In-depth interviews of 16 contract teachers, 16 regular teachers, and 8 principals from a representative sample of 8 schools were conducted. Absenteeism among teachers with contracts was found to be only moderately lower than among regular teachers. Some features of the contract policy, such as fewer options for leave, greater authority of the school principal to check absenteeism of contract teachers, merit-based hiring, and the threat of nonrenewal, were perceived to reduce absenteeism. The contract policy did not address other perceived causes of teacher absence, such as insufficient allowance for female teachers' transportation and family responsibilities, dissatisfaction with students' weak academic backgrounds, and deficient government policies. Respondents identified lower salaries for contract teachers than tenured teachers despite higher qualifications, as encouraging absenteeism. The policy of contractual hiring was perceived to cause frequent resignation of contract teachers. Overall, it was found that the contract policy had relatively little impact on teacher absenteeism.

Table of Contents

	<u>Page</u>
Dedication	iv
Acknowledgments	v
Abstract of Dissertation.....	vi
List of Figures.....	xii
List of Tables	xiii
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION.....	1
Overview of the Study	1
The Problem of Teacher Absenteeism	4
Teacher Absenteeism in Pakistan	5
Teacher Contracts and Absenteeism.....	7
Need for Research.....	9
Purpose of the Study	10
Summary of Research Questions	11
Overview of Methodology and Assumptions	12
Delimitations.....	13
Limitations	13
Potential Significance	14
Statement of Potential Subjectivity.....	15
Overview of Dissertation	15
Definitions of Key Terms	16

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW	20
Introduction.....	20
Overview of the Contract Teacher Policy.....	20
Analysis of Contract Policy Incentives and Sanctions	22
Contract Policy Implementation	23
Defining and Measuring Absenteeism.....	25
Theoretical Explanations of Absenteeism	27
Absenteeism as Pain Avoidance	27
Absence as Reaction to Individual and Group Behavior	28
Absence as Rational Choice.....	29
Integrated Models Explaining Absenteeism	30
Empirical Studies of Teacher Absenteeism	31
Teacher Absenteeism in Poor School Districts.....	31
Teacher Absenteeism and Leave Policies.....	32
Literature on Teacher Absenteeism in Developing Countries	34
Correlates of Absenteeism in Multicountry Studies	35
Literature Linking Contract Employment and Teacher Absenteeism	38
Weak Accountability as a Rationale for Contract Teachers	38
Importance of Accurate Teacher Performance Evaluation.....	39
International Experience with Contract Teachers.....	40
Relevance of Research for Pakistan.....	42
Conceptual Framework for Studying Teacher Absenteeism	43

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY	50
Introduction.....	50
Research Questions.....	51
School and Teacher Sample.....	53
Data Collection	56
Open-Ended and Semistructured Interview Format	56
Data Analysis	58
Coding Interview Data.....	59
Memos and Field Notes	61
Document and Published Data Analysis.....	63
Unit of Analysis	63
Validity and Reliability.....	63
Internal Validity.....	63
Triangulation Techniques to Strengthen Internal Validity	64
External Validity.....	65
Reliability.....	66
Human Participation and Ethical Considerations	67
Research Methodology Limitations.....	68
CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH FINDINGS.....	71
Introduction.....	71
Findings From Interview Data	76
Research Query #1: Do Contract Teachers Tend To Be Absent Less Than Regular Teachers in a Sample of Lahore Schools?	76

Finding 1.1	77
Finding 1.2	79
Finding 1.3	82
Finding 1.4	83
Research Query 2: What Are Teachers’ and Principals’ Perceptions of the Impact of the Contract Policy on Teacher Absenteeism?	87
Finding 2.1	87
Finding 2.2	93
Finding 2.3	97
Research Query 3: What Are Teachers’ and Principals’ Perceptions of the Impact of Specific School and Individual Teacher Characteristics on Teacher Absenteeism?	99
Finding 3.1	101
Finding 3.2	103
Finding 3.3	104
Finding 3.4	107
Finding 3.5	119
Summary of the Findings	127
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS	130
Contributions to the Literature	130
Comparing Main Findings With Existing Literature	133
Teacher Absenteeism and Poor School Districts	133
Effect of Contract Incentive Structure on Absenteeism	133

Teachers' Probationary Status Improved Attendance.....	134
Fewer Leave Options Reduce Absences.....	134
Lower Contract Salaries as a Disincentive to Attend	135
Comparison of Main Results Using Analytical Framework.....	136
Extrinsic Motivation to Attend	137
Intrinsic Motivation to Attend	138
Constraints on Ability to Attend.....	139
Policy Implications	141
Contract Policy and Teacher Absence	141
Resignation Option	141
Consistency of Policy Design	142
Evaluation of Contract Performance.....	142
Implications for Future Research.....	146
Conclusion	147
REFERENCES.....	149
APPENDIX A: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL.....	160
APPENDIX B: CODE NAMES AND DESCRIPTIONS	169
APPENDIX C: PARTICIPANT INFORMED CONSENT FORMS.....	173
APPENDIX D: SCHOOL BACKGROUND INFORMATION	175
APPENDIX E: SAMPLE TEACHER BACKGROUND INFORMATION	180
APPENDIX F: COMPARING SALARIES AND YEARS OF EXPERIENCE	184
APPENDIX G: EXAMPLE OF CODING	185

List of Figures

	<u>Page</u>
2.1. A Framework for Analyzing Contract and Regular Teacher Absenteeism	45
3.1. School Population and Sample	54
3.2. Schools Represented in Sample for In-depth Interviews	55
F.1. Salaries of Contract and Regular Teachers	184
F.2. Years of Experience for Contract and Regular Teachers.....	184

List of Tables

	<u>Page</u>
3.1. Example of Start List and Pattern Codes	60
4.1. Perceptions of Teacher Absence in Response to Open-Ended Query	80
4.2. Perceptions of Absence Among Contract and Regular Teachers	82
4.3. Absence Rates for Selected Sample Schools	83
4.4. Perceived Effect of Contract Features on Teacher Absence.....	88
4.5. Perceived Combined Influences of Contract Features on Absenteeism	94
4.6. Supervision Factors Perceived to Lower Teacher Absenteeism.....	101
4.7. Combined Influences of Supervision Effects on Teacher Absenteeism.....	104
4.8. Job Environment Factors Perceived to Increase Teacher Absenteeism.....	109
4.9. Combined Effects of Work Environment Factors on Absenteeism.....	117
4.10. Perceptions of Influence of Teachers' Personal Attributes on Absenteeism.....	120
D.1. Sample School Characteristics.....	175
E.1. Teacher Background Characteristics in Eight Sample Schools	180
E.2. Detailed Teacher Background Table	182
E.3. Job Environment Factors Perceived to Increase Teacher Absenteeism	183
G.1. Example of Coding Showing Descriptive, Pattern, and Interaction Codes Relating Contract Policy Features and Absenteeism	185

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Overview of the Study

Despite several rounds of educational reforms and periods of favorable economic progress, many generations of Pakistanis have reached adulthood without an education. Currently, half the population over age 15 has never been to school. In 2007, the primary net enrollment rate¹ in government schools was 55%. Poor, rural females represented the most underprivileged group, with net enrollment rates as low as 15% in remote rural areas (Government of Pakistan, 2009).

Mounting economic, social, and political pressure in Pakistan has created urgency to improve educational achievement. There is widespread awareness that basic, modern schooling is essential for increasing citizens' employability and quality of life, as well as the chance to compete in the global market. Moreover, there is political awareness of the risk associated with young men who turn to extremism due to lack of mainstream educational and employment opportunities (Kronstadt, 2004).² Thus, local demand for improved education and pressure from international donors to expand the access and quality of education continues to encourage new educational reform policies. The quality and accountability of teachers is often cited as a crucial measure for improving education in Pakistan (Gazdar, 2000; Khan, 2002; Reimers & Warwick, 1995; World Bank, 2002).

¹ Net enrollment rates in Pakistan are calculated by dividing the number of enrolled primary school students by the number of children aged 5–9. If gross enrollment levels are used, the participation rate in 2007–08 increases to 90%, indicating the high proportion of over-age children enrolled in primary classes.

² The need to improve education in Pakistan was outlined in a U.S. Congressional report (Kronstadt, 2004) and the 9/11 commission report (<http://www.gpoaccess.gov/911/>).

Teacher absenteeism is a persistent problem in Pakistani government schools. It is estimated that on any given day, about 20% of teachers are absent (Gazdar, 2000; World Bank, 2008). The success of educational reforms is ultimately gauged by student learning progress; however, one important intermediate outcome of reform is the potential decrease in teacher absenteeism in Pakistani schools. Although reduced teacher absenteeism alone may not lead to enhanced classroom learning, studies have shown that teacher absenteeism reduces the benefits of educational interventions to improve teacher performance and student learning outcomes (Glewwe, Holla, & Kremer, 2008).

In 2002, the government implemented the Punjab Education Sector Reform Program (PESRP) to improve the overall quality of school education. A major focus of PESRP was to address the lack of accountability associated with tenured teachers. The perception was that strongly unionized, politically aligned tenured teachers were an obstacle to evaluating teacher performance and improving educational standards. A principal feature of the reform program was the switch from hiring teachers on tenure to hiring them on 5-year contracts renewable upon satisfactory performance.

The contract teacher policy did not allow for contract teachers to become eligible for tenure-track positions. Tenured, or regular, teachers are difficult to penalize for absenteeism or unsatisfactory performance, because their jobs are permanent and they are protected by teacher unions. The policy of employing teachers on a contractual basis was intended to improve teacher performance and attendance. Under new reforms, instead of being hired as civil servants with tenure, teachers are hired for fixed-term employment, and renewal of contracts is tied to various performance criteria.

To improve teacher quality and accountability, the contract policy included merit-based, transparent hiring processes; higher minimum qualifications; site-based hiring to avoid teacher transfers based on political favors; fewer leave options; and threat of termination of contract upon unsatisfactory performance. The stated objective of the contract policy was to improve teacher performance and accountability. Reduced absenteeism was among the criteria for satisfactory performance for renewing contracts.

A teacher management study (World Bank, 2005) suggested that the contract policy was having the desired impact on absenteeism. Based on a survey of 104 schools in six representative school districts in the Punjab province following the implementation of the contract policy, the study concluded that absentee rates of contract teachers were seven percentage points lower than those of regular teachers. These results reported the impact of the contract policy after only 3 years, a relatively short period. Also, the data in support of the findings were based on a single 1-day visit to each school. However, there has been no further research on the effect of the contract policy on teacher absenteeism.

The purpose of this study is to understand how the features of the contact policy relate to the causes of teacher absenteeism based on a qualitative study of teacher and school principal perceptions regarding teacher absence, features of the contract policy, and how the contract policy features affect absenteeism. Perceptions of a sample of 32 teachers (16 regular and 16 contract) and 8 school principals in 8 schools in Lahore, a major metropolitan center of Pakistan, were obtained via in-depth interviews.

Three main mechanisms of the policy were expected to reduce teacher absenteeism: (a) contract nonrenewal due to unsatisfactory teacher attendance, (b) hiring procedures designed to appoint competent and politically unaligned teachers, and (c)

fewer leave options for contract teachers than for regular ones. The condition of contract nonrenewal due to unsatisfactory attendance was expected to put pressure on contract teachers to attend more regularly in order to keep their jobs. The policy of merit-based hiring was also expected to lower absenteeism among contract teachers because appointments based on political favors promote the practice of taking unexcused absences. The policy of fewer leave options for contract teachers was expected to lower absenteeism. Other features of the contract policy, like site-based hiring and higher educational qualifications, were expected to improve teacher attendance among contract teachers, whereas lower salaries, reduced benefits, and not being allowed to transfer to other schools were expected to lower the motivation to attend among contract teachers.

The Problem of Teacher Absenteeism

Teacher absenteeism is a problem faced by both developing and developed countries. A serious consequence of teacher absenteeism is interruption of student learning. For example, using detailed data from a large urban school district in the United States, Miller, Murnane, and Willet (2008) estimated that high rates of teacher absenteeism were directly related to lower student math scores. In developed countries, substitute teachers usually fill in for absent teachers. Data collected by the National Council on Teacher Quality showed that the average U.S. student experiences the equivalent of a year of instruction from a substitute teacher during the K–12 school cycle (Pitkoff, 2003). Continued use of substitute teachers has resulted in deterioration of student achievement and quality of instruction (Bruno, 2002).

Much of the concern about absenteeism in developed countries is related to the cost and quality of substitute teachers. However, in developing countries, the impact of

teacher absenteeism on education is even more serious because the use of substitute teachers is rare. Students miss the opportunity to learn when a teacher is absent because they are either sent home or supervised by other teachers or older students who discipline the class but seldom teach. Research on Zambia and India has indicated significant losses in student achievement due to teacher absenteeism (Das, Dercon, Habyanmana, & Krishnan, 2005; Duflo, Hanna, & Ryan, 2007). Although comparable research is not available for Pakistan, similar outcomes of lower student learning due to teacher absenteeism are expected.

Teacher absenteeism also exacerbates the educational gap between income groups. Research suggests that poor students in both developing and developed countries are more likely to be subjected to frequent teacher absenteeism (Bruno, 2002; Clotfelter, Ladd, & Vigdor, 2009). For example, teacher absenteeism in low-income urban school districts in the United States disproportionately affects poor students because their parents' economic circumstances make their access to school an important and sometimes the only source of educational development (Bruno, 2002). A study for India found that the poorest districts suffered from the highest rates of teacher absenteeism of up to 40% (Chaudhury, Hammer, Kremer, Muralidharan & Rogers, 2006)

Teacher Absenteeism in Pakistan

Estimates of rates of teacher absenteeism in Pakistan are based on a limited number of surveys with varying methodologies. The recent Learning and Educational Achievements in Punjab Schools (LEAPS) report (World Bank, 2008) estimated government schoolteacher absenteeism was 20% on average for government schools, according to a comparison of 800 private and public schools in the Punjab. In an earlier

survey of 125 rural public schools, Gazdar (2000) reported that of the 70% of schools open at the time of the visit, 24% had more than half of their teaching staff absent.

According to a survey of schools conducted by Ali and Reed (1994) in the Northwest Frontier province, 15% of teachers were absent at the time of visit. Other reported estimates of absenteeism range from 18% (King, Orazem, & Paterno, 1999) to 22% (World Bank, 2005). Though comparable to rates in other low-income countries, Pakistan's absentee rates are substantially higher than those of developed countries. For example in the United States, 5%–6% of teachers are absent on any single school day (Podgursky, 2003).

Teacher absenteeism in developed countries incurs substantial financial losses and lowers student learning outcomes (Bruno, 2002; Pitkoff, 2003). Although losses from teacher absenteeism have not been directly measured in Pakistan, high teacher absenteeism contributes to the inefficient use of scarce educational resources. In Pakistan children from wealthy urban families typically attend private schools and have reasonable educational achievement. However, most poor children are enrolled in government schools offering low-quality education (Andrabi, Das & Khwaja, 2006; Rahman, 2004; World Bank, 2008). Policies aimed at reducing the problem of teacher absenteeism in Pakistani government schools, therefore, are likely to benefit the poorest students and help to reduce educational disparities.

Teacher Contracts and Absenteeism

Although several major education reform programs have been introduced in Pakistan, few initiatives directly address the problem of teacher absenteeism.³ Other than sporadic, surprise raids by government officials to check for teacher attendance and temporary suspensions, systematic policies to address teacher absence have not been pursued.

To improve teacher accountability, hiring of government schoolteachers has been conducted on a contractual basis in the Punjab province since 2002. The rationale for this policy was to provide an alternative to the tenured, union-backed civil service positions in which weak accountability mechanisms led to low teacher performance, high teacher absenteeism, and low quality of education in schools (World Bank, 2005). Based on single visits to a sample of 104 schools in six representative districts in the Punjab province, researchers found that, overall, 22% of the teachers were absent on a single day, with 24% of regular teachers and 17% of contract teachers absent.

The contract policy was one of seven strategic initiatives introduced by PESRP. The PESRP was meant to meet the goals of the Education Sector Reform (ESR) program (2001–04) of the Federal Ministry of Education using provincial-level efforts to feed into and coordinate with the ESR program.

The seven initiatives outlined in PERSP were (a) improvement of school infrastructure provisions, (b) stipends to middle school girls, (c) contractual teacher recruitment, (d) free textbooks, (e) awareness campaigns, (f) improved access to

³ For example, despite spanning 10 years, the Social Action Program (SAP) of the mid-1980s to mid-1990s barely registered any educational progress. Evaluations of the program's outcomes did not show a difference in teacher absence rates (Ghaus-Pasha et al., 1997).

education in poorer districts, and (g) parent membership in school councils. These initiatives were to be aided by the National Devolution Plan of 2001, which was designed to give greater autonomy to provincial and district governments in implementing and delivering educational services (Winkler & Hatfield, 2002; UNESCO, 2003). Most of these initiatives were introduced to improve motivation for both tenured and contract teachers; however, fixed employment terms under the contract measure were targeted to affect teacher accountability and absenteeism.

The threat of termination of contract for unsatisfactory attendance remains the strongest sanction in the contract policy to reduce absenteeism. Fewer leave options (2 days of casual leave per month for contract teachers as opposed to 2 days of causal leave per month, 12 days of earned leave per year, and maternity and study leave for regular teachers) might present fewer opportunities for absence to contract teachers. Another reason to expect fewer absences among contract teachers is the merit-based hiring process that leaves less room for appointments based on political favors. Teachers appointed on the basis of political favors tend to get away with unexcused absences and may not be fully qualified and competent as teachers. Therefore, merit-based appointments might lower the number of absences that occur when teachers are hired through political favors.

However, there may be unintended consequences for teacher absenteeism because of some features of the contract policy. For instance, the effect of site-based hiring, short-notice resignation options, and lower salaries and benefits than regular teachers may actually decrease teacher motivation and increase teacher turnover. Given recruitment

delays, teacher positions might remain vacant for long periods. Such unforeseen consequences of the contract policy are analyzed in this study.

Need for Research

Designing and implementing effective educational policies in developing countries is an important subject for research, because many of the poorest citizens in these countries could benefit greatly from improved policies. In Pakistan, recent educational reforms need to be comprehensively assessed for their impact on alleviating major shortcomings, such as teacher absenteeism. A sweeping reform such as the contract policy should be evaluated for its ability to better reduce teacher absenteeism, one of its intended objectives, compared to the previous system of tenure-track civil service positions.

Currently, only anecdotal or limited research is available to suggest that absenteeism among contract teachers is lower than that of regular teachers (World Bank, 2005). Moreover, although some studies have given estimates of absence rates among teachers (Ali & Reed, 1994; Gazdar, 2000; King et al., 1999), few have probed deeper into the causes of absenteeism. The qualitative approach of this study involves directly asking teachers and principals about their perceptions of teacher absence and features of the contract policy that affect absenteeism and its causes. This approach allows for a better understanding of the contract policy and its effect on absenteeism from the perspective of school principals and teachers.

Purpose of the Study

Reduction of teacher absenteeism is an important aim of the contract policy under PESRP and, therefore, is an important gauge of the policy's success. The purpose of the study is to ascertain if incentives and sanctions built into the reforms (such as threat of termination of contract for unsatisfactory teacher attendance) are effective in reducing teacher absenteeism in a selected sample of schools in Pakistan. The study aims to identify why teachers are absent and whether the contract policy seems to be mitigating factors that encourage absenteeism, such as weak supervision mechanisms and unsatisfactory work environment, by comparing absenteeism among regular and contract teachers. An analytical framework and research questions supported by the literature on contract teachers and worker and teacher absenteeism were developed to further probe the various factors that influence teacher absenteeism and how the contract policy counteracts the likely causes of absenteeism.

The research questions provide the basis for conducting in-depth interviews of regular and contract teachers and school principals in a sample from the city of Lahore, which has a large urban school district. This particular urban center was chosen because the contract policy was first implemented in the Punjab province in 2002. A total of 34 districts in the Punjab make up 60% of the country's population, and Lahore is the largest city in the province with a population of nearly 7 million. Government schools typically provide education to the least privileged children, given that the option of private schools is available to better-off families.

Therefore, studying the impact of the contract policy on teacher absenteeism in government schools helps in understanding whether this reform policy can assist in

lowering absenteeism in schools serving some of the poorest residents of the city. Results from this study offer educational practitioners valuable insight into teacher absenteeism and the success of reforms in helping to lower it.

Summary of Research Questions

The research questions and corresponding subquestions were based on the theoretical and empirical literature. (A detailed analysis of the research questions is given in Chapter 3.)

Research Query 1: Do contract teachers tend to be absent less than regular teachers in a sample of Lahore schools? This overall query was made to descriptively assess differences in absenteeism among contract and regular teachers in the sample of government schools selected for the study. Teacher and school principal interviews, as well as school attendance records, were used to compare absenteeism among regular and contract teachers.

Research Query 2: What are teachers' and principals' perceptions of the impact of the contract policy on teacher absenteeism? This open-ended question appealed to participants' perceptions of the effect of specific features of the contract policy on teacher absenteeism. Having a general unprompted query about the research problem at the beginning of the interview helped to reveal teachers' and principals' views of the problem and its scope. Interviewees were asked to identify and explain features of the contract policy that helped to lower absenteeism.

Research Query 3: What are teachers' and principals' perceptions of the impact of specific school and individual teacher characteristics on teacher absenteeism?

Semistructured questions were posed to principals and contract and regular teachers to

probe further into the specific factors expected to influence teacher absenteeism based on the literature and analytic framework. These factors included the following:

- Formal and informal supervision at the school and community levels
- Work environment factors, including student background, government policies, school infrastructure, and facilities
- Teachers' personal attributes, including educational qualifications, experience, family responsibilities and transportation issues

Overview of Methodology and Assumptions

This study followed a qualitative approach, in which in-depth interviews of (a) contract teachers, (b) regular teachers, and (c) school principals were conducted using a semistructured interview format. The population consisted of approximately 1,200 public schools in the Lahore urban school district. A stratified, random sample was selected based on the presence of contract teachers in the school, schooling level (primary, middle, or secondary), school district income level, and gender. The sample selection, therefore, included the following variations in the data:

- Level of schooling (elementary, middle, or secondary)
- Income level of school location
- Size of the school
- Degree of selectivity of school
- Gender (girls or boys)

The methodology and potential findings were based on assumptions that also underlie the chosen theoretical and analytic framework. The first assumption was that teachers would reveal their true perceptions regarding reasons for absence and their views

related to the contract policy. Second, based on the literature review for developing countries and South Asia, cultural factors were assumed to play an important part in the reasons for absenteeism. Therefore, a methodology using semistructured in-depth interviews was chosen to gain a deeper understanding of these cultural factors. Third, it was assumed that school districts' income level, schooling level, and teacher gender would influence teacher absenteeism. These factors were used in stratifying the sample to include variation in the interview data.

Delimitations

The delimitations imposed on the study included the choice of the contract policy as the reform policy for review. Also, teacher absenteeism was chosen as the focus. These delimitations were part of the restrictions imposed on the study to narrow its scope. The sample was delimited by the selection of one specific urban setting—the city of Lahore. The small sample size of 16 contract teachers, 16 regular teachers, and 8 school principals also was a delimiting factor of the study. However, the sample was purposeful and drawn using a stratified method in order to make it as close as possible to objectives of the research study. Therefore, generalizations drawn from the study based on the sample are limited to the specific context in which the study was conducted.

Limitations

Limitations of the study included the possibility that some interviewees might not be truthful in their assessment of the issues due to fear of jeopardizing their employment. Special care was taken to inform and ensure participants of their anonymity and the confidentiality of the research findings. Teachers, in particular, might not be willing to

respond to sensitive questions concerning their hiring process in case there may have been a legal irregularity or special favor involved in their selection. Given this possibility, questions within the semistructured interview format were adjusted and adapted to allow for such limitations. For instance, teachers were asked if they knew of other teachers who were hired under special circumstances in order to find out if hiring procedures varied.

There might have been self-selection or sorting, because the teachers available for interviews, in general, might be less frequently absent or the teachers interviewed were recommended by supervisors or school principals. An attempt was made to avoid such problems by building the sampling frame with as much knowledge as possible about the categories and characteristics of teachers and by selecting the sample such that it represented the goals and objectives of the study.

Generalizations from this qualitative study to other situations are possible only to the extent that the details and background of the study, available through interviews and school site visits, allow for comparison with other situations (Merriam et al., 2002). Therefore, to enhance the study's external validity and the generalizability of the findings, the urban sample was selected to take several sources of variation into account, such as schooling level, teacher gender, and income variation within urban areas, in order to represent several different situations.

Potential Significance

Research on the performance of Pakistani contract teachers and the factors influencing teacher absenteeism among contract and regular teachers has not been carried out. Through examination of teachers' and principals' perceptions of the problem, this study provides a better understanding of the causes of teacher absenteeism in the context

of a sample of Lahore schools and the major connections between the causes of teacher absenteeism and features of the contract policy that help to lower them. The research is expected to inform education policymakers about the potential impact of the contract reform on teacher absenteeism. Insight from the results has important implications for improving the efficiency of and equity in public education expenditures by preventing waste due to unnecessary teacher absences and improving the quality of education for the poorest students.

Statement of Potential Subjectivity

In qualitative research, it is important to prevent personal bias or issues of subjectivity from influencing the research (Peshkin, 1988, 2000). I am not aware of any overt personal biases that may influence the study. In general, my attitude towards educational research is to approach issues in a way that constructive solutions can be found. Therefore, my objective is not necessarily to criticize policies but to reveal problems so that improvements might be made. A personal tendency might be to look for policy solutions in the results of the study, and interview questions and follow-up discussions may veer toward solutions rather than taking an exploratory approach, which is the focus of this study. To minimize these biases, I conducted the interviews and research as objectively as possible and enhanced the validity of the study by obtaining feedback from peer reviewers during the course of research.

Overview of Dissertation

The dissertation is organized into five chapters. Chapter 2, the literature review, provides an overview of the contract policy in Pakistan, a review of the theoretical and

empirical literature on contract teachers\ the literature on models of absenteeism, teacher absenteeism in industrialized and developing countries, and the application of the findings of the literature to the research problem posed in this study. Chapter 3, Methodology, describes the overall research design; the theoretical framework used for the study; and sampling, data collection, and data analysis procedures. It also describes methods used to address threats to validity and reliability. Chapter 4 describes how the data were collected, coded, synthesized, and analyzed based on the research questions. The data are then presented in the form of descriptive text, matrices, graphs, and charts. Finally, Chapter 5 presents a summary of the findings; analysis of the implications of the research in terms of the research questions posed at the beginning of the study; and conclusions, possible policy recommendations, and implications for further research.

Definitions of Key Terms

The following key terms are used throughout the study.

Contract reform and *contract policy* are used interchangeably and refer to the policy introduced in 2002 in which all new government school teachers in the Punjab province of Pakistan, were hired on 5-year contracts with renewal dependent on performance criteria that included low teacher absenteeism.

Contract teacher refers to a teacher hired under the new contract policy.

Regular teacher and *tenured teacher* are used interchangeably and refer to school teachers employed under the Civil Service Act of Pakistan. No new hiring of tenure track teachers took place after 2002, but tenured teachers employed before this period remain in the education system and currently make up the majority of teachers.

Teacher absenteeism and *teacher absence* are used in the study to assess the number of days regular and contract teachers do not attend school. Voluntary and involuntary absences are included in the definition of absence based on a discussion of service provider absences by Chaudhury et al. (2006).

Para teachers refer to teachers hired on annual contracts in India, with the characteristic of being hired mostly in remote areas and having lower qualifications and salaries compared to tenured teachers.

Matric exam refers to the matriculation examination conducted by government examination boards at the provincial level at the end of Grades 9 and 10. Students receive a secondary school certificate upon passing this exam.

Primary Training Certificate (PTC) refers to a government examination required of all teachers who want to join government schools, taken after completing the secondary school certificate (matric) or higher educational qualification.

District nazims have been appointed as the chief elected officials representing a district since the Local Government Act was introduced in 2001. The nazim for the district of Lahore oversees the administrative structure of the district's schools.

Education District Officer (EDO) is the head of the education district administrative office, is accountable to the district nazim, and reports to the Secretary of Education.

District officer (DO) assists the EDO. There are two district officers, a man and a woman, in charge of boys' and girls' schools, respectively.

Assistant education officer (AEO) assists the district officers. Male and female AEOs are usually responsible for visiting schools to monitor teacher attendance and performance under the district's teacher supervision system.

Monitoring teams are appointed under the Chief Minister's Program at the provincial government level, forming a parallel system of supervision of schools and teachers by retired army officers in addition to district-level supervision.

Eid refers to religious holidays that take place twice a year, during which schools are typically closed for 3–5 days.

Hajj refers to a Muslim religious pilgrimage that takes place every year in Saudi Arabia. Teachers can apply for and take earned leave to perform the pilgrimage, which requires leave of about 1 week to 10 days.

Urdu is the national language and is taught as a subject in schools.

Nongovernmental organization (NGO) in the context of this study refers to a nonprofit organization allowed to work with government schools that provides additional teachers to assist with teaching and curriculum. NGO teachers were not included in the study, but the effect of NGO support in some of the sample schools was included in the analysis.

Punjab Education Sector Reform Program (PESRP) was implemented in 2002 by the Government of the Punjab to improve the overall quality of school education. The contract teacher reforms were part of this initiative.

Board exams refer to external exams conducted by the government, usually by the Punjab Education Board, at the end of Grades 10 and 12 and the bachelors' or masters' levels.

Casual leave refers to paid leave for government schoolteachers at the discretion of the school principal. Teachers can take up to 2 days of casual leave per month.

Combined influences of factors and *interaction effects* refer to the effect of a primary factor, as mentioned by a respondent, on absenteeism being reinforced or weakened by the influence of another factor.

CHAPTER 2:

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the theoretical and empirical literature linking absenteeism and contract teachers. First, a review of government documents and reports gives an overview of the features of Pakistan's contract policy. Second, starting with the definitions and measures of absenteeism, models of the causes of absenteeism are reviewed. Third, the literature on teachers hired on contract terms is reviewed. Lastly, the literature is interpreted in the context of the current study to evaluate the likely effect of Pakistan's contract policy on teacher absenteeism and to develop an analytical framework to assess the theoretical bases for factors that influence teacher absenteeism. The analytical framework is used as a guide to answer the research questions and assess the mechanisms by which contract terms of employment might reduce teacher absenteeism. Findings from the literature help to frame the research questions presented in Chapter 3.

Overview of the Contract Teacher Policy

Since the contract policy was announced in 2002, all government schoolteachers in the Punjab province have been hired on a contractual basis. In 2003–04, 13,000 contract teachers were appointed to specific school sites. Moreover, 16,000 contract teacher posts were approved by the Punjab government in 2004–05. A donor-sponsored consultant report explained that weak accountability mechanisms under the Civil Services Act made it difficult to take action against chronically absent teachers, and this impacted the quality of education (World Bank, 2005). A stated rationale for hiring contract

teachers included the goal of lowering teacher absenteeism through improved quality and accountability of the teaching staff by providing an alternative to tenured, union-backed teaching positions under civil service job regulations.

Contract teachers were selected according to guidelines set by the provincial government. Among the most important merit-based selection criteria were high scores on the BA exams, work experience, and training; preference was also given to female candidates. No new tenured positions were being offered. Features of the contract employment terms and their stated goals are summarized as follows:

- Teachers are appointed on 5-year, site-specific contracts renewable upon satisfactory performance. Positions become available at specific schools according to job vacancies and district government demands.
- Contract teachers are required to have at minimum a BA or BSc and a PTC. Tenured teachers' minimum qualifications range from high school diplomas to masters' degrees; they also are required to have a PTC.
- Candidates can apply for more than one position and indicate their first choice for school location. Applications are processed by district administrative staff, which includes two EDOs, one DEO, and one provincial government nominee.
- A low weight is assigned to interviews for applying to teacher positions in the hiring process to minimize the role of political favors and make teacher recruitment transparent and merit based. In the previous system of tenured teacher hiring, a greater weight was attached to interviews, which allowed hiring based on political favors.

- Appointments are school specific to prevent the practice of transfers through political favors and to encourage local hiring. Tenured teachers are allowed to transfer to other schools.
- Teacher performance is based on the following criteria: improved school enrollment and lower dropout rates, student learning outcomes, and teacher attendance and punctuality. Tenured teachers are not evaluated according to these criteria and are hired on a permanent basis.
- A teacher contract can be terminated by the DEO by giving 1 month's notice or paying 1 month's salary. Teachers can resign by giving 1 month's notice or by paying the equivalent of 1 month's salary.
- Contract teachers are not eligible for government pension and provident funds.
- Contract teachers are eligible for 25 days of casual paid leave, unpaid sick leave, and 3 months of unpaid maternity leave. Regular teachers are eligible for 25 days casual leave, 12 days earned leave, and other leave benefits, such as paid maternity and study leave.

Analysis of Contract Policy Incentives and Sanctions

Reducing teacher absenteeism is a stated goal of the contract policy, and reduced absenteeism is one of the specific performance criteria for renewing teacher contracts. An objective of the contract policy in Pakistan is to address problems with accountability and teacher absenteeism associated with regular civil service positions. However, an additional objective of hiring teachers on contract in developing countries like Pakistan has been to ease the problem of teacher shortages during tight budgetary conditions. The extent to which the contract policy may have been used to address fiscal issues tied to

pension payments rather than as a means to improve teacher accountability remains to be assessed (World Bank, 2008). In general, if the status of contract teachers is perceived to be inferior to that of regular teachers, the likely outcome is increased pressure to regularize all teachers to secure higher salaries, benefits, and job security.⁴ In this study, the perceptions of teachers and principals formed the basis for analyzing the incentives and sanctions offered by the contract policy to assess whether they lead to lower absenteeism.

Contract Policy Implementation

Although thorough assessments of the implementation and impact of the contract policy in Pakistan have not been conducted, some insight can be gained from a teacher management study in which various issues of teacher reform were analyzed (World Bank, 2005). The study included a survey of 104 schools in six representative districts of the Punjab province 3 years after the contract policy was implemented. It was found that the Punjab government was successful in fairly rapidly switching to the contract teacher policy. Highlights of the report related to contract teachers are as follows:

- All contract teachers held at least B.A. degrees.
- Based on evidence from a single visit to each school, 21% of the teachers were absent on that day; absenteeism was 24% among regular teachers and 17% among contract teachers.

⁴ The pressure to regularize contract teachers is already being used as a political tool by teachers unions due to dissatisfaction among contract teachers. Low pay and lack of benefits and job security were among the reasons for demanding regularization of teachers by teacher unions (Ahmad, 2006).

- Because contract teachers were assigned to specific schools without the option of transfer, some resigned from their assigned schools to apply for contract jobs in other schools, thus creating vacancies that could not be filled until the following academic year.
- Science teachers and other subject specialists were difficult to recruit in remote areas.
- Under a policy introduced in the late nineties, several English language teachers who were hired on a contract basis were regularized. This sent a contradictory signal to contract teachers hired under the new policy in 2002 that regularization and becoming part of the civil service track was desirable and, possibly, their ultimate objective.
- Although the DEO was authorized to terminate teachers' contracts by giving 1 month's notice, there were no cases of dismissal, according to a survey of 450 regular and contract teachers. Only one case of a request for transfer and a few cases of written and verbal warnings were reported by head teachers.
- Contract teachers enjoyed less political patronage and union support than regular teachers.
- District officials indicated problems with transportation and other resources required to supervise and spot check teachers.

The results of the World Bank (2005) survey indicated that the contract policy was successful because more teachers were hired on merit and it was put in place fairly quickly. A comparison of absence rates of regular and contract teachers indicated that contract teachers were absent less than regular ones in the sample of schools. However,

the results also suggested some issues with teacher resignation and positions remaining unfilled because transfers were not allowed. Monitoring and supervision problems related to adequate staffing and actions taken in response to unsatisfactory performance of contract teachers were also described. Review of the documents reporting the preliminary results and analyzing the design of the contract policy underscored the need for more analysis of the issues surrounding the relationship between the policy and teacher absenteeism.

Defining and Measuring Absenteeism

The literature on absenteeism in the workplace made a broad distinction between voluntary and involuntary absenteeism. Involuntary absenteeism involves legitimate reasons such as sickness; voluntary absenteeism is intentional or unexcused (Atkin & Goodman, 1984). In the United States, an analysis of the labor market in the early 1980s revealed that slightly less than half of all absences were voluntary, although the rate of absence was only about 5% (Klein, 1986). Similarly, studies of teacher labor markets distinguished between absence (associated with legitimate reasons for not coming to work) and absenteeism (associated with choosing not to be present; Jacobson, 1989). Therefore, in developed countries, problems with absenteeism are related to voluntary or unsanctioned absences.

However, in developing countries, the distinction between voluntary and involuntary absenteeism is not easy to make. For instance, sick leave may be granted for reasons that fall into the voluntary category. In developing countries, absenteeism may also be initiated by employers who expect teachers to perform administrative tasks that take time away from classroom instruction. Therefore, for the purposes of this study, a

definition of teacher absenteeism in the context of a developing country was developed to capture as closely as possible the time a teacher is away from the classroom learning environment. For this reason, Chaudhury, Hammer, Kremer, Muralidharan, and Rogers (2006) used the more general *absence* in their study of service provider absence in six developing countries. According to Chaudhury et al., *absence* includes time an employee is away from his or her tasks due to sickness and official duties, rather than *absenteeism* which implies that service providers might be acting irresponsibly in fulfilling their duties. In Pakistan valid, excused, and involuntary reasons for absence from work would include leave taken for illness, training workshops, and official duties. Aspects of teacher absence that include allowed leave policies and time allotted to administrative tasks outside the school would also be considered as involuntary or excused leave. The terms *absenteeism* and *absence* are therefore used interchangeably to include both voluntary and involuntary aspects. The objective is to gauge the extent to which teachers are away from the classroom. In-depth interviews were used to provide more detail about the extent of voluntary and involuntary absenteeism.

Absenteeism is measured in terms of magnitude, frequency, and duration (Atkin & Goodman, 1984; Rhodes & Steers, 1990). Magnitude involves a measurement of time lost per employee during a given period, such as 1 month or 1 year. Time lost may be measured in hours or days. Frequency is reflected in events or episodes, so that one episode is counted as one absence even if the episode (e.g., illness) lasted more than 1 day. Duration involves the average length of absence or the percentage of work time lost. Therefore, patterns of voluntary absence could be characterized by high frequency and low duration, such as taking several 1-day sick leaves (Jacobson, 1989). Such incidences

of several short-term absences may reflect tendency to take advantage of a lax attendance system or leave policy. Patterns of leave taking provide important insight into the effectiveness of policies such as the contract policy and the leave policies that encourage specific absentee behaviors.

Theoretical Explanations of Absenteeism

A certain amount of absence is inevitable at any job. However, depending on the type of work situation, employers respond differently to employee absence. Some react with severe consequences, and others allow for a few casual absences as part of a tacit psychological contract in light of the characteristics of the job, such as a demanding work environment or poor facilities (Rhodes & Steers, 1990). Researchers have stressed the need to study absenteeism as a multidimensional problem (Durand, 1986; Kohler & Mathieu, 1993). The literature on absenteeism is an amalgam of theories and empirical studies from varied disciplines, much of which has theoretical underpinnings in psychology, as well as management and economics. Education researchers draw on these varied sources to explain patterns of teacher and student absenteeism.

Absenteeism as Pain Avoidance

Psychological literature's stance on absenteeism is that dissatisfaction with working conditions is its primary cause, as supported by job satisfaction and pain-avoidance models (Argyle, 1972; Brayfield & Crockett, 1955). However, worker dissatisfaction as the primary cause of worker absenteeism has not been supported by empirical testing and has been considered too narrow and simplistic in explaining

absentee behavior (Hackett & Guion, 1985). Such findings underscore the need for broader explanations that incorporate work and personal situations.

Absence as Reaction to Individual and Group Behavior

According to organizational and managerial literature, absenteeism is caused by characteristics and policies related to the workplace and its social context or culture. Hill and Trist (1955) first theorized that absence was a means of withdrawing from unpleasant work situations and explained that workers use sanctioned absences as substitutes for unsanctioned absences as they get familiar with social norms associated with workplace attendance. Gibson (1966) put forth one of the earliest comprehensive theoretical conceptualizations of absenteeism as the result of interactions between needs-based individuals and goals-based organizations. Workers provided services based on their skills in return for rewards by the organization. The more job conditions and compensations satisfied workers' needs, the lower the expected incidence of absenteeism. Gibson also compared absenteeism to a contagious disease that can spread quickly in a workplace if job conditions are not satisfactory.

Researchers later criticized these models for lack of evidence to support them and in the case of Gibson's (1966) model, for lack of consistency between the theoretical model and the methodology and data used to test it. However, earlier models were extended to introduce the concept of group rather than individual interactions between employers and employees to explain absenteeism. It was argued that there might be collusion among workers to cover for each other's absences. Additionally, the work environment may promote use of leave provisions such as sick leave to alleviate workload stress. Consequently, an absence culture may develop due to practices in the

organization rather than individual responses to the work environment (Chadwick-Jones, Nicholson, & Brown, 1982).

Absence as Rational Choice

Another explanation of absenteeism stems from economists' theory of rational choice (Allen, 1981), emphasizing the importance of financial incentives and criticizing undue focus on managements' shortcomings and employee job satisfaction as the main cause of absenteeism. Allen used the labor-leisure model to explain that absenteeism was the result of a worker contracting more than his desired hours of work at a given wage, resulting in an incentive to consume more leisure. Absence is interpreted as a behavioral response to desired work levels in relation to wages, conditions of work, and other factors related to work-leisure decisions.

According to the labor-leisure model, it may cost employers less to accept some absenteeism than to renegotiate contracts to suit individual workers' preferences in terms of schedule flexibility or work hours. Allen (1981) used self-reported absence measures from the U.S. 1972-73 Quality of Employment Survey, in which respondents were asked how many days of scheduled work they missed in the last 2 weeks. Allen argued that these self-reported measures had the advantage of not being establishment specific and, therefore, more closely reflected workers' preferences. The empirical findings suggested that monetary incentives and flexibility of work scheduling offered the primary explanations for absenteeism; individual characteristics and psychological explanations were weak explanatory variables. Although women with children and blue collar female workers showed higher absenteeism than men, these gender differences could be

explained by lack of financial incentives and lack of work flexibility to meet family demands (Allen, 1981).

Similarly, Dionne and Dostie (2007) analyzed Canadian workers' decision to be absent using the Workplace Employee Survey from 1999–2002 and the labor–leisure model to assess the effects of demographics and job characteristics, and found dissatisfaction with the number of contracted work hours was a significant determinant of absence.

These results indicate that absenteeism can be explained as an outcome of dissatisfaction with wages. The labor–leisure model can be used to explain how leisure preference can translate into absenteeism if wages are not satisfactory. This model would be relevant to the current study if contract pay levels were found to be unsatisfactory and given as a reason for high absence rates among contract teachers.

Integrated Models Explaining Absenteeism

Another approach was to combine explanations of absenteeism from different disciplines to form integrated models. For instance, Youngblood (1984) merged psychological and economic approaches to absenteeism to define absence as a motivational response to an unpleasant work environment. The Steers and Rhodes (1978) model was one of the earliest comprehensive models to combine the theories and empirical results of absenteeism studies from psychological, organizational, and economic disciplines. The model offered a multidisciplinary and multivariate framework for estimating worker absenteeism. Steers and Rhodes defined two overarching determinants of attendance: motivation to attend and ability to attend. Therefore, even if employees were motivated to attend, other factors such as illness, childcare

responsibilities, and transportation could keep them away from work. Despite problems with estimation and weak construct validity of the main components, the Steers and Rhodes attendance model broadened the study of absenteeism beyond earlier narrow psychological approaches that explained absenteeism predominantly in terms of dissatisfaction with the job.

Empirical Studies of Teacher Absenteeism

Studies of teacher absenteeism in developed countries deal mainly with three subjects—the low quality of education provided by substitute teachers, the high incidence of teacher absenteeism in poor school districts, and the effect of leave policy on teacher absenteeism. The latter two topics are relevant to this study, because in Pakistan and developing countries in general, the use of substitute teachers is uncommon. Instead, teachers from another grade or senior students are usually asked to maintain discipline in the absent teacher's class.

Teacher Absenteeism in Poor School Districts

The higher incidence of absenteeism in poor schools versus wealthy schools underscores the need to approach the problem of absenteeism from the perspective of narrowing the gap in educational inequality. Bruno (2002) used Geographical Information Systems (GIS) to map associations between teacher absence and school district location by income level using a threshold of eight absences per teacher per year to compare areas of low and high absence rates. He found that issues of quality and equality of educational opportunity in urban schools depended on the quality of classroom instruction; and reliance on substitute teachers had great significance for

students for whom the school setting was the only source of educational development. Bruno concluded that higher teacher absenteeism in the poorer school districts mitigates the aims of reforms seeking to promote equity and excellence in public schools.

Similarly, Pitkoff (1993) studied the demographic records of 17 schools with about 3,000 employees in Brooklyn, New York, and found a high correlation between teacher absenteeism and the proportion of students reading below grade level and receiving free lunch. The Punjab contract teacher policy does not explicitly reward teachers for taking employment in poor, remote, or rural areas, and because the jobs are nontransferable, teachers hired at a specific school site can only resign if they want to leave the job to move to another location. Therefore, the effect of location by income level may affect teacher absence.

Teacher Absenteeism and Leave Policies

Studies relating absenteeism to leave policies in developed countries have indicated that lax and excessive leave policies can be a reason for higher absenteeism. In a study of a school district in New York State, Jacobson (1989) found that after introducing monetary incentives for teacher attendance, the use of sick leave diminished.⁵ A paired sample *t*-test was used to compare the mean averages of personal and sick leave days before and after the incentive pay plan was introduced.

In a study of the effect of leave policy on absenteeism, Winkler (1980) assessed the impact of three types of sick leave policies on teacher absenteeism in 57 public schools in California and Wisconsin. Winkler used a short-term measure of absenteeism,

⁵ This incentive plan was introduced as a means to save funds on substitute teachers and not directly for increasing attendance of regular teachers.

as this measure was more likely to be abused by employees than long-term absences, which were likely to be used for actual illness. A labor–leisure model and the Ordinary Least Squares (OLS) functional form were used to estimate the effect of the three types of sick leave policies. After controlling for the effects of personal and job characteristics, Winkler found that income protection plans in which teachers lost the insurance benefit of unused sick leave had the effect of increasing short-term absenteeism, and requiring proof of illness and personally reporting absences to the principal had the effect of lowering absenteeism. However, Winkler qualified the results by saying that the costs of policies had to be weighed against the results of lowered absenteeism and that flexibility in finding optimal policies at the district level were preferable to state-wide introduction of sick leave policies for teachers.

Similarly, Ehrenberg, Rees and Ehrenberg (1991) analyzed data for over 700 school districts in New York in 1986–87 to study how districts’ sick leave and other leave policies influenced teacher absenteeism. Ehrenberg et al. found that teachers had higher absence levels if there were more leave days permitted annually, more leave days for bereavement, and fewer days for professional development and conferences. Ehrenberg et al. used a life-cycle approach and studied teachers’ responses by age group, finding that tenured teachers tended to use more sick leave. Districts that followed leave policies in which unused leave was refunded at retirement had lower teacher absence.

Pitkoff (2003) observed that district and school leave policies could be instrumental in encouraging teacher absenteeism. Because teachers treat leave as an entitlement and feel that they must use it or lose it, Pitkoff suggested changes to district teacher leave policies that allowed absences only when really required by abolishing

“sick leave banks,” which encouraged teachers to take more casual sick leave because they did not need to accumulate it.

In Pakistan, contract teachers are given fewer leave options compared to regular teachers. Consequently, the perceptions of teachers and principals regarding leave policy were analyzed for the purposes of the current study to assess if less leave for contract teachers results in lower absenteeism.

Literature on Teacher Absenteeism in Developing Countries

In the context of developing countries, specific cultural situations may be relevant in explaining absenteeism. As Basu (2006) pointed out, two districts in India with the same economic incentives for teachers had strikingly different levels of absenteeism due to different social norms and socially acceptable behaviors. If a stigma was attached to high absenteeism, teachers tended to have better attendance. Moreover, in countries with a colonial past, traditional and modern administrative structures tend to coexist. Harber (1993) applied a theory of “prismatic societies” to explain that discrepancies between modern educational policy goals and outcomes based on realities are rooted in cultural settings that make sense to grassroots implementers of educational policies. Absenteeism models for Pakistan also must be interpreted within this context, and the methodology used to research absenteeism must take into account that institutional structures in which teachers operate present many more challenges in low-income countries than developed countries.

Correlates of Absenteeism in Multicountry Studies

The problem of absenteeism among education and health providers in developing countries was the subject of a series of surveys carried out in 2002–03 by a joint team of World Bank and academic researchers (Chaudhury et al., 2006) in six countries: India, Bangladesh, Ecuador, Indonesia, Peru, and Uganda. Unlike in earlier studies that were focused on specific regions and projects, nationally representative samples were collected to assess the extent of absenteeism and multivariate regression was used to correlate absenteeism with community, individual, and institutional characteristics.

Absenteeism was measured by conducting two unannounced visits to the same primary school, usually 3–4 months apart, to observe if teachers were present. Approximately 100 schools were visited in each country. Researchers conducted two observations of an average of 8 providers in each facility and recorded more than 1,500 observations of teacher attendance for each country (for India the number was much larger due to representative data collected in each of 20 states). Survey data were used to develop a multicountry sample to find correlates of teacher absence using HLM regression analysis.

Teacher absence rate estimates showed a wide range, from relatively lower rates of 11% and 16% in Peru and Bangladesh, respectively, to higher rates of 24% and 27% in India and Uganda, respectively (Chaudhury et al., 2006). Higher absenteeism was found among male teachers (significant for India), head teachers (significant for India and Indonesia), and union members (significant for Ecuador). Lower absence was correlated with better school infrastructure (significant for India and Ecuador), parent literacy rate (significant for India and Peru), and local teachers (significant for India and Indonesia).

Chaudhury et al. (2006) did not find absence rates to be lower among contract teachers or among teachers with more education and training. Formal inspections and proximity to the education ministry had significant negative correlations with absence in India and Ecuador but not other countries.

In interpreting these results, the use of common survey instruments and nationally representative data allowed for a comparison of major correlates of teacher absence in developing countries. At the same time, circumstances in individual countries and use of different proxies to represent variables such as infrastructure or inspections must be considered before reaching conclusions. Moreover, to establish causal links, more controlled experimentation or thorough evaluation of the relationship between absenteeism and various factors would need to be carried out. Therefore, whereas multicountry studies provided valuable insight into expected variations in absenteeism based on economic and social characteristics, more in-depth research is needed to explain the causes of absenteeism and to interpret the results.

Studies of education and teacher absence in India (De & Drèze, 1999; Kremer et al., 2004) and Bangladesh (Chaudhury, Hammer, Kremer, Muralidharan, & Rogers, 2004) are relevant to Pakistan due to India's similar experiment with contract teachers, regional proximity, and shared educational history. In India, teacher absentee rates were particularly high at 24% overall and varied from 14% in Maharashtra, a relatively high-income province, to 45% in Jharkand, one of the poorest regions. School inspections were found to be significantly correlated with lower absenteeism, but only one out of 3,000 headmasters interviewed reported dismissal of a teacher due to low attendance, which indicated that systems of supervision were rarely enforced (De & Drèze, 1999).

Better infrastructure, as measured by the existence of toilets for teachers, an electrical connection, a library, covered classrooms, and nonmud floors, was associated with lower absenteeism (Kremer et al., 2004). Although contract teachers were paid less than regular teachers, no significant difference was found in absence rates between the two groups. In India, male teachers were absent more than female teachers, although female worker absenteeism was found to be higher in some studies due to transportation, family, and infrastructure constraints (El-Sanabiy, 1989; Scott & McClellan, 1990; Vistnes, 1997). Head teachers were more likely to be absent than regular teachers, as were better educated, better paid teachers. Therefore, higher salaries appear to be insufficient incentives for attendance (Chaudhury et al., 2006).

A report on teacher absence in Bangladesh showed higher tolerance for general absenteeism in health and education services, as parents expected that a certain degree of nonattendance by teachers was inevitable (Chaudhury et al., 2004). Head teachers and headmasters were found to be absent most often in primary schools; the reason given was that they had to be away from school to perform official duties. Remote, rural schools had a higher absentee rate. Formal supervision through visits by education officials and informal supervision measured by mothers' education level were found to be associated with lower absenteeism.

Results from multicountry studies indicate different causes of teacher absenteeism depending on cultural and regional settings. These factors were incorporated into the research questions related to school and teacher attributes that appear to influence absenteeism.

Literature Linking Contract Employment and Teacher Absenteeism

The term *contract teacher* is associated with teachers who are not part of the regular civil service cadre. In this section, the theoretical foundations of contract employment are studied to analyze the purpose and effect of contractual employment. Specific countries experience with the use of contract teachers is then discussed with respect to its effect on teacher absenteeism.

Weak Accountability as a Rationale for Contract Teachers

Theoretical literature related to the effect of contractual employment terms on teacher absenteeism is limited. However, arguments in favor of contractual employment have been linked to teacher accountability and can be found in literature analyzing reforms to improve traditional tenured teaching positions through merit-, knowledge-, and skills-based pay (Bruno, 1986; Ingersoll, 2004; Milanowski, 2003; Murnane, 1981).

Based on 1993–94 school data for the United States, Ballou and Podgursky (2002) argued that there was little theoretical and empirical basis for the tenure system's ability to strengthen teacher accountability and productivity. Ballou and Podgursky provided a theoretical rationale for introducing alternate contractual arrangements to improve accountability in education. Although theoretical models based in labor economics suggest that wages rise with seniority because senior teachers are more valuable to the employer, Ballou and Podgursky argued that educational research shows that teaching experience beyond 3 or 4 years does not enhance teaching performance. In spite of this, salary schedules typically show the same proportionate increase in salaries for up to 15 to 20 years. Ballou and Podgursky suggested that hiring teachers on probation links them more closely to performance and questioned whether significant

budgetary expenditures on automatic salary increases based on seniority and qualifications for public school teachers is money well spent.

Ballou and Podgursky (2002) also argued for hiring teachers on probation using the performance bond hypothesis, which holds that it may be difficult to gauge teacher performance as soon as they are hired, and imperfect or costly monitoring may require delayed payment to secure greater effort by employees. The theory supports hiring new teachers on a contract or probationary status, but suggests that once teachers become tenured or regularized, the incentive for them to improve is no longer there. Therefore, Ballou and Podgursky concluded that due to the protections teachers enjoy under the tenure system, the structure of salaries in public education may be more like rent-seeking rather than efficient contracting.

Importance of Accurate Teacher Performance Evaluation

If weak accountability mechanisms associated with traditional tenured teaching justify introducing alternative terms of employment such as contract teaching, fair and accurate teacher evaluations for rewarding merit and assessing teacher effectiveness becomes imperative (Gordon, 2006). According to Cohn (1996), merit pay schemes in the United States have promoted competition and opportunistic behavior among teachers and administrators, whereas cooperation is ultimately what is needed to make school systems more effective. These findings are relevant to Pakistan, where weak supervision and accountability hinder the improvements sought through contractual teacher arrangements.

In some developing countries, contract teachers are monitored and financed through community participation. In the case of Nicaragua, a portion of contract teachers'

salaries was tied to attendance, which was monitored by the community (Gaynor, 1998; Sawada, 2000). The effectiveness of individual teachers depends on evaluations by principals, peers, and parents and demonstrated student achievement. However, effective teacher evaluations are costly and difficult to carry out.

According to Murnane (1981), if teachers cannot be appropriately evaluated, tenured positions may work more effectively in countries where the educational system is expected to provide low-cost education to all children. Therefore, the costs of evaluating teachers on probation or contract versus the cost of keeping teachers on a tenure system must be taken into account when considering the effectiveness of contract teacher systems in lowering teacher absenteeism.

International Experience with Contract Teachers

The use of non tenured contract teachers in public schools is more common in developing countries because increased demand to improve access to and quality of education has put pressure on governments to seek alternatives to expensive tenured teacher hiring in public schools (Muralidharan & Sundararaman, 2008). However, recent teacher reforms in the United States,⁶ Sweden (Strath, 2004), and Britain indicated that teacher shortages, accountability problems associated with tenured teachers, and fiscal problems were causing high-income countries to experiment with alternative teaching arrangements (Duthilleul, 2004).

⁶ A two-tier system introduced in District of Columbia public schools gave public school teachers the option of giving up tenure and taking up contract employment for a substantial increase in pay based on performance. Under this arrangement, teachers could be fired if their performance evaluation was not satisfactory (“Merit and the D.C. School System,” 2008).

Muralidharan and Sundararaman (2008) identified four main characteristics of contract teachers: (a) They are appointed on annual renewable contracts with no guarantee of renewal, (b) they are often less qualified than regular teachers and less likely to have a formal training certificate, (c) they are paid much less than regular teachers (typically one-fifth of regular teachers' salaries), and (d) they are more likely to be from the area where the school is located. Different countries have varying combinations of these features; for instance, India's contract policy displays all four. On the other hand, Pakistan's contract policy only displays one of these features: Contract teachers are paid less than regular teachers.

Only a few studies have evaluated the effect of contract status on absenteeism. As part of the research carried out at Harvard and the Poverty Action lab at MIT, the effect of contract teachers on teacher absenteeism were evaluated in India and Kenya using randomized trials (Glewwe et al., 2008). In both countries, contract teachers were found to have lower absence rates compared to civil service teachers (Glewwe et al., 2008). Another study in India showed contract teachers received better incentives than regular teachers and, therefore, were less likely to be absent compared to regular teachers (16% and 27%, respectively; Muralidharan & Sundararaman, 2008).

A study commissioned by an international organization discussed contract teacher policies in Cambodia, India, and Nicaragua in the context of meeting Education for All (EFA) goals (Duthilleul, 2004). In Cambodia, when schools reopened after a period of political conflict, teachers were hired on an informal basis, and there was a severe shortage of teaching staff. Teachers were hired on 1-year contracts with salaries equivalent to those of regular teachers with no dependents; but without additional

benefits or access to training programs. However, few of these evaluations looked at the effect of contract status on absenteeism. Although the study was not based on rigorous methods, it provided the social, economic, and political background of the development and evolution of contract policies in different countries.

In Nicaragua, decentralized autonomous schools were introduced in the 1990s to improve the education quality and efficiency; and teachers were hired by local school councils rather than the Ministry of Education. The locally managed incentive program paid 25% of teachers' salaries based on teacher attendance and low student dropout rates; if a teacher was absent, the monthly salary was reduced (Duthilleul, 2004; Gaynor, 1998).

In India, low-paid, underqualified para teachers or contract teachers were introduced in the 1980s to provide informal education in remote areas. Within a decade, however, the use of contract teachers spread to regular primary schools to counter absenteeism among regular teachers and contain costs. The use of para teachers was found to result in learning gains among less advantaged students (Vegas, 2007).

In a study of Peru, Ecuador, and Indonesia, contract teachers generally were not found to have higher attendance than regular teachers with tenure (Alcazar et al., 2006).

Relevance of Research for Pakistan

As mentioned in the previous section, only one out of the four typical features of a contract policy (contract teachers being paid less than regular teachers) was adopted in Pakistan. Moreover, all new teachers were hired on a contractual basis when the reform was introduced, and the regular tenure track option became unavailable for anyone joining the teaching profession after 2002. This was unlike most other countries, where contractual employment systems remained parallel to civil service tracks for teachers.

Another unusual feature of Pakistan's contract policy is the different minimum requirements for higher education of contract teachers and regular teachers: All new contract teachers are required to have a BA degree. In other countries, contract teachers usually are less qualified than regular teachers and, as such, are paid less than tenured teachers. The effect of monitoring and supervision systems has not been assessed for teachers in Pakistan. One of the objectives of this study is to see whether or not the sanctions under the contract policy have led to better supervision of teachers with a greater emphasis on checking teacher attendance.

Conceptual Framework for Studying Teacher Absenteeism

The previous discussion suggests that it is important to assess the impact of the contract policy on absenteeism in the context in which the policy is implemented. The Steers and Rhodes (1978) interdisciplinary attendance model was used as the guiding framework for this study to include the effects of several potential sources of absenteeism for regular and contract teachers. Most other models emphasize only certain aspects of absenteeism, such as dissatisfaction with work or organizational norms (Chadwick-Jones et al., 1982; Gibson, 1966; Youngblood, 1984). This model was selected for its synthesis of the literature on absenteeism and incorporation of organizational, work-related and personal reasons for absenteeism. In this model, several contextual factors affecting absenteeism are included, such as teachers' gender and educational qualifications, school facilities and setting, and the effect of contract employment reforms.

According to the Steers and Rhodes (1978) model, absenteeism stems from (a) a lack of motivation to attend and (b) the presence of constraints on the ability to attend. Motivation to attend, the basis for understanding absenteeism, is influenced by several

factors relating to personal characteristics, the work environment, and external pressures such as incentives and reward systems that penalize nonattendance. In the context of teachers' attendance, research indicates that teachers are less motivated by monetary compensation than other employees and more motivated by the intrinsic rewards of teaching (Jacobson, 1989; Johnson, 1984). Therefore, intrinsic motivators such as job satisfaction and commitment to the job are as important to consider as extrinsic motivators such as supervision and sanctions (Herzberg, 1964).

Along with the motivation to attend, the Steers and Rhodes (1978) model considers the ability to attend an important aspect of absenteeism. Ability to attend is affected by constraints such as family responsibilities and transportation problems that lower employee attendance despite high motivation to attend. Because the model was developed to capture processes, factors within these categories are linked such that motivators to attend are constrained by factors related to ability to attend and pressure to attend.

To study the effect of contract reform on teacher absenteeism in Lahore, several aspects of the Steers and Rhodes (1978) model were adapted to incorporate the perceived effect of the contract policy. The model was used to identify the different causes of absenteeism and the influence of contract teacher reform. Figure 2.1 illustrates various factors influencing absenteeism as identified by the Steers and Rhodes model.

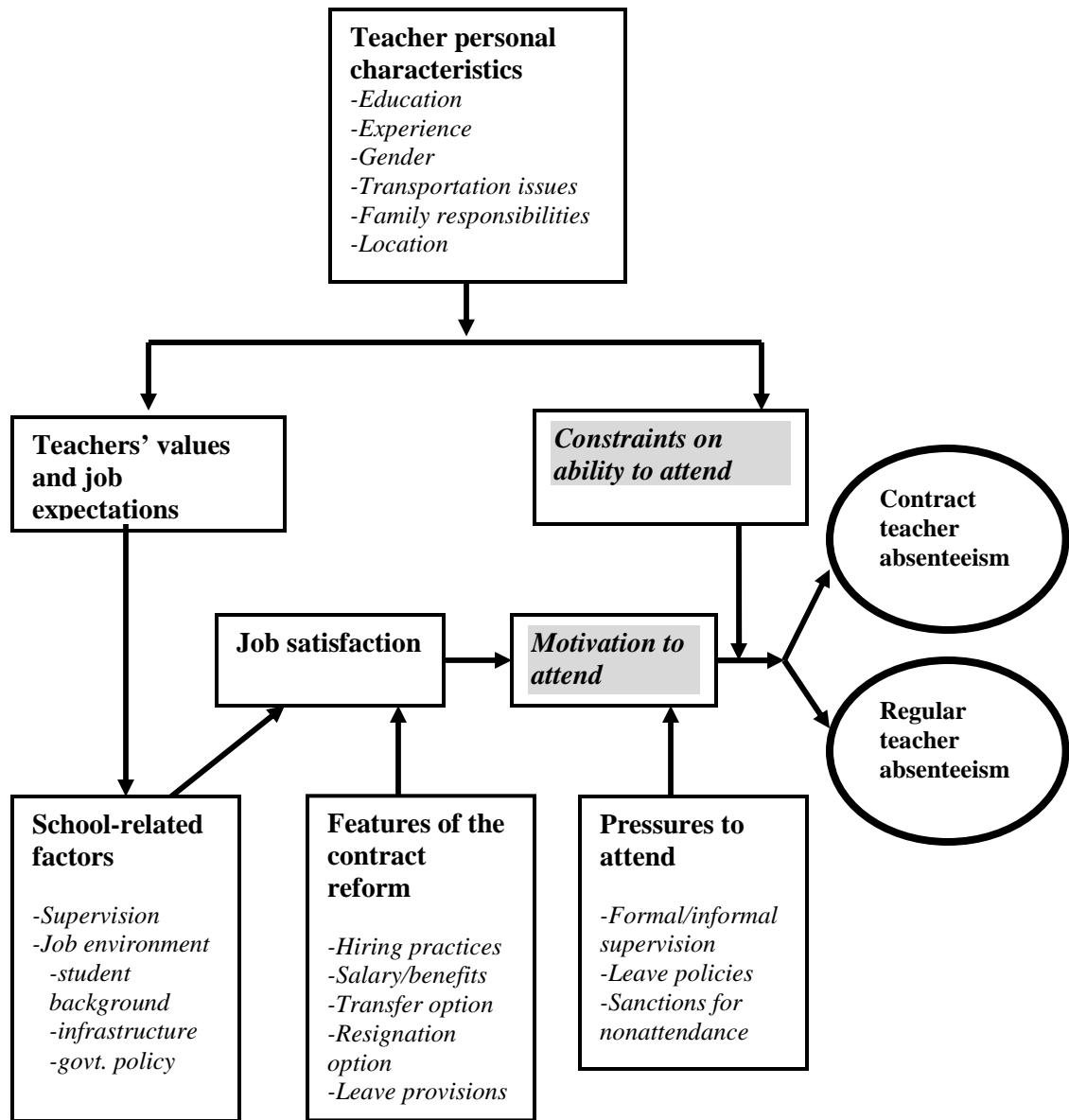


Figure 2.1. A framework for analyzing contract and regular teacher absenteeism. Adapted from “Major Influences on Employee Attendance: A Process Model,” by R. M. Steers and S. R. Rhodes, 1978, *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 62, 472–479. doi:10.1037/0021-9010.62.4.472

Aided by the analytic framework suggested by Steers and Rhodes (1978) and findings from the literature on teacher and employee absenteeism, several factors were identified that influence the motivation to attend and the ability to attend (represented by the shaded rectangles in Figure 2.1). The adapted model suggested the following sets of

factors could potentially influence teacher absenteeism under the contract policy. The factors are identified through the following proxies:

1. Features of the teacher contract reform
 - Hiring practices based on merit for contract teachers
 - Contract renewal after 5 years dependent on performance
 - Salary and other benefits for contract teachers
 - Transfer option not available to contract teachers
 - Resignation option available to contract teachers
 - Leave provisions under the contract policy
2. School-related factors/work environment for contract and regular teachers
 - Supervision at the school, district, and provincial levels and the role of the community and parents
 - Condition of school facilities, such as physical infrastructure and educational materials (e.g., blackboards)
 - Support and collegiality and measures of school culture
 - Student behavior, attendance, and achievement
 - Differences in attendance stipulations for contract and regular teachers
3. Personal characteristics of contract and regular teachers
 - Level of education
 - Years of teaching experience
 - Teachers' gender and access to transportation differences in family responsibilities, and security and social issues

- Location (whether or not teachers live locally and the time it takes to reach school)
- Extent of family responsibilities
- Perceived sense of effectiveness
- Teachers' values and job expectations

The objective of using the Steers and Rhodes (1978) synthesis model was to capture as many potential influences on teacher absenteeism as possible. The model provides a framework for studying the research questions. The first research question compares contract and regular teacher absenteeism and is represented by the two oval shapes in Figure 2.1. The illustration shows the differences in the overall absence levels of contract and regular teachers as a result of the combined influences of the contract policy and other factors.

The second research question is related to features of the contract policy perceived to have an impact on teacher absenteeism. This is represented in Figure 2.1 in the rectangle labeled "Features of the contract reform" to highlight the role of the contract policy in influencing absenteeism. Contract features have been shown to potentially influence absenteeism through motivation to attend and ability to attend. For instance, transparent, merit-based hiring practices, fewer leave options, and threat of contract nonrenewal could improve contract teachers' motivation through the effects of job satisfaction and pressure to attend. Lower salaries, lack of benefits, inability to transfer, and the resignation option could have a negative effect on job satisfaction and the motivation to attend. Contract teachers' personal attributes, such as high educational qualifications and location, are also represented in Figure 2.1 and can influence contract

teachers' motivation and ability to attend. For example, if a contract teacher lives far from the school, inability to transfer and the option to resign could constrain teachers' ability to attend.

The third research question is represented in Figure 2.1 by the school-related and personal factors. The possible effects of work environment influences, such as student achievement and attendance, the condition of school infrastructure, the impact of government policies such as class size; and the possible effects of teachers' personal attributes (e.g., family responsibilities and commute time) are taken into account in setting the context in which the contract policy is implemented. This framework was used to develop interview questions, subquestions, and probes.

The purpose of this study was to ascertain the perspectives of teachers and principals on teacher absenteeism and the contract policy from a sample of schools in Lahore—not to formulate a priori hypotheses on the subject. Therefore, the model represented in Figure 2.1 was used as a guiding analytic framework to probe further into the causes of absenteeism and the effect of the contract policy on them. The model also allowed for overlapping and combined influences among factors. For instance, teachers' intrinsic motivation to attend, represented by teachers' values and job expectations, could be influenced by inconsistent government policies or poor infrastructure; teachers' motivation to attend could also be influenced by ability to attend.

The model included several influences on absenteeism for assessing the effect of the contract policy on teacher absenteeism and was conducive to using a methodology of open-ended and semistructured questions, which gave respondents an opportunity to

engage in spontaneous discussions regarding their perceptions of the contract policy's effect on absenteeism and various factors influencing teacher absenteeism.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This study followed a basic interpretive qualitative research design to assess teachers' and principals' perspectives on the phenomenon of teacher absenteeism and the effects of the contract policy. In the study, consistent with the basic interpretive approach, absenteeism and contract reforms were perceived to be social realities (Fetterman, 1998) that could be defined and explained. Therefore, the methodological emphasis was on how study participants interpreted the meaning of a situation or phenomenon (Merriam et al., 2002). The contract policy implementation and the causes of absenteeism both involve processes that vary depending on factors such as individual schools and teachers' circumstances. Data collection and interview formats were developed with these factors in mind.

Teacher absenteeism is a poorly understood phenomenon caused by multiple interacting factors, often specific to cultural settings. Similar to other developing countries, educational policies such as contract reforms were implemented in Pakistan in variable school, teacher, and managerial environments. In cases where policy making is fragmented by various levels of bureaucracy and implementation, a choice of methodology that allows in-depth analysis of particular cases may better explain outcomes (Chen & Rossi, 1983; Weiss, 1998). The main research questions and subquestions are described in this chapter followed by data collection processes and a discussion of validity, reliability, and ethical issues.

Research Questions

Three overall research queries were addressed in this study. The first research query focused on assessing the extent of absenteeism among contract and regular teachers. The second and third research queries assessed principals and teachers' perceptions of how absence was influenced by the contract policy and how factors such as supervision, school management, work environment, teachers' personal attributes, and other factors affected absenteeism among contract and regular teachers. Subquestions and probes were used to explore the main research queries more fully and to provide the broader context in which contract reform took place.

Research Query 1: Do contract teachers tend to be absent less than regular teachers in a sample of Lahore schools? Differences in absenteeism among contract and regular teachers in the sample of government schools selected for the study were assessed through teacher and principal interviews. Variations in sample data were addressed by:

- School level (elementary, middle, or secondary)
- School location (low or high income, rural or urban)
- Size of school
- Gender of students (girls or boys)

School attendance records were also used to triangulate the results from interviews about perceptions of absenteeism among regular and contract teachers.

Research Query 2: What are teachers' and principals' perceptions of the impact of the contract policy on teacher absenteeism? This was an open-ended research query designed to elicit teachers' and principals' perceptions of how incentives and sanctions in the contract policy addressed absenteeism. A general, unprompted query about the

research problem at the beginning of the interview was designed to reveal teachers' and principals' views of the problem and its scope. Subquestions about the contract policy addressed specific incentives and sanctions that participants believed influenced absenteeism among contract teachers.

Research Query 3: What are teachers' and principals' perceptions of the impact of specific school and individual teacher characteristics on teacher absenteeism?

School-related factors

- Leave policies
- Formal and informal supervision mechanisms at the school, district/provincial, and community levels
- Work environment, including student-related factors such as discipline and achievement, government policy issues such as class size and textbooks; and school infrastructure and facilities such as building maintenance and provision of classroom materials such as blackboards

Teacher personal characteristics

- Education and training level
- Experience level
- Teacher gender
- Location issues such as commute and transportation
- Family responsibilities
- Other personal characteristics

Following a semistructured format, the third research query subquestions were posed to further explore perceptions regarding the influence of specific factors leading to

differences in absenteeism between contract and regular teachers. The relationship between these specific school and teacher personal factors and the analytic framework of the study was given in chapter 2.

School and Teacher Sample

The first step in sample selection was to choose schools that had hired contract teachers to compare with regular teachers. Therefore, a purposeful sample of schools was drawn using a criterion of at least two contract teachers per school. A purposeful sampling method is used for small sample research studies in which cases are chosen for in-depth study to capture variation in the data (Patton, 2002; Maxwell, 2005). For sample selection, detailed data on Lahore public schools was available from the Program Implementation and Monitoring Unit (PMIU) of PESRP.

Because contract teachers made up 20% of Lahore school district teachers, many schools only had regular teachers. Therefore, the population sample was narrowed down to all the public schools in the city that had at least two contract teachers. A subset of schools was chosen from the overall population of approximately 1,200 schools in the district of Lahore (Government of the Punjab, 2005), and the sample population was narrowed to about 300 schools with at least 2 contract teachers each (shown in Figure 3.1).

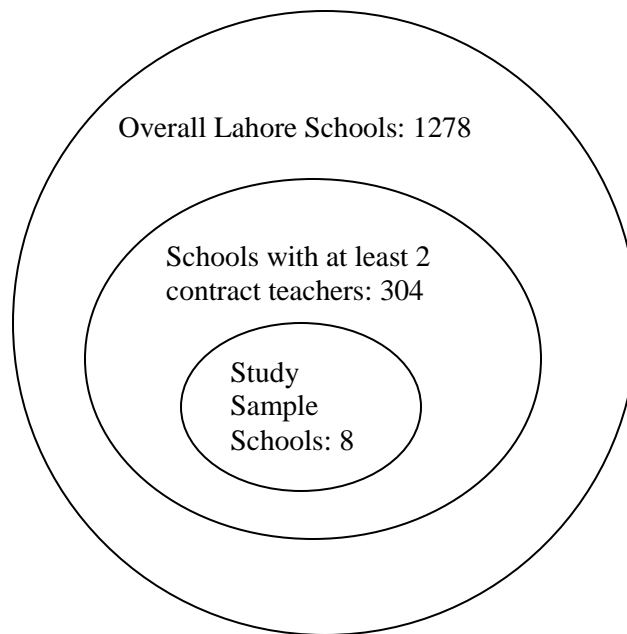


Figure 3.1. School population and sample. Adapted from *Punjab EMIS Database 2004–2005*, Government of the Punjab, 2005. Retrieved from <http://www.punjabeducation.edu.pk/tables/table1.pdf>

Preliminary discussions with education officials and policymakers to aid in sample selection and developing interview protocol suggested that variations in school and teacher characteristics could play an important role in explaining differences in the effect of the contract on absenteeism. In order to allow for variation in school and teacher characteristics, a stratified sampling procedure was followed. Schools were selected using the criteria of school level (primary, middle, or secondary), location, school size, and student gender, which were identified in the literature and preliminary discussions as important sources of variation among schools. After allowing for these representative categories, 8 was considered an appropriate number of schools for the sample.

Within the category of student gender, further stratification of the sample was carried out to capture variation in school characteristics. To include an even number of

female and male teachers, 4 girls' and 4 boys' schools were selected,⁷ of which 3 of each gender were identified as primary or middle schools and at least 1 school of each was a secondary school. Because the majority of government schools were in poor localities, 6 low-income area schools and 2 higher income schools were chosen. From the database, 5 urban and 3 rural schools were chosen because rural schools had almost half the student enrollment (see Figure 3.2).

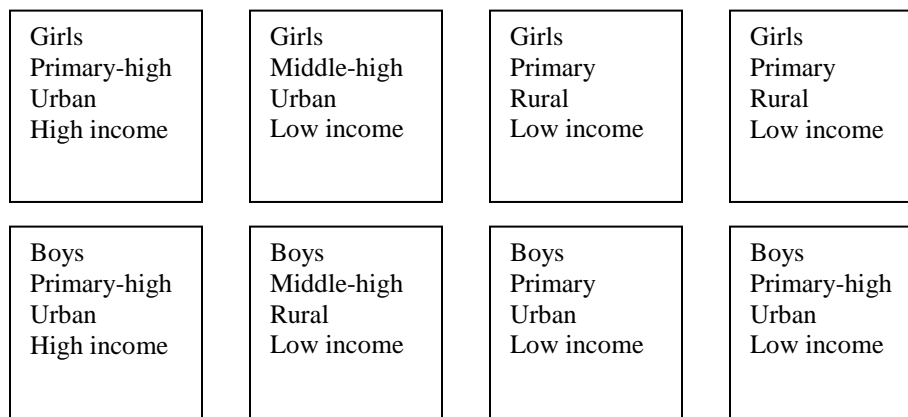


Figure 3.2. Schools represented in sample for in-depth interviews.

From the final selection of 8 schools, 2 contract and 2 regular teachers were selected by requesting the principal to ask any two teachers within the two groups to grant interviews.⁸ This resulted in an overall sample of 32 teachers (4 teachers from each

⁷ Twelve schools were initially selected from the database; 10 were approached for interviews after principals' phone numbers were obtained from the district office, and 8 agreed to participate.

⁸ The district office informed me that I could not contact teachers directly and must call the principal to arrange interviews. To prevent selection bias, I explained to the principals that I wanted to conduct research on the contract policy and teacher absenteeism, and I would need to interview any two teachers who would be willing and available to talk from within the two groups of contract and regular teachers. I requested that the principal not choose anyone in particular. In light of the possibility of teacher selection bias, I posed additional probing questions to teachers if they seemed less forthright in their discussion. However, the overall impression was that teachers were sufficiently open and critical during their interviews, and there

of the 8 schools; 16 regular and 16 contract teachers). Principals at each of the 8 schools were also interviewed, making a total of 40 interviewees.

Forty is a relatively large sample for in-depth interviews and involved many hours of interviewing, transcription, data manipulation, and analysis. However, for the purpose of the research, the sample size of 8 schools covered variations in types of schools according to gender, location, level, and size, and a minimum of 4 teachers from each school were selected to compare contract and regular teachers within a particular school.

Data Collection

Two types of data were collected from sample schools. The main data set was derived from interviews of 40 participants from 8 schools. In addition to in-depth principal and teacher interviews, teachers' attendance records were gathered from a selection of the sample schools to obtain estimates of attendance rates.

Open-Ended and Semistructured Interview Format

Interviews followed two types of formats: (a) open-ended questions about perceptions of absenteeism and the contract policy and (b) semistructured questions guided by the literature and analytical framework. The use of open-ended questionnaires as the first two research queries allowed the researcher to let respondents give their perceptions on the research subject without being prompted by explanations or knowledge already articulated in the literature.

The main portion of the interview consisted of semistructured questions. In keeping with the semistructured format, participants were requested to answer specific

did not seem to be a bias in selection or only those teachers who would be less critical of the school or government.

questions based on the research questions. In-depth interviews guided by the literature were used to try to understand and explain absenteeism and the effect of the contract policy and not necessarily to test a priori explanations (Merriam et al., 2002). Interview questions were based on the research questions, empirical and theoretical literature, and a pilot survey. The interview protocol is given in Appendix A.

Two separate instruments were used for contract and regular teachers. The questions were identical except for those related to the terms of the contract, which were addressed only to contract teachers. Regular teachers were asked to comment on their perception of the incentive structure of the contract policy and how it affected absenteeism of their contract teacher colleagues.

The third instrument was for the school principals. Principals in each of the 8 sample schools were interviewed to provide the context for teacher interviews and to gain principals' perspectives on contract policy implementation and effectiveness. All questions addressed to the principal were about contract incentives and teacher absenteeism. Principals were not questioned about their own absenteeism, although this came up indirectly as a factor in supervision, management, and leadership. The objective was to get a sense of the implementation of the policy in the particular school environment, and to corroborate the results of the interviews of teachers from the same school. The principal interview data also provided a useful basis for comparisons of results obtained from teacher interviews and descriptive data sources and helped with triangulation of results.

Before the final interviews, a pilot survey of two teachers and one principal from nonsample schools was conducted to test the feasibility of the interview protocol, and

appropriate changes were made to the questionnaires before final interviews took place. Feedback from the pilot survey interviewees helped to assess the internal validity of the instruments. Some of the questions were sharpened and revised after this initial round of interviews. I also gained insight into the respondents' perspectives on the research subject and how my style of communication was received. I found that most of the interviewees were comfortable and forthcoming in their responses; however, the use of probes helped in some cases according to the environment of the school.

Interviews for the study were conducted at the school sites and lasted about 30 to 40 minutes each. Possible probes were listed in the interview protocol. However, these probes were used only if relevant. Where necessary, additional spontaneous follow-up questions were used to investigate and clarify answers and seek new explanations for the interview questions (Merriam et al., 2002). Care was also taken that the discussion did not veer from the main research objectives of the study. Each interview was taped and transcribed. Codes were used in place of the names of schools and interviewees. Tapes and interviews were not accessible to anyone except the researcher.

Data Analysis

Three data sources were analyzed: (a) 40 transcribed interviews of school teachers (16 contract and 16 regular teachers) and 8 school principals, (b) field notes and memos created during the interviews, and (c) document analysis of published materials or school records provided by school principals and other education officials.

Interview data were analyzed in the following steps:

1. Data were reduced through coding of interview transcriptions. Data reduction was accomplished by using an initial set of descriptive codes, creating new descriptive

codes, creating pattern codes to link data, and creating codes for combined effects of two or more factors. Then all transcribed interview data were categorized and coded.

2. Codes were organized according to research questions.
3. Charts and tables were developed to relate research questions to respondent and school characteristics.
4. Analysis of findings was organized according to the research questions and by referring to tables, matrices, charts, and interview data to write each section.
5. Memos and field notes were written throughout the research process. Upon completion, they were organized according to the research questions and incorporated into analysis of the findings.

Coding Interview Data

Codes from qualitative research can be used as static or descriptive information, or to form pattern codes indicating patterns or themes (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005; Miles & Huberman, 1994). A start list of descriptive codes prior to conducting fieldwork helped in setting up a preliminary coding system that related codes to particular research questions and subquestions (Appendix B). Although recurring patterns of information from the interview data were organized into categories based on research questions and subquestions, it was kept in mind that codes needed to be changed if they did not seem pertinent (Miles & Huberman, 1994). As a result, on-going analysis during fieldwork and data retrieval led to some changes and revisions in coding patterns. For instance, new codes were added for responses to open-ended and follow-up questions, and some

preliminary codes became redundant.⁹ Table 3.1 gives an example of the process of coding from the interview data.

Table 3.1
Example of Start List and Pattern Codes

Start list descriptive codes	Interview data	Additional codes
RT_SUPR RT_SUPR_INSPCT RT_LV POL RT_LV DAYS RT_SUPR_ABS ACTION	<p>MH: Who supervises and monitors contract teacher attendance?</p> <p>R1: Only the headmaster. The EDO, DO have not come here. The monitoring people make about two visits per month, but don't come in the classes. They used to come before the holidays, but now they only sit in the headmaster's office. It used to benefit the teaching and make teachers more alert in attending and maintaining their classes.</p> <p>MH: Is supervision different for contract and regular teachers?</p> <p>R1: It's the same. But we get more leaves than contract teachers. We all get 25 days in the year, but regular teachers also get earned leave. Teachers usually think it is their right to take all of them. Contract teachers also try to take all their leaves. I took about 5 in the year so far, when my sister died. When the contract teachers first came, their attendance was better, and then they became spoilt after looking at the atmosphere here and the behavior of the regular teachers. The headmaster does not have the power if some teachers have other sources of patronage or support that he can't take action against.</p> <p>MH: What action does the principal or officials take if a teacher is taking too much leave?</p> <p>R1: It depends on the head. I heard about a head in another school who did not let teachers take more than 18 leaves in the year.</p>	<p><i>SUP:PRIN(SU2)</i> <i>SUP:MON(SU3)</i> <i>SUP: DIST(SU4)</i></p> <p>+&<i>SUP:PRIN-AUT(SU6)</i> -&<i>SUP:PRIN-EV(SU5)</i></p>

The left-hand margin identifies codes from the start list of descriptive codes given in Appendix B. New descriptive pattern and interaction codes were identified in the right

⁹ For instance, the start list codes for supervision (RT_SUPR and CT_SUPR) were enhanced by codes related to recurring themes of specific types of supervision mentioned during interviews.

margin, relating to patterns and interactions among factors.¹⁰ In the left-hand margin, general descriptive codes about anticipated actions as a result of supervision (RT_SUPR_ABSACTION) were extended to describe new descriptive codes for specific types of supervision by principals (*SUP:PRIN(SU2)*) or monitoring teams and interactions between factors indicated by interviewees, such as the effect of the principal's authority to take action on teacher absenteeism (*&SUP:PRIN-AUT(SU6)*).

Codes representing interactions started with the symbol &, implying a combined effect of principal supervision and authority on teacher absenteeism.¹¹ The final coding was used to make categories and to analyze and present the data through descriptions, matrices, graphs, and charts. Matrices were developed according to the research questions. Respondent codes were incorporated into the matrices to include information on school and teacher characteristics for each of the pattern or interaction codes representing research questions. Findings and conclusions presented in Chapters 4 and 5 were drawn from this analysis.

Memos and Field Notes

Field notes were made during visits to the district education office and the 8 school sites. Information was gathered on infrastructure facilities and the general environment of schools based on personal observation. Memo writing helped to expand and explore the data collected through interviews and allowed the researcher to add substance and additional dimensions to interview data through observations and insights.

¹⁰ The right margin uses the results of the study, which are discussed in the next chapter and given here as an example of the coding process as it evolved before and after the interviews and during the transcription and data analysis.

¹¹ The direction of the interaction effect is given by adding a – to the codes starting with & if the interacting factors had the effect of lowering absenteeism and a +if the interaction lead to higher absenteeism.

The processes, relationships and patterns categorized via codes were elaborated through memo writing.

Another purpose of memo writing in qualitative research is to reflect on research methodology, theory, and research goals (Maxwell, 2005). Memos were kept separate from interview data files and categorized by research questions; they were then used to substantiate and triangulate the results of interview data. The following is an example of a field note made during a visit to the Lahore city district education office:

The office complex includes the offices of the district officers (a total of 6—3 male and 3 female for each level of schooling). In general, office buildings were clean but very rudimentary. Did not see any computers, even in the EDO's office, which only had a fax machine/printer. EDO was helpful. Said I should give him the parameters of the sample I needed and he would help contact teachers. Regarding the gift voucher, he suggested it was best not to mention it to anyone yet, since it may create unnecessary interest among teachers to be included in the interviews. It could be given later, after the interview, without publicizing it in advance. Two men walked into the office while I was there. One of them was a teacher (about late 50s) and the other person was someone who was there to help plead his case. The teacher had taken leave without pay but had received his salary. Now he was being asked to reimburse it and was requesting (he had given in an application, etc.) to not be asked to give the money back. A prolonged discussion took place, with the EDO protesting that he could not do this, and the other two pleading that the salary not be relinquished. There seemed to be a constant flow of such requests and meetings in these offices.

Notes such as these supplemented information from interviews¹² and, in this case, provided important insight into procedures for leave taking and related consequences and the role of the school principal and the district offices in resolving teacher absence issues.¹³

¹² Based on this meeting, it was agreed that as a token of appreciation for the interviews, a gift of reference books to the school as a whole was more appropriate than individual gift certificates to interviewees, since this might bias teacher sample selection.

¹³ Examples of memos and field notes use the results of the study which are given in the next chapter to augment the data analysis.

Document and Published Data Analysis

Published reports and data related to the population from which the school sample was taken were used to gather background information on the study. To supplement and triangulate findings from interviews, other data sources were used, including reports, documents, and data provided by school principals and district and provincial offices. Attendance and background data on contract and regular teachers was also collected from these sources.

Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis consisted of individual participants (teachers and principals). The perceptions of individual contract and regular teachers and school principals formed the basis of the research study.

Validity and Reliability

Validity refers to the credibility of the research procedures and results in accurately analyzing and depicting the researcher's specific objectives (Creswell & Miller, 2000). Therefore, the research methodology chosen and procedures undertaken to conduct the research have to be relevant, appropriate, and transparent. Researchers distinguish between internal and external validity.

Internal Validity

Internal validity addresses the issue of credibility, whether research findings are a valid measure of what the study intended to determine as captured by the research design and methods. This study used teachers' and principals' perceptions to provide an accurate

basis for exploring the effect of the contract policy on absenteeism. The choice of a qualitative methodology of semistructured and open-ended interviews captured participants' perceptions, and memos and field notes from site observations and interviews set the contextual and descriptive background to form a firm basis for internal validity.

Because the contract reform was part of PESRP, other elements of the reform program implemented at the same time may have affected teacher absenteeism, such as free textbooks or increased qualifications for teachers. The use of the open-ended interview technique and follow-up probes to the main interview questions were used to incorporate some of these expected exogenous effects on absenteeism that may pose important threats to internal validity.

Triangulation Techniques to Strengthen Internal Validity

Because the qualitative paradigm used participants' perception of social reality as the basis for research, it was important to keep checking the accuracy of participants' perceptions during the course of the research and fieldwork (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). To improve validity, member checks, document analysis, and peer review techniques were carried out. Member checks consisted of checking back with study participants to ensure credibility of results. Discussions were carried out with 4 teachers and 2 principals to get their feedback on early findings regarding how authentic results seemed to them. Member checks took place in person with 2 teachers and on the phone with the other 4 participants.

Another triangulation technique used to strengthen internal validity was the use of alternate data sources in the study of the same phenomenon. Document analysis of public

records and published reports was used to gather information on leave policies and contract rules and regulations to compare with the data gathered through interviews.

Peer review was the third method used to establish the study's credibility by requesting two researchers familiar with the topic to review the data, research process, and preliminary findings of the study. Feedback from peer reviewers was incorporated in the study at the stage of developing the interview questionnaire and also in the interpretation of interview results.

The study followed Coffey and Atkinson's (1996) approach, which held that although triangulation is often interpreted to allow researchers to approximate a common valid representation of social reality, but that in fact researchers' exploration of alternative data sources and methods might increase and not reduce complexity and variety of results. In the latter approach, using triangulation, does not necessarily reinforce the results of the study but is used to explore outcomes obtained from other data sources and analysis methods.

External Validity

External validity refers to the extent to which research findings can be transferred or generalized to other situations. In qualitative research, the ability to extrapolate from research findings is limited by the methodology and depends on the specific context from which the sample is taken (Maxwell, 2005). In this qualitative study, only 8 schools in one city were studied; therefore, the external validity of any study based on this methodology is expected to be weak. The results cannot be extrapolated or interpreted much beyond the particular context of selected cases.

One technique employed to strengthen the study's external validity was to provide rich descriptions and details from in-depth interviews and site observations to provide detailed information for comparison purposes. Having a well-defined sample through purposeful sample selection and sample stratification was another technique used to enhance external validity (Merriam et al., 2002). Teachers' and principals' behavior and perceptions were expected to vary depending on several factors addressed in the study. Sample selection took into consideration several sources of variation among schools that could potentially influence research findings, such as schooling level, gender of students and teachers, school location, and school size. Using purposeful sample selection helped to adequately represent the range of variation among teachers rather than some average subset of teachers (Maxwell, 2005). Therefore, the intention of the study was not to generalize from the findings. Rather, by making the sample more representative of the population, the improved credibility of results allows for comparison of the results with other similar cases.

Reliability

Another test of the rigor of a research study is its reliability, or the extent to which the study's findings are consistent and can be replicated or repeated. Qualitative research results are expected to be consistent and dependable in the context in which data is collected (Merriam et al., 2002). To strengthen reliability, research methods were made transparent by providing details of sample collection and instrumentation procedures. Comprehensive contextual data on teacher characteristics and school factors provided the setting for this study's particular results and enabled comparisons with other studies and the framework for possible replication of research. To check for the reliability of coding,

peer examinations of coding procedures were carried out. Triangulation techniques also helped to improve the transparency and accessibility of research methods. Reliability was aided by using interview procedures that started with open-ended questions followed by semistructured ones and the use of probes when the responses were not clear.

Human Participation and Ethical Considerations

No harmful effects to the human participants were anticipated in this study. Because it may have been possible for teachers to be reprimanded or dismissed if their responses became known to their supervisors, special precautions were taken to ensure that teachers' were not jeopardized due to their responses. As the principal researcher, I took the position of wanting to understand the problem and phenomenon of absenteeism and did not judge teachers for their lack of attendance, even though it may have been a breach of duty. I was aware that questions about absence needed to be asked in a way that their responses would not evoke any negative repercussions on their employment situation. Therefore, questions about absenteeism were sometimes posed indirectly or in general terms to explore problems teachers encountered on a regular basis.

So as not to create a possible ethical issue in terms of informed consent, the full nature of the study was disclosed to the interviewees. A letter presented to them at the beginning of the research described the study and sought permission for the interviews. Participants were given about 5 minutes to read the letter and ask questions. Teachers and principals were assured of anonymity regarding their schools' names and information gathered during the interview. To avoid the possibility of identification of respondents, I used techniques such as alternating numbers and letters in coding schools. They were informed that their identity would not be revealed in the study or to any other researchers

or institutions, and that the information was being collected for research purposes only. Respondents were interviewed either in the principal's office without the principal present or in an empty classroom, if available. The interviews were conducted in privacy with only one respondent at a time.

Throughout the data collection process and analysis, privacy of respondents was maintained; all materials related to taping, transcription, and coding of the respondent interviews were kept secure in locked cabinets accessible only to the researcher. As the principal researcher, I took care to prevent any personal biases or subjectivity issues from influencing the research (Peshkin, 1988, 2000). I was not aware of any overt personal biases that may have influenced the study. As a native Urdu speaker and being of Pakistani origin, I had to establish that I was a doctoral student, that the interviews were being carried out for the purpose of research only, and that I had no links with any government or other agencies. Also, there may have been a tendency to look for policy solutions from the results of the study and interview questions, and the follow-up discussions may have sometimes veered towards that aspect rather than following a more exploratory approach, which was the main focus of this study. Because I was aware of this possible bias, I made an effort to conduct the interviews as objectively as possible.

Research Methodology Limitations

The possibility of bias due to principals selecting teachers to be interviewed must be considered in analyzing the findings, because teachers who tended to be absent often might not have been selected for interviews. To avoid this problem, the principal had been requested to randomly select any 4 teachers who were willing and available for interviews, without considering any factors except that there should be 2 from each

category of regular and contract teachers. Moreover, to counter the possibility of the principal selecting teachers who attended more regularly, interviewees were asked to give their perception of others teachers' absence behavior as well as their own. Discussions with 5 interviewees from each school helped in depicting varying absence trends among teachers in the same school.¹⁴ However these findings were limited by relying on perceptions of attendance rather than actual observation of teachers present.

Using perceptions of teachers and principals as the main method to collect data presented another limitation of the research. Responses about absenteeism may have been overly cautious or exaggerated, depending on the comprehension, stakes attached to the response, or other aspects of a particular respondent. A combination of open-ended and semistructured interview techniques was designed to capture forthrightness of respondents as much as possible. However, biases in reporting were bound to be present.

Causality cannot be implied by the research findings, because teacher perceptions of absences or the effect of the contract policy may not take all factors into account. The effect of other components of the PESRP presented an internal validity threat, because these components represented influences on teacher absenteeism other than the effect of contract hiring. Some of these effects, such as timing of textbook delivery and infrastructure improvements, were described in the open-ended interviews and follow-up probes. Some reform measures were also identified as factors shown to have interaction effects with the contract policy.

¹⁴ For instance, interviews in one school revealed that a particular teacher (who was not interviewed) had a reputation for taking excessive leave and using his contacts to avoid any action against him. When I asked the principal if I could interview that teacher, he said that it could be arranged but that that the teacher would not admit to taking unexcused leave and it would be difficult to get him to speak the truth. This example suggested that principals generally could not hide cases of major absentee problems, because these became known throughout the school.

Care was taken to conduct interviews at a time of year when there were no special pressures of holidays, exams, or harvest-related activities. Interviews began 2 weeks after the end of a religious holiday. However, at the first school, the principal and some teachers complained that teachers and especially students took additional days off and did not return to school when it officially reopened. Staff from schools who were interviewed days later did not express this problem. Therefore, biases from interview timing were taken into account in terms of the information given in the interviews.

Attendance data from registers used to calculate teacher absence rates might not reflect actual teacher absentee rates. There may be underreporting of teacher attendance, and this may be inconsistent across schools because attendance registers rely on principals and head teachers to maintain records and are not subject to external audits. The methodology adopted in this research focused on perceptions of a limited sample of teachers and principals. The small sample size of 8 schools focused on in-depth interview analysis and did not allow for generalizations. Therefore, results were interpreted in the context of the specific cases studied.

CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter reports the findings from an analysis of the responses of a sample of teachers and principals from the district of Lahore and their perceptions of the impact of a new policy in Pakistan to stem teacher absenteeism. The frequency of absenteeism, teachers' and principals' views of absenteeism in their schools, and the perceived influence of the contract policy and other contextual factors on teacher absenteeism are reported.

The findings were based primarily on interviews of a representative sample of 40 participants in 8 schools. The analysis in this chapter is based on open-ended questions, semistructured interviews, Education Department documents, and attendance data from school registers. The discussion of the findings is organized by the three main research queries introduced in the previous chapter:

1. Do contract teachers tend to be absent less than regular teachers in a sample of Lahore schools?
2. What are teachers' and principals' perceptions of the impact of the contract policy on teacher absenteeism?
3. What are teachers' and principals' perceptions of the impact of specific school and teacher characteristics on teacher absenteeism?

Interviews were the source of data for answering the research questions. Three separate instruments for contract teachers, regular teachers, and school principals were used to conduct interviews at each of the school sites (see Appendix A). The result was a

large data set of transcribed interviews from 40 respondents (16 contract teachers, 16 regular teachers, and 8 principals).

As explained in Chapter 3, a sample of 8 schools within the public school district of the city of Lahore was selected. The sample was stratified to represent variations in schools by characteristics that may have an influence on absenteeism, such as teacher gender, school size and level, and school location (rural or urban, high or low income). Background information on sample school and teacher characteristics also helped to indicate possible interactions or combined influences among factors that affect absenteeism. By selecting 4 teachers from each school, a comparison of 2 contract and 2 regular teachers could be made at each school. In-depth interview data were collected from 32 teachers (16 regular and 16 contract) and 8 principals. One-on-one teacher interviews were conducted in private at a time scheduled by the school principal on the school premises, either in an empty classroom or in the principal's office.

Information on school characteristics was obtained from a combination of District Education office statistics, memos, and field notes made during the school visits, and discussions with school principals and teachers. Observations of infrastructure and physical facilities at the schools were recorded at the time of the school visits. Sample school characteristics are summarized as follows. (For a more detailed description, see Appendix D.)

The condition of infrastructure was expected to be an important factor in the work environment that influenced teachers' motivation to attend. All schools in general were in a state of neglect as far as infrastructure and facilities were concerned. Only two schools had adequate buildings and furniture (see Appendix D, Table D.1). The absence of desks

and chairs in these classrooms meant that students had to sit on the floor. In general, the better maintained schools had more selective admission processes and higher enrollment. The two rural girls' primary schools in the sample had the worst facilities, and one of those had no furniture and was missing electrical wires and bathroom fixtures.

Because contract teachers had better educational qualifications compared to regular teachers, characteristics of the school work environment were expected to affect absenteeism differently for contract and regular teachers. Several teachers taught across levels, depending on their educational background and skills; hence, it was not always possible to unequivocally classify them as a primary, secondary, or middle school teachers. However, the interviews revealed that contract teachers were more sought after for teaching high school grades and English, mathematics, and science due to their higher qualifications and up-to-date knowledge of these subjects.

The size of school, measured by the number of enrolled students, was included in sample stratification as a possible factor for explaining teacher absenteeism. In the sample, one middle-high school in a busy urban center had a very high enrollment of over 2,000 students. Two of the smallest schools were rural girls' schools with 150-400 students in each school. The large size of a school may reflect a densely populated area or a good reputation, which may lead to overcrowding and pressure to admit more children. Two of the schools in the sample had below-capacity enrollments compared to the space available.

To study gender-specific reasons for teacher absence, the sample included an equal number of boys and girls schools to represent an equal number of male and female teachers. However, school visits revealed that all schools were coeducational at the

primary level, with at least 15%–20% enrollment of the other gender. (In one better maintained “boys” primary school, 50% of the students were girls.) Two interviewees who were recommended by the principal at a boys’ primary school were women. The overall participant sample consisted of 14 male and 18 female teachers, rather than 16 of each gender as planned before the fieldwork. However, this selection was considered representative of the unofficial practice of coeducation in government primary schools and of hiring a greater proportion of female teachers at the primary level.

Government schools in general admitted students from the lowest socioeconomic groups. Government schools in affluent areas usually admitted students from nearby slums or children of domestic staff, whereas the wealthier students attended private schools. The three rural schools in the sample were on the outskirts of the city in high-poverty areas, where the local population worked on farms or in factories. The two rural girls’ schools in the sample had the worst facilities. Within the urban sample, one of the schools was located in an affluent residential area, and another was located in a well-off commercial area. Schools in the higher income urban locations did not necessarily have better facilities (see Appendix D). A school located in a very poor, congested section of the city was found to have relatively superior facilities and higher enrollment compared to a school in an upscale residential neighborhood with greater space and building allocation.

Two schools that were being assisted by NGOs as part of a government scheme to improve curriculum and teaching support were included in the sample. This was not considered to result in a selection bias as it represented the government’s policy to promote private–public partnerships. Teachers from NGOs were not included in the

sample but their impact on government teachers' absence was assessed during the interviews.

Background characteristics of regular versus contract teachers were also used to determine differences in the impact of the policy. For example, teachers' education was a factor used in the data analysis. Detailed comparative data about contract and regular teacher characteristics including education, experience, and salary were summarized for each school (see Appendix E, Table E.1). Additional teacher background information on number of dependents, after-school jobs, and commute time are given in Appendix E, Table E.2.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the use of open-ended and semistructured interviews was an important aspect of the methodology to obtain details and insight into the research questions. A challenging aspect of presenting findings from large amounts of transcribed interviews was to group data into categories while not losing detail. To ensure that concerns about privacy and consent were respected participants who did not give clear opinions or did not want to respond despite follow-up questions or probes were counted as valid responses of not having enough knowledge on the subject or choosing not to respond because of the sensitivity of the subject or for privacy considerations.

Data were sifted and categorized using the initial list of codes established prior to the interviews and by adding new codes for new factors, categories, subcategories, and pattern and interaction codes. Findings from interviews based on categories generated by a priori coding and new coding generated from the interviews were organized in tables and matrices.

The magnitude or intensity of a response was gauged by the frequency with which the issue came up in the conversation or by the details and arguments presented during interviews. Participants were not asked to rank their responses numerically. Doing so might have lowered the validity of the open-ended and semistructured interview format because of the implications of having to prioritize answers on relationships with colleagues. Ranking might also have biased answers due to apprehensions about job security. Matrices and tables were used to present the data clearly and in as much detail as possible. Verbatim quotes to illustrate research findings were included to capture greater detail and depth.

As discussed in Chapter 3, because the objective of this study was to assess the extent to which teachers were available to students to teach, the concept of absenteeism included both sanctioned and unsanctioned leave. The literature on developing countries suggested that it might be difficult to distinguish between voluntary and involuntary absences among teachers (Chaudhury, 2006). To compare the sanctioned leave available to contract and regular teachers, information on different allowed leave options available to contract and regular teachers was obtained from interviews and school documents. The findings are presented and organized by research query to report important patterns.

Findings From Interview Data

Research Query #1: Do Contract Teachers Tend To Be Absent Less Than Regular Teachers in a Sample of Lahore Schools?

In this section, teacher absence and differences in absenteeism between regular and contract teachers were assessed on the basis of three methods: (a) perceptions of

teachers and principals elicited through an open-ended question about absenteeism, (b) semistructured interviews comparing regular and contract teachers' absences, and (c) estimates from available teacher attendance data provided by principals from school registers during field visits. The comparison of data sources allowed for triangulation of results. The key findings are as follows:

Finding 1.1. *Fewer leave options for contract teachers compared to regular teachers suggested that contract teachers were expected to be less absent.*

Information about the types of leave available to contract and regular teachers was acquired from in-depth interviews and documents about leave regulations provided by district and school offices. It was evident that contract teachers had fewer options. This finding was determined using information about the type of job leave that was allowed, the number of days allowed, and whether the leave was to be taken with or without pay. The types of leave can be summarized as follows:

1. *Casual leave.* This was the only paid leave available to contract teachers. All teachers, regular and contract, were allowed 25 casual leaves annually, sanctioned at the school level at the principal's discretion. As part of PESRP, teachers were discouraged from taking more than 2 consecutive leaves per month, whereas previously they could take several days off at once. Because casual leaves were not credited or accumulated across years of service, teachers had an incentive to use all of their allowed leaves.
2. *Earned leave.* In addition to casual leave, regular teachers were allowed to take up to 12 days of earned leave per year, sanctioned by the district education office upon teacher request for specific reasons such as medical leave, Hajj, and family

occasions such as weddings or funerals. Regular teachers mentioned Hajj twice as a reason for leave, and weddings were mentioned by regular and contract teachers.

3. *Maternity leave.* Regular teachers were eligible for 3 months of paid maternity leave. Contract teachers were also eligible for 3 months maternity leave but without pay. Thus, they tended to take as little of this leave as possible. One contract and one regular teacher mentioned using maternity leave themselves, and interviewees also mentioned about four cases of maternity leave among other teachers.¹⁵
4. *Short leave.* At the principal's discretion, regular and contract teachers could leave the school premises for up to 2 hours of short leave, usually only for emergencies. Entry and exit were entered in the attendance register. Three short leaves added up to one casual leave. This type of leave was used by men more often than women because their greater mobility allowed them to come and go more easily from school. Senior teachers were also more likely to take short leave compared to younger regular and contract teachers.
5. *Study leave.* Only regular teachers were eligible for study leave (during which they were paid 75% of their salaries) for a maximum of 2 years twice in their service tenure. To apply, teachers needed to provide evidence of admission from an educational institution. None of the teachers in the sample had availed themselves of this leave.

¹⁵ One contract teacher complained that she had to return to her job only 6 weeks after the birth of her child because she could not afford to stay away.

6. *Election, census, and board exams.* Only regular teachers could take paid leave if they were called for election, census, or board examination duty, for which they received an additional stipend.

Based on this information, regular teachers could take at least 37 days of paid leave (and even more if they needed to take maternity or study leave or were required to perform election or exam duties) compared to contract teachers' maximum allowance of 25 days paid leave. Any additional days of leave taken by contract teachers were supposed to be deducted from their salary. Because contract teachers had substantially less paid days of leave compared to regular teachers, their absence levels were expected to be lower.

Finding 1.2. *Contract status was not considered a primary reason for teacher absence, whereas teacher seniority was. Respondents also cited weak supervision, sickness, slackness among teachers, teacher seniority, and maternity leave as reasons for absenteeism.*

The initial question addressed to all respondents was regarding their perceptions of teacher absence in general: Is teacher absenteeism a problem in your school? This open-ended question did not prompt teachers to compare regular and contract teacher absenteeism, but allowed teachers' own spontaneous views to direct the discussion. Teachers were asked to talk about their own and others' absence because it was felt that teachers might hesitate to fully discuss their own reasons for being absent. These findings are presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1

Perceptions of Teacher Absence in Response to Open-Ended Query^a

Perceived reasons for teacher absence	Overall responses	Contract teachers' perceived reasons for teacher absence		Regular teachers' perceived reasons for teacher absence		Principals' perceptions about teacher absence
		Own	Others	Own	Others	
Teacher slackness	12	-	2	-	7	3
Weak supervision = 16 responses						
Principal not strict	9	-	3	-	5	1
Weak external supervision	7	-	3	-	3	1
Own and family sickness = 13 responses						
Family sickness	8	2	-	3	2	1
Own sickness	5	2	-	2	-	1
Contract/seniority = 9 responses						
Contract teacher	2 ^b	1	-	-	1	-
Seniority	7	-	4	-	1	2
Other reasons for absence = 29 responses						
Maternity leave	6	1	2	1	1	1
Rural school	5	1	2	2	-	-
NGO presence	4 ^b	-	1	1	1	1
Large school size	3	-	1	-	1	1
Family wedding	3	1	-	2	-	-
Exam duty	2	-	-	-	2	-
Hajj pilgrimage	2	-	-	2	-	-
Other job	2	-	-	-	1	1
Election duty	1	-	-	-	1	-
Local teacher	1 ^b	-	-	1	-	-
Absence not perceived as a serious problem	9	3	5	1	-	-

^a Thirty-one respondents gave one or more reasons for absence. Nine did not think that absence was a serious problem.

^b Reasons for lower absence

Thirty-one out of 40 participants felt that absence was a problem in their school. Only 2 indicated that contract employment was a reason for low absenteeism, implying that if teachers and principals were not specifically asked about the effect of the contract policy, it would not spontaneously come up as an important perceived reason for lower absenteeism. However, teacher seniority was mentioned as a cause of higher absence by

7 respondents, the majority of whom were contract teachers and principals. Because seniority almost always implied that a teacher was tenured, contract teacher absence was generally considered to be lower compared to that of regular teachers.

Prominent perceived reasons for absence were lack of effective supervision, which elicited the most responses by participants, especially with respect to the role of the principal. Lack of supervision was followed by sickness, either personal or family as the most common reason teachers gave for their own absences. Slackness, or lack of motivation, was another important reason given, most often by regular teachers, to explain other teachers' absences. Of the several other reasons for absence mentioned by respondents (see Table 4.1), maternity leave was only mentioned occasionally as a reason for absence; however, the duration of the leave and, therefore, the impact of absence in the classroom were likely to be more extensive than those of most other reasons. Nine respondents felt that absence was not a serious problem (shown in the last column in Table 4.1).¹⁶ These results, based on an open-ended query, were used to probe the causes of absenteeism while discussing Research Question 3 using semistructured interviews.

In summary, contract status itself was not perceived to be the most important predictor of absenteeism in the open-ended query about absenteeism. However, because teachers' seniority was often cited as a factor, it can be said that in general, regular teachers were expected to be absent more often than contract teachers. Weak supervision, low motivation to work, personal and family sickness, and maternity leave were

¹⁶ Some teachers gave mixed messages. For instance, in response to the open-ended question, a contract teacher in a large urban high school said that most teachers attended their classes and absenteeism was not a problem. Later in the interview, during the semistructured portion of the question session, the same teacher said that contract teachers were given extra duties and that he was usually assigned an extra period every day because a teacher was absent. Contradictory responses such as these could imply that teachers generally consider the level of absence in their schools acceptable or hesitate to make an outright statement about absenteeism being a problem.

perceived to be prominent factors in determining levels of absence. (These factors are discussed in more detail in the exploration of Research Query 3).

Finding 1.3. *Half of surveyed teachers and principals stated that attendance rates of contract and tenured teachers were generally similar. Those who stated that there were differences also stated that contract teacher absence rates were moderately lower than those of regular teachers.*

Semistructured interviews were conducted following the open-ended question about absenteeism. Participants were specifically asked to give their opinions on overall differences in absence levels between contract and regular teachers. During the interviews, 36 out of 40 participants gave their opinion on overall differences in absence levels (see Table 4.2) between contract and regular teachers. Four, or 10%, of the participants said they did not have enough knowledge to give an opinion or did not give a clear answer.

Table 4.2
Perceptions of Absence Among Contract and Regular Teachers

	No difference in absence	Contract teacher absence lower	Regular teacher absence lower	No opinion	Total number of respondents
All	21 (52%)	10 (25%)	5 (12%)	4 (10%)	40
Contract teachers	7 (44%)	7 (44%)	-	2 (12%)	16
Regular teachers	9 (56%)	1 (6%)	4 (25%)	2(12%)	16
Principals	5 (62%)	2 (25%)	1(12%)	-	8

Half of the participants perceived attendance levels to be the same. About 25%, mostly contract teachers, perceived that there was a difference between contract and regular teachers, and both groups of teachers stated that their own attendance was better. Fewer regular teachers perceived a difference in absence between the two types of teachers.

In summary, when asked specifically about differences in absence between contract and regular teachers, the perception of teachers and principals were that attendance was similar, as perceived by about half the respondents, mostly regular teachers. However, among those participants who stated that there were differences in attendance rates, the majority considered contract teachers' absence rates to be lower. In general, this result could mean that absence rates between contract and regular teachers were not perceived to be significantly different.

Finding 1.4. *Available attendance data gathered from 5 out of 8 schools in the survey indicated that on average, contract teachers were less absent than regular teachers by about 1 day each month.*

School attendance registers were another source of data on the differences in contract and regular absenteeism. Table 4.3 summarizes rate of absence of contract and regular teachers at a particular school, calculated as a proportion of the number of days absent and the total number of working days for all contract or regular teachers in that month. Attendance data were provided by school principals.

Table 4.3
Absence Rates for Selected Sample Schools^a

Month	School A		School B		School C ^b		School D		School E	
	Reg	Con	Reg	Con	Reg	Con	Reg	Con	Reg	Con
1	-	-	13%	2%	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	13%	8%	12%	2%	11%	12%	6%	3%	14%	9%
3	11%	9%	10%	1%	22%	38%	9%	3%	13%	10%
4	13%	9%	-	-	40%	34%	14%	5%	11%	10%
5	-	-	-	-	31%	26%	-	-	-	-
6	-	-	-	-	11%	7%	-	-	-	-
Ave.	12%	9%	12%	2%	23%	23%	10%	4%	13%	9%

^aAbsence rates based on school teacher attendance registers.

^bHigh absence rates for contract teachers in school C reflect unpaid medical leave taken by 2 contract teachers before they decided to resign in Month 6. High absence rates for regular teachers reflected high absence by 2 teachers who were about to retire.

Principals of 5 schools agreed to give attendance data for selected months to ensure teacher anonymity. Attendance rates were reported for schools with principals who agreed to give at least 3 consecutive months of data, which applied to the same months in most cases. Only those schools whose principals felt that teachers' privacy would not be compromised were included. The 5 schools were fairly representative of the sample in terms of variation in school level, location, and gender.

Monthly absence rates were developed using the following calculation within each category of contract and regular teachers: number of days teachers were absent in a given month divided by the number of days of school held in that month times the number of teachers in the school. Excused or legitimate absences (e.g., due to sickness) were not differentiated from absences that may have been voluntary (Atkin & Goodman, 1984; Jacobson, 1989). The example given by Chaudhury et al. (2004) in their study of service providers in developing countries was followed such that absenteeism was defined as all types of leave in which employees are away from their task.

Absence rates based on all types of leave showed wide variations, ranging from 2% to 23% for contract teachers and from 11% to 23% for regular teachers. However, absence rates were consistently lower for contract as compared to regular teachers in all schools except one, where both groups of teachers had similar high absence rates for the selected months. Unusually high absence rates for all teachers for several months at one school were explained by medical leave taken by both regular and contract teachers (unpaid leave in the case of contract teachers). In this school, resignation of 2 contract teachers, who had been taking leave persistently before resigning, and retirement of 2 senior regular teachers in Month 6 led to a sudden decline in overall absence rates for that

month, because these teachers were no longer part of the school registers. Positions left vacant by contract teachers who resigned usually cannot be filled until new contract job openings are announced. However, a substantial presence of NGO sponsored teachers in the school made it easier to find substitutes for absent government teachers. Perhaps the presence of alternate teachers also created incentive for government teachers to take more leave if the principal allowed it.

Table 4.3 shows that based on a small sample of schools, contract teachers consistently took less leave compared to regular teachers, although absence levels and differences between them showed wide variations among schools and teachers, reflecting specific circumstances of particular schools and particular time periods. On average, absence among regular teachers was 14% for the 5 months, and absence rates for contract teachers were 9.4%, a difference of about 1 day per month, or 9 days per year, between attendance by regular and contract teachers.¹⁷

Overall, in assessing differences in absenteeism between contract and regular teachers—an important objective of the study addressed by the first research query—the three different methodological approaches gave fairly consistent results. The interview and attendance data indicated that regular and contract teachers generally took their maximum allowed leave. Less allowed leave for contract teachers meant that they would automatically be expected to take less leave, but the effect of contract teachers resigning

¹⁷ The number of school days in the year was estimated to be about 200 days, based on school attendance registers. The average difference between contract and regular teachers of 4.6% represents a difference of 9 days in the year.

also created a unique problem of prolonged vacancies, or absences, before positions were filled.¹⁸

In response to the open-ended question about absenteeism, teachers and principals did not consider the contract policy to have a prominent effect on absenteeism; only 2 said that contract teachers had lower absence rates. However, teacher seniority was perceived to be an important reason for absence, so when the proxy effect of teacher seniority was taken into account, regular teachers appeared to be more absent in general. Participants reported the main causes of absence were weak supervision, sickness, and teacher slackness or lack of motivation. Moreover, regular teachers were more likely than contract teachers to think of slackness as a problem; contract teachers were more likely than regular teachers to think of seniority as a cause for absence.

In response to semistructured questions that specifically asked about absence differences between contract and regular teachers, half of the respondents stated that there was no significant difference in absences. Of the 37% of respondents who said there was a difference in absence rates, the majority said contract teachers were absent less. The method using attendance registers to estimate absence rates showed contract teacher absences were lower by about 1 day per month compared to regular teachers. In sum, results from the three methods used to compare contract and regular teacher absenteeism indicated that contract teacher absences were perceived to be the same or moderately lower, but not higher, than regular teacher absences.

¹⁸ The effect of sudden resignation is reflected by School C in Month 6 in Table 4.3, when two contract teachers left the school after remaining absent in the previous months, without new teachers joining.

Research Query 2: What Are Teachers' and Principals' Perceptions of the Impact of the Contract Policy on Teacher Absenteeism?

Research Question 2 was intended to analyze principals' and teachers' perceptions of the contract policy to assess how incentives and sanctions affected absenteeism among teachers. Open-ended and semistructured interviews were related to specific incentives and sanctions in the contract policy influencing teacher absenteeism. A key objective was to get participants' views on which specific incentives or sanctions of the contract policy, in their opinion, had an effect on contract teacher absenteeism. These responses could be compared to the intended effects of the policy of improved teacher accountability and attendance as stated by policymakers to assess if these goals were achieved.

The open-ended question asked respondents to identify features of the contract policy they perceived to be important in influencing absence. The interviewees were encouraged to give their own views and were not prompted about specific incentives or sanctions.

Finding 2.1. *Teachers and principals perceived that low salaries and benefits, lack of job security, and the resignation option made contract teachers less motivated to attend and more likely to resign before their terms ended. Fewer leave benefits and less political patronage were features of the policy perceived to lower absenteeism among contract teachers. However, nonrenewal of contracts had mixed effects: Half of the respondents perceived it as increasing absences among contract teachers and half perceived it lowered absences.*

In response to the open-ended question about features of the contract policy that influenced absenteeism, 38 out of 40 participants provided specific responses. Eleven features of the contract policy were identified by the respondents as influencing absenteeism. The results are summarized in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4
Perceived Effect of Contract Features on Teacher Absence^a

Contract features influencing teacher absenteeism	Response frequency			
	Overall	Contract teachers (out of 16)	Regular teachers (out of 16)	Principals (out of 8)
Policy features perceived to discourage absence				
Fewer leave options	9	3 (19%)	1 (6%)	5 (62%)
Transparent hiring	8	2 (12%)	2 (12%)	4 (50%)
Policy features perceived to encourage absence				
Low salaries	30	14 (87%)	8(50%)	8 (100%)
Lack of benefits	28	14 (87%)	7(44%)	7 (87%)
Resignation option	23	9 (56%)	8(50%)	6 (75%)
Lack of job security/career path	20	8 (50%)	4(25%)	2 (25%)
Heavy workload	17	10 (62%)	5(31%)	2 (25%)
Lack of status/respect	17	8 (50%)	3(19%)	6 (75%)
Administrative procedures	11	9 (56%)	0	2 (25%)
Nontransfer feature	8	5 (31%)	1(6%)	2 (25%)
Policy features with mixed effects on absence				
Fear of contract nonrenewal (absence lower)	8	4 (25%)	1(6%)	3 (37%)
Fear of contract nonrenewal (absence higher)	9	7 (44%)	2(12%)	-

^aThe percentages reported in parentheses refer to responses represented by categories in each row as a proportion of categories represented in columns, so that column 2, row 2, represents 3 out of 16, or 19% of contract teachers mentioning fewer leave options.

Three out of 11 features of the contract policy were perceived to have a positive impact on teacher attendance: (a) transparent merit-based hiring procedures that made it less likely for teachers to use political connections to remain absent, (b) fewer leave options for contract teachers, and (c) the possibility of nonrenewal of contracts. The last feature had mixed results, with about half of the respondents perceiving that the threat of nonrenewal lowered absenteeism and created a positive incentive to attend, whereas the

other half respondents thought that the effect was a disincentive for contract teacher to attend.

More features of the contract policy were perceived to have a negative effect on teacher attendance than a positive one. Eight of 11 features of the contract policy were perceived to lower teacher attendance. As indicated in Table 4.4, low salaries and benefits, lack of job security, and the option to resign were perceived to be the main features of the policy that reduced motivation to attend. The effects of these features are discussed as follows:

Low salaries. The majority of the overall respondents, including almost all contract teachers and principals and half of regular teachers, perceived low contract salaries to negatively influence teacher attendance. A greater proportion of men compared to women identified salary as the reason for low motivation to attend and stay in the contract job (see Appendix E). Men specifically compared teacher contract jobs to a newly introduced contract traffic police job that had a starting salary three times higher than that of contract teachers, but only required a BA degree and 6 months training of new recruits. According to one male teacher in a large urban school,

I take at least one period a day because someone is absent. Even though we have a lot of teachers in the school, there are too many children. Even if we are not made regular and are not given pension, the salary package should be at least 15,000 rupees. I have talked to other teachers, and they also feel that if the pay was better, the contract is not an issue.

Lack of benefits. The frequency and distribution of responses citing lack of benefits were similar to those citing low salary, but contract teachers and men identified specific benefits that affected them in particular, more often than regular teachers and women. Female contract teachers mentioned the absence of paid maternity leave,

transportation allowance, and paid medical leave lowered their motivation to stay in the contract job, whereas male contract teachers most often mentioned lack of medical allowance and pension funds. Regular teachers generally favored contract teachers being given most of the benefits they themselves received.

Option to resign. Because contract teachers were allowed to resign at any time by giving 1 month notice, an adverse and unintended consequence of the contract policy revealed by the interview data was the effect of long-term vacancies left by contract teachers when they resigned before the school year ended. The majority of school principals and about equal numbers of regular and contract teachers stated that it was difficult to fill positions left vacant by contract teachers, as filling them depended on transferring regular teachers or waiting for the next round of new teacher hiring. Urban men were the most vocal about this problem; greater mobility and opportunities among males and urban teachers may have been a factor in their greater awareness of contract teacher resignations.

Table 4.4 demonstrates that even though the resignation option only applied to contract teachers, half of the tenured teachers and the majority of principals, especially at the high school level, perceived it to be a problem. Participants stated that vacancies created greater pressure for principals and regular teachers to prepare students for high school board exams. As one urban school principal explained,

There are negative and positive effects of the contract policy. Contract teachers work well because they work under stricter rules and cannot take a lot of leave. But a negative effect is that if they get a better job or find a new job opening, they just leave the job. For instance, if there is a regular teacher who wants to move to a school closer to where they live, they have to apply for a transfer, but contract teachers just resign immediately if they get a better job. They also sometimes get a job outside education and leave in the middle of the academic session. In my previous school, there was a contract teacher who got a job in a pharmacy and I

had to teach science to the senior students since it was the end of the academic session and exams were coming up.

A similar observation was made by a regular teacher:

If I were a head of school, I would prefer regular teachers to contract teachers since the contract teacher may leave the school voluntarily, and then the school is left without teachers. There is great uncertainty. Otherwise, the contract teacher attendance and teaching is good, although their pay is very low.

Contract nonrenewal. Half of the respondents, mostly contract teachers, said that the threat of contract nonrenewal lowered their motivation to attend and stay in the job because it created uncertainty and there were no clear evaluation systems to implement the nonrenewal policy effectively. Most of these respondents also believed that contract teachers should be regularized. According to one regular teacher, it was like wanting stale bread for contract teachers while he enjoyed cake. Not being tenured was also perceived to prevent contract teachers from being fully committed to their job and supportive of other staff. According to one contract teacher:

If contract teachers got a higher salary, they would not have to look elsewhere and it would create a better atmosphere for teaching. It is not necessary to have the fear of losing the contract to do a better job and to lower absence of teachers.

Lack of status/respect. Half of the contract teachers, one fourth of regular teachers and three fourths of principals said that the lack of respect associated with the contract position contributed to low morale among contract teachers and was a disincentive to attend.¹⁹

Heavy workload. Half of the respondents, mainly contract teachers, complained about contract teachers being given a heavier workload than regular teachers. Contract

¹⁹ A memo recorded during a field visit to the district education office conveyed a similar sentiment: An administrative officer stated that contract teachers were known as the “the unfortunates.”

teachers said it was difficult to refuse requests by the principal to take on other classes due to absent regular teachers and other jobs related to admission processes and paperwork. A contract teacher commented that contract teachers were given extra work during student admissions: “Teachers get 10 days duty each, but the contract teachers had to do more, like preparing admissions forms, testing, and the results. The permanent regular teachers were not given this work.”

Cumbersome administrative procedures. Contract teachers stated that contract renewal procedures were frustrating experiences that lowered motivation to attend and provoked resignation among contract teachers. One contract teacher complained of having to go through medical tests at her own expense to renew her contract at the end of 5 years. Contract teachers also spoke of administrative processes, like receiving paychecks, to be cumbersome experiences. Whereas regular teachers’ salaries, adjustments during leave, and allowances were part of an existing system, these procedures had not been streamlined for contract teachers. According to one teacher, “the procedure for contract renewal is cumbersome; this is all a way for the clerks to make money and bother teachers.” Another contract teacher explained,

The whole year we got the salary 2 months late. Going to the district office is complicated. Just to get the check. Now they are taking the forms to deposit directly in the bank. Regular teachers get their salaries by the third or the fourth of the month. We get it late, now it’s around the 15th, after a lot of bother.

Nontransfer feature. About one fourth of all respondents mentioned site-specific hiring and no option to transfer as hindrances to contract teachers’ motivation to attend. Teachers were allowed to cite their preferred location on the application forms but were given their first choice according to their academic merit. One teacher in a rural school, who had to commute for at least 1 hour to reach school, said that he planned to complete

his masters' degree to become eligible for another job closer to his residence. Teachers also mentioned that the nontransfer feature had resulted in hiring proportionally more contract teachers in rural areas:

In rural schools, there are more contract teachers. There is a lot of competition for schools in the city, so many of the newer appointments are in rural areas. Also, there are vacancies in the rural areas because fewer teachers want to come here. The closer schools, regular teachers get themselves transferred there. Here, there are more vacancies.

The combined effects of features of the policy were also perceived to be important. For instance, several respondents who mentioned salary to be an important factor also cited other factors such as low benefits, workload, and job insecurity in various combinations. When respondents said that these factors interacted or worked together to influence absenteeism, the combined effect was coded and included in the findings. Appendix G shows an example of the coding process.

Finding 2.2. *Combined effects of low salary, low benefits, and job insecurity, along with heavy workloads and low status, were perceived to be the main reasons for low motivation to attend among contract teachers. Nontransfer options combined with low salary and job insecurity were often perceived to hasten resignations by contract teachers.*

Although individual effects of particular contract policy features were perceived to influence absenteeism, respondents also mentioned two or more factors to have combined or interacting influences on teacher absenteeism. Relying on key patterns mentioned in the interviews, combined effects of factors that reinforced the main factor influencing absenteeism were analyzed (see Table 4.5).

Table 4.5
Perceived Combined Influences of Contract Features on Absenteeism

Factor interactions	Number of respondents			
	Overall	Contract	Regular	Principal
Effect of interactions perceived to increase absence				
Low salary & low benefits	18	10	5	3
Low salary & workload, job insecurity, lack of respect	3	2	-	1
Resignation & low salaries, lack of benefits	10	5	2	3
Resignation & job insecurity, workload	3	2	-	1
Resignation & nontransfer, low salaries	5	2	1	2
Lack of respect & low salaries, low benefits	8	5	2	1
Lack of respect & job insecurity	2	2	-	-
Lack of respect & administrative procedures, workload	2	2	-	-
Effect of interactions perceived to lower absence				
Contract nonrenewal & fewer leave options	2	1	-	1
Interaction effect of changes in factors expected to lower absenteeism				
Contract nonrenewal & higher salaries, more benefits	8	4	1	3
Contract nonrenewal & evaluation system	3	2	-	1

Interactions among low salary, low benefits, and other factors. A majority of respondents who mentioned inadequate salaries as a reason for higher absenteeism perceived this effect was exacerbated when combined with low benefits. Other features of the policy described as having combined effects with low salaries were heavy workload, job insecurity, and/or lack of respect. Out of 30 respondents who spoke of salary as a factor in low contract teacher attendance, 18 spoke of a combined effect with lack of other allowances given to regular teachers (see Table 4.5). As one contract teacher stated, “regular teachers have increases in salary according to inflation announced in the budget;

they also have medical, conveyance and housing allowance—we don't really know what they get, but we don't get any of these. They also have retirement benefits.”

Two teachers and one principal stated that the effect of low salary was exacerbated by the effect of heavy work load, job insecurity, and lack of respect in encouraging absenteeism. One contract teacher stated,

I would like to tell you about my dissatisfaction with the contract position. I don't mind working, but I feel that there should be an adequate reward for one's job. There is a big salary difference between contract and regular teachers, but the work is the same. Three of us came in this batch initially as contract teachers, but two left after a year and a half. The salary is very low, but we do the same, in fact, extra work compared to regular teachers. Regular teachers know they cannot be fired, so they are less bothered about taking on some of the extra work. Since we are not permanent, the perception is that if we want to keep our jobs, we will be willing to take on the extra work. So, if a regular teacher wants to go on leave, we have to take their class; but it is harder for us to go on leave and for them to take our class. The low salary gives contract teachers low status, and they are treated disrespectfully at the district education office.

Interactions between the resignation feature and other factors. A majority of respondents thought that the resignation option, an unintended feature of the contract policy, was reinforced by its combined effect with other factors such as low salaries, low benefits, and the inability to transfer to other teaching positions. Participants cited important interactions among factors that had a collective effect in explaining contract teacher resignation. One contract teacher mentioned the interaction effect of low salaries and low benefits:

There is no clear-cut policy regarding contract teachers who have been here for 5 years; about 70% are dissatisfied. The salary and benefit package is too low. So, they leave the job. Many of them resigned and have applied for the traffic warden position.

Of the teachers that mentioned resignation as an outcome of the contract policy, some mentioned that low salaries and not being able to transfer to other locations or to

other teaching positions that opened up were factors that jointly influenced the decision to resign. A contract teacher explained that “teachers often have to move when they get married, because they can’t transfer; they leave the job and wait for a new opening closer to where they live.”

Interactions between lack of respect and other factors. Three sets of factors: low salaries and benefits, job insecurity, and administrative procedures and workload had important combined effects with lack of respect to lower teachers’ motivation to attend. Teachers and principals stated that because of their low pay, meager benefits, and the uncertainty associated with the contract job, contract teachers had a lower status among their tenured peers and the district education staff. A contract teacher expressed a major issue of self-respect among contract teachers; they felt lower in status compared to regular teachers because their jobs were not secure and they “get snubbed by officials in the education department.”

Another teacher described how contract teachers’ low status was reinforced by having to deal with staff at the district office and the disrespectful treatment they received when they went to the office to pick up their salary checks or for other administrative reasons:

Even for the salary, this time, I had to go to the district office. They misbehaved with us so much. He asked if I had brought my original identification card, and I said I had a copy with the principal’s signature, and he threw it back. So, even if we have a low salary and we are in need, we are still teachers and should have some stature. I felt so hurt and even told him that he did not have any manners.

Finding 2.3. *The nonrenewal feature of the policy was perceived by some teachers to have helped to keep teacher absenteeism in check. They indicated that they would want to keep this feature if it were possible to combine it with better pay, some benefits, and a better evaluation system.*

Respondents spoke about the interaction of the nonrenewal factor with other factors in two main contexts: first, as a feature of the contract policy that combined with other factors to increase absenteeism, and second, as a feature of the contact policy that could hypothetically have a positive effect on improving attendance among teachers if combined with other features. About 20% of respondents (25% of contract teachers, 6% of regular teachers, and 37% of principals) perceived that the nonrenewal feature could have a positive impact on reducing teacher absenteeism if salaries and benefits could be improved. Principals, in particular, expressed that they needed more checks to make teachers accountable, but at the same time, they stated that some of the contract conditions were unfair. As one principal explained,

Our suggestion would be to continue to have the sword of the contract dangle above the teachers but to improve the salary package so they can work with satisfaction. A salary increase has been proposed, so, hopefully, it will be better in the near future.

A couple of teachers who felt that absences were reduced due to the contract terms mentioned that despite the feature of nonrenewal and dismissal, there had been very few cases of contract teachers being fired or their contracts not being renewed. Three mentioned that there had not been many cases of dismissal or of contract nonrenewal for poor attendance and attributed this to lack of evaluation systems. One teacher explained how the contract nonrenewal feature could be more effective in improving attendance if there was a clearer evaluation system:

Teachers should be checked more for attendance, but we don't have a system of evaluation to check teachers. Regular teachers know they won't lose their jobs. Attendance is better if you have a little fear that if you don't work well, you could lose your job. The job should probably remain on a contract basis. The student should be treated as the product, and the contract should be renewed if students are performing satisfactorily. Otherwise, the teacher should be dismissed. I have never actually heard of any teacher being dismissed because of poor performance.

Another contract teacher explained that because the criteria for evaluating contract performance and attendance were not clear and not necessarily fair to teachers, therefore, it may be better to regularize teachers:

We are also not sure what the renewal depends on after 5 years. If they don't need contract teachers, they could just dismiss us. The terms of our contract state that we can be dismissed at any time, and the contract can be ended without any reason. Although this has not happened to any contract teachers I know, it creates uncertainty. The performance criterion for contract renewal includes increases in children's enrollments, lower drop-outs, teacher regularity, not taking unnecessary leave, and working to the best of our capacities. Although there is pressure to do these things, there is less professional understanding of how education can be improved. For instance, children may not be doing well because of socioeconomic issues in the local area. So, these kinds of things are not addressed. Contract teachers should be made regular; their performance would improve a lot.

Overall, in responding to incentives and features of the contract policy that influenced absenteeism, poor salary and benefits and job insecurity were considered to be the main reasons for low motivation to attend among contract teachers. Moreover, features of resignation and nontransfer options for contract teachers combined with a low salary package and job insecurity created the unintended outcome of contract teachers' untimely resignations. These teachers seemed to be in constant search for better jobs. Because contract teachers could resign by giving a month's notice, schools often found themselves without teachers for long periods.

The sanction of nonrenewal, fewer leave benefits, and less political patronage were reported to force contract teachers to attend relatively more regularly. At the same time, it was perceived, especially by contract teachers, that if salaries and job satisfaction remained low and benefits remained inadequate, contract teachers would continue to be less efficient and would leave for better jobs. Because there was a scarcity of jobs in the economy compared to the supply of university graduates, several candidates applied for and took up the contract job despite the low salary. However, if contract teachers were able to find better paying jobs commensurate with their higher qualifications, they could opt to resign from the job. Therefore, teachers spoke of having to weigh the shortcomings of the contract job with other available job opportunities.

Research Query 3: What Are Teachers' and Principals' Perceptions of the Impact of Specific School and Individual Teacher Characteristics on Teacher Absenteeism?

The objective of Research Query 3 was to follow up on the first two research questions and probe further into the specific personal and school-related factors perceived to affect teacher absenteeism and whether these factors affected regular and contract teachers differently. In this section, the discussion is based on semistructured interviews. Factors perceived to influence teacher absenteeism were gathered from the literature and the analytical framework discussed in chapters 2 and 3. School-related factors included supervision and the work environment (e.g., student background and government policies). Personal teacher characteristics included teacher education, teaching experience, gender, family responsibilities, and distance from work. Responses to the open-ended question on absenteeism reported in Table 4.3 (presented in the discussion of Research Query 1) are referred to for purposes of triangulation.

The objective of conducting the semistructured interviews was to probe further into the main causes of low motivation and other reasons for absence among contract and regular teachers. An important overarching response to the open-ended question on the causes of absence reported in Table 4.1 was the perception that a teacher's nature or conscience was a factor in teacher absenteeism. A habit of slackness or a lack of conscience among teachers was perceived to be an important factor in the absence of others by 30% of respondents and especially among regular teachers. Therefore, spontaneous responses about absenteeism indicated a low motivation to attend among teachers and needed to be explained further through specific follow-up questions.

In the first set of questions, participants were asked how teachers were supervised in their school and which supervision system helped to lower teacher absenteeism. Three types of supervision were identified: The first was by the principal at the school level. The second was carried out by the district administration office, headed by the EDO, accountable to the mayor or nazim, and reporting to the Secretary of Education. School visits were conducted mainly by staff below the EDO, consisting of male and female DOs, who in turn were assisted by deputy district officers (DDOs) and AEOs, although there had been some instances of surprise visits by the EDO and nazim. The third type of supervision was carried out under a separate provincial-level chief ministers' program. In this program, monitoring teams consisting of retired army officers conducted unannounced monthly school visits and filled a standard questionnaire to record student attendance, teacher attendance, and the condition of school facilities at the time of the visit.

Regarding community level efforts, involvement of school management committees (SMCs) and parent councils was limited to funding small projects, such as building a gate or a wall in schools. None of the respondents stated that parents or communities played a role in monitoring teacher attendance. Twenty-nine out of 40 respondents perceived one or more forms of supervision to have a positive effect on lowering absenteeism. Eight (5 regular and 3 contract teachers) out of 40 respondents acknowledged that supervision existed but that it did not make a difference in lowering absenteeism among teachers either because the supervision was ineffective or because teachers who had a habit of being absent would still get away with it. Three out of 40 respondents did not make a clear or direct comment. The perceived factors influencing supervision on teacher absenteeism are given in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6
Supervision Factors Perceived to Lower Teacher Absenteeism

Effect of supervision factors	Number of responses			
	Overall	Contract teachers	Regular teachers	School principals
No difference	8	3	5	-
Supervision factors perceived to lower teacher absenteeism				
Effect of school principal	21	11	7	3
Effect of monitoring team	16	4	7	5
Effect of district staff	10	4	2	4
Evaluation system	5	3	2	-
Supervision factors perceived to increase absenteeism				
Effect of monitoring team	2	2	-	-
Effect of district staff	1	1	-	-

Finding 3.1. *Of the three supervision systems identified, the principal's role was perceived, especially by contract teachers, to be the most effective form of supervision for lowering absenteeism. Provincial government monitoring teams and district officials were considered relatively less effective.*

As shown in Table 4.6, three types of supervision (principal at the school level, district-level staff, and provincial-level monitoring teams) were identified. The role of the school principal, mentioned by 21 respondents overall, was perceived, especially by contract teachers, to be the most relevant form of supervision for lowering absenteeism, followed by supervision by monitoring teams and visits by the district office officials.

The principal was responsible for sanctioning casual leave, the only type of leave afforded to contract teachers. Even though all teachers are entitled to 25 casual leaves in the year, it was up to the principal to influence them to take less. Regular teachers also needed to get their casual leave sanctioned by the principal but, in addition, were eligible for earned leave, which was approved by the district office after the principal's recommendation. Regular teachers' applications for transfer depended on teachers' service records and principals and supervisors' approval. Therefore, principals had an important role in determining leave for all teachers but had more direct control over supervising contract teachers.

Interviews revealed the importance of specific principals' management styles and initiatives, the school context, and teachers' backgrounds in determining the pattern of teacher attendance. For instance, a teacher stated that "the head has a lot of control over the discipline of the school, and if he is disciplined, the staff is also regular." Another teacher said that the principal had initiated specific measures in the school such as cleanliness and the fact that students wore clean uniforms, and these were important reasons for his coming to school.

Finding 3.2. *Monitoring teams were perceived by regular teachers and principals to be more effective in checking teacher absenteeism, as compared to district staff.*

Monitoring teams were thought to have a positive influence on teacher attendance, mainly because they visited the schools more often. A tenured teacher indicated that “the monitoring cell run by army officers has changed the system and it has become more regular” and that “in the last 3–4 years the government had become stricter with schools.” Similarly, in an urban school the principal mentioned: “The DO has come only once. The monitoring people come more regularly. The habitual absentees become a little more alert when they come.” A rural school principal stated that “the government has started checking the schools much more than they used to; now monitoring teams come so often to our school that nobody wants to spoil their attendance record.”

In general, district officials were perceived to have less influence on curbing teacher absenteeism compared to supervision by monitoring teams. The extent and type of supervision by district staff varied between schools, depending on initiatives taken by principals as well as district officers. In one school, a majority of teachers and the principal affirmed the support of the DO and AEO in bringing positive changes to the school’s infrastructure, encouraging NGO involvement, and improving teacher attendance.

However, as shown in Table 4.6, external supervision by monitoring teams and district staff was also perceived to have adverse effects on teacher attendance. Three contract teachers suggested that a more professional approach toward supervision would have a better effect on teacher attendance:

The monitoring team people sometimes humiliate the teachers, and this can have a negative effect when teachers get tense. Teachers unions have objected that the monitoring team should be educators and not army personnel.

Finding 3.3. *The principal's skills and managerial style combined with the school's contextual factors and teacher preferences are perceived to shape patterns of teacher attendance most. Principals with consistent teacher evaluation methods and who are able to counter political patronage were perceived to supervise teacher attendance better.*

Respondents also felt that there were important combined effects of supervisory factors on absenteeism. For instance, participants stated that school principals were more effective in curbing absentee behavior among teachers when they could use their authority to take action against delinquent teachers or when they had some sort of teacher evaluation system. Table 4.7 displays the main interaction effects among supervision factors influencing teacher absenteeism. Factor interactions are presented in the left column, organized by main supervision factor followed by interacting factors.

Table 4.7
Combined Influences of Supervision Effects on Teacher Absenteeism

Factor interactions	Number of responses			
	Overall	Contract teacher	Regular teacher	Principal
School principal & use of authority	5	0	2	3
School principal & evaluation system	4	1	3	0
Monitoring teams & evaluation	2	1	1	0
District office & evaluation	1	0	0	1
School principal & monitoring & district staff	2	1	0	1

Combined influences of supervision factors can be summarized as follows:

The dual impact of school principal supervision and principal's use of authority.

Five, or 21%, of respondents who considered principals' supervision to be important in checking teacher absenteeism perceived that principals were effective when they exercised authority or skills to counter political patronage. The practice of appointing teachers or giving them other concessions as a favor for political alignments was one of the reasons for introducing the contract teacher policy. Several teachers indicated that it was an ongoing challenge for principals to resist the use of political influence by some teachers, especially those hired on tenure, to get leave extended or sanctioned. A regular teacher gave an example of how one school principal was able to take action when a regular teacher persisted in taking unsanctioned leave:

There are many decisions headmasters can make if they know their powers. One teacher here had some issues with the law and was absent for a long time. The principal, on his own initiative, stopped the teacher's pay and had him removed from the school. This was all at the school level.

In another school, the principal explained the difficulty and diplomacy with which unauthorized leave requests had to be accommodated when teachers' political influence was strong:

To lower teacher absenteeism, political influence has to stop. The head of the school should be given full authority to give leave according to his judgment since he understands the system. Among my staff, there are a few teachers who create a problem. They are habitual absentees and necessarily apply for leave after every 2–3 months. They are doing something else, business or something. They do not take this job seriously and, based on political influence, get a salary but also do other activities. It becomes difficult for principals who have to give in to political pressure and give leave to the habitual illegitimate leave-taker. When other teachers need leave, they protest that so-and-so got it and why can't they? So, in these situations, I have to operate the system with a lot of diplomacy. I try to give a little so I can get my way also.

The dual impact of principal supervision and managerial approaches. One contract and 3 regular teachers spoke about principal supervision being more effective when principals used an evaluation system for teachers. A contract teacher in a boys' school said, "In our school, (teacher) absence is low because the principal has a good supervision and planning system." In this school, the principal had rules for teachers and had tied salary increases to students' exam results. This had an indirect effect of putting greater pressure on teachers to attend school more regularly, as slackness in teachers' attendance would affect their performance. A few other school principals had different rules or management styles that depended on their own initiative as well as how much authority they could exercise in implementing supervision systems.

The combined impact of supervision by principal, monitoring teams, and district administration. Two respondents from the same school perceived that the three types of supervision had a combined influence in lowering absenteeism. According to a contract teacher, principals' effectiveness in monitoring teacher attendance was influenced by supervision by "external staff like the nazim, the education secretary, the EDO, and the monitoring unit." A regular teacher in the same school perceived all three systems of supervision worked in combination to lower teacher absence and thought that it was important to have checks and balances.

For triangulation purposes, these results were compared with open-ended responses on teacher absence reported in Table 4.1. The role of supervision in lowering absenteeism came up spontaneously in the open-ended response and the roles of the school principal especially, as well as external supervision mechanisms, were highlighted. In response to the open-ended question, most of the respondents who did not

perceive absenteeism to be a serious problem also said that in their school, the principal was less lenient and external supervision, more effective.

In summary, the interview data on the effect of supervision on teacher absenteeism suggested that the role of the principal was perceived to be the most effective form of supervision for lowering absenteeism, especially according to contract teachers. Provincial government monitoring teams were perceived to play an important role in improving teacher attendance, mostly by principals and regular teachers, due to their frequency of visits. DEO supervision showed a strong impact in a couple of schools where there was close cooperation between the district team and school staff, but was considered to be less effective overall.

Teachers and principals perceived principals' skillful dealing with pressures related to political connections to be a necessary part of effective supervision of teacher attendance. School principals using consistent teacher evaluation methods were also considered better supervisors of teacher attendance. Parental and community supervision were not mentioned as playing a role in improving teacher attendance.

Finding 3.4. *Among work environment factors, weak student academic performance and students' socioeconomic background were perceived to be the most prominent factors contributing to lower motivation among teachers, followed by the impact of inconsistent government policies, poor infrastructure, and teacher collegiality. Combined effects of student background and inconsistent government policy were perceived to be especially important in lowering motivation to attend among contract teachers in girls' schools.*

Within school-related factors leading to teacher absence, respondents were asked about aspects of the work environment that promoted absenteeism among teachers. Thirty-eight out of 40 participants, or 95%, responded to the question. Findings from the survey, based on frequency and importance of responses as revealed by the teachers and school principals, were grouped by themes. Based on 115 responses, 14 main factors were identified by teachers and principals as work environment factors perceived to influence teacher absenteeism. These 14 factors were organized into four main categories (student-related factors, government policies, infrastructure facilities, and teacher collegiality) of work environment factors related to absenteeism. Details are presented in Table 4.8.

The majority of responses (83%) of all 115 responses fell into two overall categories: student-related factors and government policy factors. Participants reported that student-related factors influenced teacher absenteeism most, followed by government policy, facilities and infrastructure, and teacher collegiality. Details of these findings are grouped into four major categories of factors:

Table 4.8
Job Environment Factors Perceived to Increase Teacher Absenteeism^a

Work environment factors	Responses			
	Overall (out of 115)	Contract teachers (out of 16)	Regular teachers (out of 16)	Principals (out of 8)
Student-related factors				
Weak academic base	24	14 (87%)	6 (37%)	4 (50%)
Parental poverty	23	11 (69%)	8 (50%)	4 (50%)
Low student attendance	7	3 (19%)	1 (6%)	3 (37%)
Government policy				
Large class size	10	6 (37%)	4 (25%)	-
School calendar	7	3 (19%)	4 (25%)	-
Late textbook delivery	7	4 (25%)	3 (19%)	-
Corruption	6	3 (19%)	2 (12%)	1 (12%)
Over-age students	5	2 (12%)	1 (6%)	2 (25%)
Automatic student promotion	4	2 (12%)	2 (12%)	-
NGO involvement	3 ^b	3 (18%)	-	-
Poor facilities and infrastructure				
Inadequate furniture/buildings	8	3 (19%)	3 (19%)	2 (25%)
Absence of security guard	3	0	1 (6%)	2 (25%)
Teacher collegiality				
Lack of respect	5	4 (25%)	1 (6%)	-
Teacher relationships	3 ^b	3 (19%)	-	-
Total number of responses	115	62	36	17

^aThe total number of work-related factors identified by 38 respondents are given in column 1. The numbers in column 2, 3, and 4 add up to the total in column 1. The percentages reported in parentheses refer to each category total reported in row 1 (i.e., 87% in the second column and first row refers to 14 out of 16 contract teachers who perceived weak academic base to be an important factor).

^bTwo out of 3 responses of NGO involvement and 1 response out of 3 for teacher collegiality perceived these factors to lower absenteeism

Student factors. Almost half the responses cited students' weak academic foundation and parents' low socioeconomic background to be primary factors in teachers' low motivation to attend. Specifically, the interview data indicated the following patterns of perceptions:

Students' weak academic base. A majority of contract (87% compared to 37% of regular teachers) and female teachers (77% compared to 35% of male teachers)²⁰ voiced frustration with students' inadequate academic preparation and cited it as a reason for absenteeism among teachers. Government schools cannot be selective by law and must admit all students who apply, including children of transient laborers who move back and forth from village to city. Consequently, there was wide variation in the ages and academic backgrounds of admitted students. In many schools, the bulk of teaching in demanding subjects such as mathematics, science, and English was being assigned to contract teachers because they had the highest and most recent educational qualifications. However, contract teachers felt that their job was more about disciplining children of diverse ages and competence levels than teaching or learning.

The lack of basic academic preparation was especially felt in girls' schools and among middle and high school teachers who had to deal with children entering higher grades from other schools. As one high school science teacher stated,

Since the children come here in Class 6, their base is already weak. Even in Urdu, they sometimes don't even know the phonetic sounds. So, the sixth grade teachers have to handle that and it takes two years for them to settle down and reach some standard by Class 8.

The teacher continued to add that teachers had to work hard to meet different learning needs in the classroom and had to decide whether to give instructions in basics to reach the majority of students or whether to carry on with the correct academic level, which would benefit fewer students. A rural schoolteacher admitted that he was looking for a better job:

²⁰ Appendix D shows the breakdown of responses for work environment factors by men and women.

If the results were better and the children responded more, there would be motivation to continue as a teacher. Half the children don't have basic skills in English and Math.

Parents' socioeconomic background. Parents' poverty and lack of involvement in their children's education was stated to be as important as students' weak academic base to creating frustration and dissatisfaction with the teaching job, especially among contract teachers. Teachers and principals felt that due to a cycle of poverty and low expectations, the majority of parents did not reinforce the importance of academics to their children.

A contract teacher in a large inner-city high school felt that because parents were mostly vendors and tradesmen, such as cobblers, their own lack of education led to low expectations for their children. A regular teacher mentioned that parents were mainly concerned with short-term survival and could not see the long-term benefits of educating their children. In a rural school, the students had to help with shelling peas and growing vegetables for sale. Older girls also helped their parents with the wheat harvest. In another village, primary school girls were involved in an income-earning project with their mothers.

Teachers often found it frustrating that students would start doing their homework in school because they did not have time at home. One contract teacher explained that the school was about to take disciplinary action against two girls who always came late, but administrators changed their minds after realizing that there were genuine reasons:

We scolded them. But one of the girls who is only in Class 3 said that her mother expected her to tend the animals before coming to school. So, we thought, at least her mother sends her to school and we know the child wants to come; many parents are so poor they need their girls to work at home, but try to somehow send them to school to get at least some education.

Low student attendance. Teacher absence was perceived to be influenced by low student attendance and vice versa. An urban high school principal felt that students were often absent after religious holidays due to extended visits to relatives and expecting this, teachers also tended to be absent. A contract teacher singled out low student attendance as one of the most frustrating aspects of her job:

I feel that if your aim is clear, it does not matter if it is hot or cold, the work can be done. One thing that bothers me is the students' attendance, especially after *eid* holidays. They still were not coming back three days after school had reopened. I feel colleagues have to get together and motivate students to attend.

Government policy. Inconsistent government policies were cited as a reason teachers did not take their job seriously. One contract teacher illustrated this as follows:

In government schools, the government's own policy presents the most problems. Sometimes there are exams in the middle school; sometimes there are no exams. Sometimes children are promoted without the exam taking place. Sometimes the books don't reach on time. That way the children are also less interested in their work, and teachers feel constrained as the system does not work according to schedule. We have only filled the shortage of books now and were not able to give the students any homework during the holidays. So, in a way, 5 months were lost without the children learning anything. Parents then tend to send their children to private schools when they see this.

Respondents identified seven main factors related to the effect of government policy on teacher absenteeism (see Table 4.8).

Large class size. Ten respondents across the distribution of schools by gender and location found large class size to be a problem. A high school science contract teacher said he had to teach over 100 boys in Class 9 and 70 boys in Class 10, and he found it difficult to control them and make them study. Three teachers coping with large classes mentioned that about 30–40 students per class would be manageable.

School calendar. Respondents said that the new policy of starting the school year in August rather than April contributed to low teacher motivation to attend. Teachers and principals felt that the old system was beneficial for strengthening students' academic foundation because teachers received new textbooks before the summer holidays and could come prepared after the 3-month vacation. Moreover, during the end of the school year, exams coincided with hot weather and harvest activities, making it difficult for students and teachers to concentrate on their work. According to one teacher,

May is in the harvesting season, and it is also very hot, and we usually don't have electricity, but final exams are held at this time. The old system set up by the British was better suited to our climate since exams were held in the good weather.

Late textbook delivery. With classes starting in August, textbooks were sometimes not delivered until late September or October, resulting in students spending almost 5 months without studying. Two teachers mentioned that principals had taken the initiative to pick up the textbooks from government offices to ensure they were available in time for the beginning of the school year.

Automatic student promotion. Teachers complained that a recent incident of automatic promotion of students, due to disclosure of the exam papers, had created dissatisfaction and resentment in the work environment and lowered teachers' motivation to attend. A regular teacher in an urban school felt strongly that the promotion of students without forcing them to retake the exam set a bad precedent, as it confused the concept of reward and punishment among students. She said teachers felt it was a disservice to children to promote them without addressing deficiencies in their academic foundation, which needed to be remedied before moving them on to the higher grades.

Corruption. Three regular teachers, two contract teachers, and one principal mentioned corruption as a reason for low motivation among teachers to attend. Regular teachers in general had more dealings with the Education Department offices in order to get their leave sanctioned or to get transfers. An urban schoolteacher said her friend had to bribe someone in the Education Department simply to have her case presented. A regular teacher who had requested a transfer said the clerk asked him for a specific amount of money, but luckily, he had a contact in the office that helped him out. He said clerks expected favors even if it meant getting an application signed. A school principal described how teachers appointed through political favors got away with taking unsanctioned leave:

The ones with political influence get away with it. Other teachers resent it. It becomes difficult for the principals who have to give in to political pressure and give leave to the habitual leave-taker.

Contract teachers' dealings with the Education Department were related to getting their salary bills paid, in case they had taken leave without pay. ("If you need to get your bill made, sometimes the clerks won't do your job if you don't give them favors"). Contract teachers also complained of staff in the district education office making them go through prolonged medical check-ups and paperwork for procedures related to contract renewal in 2007, when the first batch of teacher contracts became eligible for renewal.

Over-age students. Although teachers did not want the government policy of admitting over-age students to be revoked, they felt that they were not given any support to handle the variation in ages and competence levels. A regular teacher with more than 20 years of experience said that the government's policy to admit all children who applied made teaching difficult for even the most dedicated teachers. In one case, an 11-

year-old girl was admitted to Grade 1 because the only other option for her was to clean houses with her mother and lose out on the opportunity to get an education. In a boys' high school, a teacher complained that taking in older boys in the lower grades was causing disciplinary problems.

School facilities. More contract teachers than regular ones and more women than men teachers said that poor physical facilities at the school contributed to low motivation and low attendance on the job.

Inadequate infrastructure facilities and lack of maintenance. Fewer classrooms led to overcrowding and merging grade levels, which made teaching and disciplining students difficult, and contributed to low motivation to attend among teachers. A contract teacher teaching high school science and mathematics complained that classrooms were so small, hot, and stuffy that it was impossible to teach and that the teachers were waiting for construction funds to improve facilities. Another contract teacher complained that she did not feel like staying in the school because “the bathrooms are no good. In the summer, the water stops at 10:00 a.m. Classrooms are damaged and the room is too big for only one fan.”

In another urban school, the principal complained that there were only two bathrooms for 600 children, and the teachers' toilets needed repairs. School facilities were not necessarily superior in better-off neighborhoods. For instance, a spacious school in one of the city's affluent areas had worse facilities compared to a school with the same number of students in a very poor area of the city. In the school with better infrastructure, the principal had taken the initiative to improve facilities by actively raising funds from the community and the government.

Teacher collegiality. In larger schools, contract teachers saw themselves as a distinct group and generally felt that although their higher educational qualifications were considered an asset by their colleagues, their status was lower than regular teachers' due to lower salary and uncertainty of contract.

Teacher competition and cooperation. Contract teachers, in general, felt that there was cooperation among teachers, but some (especially male contract teachers in large urban high schools, where there is pressure to achieve good results on board exams) complained of tension between contract and regular teachers due to the wide gap in educational qualifications and salary levels between the two groups. In large urban schools, contract teachers tended to support each other as a group and said they had to be careful not to compete with regular teachers. They felt that they were given a bigger workload because of their up-to-date academic skills and their weaker bargaining position to refuse the extra work. As one contract teacher explained,

Contract teachers' qualifications are better than those of regular teachers, and they can make a difference in students' results. But regular teachers get jealous when contract teachers are praised for excellence by the authorities. So, contract teachers don't want to get into a competition, since their status is seen as temporary and they can be fired at any time.

Lack of respect for teachers. Lack of respect was repeatedly stated as a factor in lowering motivation to attend when teachers were asked about relations among teachers. Contract status had a negative effect on teacher collegiality in that contract teachers sometimes were not perceived by regular teachers as professional equals.

Interactions between work environment factors reinforced influences on teacher absenteeism. Out of those respondents who mentioned specific factors in the work environment to influence absenteeism (see Table 4.8); some mentioned these factors

worked in collaboration with other factors in the work environment. These interactions are shown in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9
Combined Effects of Work Environment Factors on Absenteeism

Factor interactions	Total responses	Contract	Regular	Principal
Weak academic base & parental poverty	9	6	2	1
Weak academics & school calendar and textbook delivery	5	2	2	1
Weak academic base & parental poverty and student attendance	3	2	0	1
Weak academics & overage children	3	1	2	0
Weak academics & class size	2	1	1	0
School infrastructure & lack of security guard	3	1	1	1

Factor interactions, or combined factor effects, in Table 4.9 are reported as the proportion of responses associated with specific interactions identified by teachers and principals.²¹ These interactions are discussed as follows:

Interaction between weak academic base and parents' poverty. Thirty-seven percent of the 24 respondents who mentioned weak academic base also perceived it to be associated with parents' poverty. Poverty and illiteracy among parents influenced their lack of involvement in children's studies, because it was difficult for them to visualize the advantages of the education their children were receiving in public schools. Poorer parents also needed their children's help with income-generating work and household chores, which also led to low student attendance. One principal complained that

²¹ For instance, in the first row of Table 4-9, of 24 respondents mentioned students' weak academic base (see Table 4-8) as a work environment factor affecting absenteeism, 9 (37%) stated that parental poverty interacted with it to reinforce the effect on teacher absenteeism.

The problem is with the children. They don't understand anything. I talked to their mothers also. You know, there is a lot of poverty here. The mothers are more concerned with making the girls work on embroidery projects when they get home, and the students don't open their book bags. When I called the mothers to explain to them, they say, we are illiterate. I told them, all you need to do is tell the children to do their work for the next day. ... They feel the 5–7 hours the children are in school is enough time for studies. They feel it's time away from earning something.

Interaction between student academic preparation and government policy. Of the teachers who mentioned weak academic base as a reason for teacher absenteeism, 10 (42%) mentioned specific government policies that reinforced the effect of weak student preparation on encouraging teacher absenteeism. A regular teacher indicated that the policy of taking in over-age children and the lack of remedial classes, combined with a weak curriculum, made the students' academic base weak:

The government school atmosphere is variable. Even dedicated teachers get frustrated because the standard of children may be very low. And the curriculum is bad. Also, the government schools have to take everyone. There are great differences in ages and competence in the classrooms. Although the system has the flexibility to take in all ages, there is no system of remedial work with children of different backgrounds except for NGO summer activities.

Teachers also mentioned that large class size reinforced the effect of weak student academic base on low teacher motivation to attend:

If there were fewer children in the class, that would help. There are 70 children in my Grade 1 class. We take in all children who apply. But some children understand the first time you tell them, and some don't even understand when you tell them 10 times. About 30–40 children are okay to handle. We sometimes try to make sections within the classroom.

Interaction between infrastructure and presence of security guard in school.

Three respondents who mentioned poor infrastructure as a reason for teacher absenteeism specifically mentioned the importance of a security guard in maintaining school infrastructure. In two rural schools, students had to sit on dusty floors because the

absence of a security guard meant that furniture often was stolen. In one of the schools, fixtures such as electrical wiring were missing because trespassing on the school premises could not be prevented. In comparison, the principal of a primary school in a congested area proudly displayed classroom furniture purchased through donations, stating that the security guard was paid more than some of the teachers.

In summary, two work environment factors, students' weak academic background and parents' poverty and illiteracy were perceived, mainly by contract and female teachers, to be the most important reasons for encouraging teacher absenteeism. Inconsistent government policies such as the effect of admitting overage students, school schedules conflicting with harvesting, hot weather conditions, and late delivery of textbooks were also mentioned fairly uniformly by respondents as contributing to teacher absenteeism.

Poor infrastructure and tense relationships between contract and regular teachers were perceived to be other job-related factors leading to teacher absenteeism. There were also important interaction effects. Students' weak academic base was perceived to have combined effects with parental poverty, and government policies to reduce teacher attendance. Contract teachers in girls' schools complained most about the frustration of having to teach poorly prepared students when there was little support from parents or the government.

Finding 3.5. *In general, personal attributes were not widely thought to have an impact on teacher absenteeism. However, teachers with more education (mostly contract teachers) were perceived to be absent less, whereas teachers with more experience (mostly regular teachers) were perceived to be absent more. Teachers*

who had to travel longer distances to get to work were perceived to be mostly women and to be absent more often.

Based on the education and absenteeism literature, the perceived effects of teachers' education, experience, family responsibilities, commuting distance, and gender were assessed and expected to influence teacher absenteeism. Respondents' comments on specific personal attributes of teachers that they perceived to affect teacher absenteeism are given in Table 4.10.

Table 4.10
Perceptions of Influence of Teachers' Personal Attributes on Absenteeism^a

Teacher personal attributes	Number of respondents				
	No difference in teacher absence	Teacher absence higher	Teacher absence lower	No opinion	Total
Greater family responsibility	15	10	11	4	40
More education	18	1	10	11	40
Additional jobs	20	3	2	15	40
Greater travel distance	22	8	0	10	40
More experience	25	10	3	2	40
Men vs. women	31	4	0	5	40
Local teacher	32	1	2	5	40

^aRespondents were asked about a specific factor and its perceived effect on all teachers.

Family responsibilities and after-school jobs. Teachers perceived family responsibilities to be reasons for taking leave, especially when younger or elderly dependents were ill or required caretaking. However, having greater family responsibilities also created pressure to retain jobs, and, therefore, to perform better in

them, because families depended on the income.²² Male contract teachers especially were perceived to hold additional jobs, mostly private tutoring ones, to supplement their incomes.²³ A female contract teacher described how male teachers had to get other jobs to look after their families:

Male teachers have many more dependents. Apart from their wife and children, they may have to help in their sister's marriage, look after their parents. The contract job is not a serious job so unless there is security and proper pay scale, they will always have to look for other work when they have families. They will leave the job, and the government will lose good teachers.

Although the effect of additional jobs was mainly perceived to increase absenteeism when teachers took leave from their public school jobs to attend to other work, one school principal explained how after-school tutoring had the effect of better attendance among teachers:

In cities, teachers are also concerned with opening their own private tutor academies and in giving private tuition. The teachers who don't attend regularly and are not good at their subject acquire a bad reputation, and then children don't recommend them to their parents for after school tutoring. In cities, the teachers who are regular also want to maintain their reputation. If the teacher is not in class, the older children complain.

Therefore, in the case of a school located in a heavily populated area with a competitive market for tutors, teachers with superior attendance records have better prospects for being recommended for after-school tuition by students to parents. However, if teachers in the same school had other side businesses like medical stores, they would not be marketing their teaching skills at the school, and only attending as

²² Based on descriptive data, the majority of teachers (84%) were financially responsible for family members (see Appendix D-2). Only 4 contract teachers and 1 regular teacher out of the 32 interviewed said that they did not have to support anyone else on their pay.

²³ Appendix D-2 on teacher characteristics shows all 7 teachers who stated that they worked after school were men. Although only male teachers said they held after-school jobs, women may also be earning money by tutoring in less formal arrangements.

much as they needed to remain in the job. These teachers may use political influence to be absent from the job. Thus, the extent of teacher absence due to after-school jobs was seen to depend on the specific school and teacher circumstances and the type of jobs teachers were engaged in other than their public school teaching jobs.

Education level. About half of the respondents felt that education did not make a difference to teacher absenteeism, and about one quarter felt that educated teachers were absent less. Because contract teachers had much higher education levels compared to regular teachers (see Appendix D) and were generally more knowledgeable about updates to the curriculum, they were usually asked to take on the more difficult subjects of science, mathematics, and English. One contract teacher felt that the younger batch of contract teachers were automatically better qualified than tenured teachers, not only because of the hiring requirements, but also because the examination boards were reputed to be more credible during the years contract teachers received their education:

Regular teachers improved their qualifications through the passage of time. With contract teachers, there was the compulsion that they had to be highly qualified upon joining. Have to be an MA, BEd. Also, in Pakistan, the education system from 1985–1995 was doubtful. The rumor was that the university board used to issue fake degrees. All contract teachers are generally qualified with better, more legitimate, genuine degrees, which required actual hard work.

Experience level. Years of experience were not generally considered to influence absenteeism. However, the respondents who felt that experience did matter indicated that more experienced teachers were more absent. This implied relatively lower contract teacher absences relative to those of regular teachers, because contract teachers in this sample were seen to have much lower experience levels compared to regular teachers (see Appendix D).

Gender and absenteeism. Male and female teachers were generally perceived to take about the same amount of leave, but the reasons for absence were different. Women's reasons for absence were more closely tied with household work and family needs. Women with young children were also perceived to be more willing to accept the less favorable terms of the contract position because timing and a safer environment made the job more attractive compared to alternative available jobs for the same education level. According to one contract teacher,

You get paid more in the private sector, but the problem is with timings. There you have to work 'til five o'clock. There are good jobs for accountants and computer-related work, and I have seen a lot of young women working in different offices, but it is hard for married women with young families. They have certain restrictions, because whoever is looking after the children are not willing to sacrifice so much time that you can stay on 'til evening. When we get off work by 2:00 p.m., that works out. So, timings are an important reason for women wanting to take up the contract teacher job.

Some teachers stated that male teachers had better opportunities to network in the education office and these made it easier to get leave authorization. One female contract teacher commented, "Maybe male teachers are absent more—I have heard from the schools in our area—because they make friends with the monitoring team people and with the AEOs and get away more easily with being absent." A regular teacher said that male teachers could get away with being absent because they had more confidence in dealing with education officials. A contract teacher from a large high school said that male teachers had more "approach" and took more risks and, therefore, could be absent more.

Distance to work. Transportation difficulties were perceived to create an absenteeism problem, especially among female teachers, who had to rely primarily on public transportation, which was erratic and uncomfortable, whereas male teachers often

had their own transport in the form of motorcycles or bicycles. One male principal said that he used public transportation as well as his motorcycle and that government franchise buses were the worst form of transportation: Passengers were “packed liked animals,” which posed an even bigger problem for women.

In general, female teachers took about 40 minutes to commute to work compared to male teachers’ average 24-minute commute (see Appendix D). Fewer seats were generally available for women in privately run wagons and on government buses. One rural female teacher commented that male teachers should have better attendance because it was easier for them to move around and that they could even catch a ride by sitting on the back of someone’s motorcycle. The relatively greater mobility of male teachers made them more inclined to take short leave during school hours for personal or official reasons.

Local teachers. Although the contract reform feature of site-specific hiring was meant to encourage local hiring, contract teachers were not likely to be local teachers. Moreover, being local may or may not be a perceived reason for lower absenteeism and depended on a particular teacher’s situation. For one regular teacher in a rural primary girls’ school, being from the local village was a reason for teachers to be absent less:

In some areas, teachers are also afraid of spoiling their performance record. Parents find out if the teacher is absent too much. In village areas, teachers are conscious of their reputation because in the village, the word spreads.

Despite the policy of site-based hiring for contract teachers, contract teachers were not likely to be local. Descriptive data revealed that on average (see Appendix D-2), contract teachers took slightly longer to get to work compared to regular teachers, and female teachers in general took double the time (42 minutes) to commute compared to

male teachers (24 minutes). Interviews also indicated that local hiring of contract teachers in rural locations may be more difficult due to the higher educational qualification requirements. According to a male contract teacher in a rural school,

It takes 1 hour to get here. The majority of regular teachers live close by. Contract teachers come from the city. Public transport is an issue for teachers, especially for women since they don't get enough space in wagons. Private buses take 35 rupees per trip. There are 40% women and 60% men on the buses.

These responses also provided insight into how the effects of various teacher characteristics were perceived to reinforce or counter the effect of other influences on absenteeism. Therefore, interactions or combined effects among teachers' personal characteristics and other factors related to the work environment or features of the contract were mentioned.

Contract teacher education and contract incentives. Although teachers with higher qualifications were perceived to be absent less often, the combined effect of more education with lower salaries and benefits and job insecurity had the effect of lowering motivation to attend. Contract teachers' high educational qualifications also meant that they were given a heavy teaching and administrative workload. In all schools, the better qualified teachers were given heavier workloads and greater responsibility to achieve good results on board exams. One contract teacher in an urban school explained that he and the other contract teachers usually filled the administrative forms for regular teachers, since they were better at doing it.

Contract teacher education level and work environment. Contract teachers' higher qualifications combined with low salary, work environment problems, and lack of respect caused dissatisfaction among them, leading to higher absenteeism and greater propensity for resigning. The three main interactions between contract teachers' educational

qualifications and other factors that had a negative effect on teacher attendance were (a) education and heavy workload, (b) education and low salary, and (c) a three-way effect of higher educational qualifications, low salary, and lack of respect.

Teachers and principals felt that because of contract teachers' better education, schools demanded more teaching from them. However, better qualified teachers were not able to use their skills effectively due to students' weak academic preparation, parents' low commitment to education, and inconsistent government policies. Most respondents stated that contract teachers were not being adequately rewarded in terms of salary and benefits or appreciated for their better educational backgrounds. More education combined with these factors created dissatisfaction and low motivation to attend among contract teachers, often leading to their resignations.

In summary, teachers' personal attributes were perceived to have a moderate effect on absenteeism according to principals and teachers. Teachers with greater family responsibilities (usually female teachers) were perceived to have higher absence levels if they had to take care of young children or other relatives. Teachers with greater family responsibilities were also perceived to be absent less if they needed to stay in the job because they had more dependents.

Better educated teachers were perceived to be absent less. Despite the lower pay and lesser experience, compared to regular teachers, contract teachers were in higher demand for teaching more advanced curriculum. However, combined effects of better education with lack of pay and benefits and unfavorable work environment tended to lower motivation to attend among contract teachers. More experienced teachers were

perceived to be absent more often, reinforcing the idea that senior, tenured teachers took more leave.

Greater travel distance was also a factor in higher absenteeism. Longer commuting time and more transportation difficulties were perceived to be larger constraints for women than men. Male teachers' easier access to transportation and ability to network with district staff was perceived to be a factor in their increased absences, especially in taking short leave. Being a local teacher was not perceived to have a significant effect on absenteeism, and despite the contract policy's feature of site-specific hiring, regular teachers were more likely than contract teachers to be local.

Summary of the Findings

1. Teachers and principals indicated that although teacher absenteeism was generally a problem in sample schools, the contract policy had a weak impact on teacher absenteeism. Half of the study participants felt that there was no difference between contract and tenured teacher absenteeism; however there was some indication that contract teacher absences were moderately, but not significantly, less than regular teachers' absences.
2. Participants perceived that the weak impact of the contract policy on checking absenteeism was related to its design and implementation. Although teacher absenteeism was reported to have decreased to some extent because of the sanction of contract nonrenewal, fewer days of leave allowed, and merit-based hiring without political favors, other components of the policy made the job unattractive—namely, low salaries and benefits despite higher educational qualifications, lower professional

- status associated with the contract position, lack of a career path, and inability to transfer to preferred locations.
3. An unintended consequence of the contract policy was the frequent resignation of contract teachers during the school term, resulting in contract positions remaining vacant until new teachers could be appointed.
 4. The principal's supervisory role and management style were perceived, especially by contract teachers, to be influential in lowering absenteeism. According to participants, an effective principal used stricter leave policies, consistent teacher evaluation methods, and skillful handling of political pressure to lower teacher absenteeism. Although considered to be less effective than the role of the principal, frequent visits by provincial monitoring staff and, to a lesser extent, the district staff, were important in curbing absentee behavior, especially when officials were able to successfully coordinate school supervision with the principal and school staff.
 5. Students' inadequate academic preparation and socioeconomic background were stated to be important causes of teachers' dissatisfaction with the work environment, contributing to high contract teacher absenteeism and resignation. It was indicated that the problem of poor student learning outcomes was not being adequately addressed by the government: There were no remedial classes for students that needed them, textbooks were not always delivered on schedule, and the school calendar conflicted with hot weather conditions and harvest activities. Consequently, teachers and principals, particularly contract teachers in girls' schools, reported that inconsistent government policies exacerbated the effect of weak academic achievement among students, lowering teacher motivation and attendance.

6. Infrastructural deficiencies were given as a reason for absence among contract and regular teachers; the lack of adequate classrooms, toilets, electricity, and water at schools were important constraints to creating an environment conducive to teaching and learning. They also lowered teachers' motivation to attend. Maintenance of school infrastructure was considered worst in schools that lacked a security guard.
7. Teachers' personal characteristics were not widely reported to have a significant impact on teacher absenteeism. Although contract teachers' high education qualifications were generally perceived to lead to lower absence, when considered jointly with the effect of lower pay and job insecurity, science, mathematics, and English contract teachers were more likely to leave their jobs because they were overworked and inadequately compensated. Wide discrepancies between education and salary levels also created tension between regular and contract teachers, especially in large urban schools, and were a reason for contract teachers' absenteeism and resignation.
8. Female teachers faced greater transportation difficulties and took about 20 minutes longer to commute to school, because men had better access to various modes of transportation than women.
9. Some of the respondents felt that if the contract policy could be amended to combine the probationary, nonrenewal aspect of contract terms with better salaries and benefits, employment on a contract basis could help in checking teacher absenteeism.

CHAPTER 5:

CONCLUSION AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

This study assessed the effect of an innovative educational reform in Pakistan. In a developing country with low education levels and tight budgetary conditions, new initiatives in education could potentially provide important benefits to the population. Specifically, the impact of the contract policy on teacher absenteeism in government schools in Lahore was analyzed.

The use of contract teachers to meet increasing demand for schooling at lower costs has gained popularity as a reform measure in developing countries. Although assessments of the impact of contract teachers on educational outcomes have been conducted in other developing countries (Duthilleul, 2004; Muralidharan & Sundararaman, 2008), the impact of Pakistan's contract policy has not been extensively evaluated.

Contributions to the Literature

In this chapter, research findings are related to the literature on teacher absenteeism and contract reforms and tied to the research questions based on the analytical framework introduced in Chapter 3. The study, based on the perceptions of a sample of 32 teachers and 8 school principals, showed that absenteeism was moderately lower among contract teachers than among tenured or regular teachers while they remained in the job. This finding was consistent with results of other studies of Pakistan (World Bank, 2005, 2008) and with studies of Kenya and India (Glewwe et al., 2008; Muralidharan & Sundararaman, 2008), but inconsistent with findings for Ecuador, Peru,

and Indonesia (Alcazar et al., 2004), where absence of contract teachers was not necessarily lower than that of regular teachers.

Disincentives such as low salaries and benefits and heavy workload, the short-term resignation option, and inability to transfer to other locations led to low motivation to attend and resignations by contract teachers. This created disruptions in the learning environment because replacing contract teachers is difficult.

This study's approach of using in-depth interviews to analyze the perceived effect of the contract reform on teachers' absenteeism has not been extensively applied in the literature. The methodology consisted of seeking teachers' and principals' perceptions to provide rich insights about the policy within the institutional and cultural setting in which it was implemented. Several studies in the development literature have assessed the impact of education reform initiatives, but few have evaluated policies based on participants' perspectives. In Pakistan, as in other developing countries, processes and outcomes associated with specific policies are carried out in complex, varied, and sometimes contradictory settings. Rich narratives from the interviews provided insight into these processes and helped to explain outcomes within the complex environment in which policies are enacted (Merriam et al., 2002).

An insight that came from the choice of the qualitative method was that absence is a complex concept that needs to be studied and understood in the context in which it takes place. The literature on absence defined legitimate reasons for being absent, such as sickness, and unexcused reasons for absence, in which the teacher chooses not to attend (Atkin & Goodman, 1984; Jacobson, 1989). However, findings from this study supported the view of Chaudhury et al. (2006), who suggested that in developing countries, leave

categories may be less relevant if, for instance, teachers are taking a lot of sick leave for other reasons. In this study, it was considered important to evaluate whether or not policies that allowed teachers to take leave for various reasons also contributed toward unnecessary absences.

An important insight from using the interview methodology was the finding that students' weak academic skills were a central factor in teachers' and principals' perceptions about school environment factors leading to low teacher motivation, which in turn was an important factor for increasing teacher absenteeism and resignation. Before the field work, student discipline and achievement were considered among student-related school factors affecting absenteeism according to the literature (Pitkoff, 1993).

Another contribution to the literature from this research was the discovery of unintended consequences of the contract policy, including teacher resignations, which amount to a kind of absenteeism. Vacancies can remain unfilled for long periods after contract teachers resign from their jobs while school is in session. Therefore, although contract teachers might have been absent less than regular teachers, this came at the price of frequent resignations by contract teachers during the school year, possibly because the contract policy did not allow for transfers.

A distinctive feature of the study was identifying perceived combined effects, or interactions, among features of the contract policy jointly influencing teacher absenteeism. For instance, higher educational qualifications combined with heavy workload and low salaries and benefits resulted in lower motivation to attend and a greater likelihood of contract teachers resigning before the school year ended. Other important interaction effects were found in school principals' supervisory role being

reinforced by principals' ability to counter political pressure in managing teachers. The existence of a teacher performance evaluation system in the school to check teacher attendance was cited to reduce absenteeism. Among work environment factors, students' weak academic base combined with parental poverty and inconsistent government policies was perceived to encourage absenteeism.

Comparing Main Findings With Existing Literature

Teacher Absenteeism and Poor School Districts

Contrary to the literature on teacher absenteeism in industrialized countries (Bruno, 2002; Pitkoff, 1993), based on teachers' and principals' perceptions, this study found that schools in poorer urban areas did not necessarily have higher teacher absence rates than schools in richer areas. Government schools serve the poorest families irrespective of location. Parents are not restricted to send children to schools according to their residence and can apply to any government school in the city in order to have access to qualified teachers at any government school. However, although it would be possible for even the poorest students to have access to the better qualified contract teachers, these teachers are also more likely to use the resignation option if they find working conditions unsatisfactory.

Effect of Contract Incentive Structure on Absenteeism

Compared to the literature on contract teachers in other countries, Pakistan's contract policy has some flaws and contradictory features that are logically inconsistent with the idea of the contract teacher initiative, which was intended to result in higher accountability and lower absenteeism. Research suggested that effective incentive

schemes for teachers must be closely linked to the desired teacher outcomes with provisions that are generous enough to motivate teachers and give them a reason to make the extra effort (Vegas, 2005).

Although it was intended to bring about better accountability and effective teaching at lower costs, Pakistan's contract policy contained only one of the features of contract teacher experience in other developing countries: lower pay than regular teachers (Muralidharan & Sundararaman, 2008).²⁴ Moreover, the common factor of lower pay was inconsistent with the fact that contract teachers' education levels were higher compared to regular teachers. In India, for example, absence levels of para teachers were lower than those of regular teachers even though their pay was lower, which was justified by their lower education and training levels (Kremer et al., 2004; Muralidharan 2008).

Teachers' Probationary Status Improved Attendance

One of the main sanctions perceived to discourage contract teacher absences was nonrenewal of contract and the possibility of dismissal on 1 month's notice. The finding on the effect of the sanction was consistent with research carried out by Ballou and Podgursky (2002), who noted that when teachers on probation were regularized, their behavior became similar to tenured teachers.

Fewer Leave Options Reduce Absences

Perceptions about fewer leave options leading to lower absence rates among contract teachers were reflected in the literature on leave policies and absenteeism in U.S.

²⁴ As explained in chapter 2, the four main characteristics of contract teachers were identified as follows: (a) appointment on annual renewable contracts, (b) lower qualifications compared to regular teachers, (c) receiving lower salaries compared to regular teachers and (d) likely to be from the local area.

schools, which consistently found that teachers had higher absence levels if there were more days of leave permitted annually in general (Ehrenberg et al., 1989; Jacobson, 1989; Winkler, 1980). Contract teachers were allowed less leave in general, a total of 25 days of casual paid leave per year, as opposed to at least 37 days of paid leave available to regular teachers (and even more leave if maternity leave, study leave, and days off for official duties were included). Teachers generally tended to avail themselves of all their unused leave.

For schools in the United States, Podgursky (2003) also found that teachers took about 2 days more sick leave than other employees because of generous leave allowances. Similarly, Clotfelter et al. (2009) suggested that if teachers were paid for each day of sick leave they gave up at a cost lower than what was paid to substitute teachers, it would be cost-effective for schools and beneficial to students. Therefore, the contract feature of fewer leave options was reported to play an important role in lowering absences among contract teachers as compared to regular teachers.

Lower Contract Salaries as a Disincentive to Attend

Dissatisfaction with salary levels was perceived to be the main feature of the contract policy to lower teachers' motivation to attend. Contract teachers made up the majority of teachers reported to be earning additional income from other jobs after school (see Appendix E). However, education research showed that teaching experience beyond 3 or 4 years did not enhance teaching performance, whereas salary schedules continued to increase automatically every year, indicating that seniority does not necessarily reflect better teaching skills (Ballou & Podgursky, 2002).

This study also found that despite higher salaries, regular teachers did not have lower absence rates compared to contract teachers, a result also found in the literature for some countries. Although theoretical models linked greater monetary incentives with lower absenteeism (Allen, 1981; Youngblood, 1984), studies on teacher absenteeism in the United States (Jacobson, 1989) and India (Duflo & Hanna, 2000; Glewwe et al., 2008), indicated that pay increases were effective in lowering absenteeism only if they were tied to attendance.

Comparison of Main Results Using Analytical Framework

Chapter 2 outlined the literature and analytical framework used to develop the study's research questions. Preliminary research indicated that contract policy implementation and teacher absenteeism in Pakistan occurred in a complex setting. The Steers and Rhodes (1978) model was chosen as the guiding framework to analyze the absenteeism problem for contract and regular teachers because it encompasses several influences on absenteeism. In this model, worker absenteeism stems from two main sources: a lack of motivation to attend and the presence of constraints on the ability to attend.

The literature on teacher motivation touches on several factors that could influence the work environment for teachers, such as principal leadership, teacher collegiality, student behavior, and the quality of school infrastructure (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Ingersoll, 2004; Kremer et al., 2004). Research on teacher performance highlights the importance of factors related to intrinsic rewards of teaching as well as extrinsic motivation (Herzberg, 1964; Jacobson, 1989; Johnson, 1984) in explaining

teacher absenteeism. Several factors in the study were identified to lower teachers' motivation to attend.

Extrinsic Motivation to Attend

Supervision, especially by the principal, was perceived to be important in lowering absenteeism. Twice as many contract teachers as regular ones affirmed the positive effect of all types of supervision, reflecting the reduced impact supervision had on tenured staff. The nature of their employment terms made contract teachers more insecure about their jobs, but the study did not report any cases of contract or regular teachers actually being dismissed due to low attendance, which showed the leniency of supervision systems in general. These results were similar to those of studies of other South Asian countries (Chaudhury et al., 2004; De & Drèze, 1999; Kremer et al, 2004) with only isolated incidents of public school teachers being fired due to low attendance indicating lack of pressure by the school administration to curb teacher absenteeism.

Insufficient strictness and discipline by the school principal were thought to be a major factor promoting absenteeism in the open-ended and structured questions addressed particularly to supervision, especially by contract teachers. In theoretical models of absenteeism (Allen, 1981), it has been suggested that the employer accepted some absenteeism rather than renegotiate terms with workers to improve conditions or give flexible hours. This atmosphere of give and take was evident from interviews with principals especially in larger schools, where principals reported that they had to work with various workplace constraints and teachers' needs and demands. The effect of the principal on influencing teacher absenteeism was also seen to interact with leave provisions, improvements in infrastructure, teacher collegiality, and NGO support.

Parental and community supervision was not perceived to influence absenteeism.

Contrary to results for other countries (Kremer et al., 2004; Sawada, 2000; World Bank, 2004), the majority of respondents did not perceive that parents or communities played an active role in monitoring or supervising contract or regular teacher attendance.

Intrinsic Motivation to Attend

Students' weak academic base and parental poverty were a factor in contract teacher absenteeism. Other than the effect of student discipline (Darling-Hammond, 2003; Pitkoff, 2003), the effect of students' academic and socioeconomic background as a factor in lower teacher attendance had not been highlighted in the teacher absenteeism literature. However, it was perceived by participants of this study to be one of the main reasons for low teacher motivation to attend. Contract teachers and subject specialist teachers for mathematics, science, and English in particular expressed frustration with the difficulty with which they had to discipline and teach large groups of children of various ages and competencies.

Effect of perceived factors interacting with each other to create an absenteeism culture. Several factors interacted within schools to influence absenteeism. Lax leave policies and deficiencies in other aspects of the school environment, such as lack of collegiality and poor infrastructure, were perceived to have a multiplying effect on affecting absenteeism and creating an absenteeism culture. Theoretical models and empirical studies of absenteeism also suggested that unsatisfactory work conditions created worker dissatisfaction and increased absenteeism, which became like a contagion that spread quickly in the workplace (Chadwick-Jones et al., 1982; Gibson, 1966).

Constraints on Ability to Attend

In the analytic framework described in chapter 2, apart from motivation to attend, another set of constraints leading to absenteeism consisted of factors that affected the ability to attend. Findings from the study related to these constraints are highlighted as follows.

Personal and family sickness and care requirements were given as reasons for being absent. Personal and family sickness were given as one of the main causes for absenteeism among contract and regular teachers. Although not stated openly, sick leave might have been taken for family, and even extended family, events such as weddings, bereavements, and the harvest. Similar to organizational absenteeism models that state that group dynamics rather than individual responses lead to collusion among workers to cover each others absences (Chadwick- Jones et al., 1982; Nicholson & Johns, 1985), this study found that family needs affected staff and supervisors alike, and there was generally an atmosphere of mutual cooperation among principals and teachers in taking time off for family obligations. Therefore, family needs often interacted with the principals' discretion to bend leave policies, which affected attendance.

In the study, definitions of legitimate and illegitimate absences were found to be blurred when leave was taken for events such as the harvest season, which may be accepted in Pakistani society as legitimate reasons for being absent, and to affect employers, employees and supervisors alike. Therefore, teachers, principals and school administrators were all closely bound to family needs and might have favored each other with time off, even if these events were not officially valid reasons to take leave.

Differences between male and female teachers' ability to attend and absenteeism.

Although absenteeism was found to be higher among female workers in industrialized countries (El-Sanabiy, 1989; VandenHeuvel & Wooden, 1995; Vistnes, 1997), in developing countries, the results varied (Kremer et al., 2004). In this study, a majority of respondents stated that male and female teachers took about the same amount of leave but that female absences were tied to family responsibilities, whereas male teachers' absences were tied to additional jobs to supplement family income. In the literature, the incidence of frequent but short leave episodes was found to reflect a tendency to take advantage of a lax attendance or leave system (Jacobson, 1989). This study found that boys' schools with predominantly male teachers tended to have a higher incidence of short leave among teachers. Male teachers' access to transportation allowed them to leave and return to school easily within working hours.

Access to transportation was an important factor in female teachers' attendance.

Inefficient and crowded public transportation was an issue for teachers living far from the school. The magnitude of the problem was much greater for women teachers whose access to transport was much worse than men. Female teachers had to rely primarily on public transportation that was erratic and uncomfortable. Women usually had to wait longer for busses and private wagons with limited seats. Female teachers' commuting time was about 20 minutes longer compared to that of male teachers.

Contract teachers were not more likely to be locally hired. Although one of the reasons for site-specific hiring was to encourage local hiring, data from interviews and reported commute times for contract and regular teachers indicated that contract teachers did not live closer than regular teachers to the workplace. In a rural school, because most

of the teachers had lived in the village for many years and most tenured teachers lived 5 minutes from the school, there was pressure for teachers to be punctual and avoid being absent to maintain their reputation in the village. This result was consistent with a study for two school districts in India that had the same monetary incentives for teachers, but one had much lower teacher absenteeism because of a stigma attached to being absent among the local people (Basu, 2006). Because the contract teachers' original policy of site-specific recruiting to encourage local hiring did not materialize as intended, more research into advantages of local teachers and incentives to retain and recruit teachers at the local level would be instructive in guiding further policy.

Policy Implications

Teachers' and principals' perceptions as discussed in this study offered a unique perspective on contract policy features for the sustainability of contract reform and its effectiveness in reducing absenteeism. Policy implications based on the study's findings are given as follows.

Contract Policy and Teacher Absence

Although relatively lower teacher absence rates associated with the contract policy may be a positive outcome of the policy, contract teachers were found to be demoralized with their employment terms and lack of job incentives and were likely to leave the job.

Resignation Option

Teacher resignations during the school year were perceived to have resulted in prolonged teacher absences when positions remained vacant. Although an attempt was

made to introduce a policy of mutual transfer, this discrepancy in the policy had not been remedied in the 5 years it had been implemented.

Consistency of Policy Design

Despite its stated objectives of improving accountability among teachers, the contract policy's main long-term objective seemed to be mitigating budgetary problems linked with teacher pay levels and pensions. An effort to develop clearer objectives about the desired policy outcomes and accountability mechanisms to monitor these outcomes would be necessary to improve teacher attendance. Research on contract teacher employment suggested that incentive schemes must be linked to the desired outcomes and must be designed to make teachers invest the extra effort needed to improve attendance and performance (Gaynor, 1998; Sawada, 2000; Vegas, 2005). In Pakistan, only sanctions were being used to lower contract teacher absence. Incentives tied to attendance constraints could be introduced, such as a transportation allowance for remote schools and female teachers.

Evaluation of Contract Performance

Accurate and fair accountability systems to evaluate teachers are expensive and logistically difficult to implement (Gordon, 2006; Murnane, 1981). Merit pay or performance-based rewards for teachers may work in the short term but are conducive to teachers "gaming the system" and tend to create an environment of competition rather than cooperation (Cohn, 1996). Although it would be difficult to introduce an accurate teacher accountability system in government schools given the weak supervisory

mechanisms, based on the findings of this study, the following measures could help to make the contract policy more effective and sustainable in lowering teacher absenteeism.

Fewer leave options and incentives for taking less leave. The contract policy demonstrated that fewer permitted leave options lead to less absenteeism. Leave options such as short leave could be monitored more closely or eliminated. Incentives such as reward ceremonies or certificates and bonuses for teachers who took the least amount of annual leave could be another option for those who don't need to take leave but take it only because it is permitted. Moderate monetary rewards for unused leave could also be introduced as incentives for better attendance. In a study of U.S. urban schools, Jacobson (1989) found that a monetary reward for best teacher attendance lowered absenteeism. Ehrenberg et al. (1989) found that school districts that bought back unused leave at retirement had lower absenteeism.

Raise contract salaries and introduce benefits such as maternity leave. The literature on teacher absenteeism indicated that unless salary and benefits were tied to attendance, increased salaries would not increase attendance. However, the study showed that the current remuneration gap between regular and contract teachers is too large, especially considering that the workload is the same. The low salary leads to reduced morale among contract teachers. Low salaries interacted with several factors to have a negative impact on teacher attendance.

Acknowledging the need for absence for seasonal and other personal events. A high tolerance for absence for certain events, such as harvests and funerals, indicated that teachers and principals would be supportive of letting their peers take leave for such events. If schools acknowledged the need for leave for commonly recurring or essential

events, such as the harvest, weddings, and funerals, rules could specify maximum, allowable leave for such events and allow flexibility to realistically meet teachers' needs without compromising student learning.

Rewarding attendance at the school level. Administrators could be encouraged to introduce incentives to improve teacher attendance at the school level. In the study, two high schools were already tying teacher increments to the overall external examination board results, and contract teachers felt pressure to attend and teach regularly. In Nicaragua, a portion of the contract teacher salary was shown to be tied to teacher attendance (Gaynor, 1998). Nonmonetary rewards could also work, since teachers from a small rural primary school did not want to be unnecessarily absent because all the parents knew them. An urban school principal stated regular attendance was an incentive for teachers who wanted to increase their chances of being recommended by students to their parents for after-school tutoring.

Principals' supervisory role. Principals' role was found to be important for checking individual teacher attendance and to avoid creating an absentee school culture. Other studies found principals to play an important role in lowering absenteeism. Pitkoff (2003) showed that the requirement of speaking directly to the principal lowered absences, and Rosenholtz (1985) found that principals in inner-city schools in the United States who focused on student achievement had more success in recruiting and retaining teachers. Policies emphasizing principals' effective management of schools could be successful in reducing teacher absenteeism.

Measures to improve the working environment. The motivation to attend, especially for contract teachers, was tied to the quality of the work environment. A key

problem identified by teachers was the lack of student preparation. Varied age and academic backgrounds of students would need to be addressed through remedial classes or measures such as hiring teachers' assistants. Contract teachers would be expected to respond more favorably to policies to improve academic rigor and consistency among students, because they were more academically qualified than regular teachers.

Coherent government policies. Policies related to the timing of summer holidays, untimely textbook delivery, and automatic student promotions were mentioned as reasons for low teacher motivation to attend. More attention to consistent government policies would signal a serious intent to impart education and prevent obstacles to the learning process.

Altering the contract policy rather than regularizing contract teachers. Budgetary constraints would make it difficult to regularize all contract teachers if political pressure to do so became strong. Moreover, the perceptions of teachers and principals indicated that they were not entirely against a contract policy but did not want it to continue in its present form. Also, the fact that the contract policy was quickly implemented and accepted was an indication of the schools and district staffs' capacity for change. The availability of teachers willing to work at low salary levels was also an indication of poor job prospects for many university graduates.

Therefore, it may be worth considering a contract policy design in which the benefits of the policy are more clearly reflected through positive outcomes, such as lowered teacher absenteeism and fewer occurrences of resignations by contract teachers. Research has shown that once teachers on probation were regularized, the protection they enjoyed under the tenure system made them difficult to dismiss and more like rent

seekers than effective teachers (Ballou & Pogursky, 2002). Similarly, the results of this study indicated that if contract teachers were regularized, they would follow the patterns of tenured teachers, with more available leave options and, possibly, lower attendance levels. Therefore, this may be an opportunity to improve upon the contract reform without reverting to the old tenured system.

Implications for Future Research

This study has highlighted several aspects of the effect of contract reforms on teacher absenteeism. These results could be used for further research in several ways. This study could be replicated in other school districts in different geographical regions. The findings of this study were unique to the sample of schools in Lahore. Expanding the coverage to other areas, such as rural and semiurban areas (such as small towns), would provide a different study context to test for consistency and variation across regions. For instance, teachers in rural areas may have fewer work options or there may be specific group dynamics among local teachers associated with smaller and remoter schools, as was found for studies on India (Basu, 2006).

Further research could test the robustness of the results regarding findings on absenteeism by selecting a larger sample of schools and participants. Several factors influencing absenteeism were identified in this study using 40 participants. The insights from this qualitative study could be examined on a larger scale and more precisely using statistical analysis. In this study, the problem of inconsistent policy design has been highlighted, both in the conception of the policy, its implementation, and the outcome. For example, one of the major inconsistencies in the contract policy that emerged from the interviews was the unforeseen and undesirable result of resignations by contract

teachers. More research could be carried out on how details of policy initiatives are designed to meet desired outcomes.

This study has also shown absenteeism to be a complex issue that is not easily defined. It is important to acknowledge that absenteeism exists and is tolerated due to several reasons, including culture-specific reasons, work environment shortcomings, lack of evaluation and monitoring, and leave policies. More research to explain what concepts such as justified and unjustified absenteeism mean in Pakistan or any other region would be needed. For instance, leave policy practices such as short leave and the extent that absenteeism is tolerated for essential family occasions or season-related harvesting or weather issues needs to be investigated further to provide workable and realistic definitions of absenteeism.

Conclusion

The study finds the phenomenon of teacher absenteeism and its causes to be complex. Factors related to both motivation and ability to attend affect absenteeism. The important factors influencing motivation to attend include effective supervision by the school principal, weak academic preparation of students, and inconsistent government policies regarding textbook delivery and the timing of the school year. The factors that affect the ability to attend include family care giving responsibility, sickness, and poor transportation arrangements for women teachers.

The contract teacher policy contains features that affect only some of the factors listed above, such as fewer leave options, merit-based transparent hiring of contract teachers, and the threat of nonrenewal of the contract. Furthermore, the policy contains features that strengthen the role of the school principal in supervising contract teachers

better. However, other features of the policy lower contract teachers' motivation and may encourage absenteeism. This includes the feature of hiring better qualified teachers but with lower salary and benefits. This, along with a heavy workload and lack of security, was an important reason for dissatisfaction with the contract policy leading to absenteeism and resignation. Resignation by contract teachers during the school term was found to be an unintended consequence of the policy that resulted in teacher positions remaining unfilled for long periods because replacing contract teachers was difficult.

To conclude, even though higher teacher attendance was one of the goals of the contract teacher policy implemented in 2002 by the government of Punjab, the incentive structure of the policy addressed the causes of teacher absenteeism in a limited manner and, therefore, has had a limited impact on lowering teacher absenteeism.

REFERENCES

- Ahmad, S. (2006, October 6). Teachers still await a raise. *Dawn News*. Retrieved from <http://www.dawn.com/2006/10/06/nat34.htm>
- Alcazar, L. Rogers, H.F., Chaudhury, N., Hammer, J, Muralidharan, K. & Kremer, M. (2005). Why are teachers absent? probing service delivery in Peruvian primary schools. *International Journal of Educational Research*, 45(3), 17-136. doi:10.1016/j.ijer.2006.11.007
- Ali, M., & Reed, T. (1994). *A school and parental survey of book provision issues in NWFP*. London, UK. International Book Development Ltd.
- Allen, S. (1981). An empirical model of work attendance. *Review of Economics and Statistics*, 63(1), 77–87. doi:10.2307/1924220
- Andrabi, T., Das, J., & Khwaja, A. I. (2006). A dime a day: The possibilities and limits of private schooling in Pakistan. *Comparative Education Review*, 52, 329–355. doi:10.1086/588796
- Argyle, M. (1972). *The social psychology of work*, Harmondsworth, UK: Penguin books.
- Atkin, R. S., & Goodman, P. S. (1984). Methods of defining and measuring absenteeism. In P. S. Goodman & R. S. Atkin (Eds.), *Absenteeism* (pp. 47-109). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Ballou, D., & Podgursky, M. (2002). Returns to seniority among public school teachers. *The Journal of Human Resources*, 37, 892–912. doi:10.2307/3069620
- Banerjee, A., & Duflo, E. (2006). Addressing absence. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 20(1), 117-132. doi:10.1257/089533006776526139. doi:10.1257/000282805774669628

- Brayfield, A.H. & Crockett, W.H (1955). Employee attitudes and employee performance. *Psychological Bulletin*, 52(5), 396-424. doi:10.1037/h0045899
- Basu, K. (2006). *Teacher truancy in India: The role of culture, norms and economic incentives*, (Working Paper Series No. 06-03). Ithaca NY: Cornell University.
- Brooke, P. P. (1986). Beyond the Steers and Rhodes Model of Employee Attendance. *Academy of Management Review*, 11(2), 345–361. doi:10.2307/258465
- Bruno, J. E. (1986). Teacher compensation and incentive programs for large urban school districts. *The Elementary School Journal*, 86(4), 424–447. doi:10.1086/461461
- Bruno, J. E. (2002). The geographical distribution of teacher absenteeism in large urban school district settings: Implications for school reform efforts aimed at promoting equity and excellence in education. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 10(32).
- Chadwick-Jones, J., Nicholson, N., & Brown, C. (1982). *Social psychology of absenteeism*. New York, NY: Praeger.
- Chaudhury, N., Hammer, J., Kremer, M., Muralidharan, K., & Rogers, F. H. (2004). *Roll call: Teacher absence in Bangladesh*. Retrieved from <http://siteresources.worldbank.org/DEC/Resources/PS.findings.Absenteeism.Bangladesh.Teachers.June.2004.pdf>
- Chaudhury, N., Hammer, J., Kremer, M., Muralidharan, K., & Rogers, F. H. (2006). Missing in action: Teacher and health worker absence in developing countries. *Journal of Economic Perspectives*, 20(1), 91–116. doi:10.1257/089533006776526058
- Chen, H. T., & Rossi, P. H. (1983). Evaluating with sense: The theory-driven approach. *Evaluation Review*, 7, 283–302. doi:10.1177/0193841X8300700301

- Clotfelter, C., Ladd, H., & Vigdor, J. (2009). *Are teacher absences worth worrying about in the U.S.?* (Working Paper No. 24). Washington, DC: The Urban Institute.
- Coffey, A., & Atkinson, P. (1996). *Making sense of qualitative data: Complementary research strategies*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Cohn, E. (1996). Methods of teacher remuneration: Merit pay and career ladders. In W. E. Becker & W. J. Baumol (Eds.), *Assessing Educational Practices* (pp.209-238). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Cook, T. D., & Campbell, D. (1979). *Quasi-experimentation: Design and analysis issues for field settings*. Chicago, IL: Rand McNally College.
- Creswell, J. W., & Miller, D. L. (2000). Determining validity in qualitative inquiry. *Theory Into Practice*, 39(3),124–130. doi:10.1207/s15430421tip3903_2
- Darling-Hammond, L. (2003). Keeping good teachers: Why it matters, what leaders can do? *Educational Leadership*, 60(8), 7–13.
- Das, J., Dercon, S., Habyarimana, J., & Krishnan, P. (2005). *Teacher shocks and student learning: Evidence from Zambia* (Policy Research Working Paper No. 3602). Washington D.C: World Bank.
- De, A., & Drèze, J. (1999). *Public report on basic education in India. The PROBE report*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press.
- Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2005). *Handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Dione, G. & Dostie, B. (2007). New Evidence on the Determinants of absenteeism using linked employer-employee data, *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, 61(1), 108-120.

- Drago, R., & Wooden, M. (1992). The determinants of labor absence: Economic factors and workgroup norms across countries. *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, 45, 764–778. doi:10.2307/2524592
- Duflo, E., Hanna, R., & Ryan, S. (2007). *Monitoring works: Getting teachers to come to school*. Retrieved from Poverty Action Lab website:
http://www.povertyactionlab.com/papers/106_Duflo_Monitoring_Works.pdf
- Durand, V. M. (1986). Employee absenteeism: A selective review of antecedents and consequences. *Journal of Organizational Behavior Management*, 7, 135–167. doi:10.1300/J075v07n01_09
- Duthilleul, Y. (2004). *International perspectives on contract teachers and their impact on meeting education for all: The cases of Cambodia, India, and Nicaragua. A synthesis report*. Paris: UNESCO.
- Ehrenberg, R. G., Rees, D. I., & Ehrenberg, E. L. (1991). School district leave policies, teacher absenteeism, and student achievement. *The Journal of Human Resources*, 26(1), 72–105. doi:10.2307/145717
- El-Sanabiy, N. (1989). *Determinants of women's education in the Middle East and North Africa: Illustrations from seven countries*. Washington DC. World Bank.
- Gaynor, C. (1998). *Directions in Development Series: Decentralization of education: Teacher management*. Washington D.C.: World Bank.
- Gazdar, H. (2000). *State, community, and universal education: A political economy of public schooling in rural Pakistan*. London, England: Asia Research Centre, London School of Economics.

- Ghaus-Pasha, A., McGarry, M., Ercelawn, A., & others. (1997). *Review of the Social Action Program*. Karachi, Pakistan: Social Policy and Development Center.
Retrieved from <http://spdc-pak.com/pub/rr/tr16.pdf>
- Gibson, R. O. (1966). Toward a conceptualization of absence behavior of personnel in organizations. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 11(1), 107–133.
doi:10.2307/2391396
- Glewwe, P., Holla, A., & Kremer, M. (2008). *Teacher incentives in developing countries*.
Retrieved from the Harvard University website:
http://www.economics.harvard.edu/faculty/kremer/files/KntchinV9_080915.pdf
- Gordon, R. (2006). *Identifying effective teachers: Using performance on the job*.
Washington, DC: Brookings Institution.
- Government of Pakistan. (2009). *Pakistan economic survey (2008-09)*. Islamabad, Pakistan: Economic Adviser's Wing.
- Government of the Punjab. (2005). *Punjab EMIS database 2004–2005*. Retrieved from <http://www.punjabeducation.edu.pk/tables/table1.pdf>
- Hackett, R.D. & Guion, R.M (1985). A reevaluation of the absenteeism-job satisfaction relationship. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*. 53: 340-381.
- Harber, C. (1993). Prismatic society revisited: Theory and educational administration in developing countries. *Oxford Review of Education*, 19, 484–497.
doi:10.1080/0305498930190405
- Herzberg, F. (1964). The motivation-hygiene concept and problems of manpower. *Personnel Administration*, 27, 3–7.

- Hill, J. & Trist, E. (1955). Changes in accidents and other absences with length of service: A further study on their incidence and relation to each other in an iron and steel works, *Human relations*, 8: 121-152.
- Hoodbhoy, P. (1998). *Education and the state: Fifty years of Pakistan*. Karachi: Oxford University Press.
- Ingersoll, R. (2004). *Why do high poverty schools have difficulty staffing their classrooms with qualified teachers? Report prepared for "Renewing our Schools, Securing our Future," A National Task Force on Public Education*. Washington, DC: Center for American Progress.
- Jacobson, S. (1991). Attendance incentives and teacher absenteeism. *Planning & Changing*, 21(2), 78–93.
- Jacobson, S. L. (1989). The effects of pay incentives on teacher absenteeism. *The Journal of Human Resources*, 24(2), 280–286. doi:10.2307/145856
- Johnson, S. M. (1984). Merit pay for teachers: A poor prescription for reform. *Harvard Educational Review*, 54(2), 175–185.
- Khan, S. R. (2002). Rationality in public sector salary scales: The case of Pakistan. *Education Economics*, 10, 333–345. doi:10.1080/09645290210127552
- King, E. M., Orazem, P. F., & Paterno, E. M. (1999). *Promotion with and without learning effects on student dropout* (Working Paper Series on Impact Evaluation of Education Reforms, Paper No. 18). Washington DC: World Bank. Retrieved from <http://www.worldbank.org/research/pdf/IEERno18.pdf>
- Klein, B. W. (1986). Missed work and lost hours, *Monthly Labor Review*, 5, 26–30.

- Kohler, S. S., & Mathieu, S. E. (1993). Individual characteristics, work perceptions, and affective reactions influences on differentiated absence criteria. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 14, 515–530. doi:10.1002/job.4030140602
- Kremer, M., Chaudhury, N., Rogers, F. H., Muralidharan, K., & Hammer, J. (2004). *Teacher absence in India: A snapshot*. Manuscript submitted for publication. Retrieved from http://post.economics.harvard.edu/faculty/kremer/webpapers/TeacherabsenceinIndia_Sept1504.pdf
- Kronstadt, K. A. (2004). *Education reform in Pakistan, Congressional research*. Retrieved from <http://www.fas.org/man/crs/RS22009.pdf>
- Maxwell, J.A (2005). *Qualitative research design: An interactive approach*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Merit and the D.C. school system. (2008, October 2). *New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2008/10/03/opinion/03fri3.html?th&emc=th>
- Merriam, S. B., et al. (2002). *Qualitative research in practice, examples for discussion and analysis*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Milanowski, A. (2003). The varieties of knowledge and skill-based pay design: A comparison of seven new pay systems for K–12 teachers. *Education Policy Analysis Archives*, 11(4). Retrieved from <http://epaa.asu.edu/epaa/v11n4/>
- Miller, T. R, Murnane, R. J., & Willet, J. B. (2008). Do teacher absences impact student achievement? Longitudinal evidence from one urban school district. *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 30(2), 181–200. doi:10.3102/0162373708318019
- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded source-book*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- Muralidharan, K., & Sundararaman, V. (2008). *Contract teachers: Experimental evidence from India*, Mimeo. University of California, San Diego.
- Murnane, R. J. (1981). Seniority rules and educational productivity: Understanding the consequences of a mandate for equality. *American Journal of Education*, 90(1), 14-38. doi:10.1086/443610
- Murnane, R. J., & Cohen, D.K.. (1986). Merit pay and the evaluation problem: Why most merit pay plans fail and a few survive. *Harvard Educational Review*, 56, 1–17.
- Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage
- Peshkin, A. (1988). In search of subjectivity: One’s own. *Educational Researcher*, 17(7), 17–21.
- Peshkin, A. (1993). The goodness of qualitative research. *Educational Researcher*, 22(2), 23–29.
- Peshkin, A. (2000). The nature of interpretation in qualitative research. *Educational Researcher*, 29(9), 5–9
- Pitkoff, E. (1993). Teacher absenteeism: What administrators can do. *NASSP Bulletin*, 77, 39-45. doi:10.1177/019263659307755106
- Pitkoff, E. (2003). School district practices that encourage teacher absenteeism. *The School Administrator*, 60(6), 34.
- Podgursky, M. (2003). Fringe benefits: AFT and NEA teacher salary surveys. *Education Next*, 3(3), 71-78.
- Rahman, T. (2004). *Denizens of Alien Worlds: A Study of education, inequality and polarization in Pakistan*, Oxford University Press, Karachi, Pakistan.

- Reimers, F. (1993). Time and opportunity to learn in Pakistan's schools: Some lessons on the links between research and policy. *Comparative Education*, 29(2), 201–212. doi:10.1080/0305006930290207
- Reimers, F., & Warwick, D. P. (1995). *Hope or despair? Learning in Pakistan's primary schools*. Westport, CT: Praeger.
- Rhodes, S. R., & Steers, R. M. (1990). *Managing employee absenteeism*. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Rosenholtz, S. J. (1985). Effective schools: Interpreting the evidence. *American Journal of Education*, 93, 352–388. doi:10.1086/443805
- Roza, M. (2007). *Frozen assets: Rethinking teacher contracts could free billions for school reform*. Retrieved from http://www.educationsector.org/usr_doc/frozenassets.pdf
- Sawada, Y. (2000). *Community participation, teacher effort and educational outcome: The case of El Salvador's EDUCO Program*. Washington DC: World Bank and University of Tokyo.
- Scott, K., & McClellan, E. (1990). Gender differences in absenteeism. *Public Personnel Management*, 19, 229–253.
- Steers, R. M., & Rhodes, S. R. (1978). Major influences on employee attendance: A process model. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 62, 472–479. doi:10.1037/0021-9010.62.4.472
- Strath, A. (2004). *Teacher policy reforms in Sweden: The case of individualized pay*. International Institute for Educational Planning, Paris: UNESCO. Retrieved from <http://www.unesco.org/iiep/eng/research/basic/PDF/teachers2.pdf>

- UNESCO. (2003). *Fiscal devolution in education: Case study reflecting initial responses*. Paris, France: Government of Pakistan & UNESCO. Retrieved from http://undp.un.org.pk/unesco/publications_files/Fiscal%20Devolution%20in%20Education.pdf
- VandenHeuvel, A., & Wooden, M. (1995). Do explanations of absenteeism differ for men and women? *Human Relations*, 48, 1309–1329. doi:10.1177/001872679504801104
- Vegas, E. (2005). *Incentives to improve teaching: Lessons from Latin America*. Washington DC: World Bank.
- Vegas, E. (2007). Teacher labor markets in developing countries. *The Future of Children*, 17(1), 219-232. doi:10.1353/foc.2007.0011
- Vistnes, J. P. (1997). Gender differences in days lost from work due to illness. *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, 50, 304–323. Retrieved from <http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0019-7939%28199701%2950%3A2%3C304%3AGDIDLF%3E2.0.CO%3B2-N>
- Weiss, C. H. (1998). *Evaluation* (2nd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Winkler, D. (1980). The effects of sick leave policy on teacher absenteeism. *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, 33(2), 232–240. doi:10.2307/2522452
- Winkler, D., & Hatfield, R. (2002). *The devolution of education in Pakistan*. Washington DC: World Bank.
- World Bank. (2002). *Pakistan poverty assessment. Poverty in Pakistan: Vulnerabilities, social gaps and rural dynamics* (Report No. 24296-PAK). Washington DC.

Retrieved from <http://lnweb18.worldbank.org/SAR/sa.nsf/Countries/Pakistan/52F7CDA6EE7FE78485256C680014813E?OpenDocument>

World Bank. (2004). Teacher absence and incentives in primary education: Results from a national teacher tracking survey in Ecuador. In *Ecuador: Creating Fiscal Space for Poverty Reduction: A Fiscal Management and Public Expenditure Review* Washington DC.

World Bank (2005). *Teacher Management and Reform Study, Background report*, Islamabad, Pakistan: Issues and Policies Consultants.

World Bank. (2008). *Pakistan: Learning and educational achievements in Punjab schools (LEAPS): Insights to inform the education policy debate*. Washington DC: South Asia Region.

APPENDIX A:
INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Three instruments for conducting semistructured interviews of contract teachers, regular teachers, and school principals are given below. (Subquestions in italics are not part of questions for participants but included as a reference to the research questions and subquestions).

A-1: CONTRACT TEACHER INSTRUMENT

Research Query 2: What are teachers' and principals' perceptions of the impact of the contract policy on teacher absenteeism?

Subquestion 2.1: What is teachers' understanding of teacher absenteeism as a problem?

- 1) **Is teacher absenteeism a problem in your school? What factor(s) do you think contribute to teacher absenteeism in your school?**

Subquestion 2.2: What is teachers' understanding of the contract policy?

- 1) **What do you know about the new teacher contract policy? How does it work?**

Research Query 3: What are teachers' and principals' perceptions of the impact of specific school and individual teacher characteristics on teacher absenteeism?

Subquestion 3-1: Do the terms of the contract and the hiring procedures seem to matter?

- 1) **When and how were you hired as a contract teacher?**
- 2) **Could you explain the terms of your employment contract?**

Possible probes: How long is the contract? What does contract renewal depend on? Do you want to renew the contract? What qualifications did you need to be considered for the contract position? Are there differences in the ways in which teachers are hired? In what way?

Subquestion 3-2: Have the contract terms been enforced?

- 1) **In your opinion, have the contract terms been implemented and enforced as planned?**

Subquestion 3.3: Are there incentives and sanctions under the contract policy that seem to make absenteeism lower among contract teachers? What are these incentives and sanctions?

- 1) In your judgment, do the contract terms influence your own attendance?**
- 2) Do you think the contract policy has improved teacher attendance among contract teachers in general as compared to attendance of regular teachers? If so, how and why?**

Possible probes: Does fear of nonrenewal of contracts have an impact on attendance? Does absence from school affect the chances of renewal of contract? What other incentives, rewards, or sanctions would improve your own attendance?

Subquestion 3-4: Do leave policies seem to have an effect on teacher absenteeism?

- 1) Can you explain the leave policy that applies to you?**

Possible probes: When you take leave, what procedure do you usually follow? (Do you, for example, inform the principal in advance? the same day? verbally or in writing? Do you need to provide a doctor's certificate for sick leave?)

- 2) Are there any penalties imposed on you for the amount and type of leave taken?**
- 3) How many days were you absent in the previous month and why?**
- 4) Do you usually avoid being absent due to the leave policy in the contract?**

Subquestion 3-5: How do working conditions seem to influence teacher absenteeism?

- 1) What do you like about your job? What do you not like? Please explain**

Possible probes: Are the students academically competent? Do the students get some help at home with their studies? How many students are there in a class? Do you make decisions about what to teach? Is there mentoring among teachers or from the principal for teaching- or instruction-related issues?

- 2) What features of your work environment help encourage you to attend on a regular basis? Please explain.**

Possible probes: If you had to be absent for some reason, could you arrange for another teacher to help in covering your teaching duties? Are the school facilities adequate for you? If not, what do you find inadequate? Are the toilet facilities adequate? Are there enough teaching materials, textbooks, etc.? Female teachers: Are there any safety concerns you have coming and going to school and at the school?

- 3) Do you belong to a teachers union? What kind of support do you get from it?**

Subquestion 3-6: Does the presence of formal and informal supervision systems seem to influence teacher absenteeism?

1) Please explain how your attendance is supervised.

Possible probes: Which school and district personnel supervise you (e.g., the principal, the DEO)? What does the supervision entail? How does the supervisor assess if the teacher is present (attendance records, visits to the classroom)? When was the school last inspected by an official from the Education Department? Who was this official? What action is taken when a teacher is absent?

2) Are you also supervised by community or parent organizations? If so, please specify and explain.

3) Do you think that you are absent less often because of this supervision?

Subquestion 3-7: What teacher attributes seem to drive absence?

1) What is your educational level?

2) How long have you been teaching (overall and in this school)?

3) What do you think are the most common reasons you are absent?

Possible probes: Do you have dependents at home? How many? Do you think the presence of dependents at home influences absenteeism? Are you from this area? How long does it take for you to get to school? Do you think distance from school and transport availability influences absenteeism? Do you think higher salaries and other monetary benefits would improve your attendance in this school? Please elaborate. Do you think it would make a difference if the benefits were tied to attendance? Do you and other teachers in the school have other jobs that may affect attendance? Female teachers: Does household work and family responsibilities often prevent you from being at work? Is this frequent?

Subquestion 3-8: Are there other factors that seem to be influencing absenteeism?

(This was derived mostly from the previous questions but was also asked at the end of the interview to see if the interviewee had additional thoughts.)

In your opinion, are there any other factors that seem to influence absenteeism?

A-2: REGULAR TEACHER INSTRUMENT

Research Query 2: What are teachers' and principals' perceptions of the impact of the contract policy on teacher absenteeism?

Subquestion 2.1: What is teachers' understanding of teacher absenteeism?

- 1) **Is teacher absenteeism a problem in your school? What factor(s) do you think contribute to teacher absenteeism in your school?**

Subquestion 2.2: What is teachers' understanding of contract policy?

- 1) **What do you know about the new teacher contract policy? How does it work?**

Research Query 3: What are teachers' and principals' perceptions of the impact of specific school and individual teacher characteristics on teacher absenteeism?

Subquestion 3-1: Do the terms of the contract and the hiring procedures seem to matter?

- 1) **Please explain the process by which you were hired?**

Probes: When were you hired as a regular teacher? How were you hired?

- 2) **What are the differences between the regular and contract position? What do you think are the advantages of each?**

Subquestion 3.2: Are there incentives and sanctions under the contract policy that seem to reduce absenteeism among contract teachers? What do these incentives and sanctions seem to be?

- 1) **Do you think the contract policy has improved teacher attendance among contract teachers in general compared to attendance of regular teachers? If so, how and why?**

Subquestion 3-3: Do leave policies seem to have an effect on teacher absenteeism?

- 1) **Can you explain the leave policy that applies to you?**

Possible probes: When you take leave, what procedure do you usually follow? (Do you, for example, inform the principal in advance? the same day? verbally or in writing? Do you need to provide a doctor's certificate for sick leave?)

- 2) **Were there any penalties imposed on you for the amount and type of leave taken?**
- 3) **How many days were you absent in the previous month and why?**
- 4) **Do you usually avoid being absent due to the leave policy?**

Subquestion 3-4: How do working conditions seem to influence teacher absenteeism?

1) What do you like about your job? What do you not like? Please explain

Possible probes: Are the students academically competent? Do the students get some help at home with their studies? How many students are there in a class? Do you make decisions about what to teach? Is there mentoring among teachers or from the principal for teaching- or instruction-related issues?

2) What features of your work environment help encourage you to attend on a regular basis? Please explain.

Possible probes: If you had to be absent for some reason, could you arrange for another teacher to help in covering your teaching duties? Are the school facilities adequate for you? If not, what do you find inadequate? Are the toilet facilities adequate? Are there enough teaching materials, textbooks, etc.? Female teachers: Are there any safety concerns you have coming and going to school and at the school?

3) Do you belong to a teachers union? What kind of support do you get from it?

Subquestion 3-5: Does the presence of formal and informal supervision systems seem to influence teacher absenteeism?

1) Please explain how your attendance is supervised.

Possible probes: Which school and district personnel supervise you (e.g., the principal, the DEO)? What does the supervision entail? How does the supervisor assess if the teacher is present (attendance records, visits to the classroom)? When was the school last inspected by an official from the Education Department? Who was this official? What action is taken when a teacher is absent?

2) Are you also supervised by community or parent organizations (such as the CCB)? If so, please explain.

3) Do you think that you are absent less often because of this supervision?

Sub-question 3-6: What teacher attributes seem to drive absences?

1) What is your education level and specialization?

2) How long have you been teaching (overall and in this school)?

3) What do you think are the most common reasons to be absent?

Possible probes: Do you have dependents at home? How many? Do you think the presence of dependents at home influences absenteeism? Are you from this area?

How long does it take for you to get to school? Do you think distance from school and transport availability influences absenteeism? Do you think higher salaries and other monetary benefits would improve your attendance in this school? Please elaborate. Do you think it would make a difference if the benefits were tied to attendance? Do you and other teachers in the school have other jobs that may affect attendance? Female teachers: Does household work and family responsibilities often prevent you from being at work? Is this frequent?

Subquestion 3-7: Are there other factors that seem to be influencing absenteeism?

(This was derived mostly from the previous questions but was also asked at the end of the interview to see if the interviewee had additional thoughts.)

In your opinion, are there any other factors that seem to influence absenteeism?

A-3: SCHOOL PRINCIPAL INSTRUMENT

Research Query 2: What are teachers' and principals' perceptions of the impact of the contract policy on teacher absenteeism?

Subquestion 2.1: What is the principals' understanding of teacher absenteeism as a problem?

- 1) Is teacher absenteeism a problem in your school? What factor(s) do you think contribute to teacher absenteeism in your school?**

Subquestion 2.2: What is the principal's understanding of the contract policy?

- 1) What do you know about the new teacher contract policy? How does it work?**

Research Query 3: What are teachers' and principals' perceptions of the impact of specific school and individual teacher characteristics on teacher absenteeism?

Subquestion 3-1: Do the terms of the contract and the hiring procedure seem to matter?

- 1) Please explain how contract teachers were hired at your school.**
- 2) Please explain the terms of the contract teacher policy.**

Possible probes: Was the position advertised? How many usually apply for each position? What does the renewal of a teacher's contract depend on? Have any contract teachers been dismissed? If so why? Are contract teachers allowed to resign before the end of the school year? How are positions left vacant by contract teachers filled? What is a contract teacher's beginning salary? Please explain the differences in pay scales between regular and contract teachers. What other benefits do contract and regular teachers have?

- 3) Please give information about the length of teacher contracts for each contract teacher in your school.**

Subquestion 3.2: Have the contract terms been enforced?

- 1) In your opinion, have the contract terms been implemented and enforced as planned?**

Subquestion 3-3: Are there incentives and sanctions under the contract policy that seem to make absenteeism lower among contract teachers? What are these incentives and sanctions?

- 1) **In your opinion, what specific features of the contract policy might encourage lower absenteeism among contract teachers compared to regular teachers?**
- 2) **In your opinion, what are the main reasons for teacher absence in your school?**
- 3) **In your opinion, what policies are needed to improve contract teacher attendance?**

Sub-question 3-4: Do leave policies seem to have an effect on teacher absenteeism?

- 1) **Please give details of sick leave and other types of leave that regular and contract teachers are allowed, and the prevalence of leave occurrences in your school in the last year.**

Possible probe: Do contract and regular teachers take different types of leave?

- 2) **When teachers want to take leave, what do they usually do?**

Possible probe: For instance, do they apply in advance for a day off, send a written or verbal message to the principal or head teacher, call in on the day the leave is taken, or not show up and explain the absence later?

- 3) **Do you think that leave policies have a different impact on contract teachers than regular ones?**

Subquestion 3-5: How do working conditions seem to influence teacher absenteeism?

- 1) **What features in your school seem to be appealing and satisfactory to teachers? Please explain.**
- 2) **What features in your school seem to be least appealing and satisfactory to teachers? Please explain.**
- 3) **Do you think that any of the above factors contribute to teacher absenteeism? Which ones? Why? (Some probing will be exercised here to get a sense of the teaching environment in the school and its potential impact on absenteeism.)**
- 4) **Do those factors differently impact absenteeism of contract and regular teachers?**

Subquestion 3-6: Does the presence of formal and informal supervision systems seem to influence teacher absenteeism?

- 1) **Who supervises and monitors contract teachers? Please explain how this supervision is done. Is supervision different for contract and regular teachers?**

Possible probes: How often is your school inspected/visited by education officials? How does the education official assess teacher absence? What action do these officials take if a teacher is absent?

- 2) **What action do you take when teachers are absent?**
- 3) **Is there any supervision of teachers by community or parent organizations, such as the CCB or school councils? Please specify**
- 4) **Do you think that teachers are often less absent because of this supervision?**

Subquestion 3-7: What teacher attributes seem to drive their absence?

- 1) **In your school, what are some personal characteristics of teachers that influence absenteeism? Do these characteristics influence absenteeism differently for contract and regular teachers?**

Possible probes: In your school, do you think higher salaries and other monetary benefits would improve teacher attendance? If so, how and why do you think this would make a difference? Do you think it would make a difference if the benefits were tied to attendance? Would this have a similar effect on contract versus regular teachers' attendance? Do teachers in the school have other jobs that affect attendance? Are teachers with more education absent more often? Are more experienced, senior teachers absent more often? Are female teachers absent more often than male teachers? Are local teachers absent less often? Do teachers who live far from the school have lower attendance? Does the availability of transport influence how often a teacher is absent? Are teachers with young children or other family dependents absent more often? Do teachers belong to a teachers' union? Does this influence teacher attendance? How is this different for contract versus regular teachers?

Subquestion 3-8: Are there other factors that seem to influence absenteeism?

(This was derived mostly from the previous questions but was also asked at the end of the interview to see if the interviewee had additional thoughts.)

In your opinion, are there any other factors that seem to influence absenteeism?

APPENDIX B:
CODE NAMES AND DESCRIPTIONS

Code name	Definition of descriptive code
Contract teachers	
CT_EMP_TERMS	Description of contract teacher employment terms
CT_ABS RENEW	The influence of absences on contract renewal
CT_COMP REG/CONT	Comparison between employment terms of contract versus regular teachers
CT_COMP REG/ CON ABS	Effect of contract policy on lowering absence (comparing absences of contract versus regular teachers)
CT_INC/REW LWR ABS	Incentives/rewards that would improve contract teacher attendance
CT_LV POL	Explanation of leave policies by contract teachers and procedures for taking leave
CT_LV PENALTY	Information on penalties, if any, for amount and type of leave taken
CT_LV DAYS	Number of days of leave taken in the previous month by contract teacher
CT_MONET ABS	Effect of higher salaries and other monetary incentives on improved attendance
CT_JOB SATIS	Contract teacher explanation of general satisfaction with job and work environment
CT_JOB MOTIV	Contract teacher explanation of main motivating factor in work environment that encourages regular attendance
CT_JOB MENTOR	Extent of mentoring available for contract teachers from other teachers or principal
CT_JOB SUBST ABS	Availability of other teachers as substitutes in case of absence of contract teacher
CT_JOB FACILITIES	Contract teacher satisfaction with infrastructure and facilities
CT_FEMALE/SAFE	Safety concerns of female contract teachers
CT_TCH UNION	Contract teacher union involvement
CT_SUP	Supervision of work and attendance of contract teachers
CT_SUPR_ABS ACTION	Action taken by school officials for contract teacher absence
CT_SUPR_INSPCT	Contract teacher recollection of last inspection of school by inspector or education officials
CT_SUPR_COMM	Supervision of contract teachers by community members
CT_EDU	Contract teacher education level and specialization
CT_EXP	Contract teacher years of teaching experience overall and in current school
CT_FEMALE	Contract teachers' perception of absenteeism level of female versus male teachers
CT_LOCAL	Contract teacher from local area
CT_DEPEND	Contract teacher number of dependents

Code name	Definition of descriptive code
Regular teachers	
RT_EMP TERMS	Explanation of regular teacher hiring process
RT_CMP REG/CONT	Regular teacher's perception of whether the contract position is better than the regular position
RT_INC/REW LWR ABS	Incentives, rewards, or sanctions that would improve regular teacher attendance
RT_LV POL	Explanation of regular teacher leave policy
RT_LV PENALTY	Penalties imposed on regular teachers for amount and type of leave taken
RT_LV DAYS	Number of days leave taken by regular teacher in previous month
RT_MONET ABS	Effect of higher salaries and other monetary incentives on improved attendance
RT_JOB SATIS	Regular teacher explanation of general satisfaction with job and work environment
RT_JOB MOTIV	Regular teacher explanation of main motivating factor in work environment that encourages regular attendance
RT_JOB MENTOR	Extent of mentoring available for contract teachers from other teachers or principal
RT_JOB SUBST ABS	Availability of other teachers as substitutes in case of absence of regular teacher
RT_JOB FACILITIES	Regular teacher satisfaction with infrastructure facilities
RT_FEMALE/SAFE	Safety concerns of female regular teachers
RT_TCH UNION	Regular teacher union involvement
RT_SUPR	Supervision of work and attendance of regular teachers
RT_SUPR_ABS ACTION	Action taken by school officials for regular teachers' absence
RT_SUPR_INSPCT	Regular teacher recollection of last inspection of school by inspector or education officials
RT_SUPR_COMM	Supervision of regular teachers by community members
RT_EDU	Regular teacher education level and specialization
RT_EXP	Regular teacher years of teaching experience overall and in current school
RT_FEMALE	Regular teacher's perception of absenteeism level of female versus male teachers
RT_LOCAL	Regular teacher from local area
RT_DEPEND	Regular teacher's number of dependents

Code name	Definition of descriptive code
School principal	
PR_CONT TCH TERMS	Principal's description of contract teacher policy as implemented in his or her school
PR_CON LENGTH	Principal's information on length of each teacher contract at the school
PR_COMP REG/CONT ABS	Principal's record of teacher absences in the previous month (comparison of absentee behavior of contract versus regular teachers)
PR_CONT _INC/REW LWR ABS	Principal's perspective of specific incentives or sanctions in the contract policy that encourage lower absenteeism among contract versus regular teachers
PR_INC/REW LWR ABS	Principal's opinion of incentives or sanctions needed to improve contract teacher attendance
PR_REASONS ABS	Principal's perception of the main reasons for teacher absenteeism for regular and contract teachers
PR_LV POL	Details of sick and other leave afforded to contract and regular teachers by school principal
PR_LV DAYS	Principal's recollection of leave taken by contract and regular teachers in the previous month
PR_LV CON TYPE	Principal's perception of the extent and type of leave taken by contract versus regular teachers
PR_LV INFORM	Principal's perception of method of taking leave of contract and regular teachers
PR_LV CONSEQUENCE	Principal's perception of consequences related to the amount of leave and the way leave is taken
PR_MONET ABS	Principal's perception of the effect of higher salaries/monetary incentives to improve teacher attendance for contract versus regular teachers
PR_TCH UNION	Principal's knowledge of teacher union activity in his or her school
PR_SUPR	Principal's explanation of monitoring and supervision of contract and regular teachers
PR_SUPR_ INSPCT	Principal's information about last inspection of school by government education officials
PR_SUPR_ ASSESS	Principal's information about education officials' assessment of teacher absenteeism
PR_SUPR_ ACTION	Principal's information on action taken by school officials on the issue of teacher absence
PR_ABS ACTION	Action taken by school principal on teacher absence
PR_SUPR_ COMM	Principal's account of contract and regular teacher supervision by community organizations
PR_PERSONAL	Principal's perception of contract and regular teachers' personal characteristics that influence absenteeism

Code name	Definition of descriptive code
PR_EDU	Principal's perception of the effect of education on regular and contract teacher absenteeism
PR_EXP	Principal's perception of the effect of experience on regular and contract teacher absenteeism
PR_FEMALE	Principal's perception of the effect of gender on regular and contract teacher absenteeism
PR_LOCAL	Principal's perception of the likelihood of local regular and contract teacher absenteeism
PR_DEPEND	Principal's perception of the influence of dependents on regular and contract teacher absenteeism

APPENDIX C:

PARTICIPANT INFORMED CONSENT FORMS

I. Contract/Regular Teacher Consent Form

Project: Contract teacher reform policy and teacher absenteeism

Principal Investigator: Dr. Yas Nakib, The George Washington University

Sub-Investigator: Masooma Habib, The George Washington University

Dear Teacher,

I am a doctoral student at the George Washington University and am conducting research for my dissertation. The purpose of the research is to assess the design and implementation of the contract policy for its possible effects on absenteeism among teachers, which will be of assistance to educational policy makers and practitioners.

For the research, I would like to interview you for about forty-five minutes on various issues related to the contract teacher policy and teacher absenteeism. The interview can take place at a time convenient for you. For your participation in this study I would like to offer a gift voucher valued at Rs. 600 (\$10).

The identity of interviewees will remain anonymous and information provided by them will remain confidential. The research and interviews will not have any adverse effects on the careers or reputations of the participants. You may review the findings of the study. You also have the option to withdraw from the study at any time.

Your participation in this study is voluntary and for further questions I can be contacted at mhabib@gwu.edu or at 042-5757172.

Thank you,
Sincerely,

Masooma Habib
Doctoral Candidate, Education Policy
The George Washington University

Teacher participant agreement and signature:

Please sign below if you agree to participate in this study as described in the latter above:

Participant Name _____

Participant signature _____

II. School Principal Consent Form

Project: Contract teacher reform policy and teacher absenteeism
Principal Investigator: Dr. Yas Nakib, The George Washington University
Sub-Investigator: Masooma Habib, The George Washington University

Dear School Principal,

I am a doctoral student at the George Washington University and am conducting research for my dissertation. The purpose of the research is to assess the design and implementation of the contract policy for its possible effects on absenteeism among teachers, which will be of assistance to educational policy makers and practitioners.

For the research, I would like to interview you at the school site for about thirty to forty minutes and also request you to provide teacher attendance records. The interview can take place at a time convenient for you. For your participation in this study I would like to offer a stipend of Rs. 600 (\$10).

The identity of interviewees will remain anonymous and information provided by you will remain confidential. The research and interviews will not have any adverse effects on the careers or reputations of the participants. You may review the findings of the study. You also have the option to withdraw from the study at any time.

Your participation in this study is voluntary and for further questions I can be contacted at mhabib@gwu.edu or at 042-5757172.

Thank you,
Sincerely,

Masooma Habib
Doctoral Candidate, Education Policy
The George Washington University

School principal participant agreement and signature:

Please sign below if you agree to participate in this study as described in the letter above:

Participant Name _____

Participant signature _____

APPENDIX D:
SCHOOL BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Table D.1
Sample School Characteristics^a

Student gender	School level	School location	School size	Facilities
Girls	MH	UR/LI	med	satisfactory
Girls	PH	UR/HI	med	satisfactory
Boys	P	UR/LI	med	good
Boys	PH	UR/LI	small	poor
Boys	PH	UR/HI	Large	good
Girls	P	RU/LI	small	poor
Boys	MH	RU/LI	med	satisfactory
Girls	P	RU/LI	small	poor

^aLevel: **P**: primary level only (Grades N–5); **MH**: middle to high school levels (Grades 6–10); **PH**: primary to high school levels (Grades N–10)
Location: **UR**: urban, **RU**: rural, **LI**: low-income; **HI**: high-income
Size (student enrollment): **large**: 1800 and above; **med**: 500-1500; **small**: 150-400
Facilities: **good**: fairly adequate classrooms with furniture; **satisfactory**: basic, functional classrooms with barely adequate facilities; **poor**: classrooms and facilities inadequate and in disrepair

Facilities and infrastructure. The condition of infrastructure was expected to be an important factor in the work environment that influenced the motivation to attend. School facilities were assessed by a brief tour of each school accompanied by the principal or a senior teacher and via principal and teacher interviews about the condition of buildings, utilities, and basic amenities such as blackboards and furniture. Only those classrooms where class was not in session were observed, and no students were present. All schools were generally in a state of neglect as far as infrastructure and facilities were concerned. Only two schools (ranked *good*) had adequate buildings and furniture. None of the schools could be ranked *excellent* for facilities and infrastructure. Evidence of a

library or computers was scarce. About half the schools dated to preindependence times (i.e., they were built before 1947).

The maintenance of buildings was a constant issue, with 4 schools in need of major repairs and 6 with acute shortages of furniture. One school awaited funds for partial rebuilding. Rural girls' schools had the poorest facilities. The absence of desks and chairs in these classrooms meant that students had to sit on the floor. In the three schools with the worst facilities, school principals pointed out that the absence of a security guard, especially at night, was an important reason for the deterioration of school facilities. In general, better maintained schools had more selective admission processes and higher enrollments.

School level. The extent of workload at different schooling levels was expected to influence the motivation to attend for contract and regular teachers. The workload was more intense at the high school level, and the workload was greater for science, mathematics, and English teachers at all levels of schooling. Contract teachers' higher educational qualifications and perceived competence in these subjects, compared to regular teachers, made their expected work load different, which was expected to differently affect their absenteeism.

Schools were chosen from three separate groups using district-level data to represent high, middle, and primary schools. However, on visiting the school sites, there was found to be considerable overlap among the levels, depending on the demand for schooling in the area, the capacity of the school to take additional students, and principals' management styles. Two schools had only middle and high school sections, 3 had classes from primary through high school, and 3 schools had only primary classes.

Because several teachers taught across levels, depending on their educational background and skills, it was not always possible to classify them unequivocally as primary, secondary, or middle school teachers. However, the interviews revealed that contract teachers were more sought after for teaching high school grades and English, mathematics, and science due to their higher qualifications and up-to-date knowledge in these subjects.

School size. Because explanations related to absenteeism may be related to school size, this was included in the sample as a source of variation in the data that needed to be captured. The size of school, or enrollment, varied according to factors such as the existence of other public and private schools in the area and the reputation of the school based on teacher attendance and quality, exam results, and general impression of how well the school was operating. In the sample, one middle–high school in a busy urban center was very large, with over 1,800 students. Another primary–high school in a similar central part of the city was medium sized (500–1,500 enrollments). Two of the smallest schools were rural girls’ schools with 150–400 students in each school. A schools’ large size may reflect high population density and a relatively better reputation, and therefore, overcrowding and pressure to admit more children.

School location. Although the three rural schools in the sample were not far from the city, they tended to be in higher poverty areas at the outskirts of the city where the local population worked on farms or in factories. The two rural girls’ schools in the sample had the worst facilities. Compared to urban schools, rural schools had students who were more involved in helping parents with income-generating agricultural or industrial activities. Within the urban sample, one of the schools was located in an

affluent residential area, and another was located in a well-off commercial area. However, schools in higher income urban locations did not necessarily have better facilities. A school located in a very poor, congested section of the city was found to have relatively superior facilities and higher enrollments compared to a school in an upscale residential neighborhood with greater space and building allocation. The government schools located in wealthier residential areas were attended by children of domestic help, transient laborers, or nearby slum settlements. The children from affluent families living in these areas attended private schools.

Girls' vs. Boys' schools. As mentioned earlier, the two rural girls' primary schools were seen to have the worst facilities; one had no furniture and was missing electrical wires and bathroom fixtures. Officially, government schools are supposed to be separate for girls and boys, with girls' schools almost always having female teachers. High schools for boys have primarily male teachers, but some female teachers do teach in boys' schools at the primary and middle school levels. To study gender-specific reasons for teacher absence, the sample included an equal number of boys' and girls' schools to represent an equal number of male and female teachers. However, school visits revealed that all schools were coeducational at the primary level, with at least 15%–20% of students of the other gender. (In one boys' primary school, 50% of the students were girls.)

The decision to include girls in boys' schools and vice versa rested mainly on the school principal. Two interviewees recommended by the principal at a boys' primary school were women, so the overall participant sample consisted of 14 male and 18 female teachers, rather than 16 of each gender as planned before the fieldwork. However, this

selection was considered representative of the unofficial practice of coeducation in government schools up to the middle school level and the policy practice of hiring a greater proportion of female teachers at the primary level.

NGO involvement. Two schools were being assisted by NGOs as part of a government scheme to collaborate with select NGOs to improve curriculum and teaching support. The collaboration had a positive effect on teacher attendance in one primary school where government and NGO staff had a good working relationship. In another school, however, the NGO presence created tension and confusion, as duties and responsibilities had not been clearly assigned. Here, the possibility of substitution by NGO teachers made it easier for government teachers to be absent. Including NGO-assisted schools in the sample was not considered to result in selection bias as it represented a policy measure of NGO partnerships being explored by the government to improve school effectiveness. NGO teachers were not included in the teacher sample, but their impact on contract and regular teacher absence was brought up during the interviews.

APPENDIX E:

SAMPLE TEACHER BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Comparative data on contract and regular teacher characteristics related to education, experience and salary are summarized in Table E.1. Detailed data on these background characteristics, as well as additional data on number of dependents, after-school jobs, and commuting time, are given in Table E.2.

Table E.1
Teacher Background Characteristics in Eight Sample Schools

School	Teacher characteristics					
	Average education (years)		Average Teaching experience (years)		Monthly salary (Rupees)	
	Contract	Regular	Contract	Regular	Contract	Regular
A	16	14	5	19	7700	23500
B	16	13	2	27	4250	12500
C	15	16	2.5	17	6250	15500
D	16	14	4	16	6040	12000
E	16	14	6	33	8500	15000
F	16	10	4.5	22	6140	9800
G	15	12	3	24	5830	12250
H	16	14	5.5	34	8100	15000
Overall averages	16	13	4	24	6600	14443

As a group, contract teachers were distinctly younger and better educated, but were paid less and less experienced compared to regular teachers. The majority (87%) of contract teachers had masters' degrees (calculated as 16 years of education); only 12% of tenured teachers had masters' degrees, and 30% of regular teachers had less than a bachelor's degree. However, all 16 contract teachers were earning less than Rs.10,000 per month, whereas all 16 regular teachers were earning between Rs. 9,000 and Rs. 27,000 per month. Primary contract teachers were paid the least. Salaries seemed to reflect work

experience; there was a marked contrast in teaching experience, with regular teachers' experience ranging from 9 to 37 years, compared to 1 to 5 years for contract teachers. Despite their lesser experience, contract teachers were in greater demand to teach high school students science, mathematics, and English due to their more recent credentials, higher qualifications, and low salaries.

The majority of teachers, up to 84%, said they provided the main source of their family's income. Almost all teachers were financially responsible for family members other than themselves. Contract teachers made up the majority of the few (mainly younger and unmarried) teachers without dependents.

All the teachers who said that they had after-school jobs were men and almost all were contract teachers. About half the male teachers worked after school. Other male teachers who had other jobs might not have wanted to divulge this information. Female teachers' demanding household responsibilities and lower mobility were given as reasons for not taking jobs after school. The women might have earned additional income from tutoring but did so less often than male teachers.

There was considerable variation in the distance teachers traveled to get to school. It took about 20 minutes longer on average for female teachers to get to work. On average, contract teachers' commute took about 35 minutes one way, slightly more than regular teachers'. Male teachers had a definite advantage in their commute: on average, 24 minutes one way, compared to female teachers, who took about 42 minutes one way (Table E.2).

Table E.2
Detailed Teacher Background Table

Respondent code^a	Education level (years)	Teaching experience (years)	Salary (Rupees)	After-school job?	Depend. on income?	Commute (time in minutes)
1	14	16	20000	no	yes	30
2	16	23	27000	no	yes	40
3	16	5	7700	no	no	45
4	16	5	7700	no	yes	10
5	14	37	16000	no	no	50
6	14	31	14000	no	yes	90
7	16	5	7700	no	yes	25
8	16	6	8500	yes	yes	30
9	12	20	12000	yes	yes	15
10	12	28	12500	no	yes	30
11	16	3	5834	no	yes	10
12	14	3	5834	yes	yes	15
13	12	37	14000	no	yes	40
14	14	17	11000	no	yes	5
15	16	1.5	4250	no	yes	60
16	16	2	4250	no	yes	45
17	14	36	16000	no	yes	40
18	14	30	14000	no	yes	20
19	16	6	7776	no	no	25
20	16	6	8500	yes	yes	25
21	14	13	13000	no	yes	60
22	16	20	11000	no	yes	30
23	16	4.5	6020	no	no	45
24	14	4	6058	no	yes	90
25	16	9	15000	yes	yes	5
26	16	26	16000	no	yes	10
27	14	3	6500	yes	yes	60
28	16	2	6000	yes	yes	10
29	10	25	9900	no	yes	5
30	10	19	9700	no	yes	5
31	16	4	6000	no	no	60
32	16	5	6280	no	yes	5

^aEach respondent code includes information about teacher gender, school, location, and schooling level, which were used in the analysis of findings.

Table E.3

Job Environment Factors Perceived to Increase Teacher Absenteeism^a

Work environment factors	Responses by contract teachers, regular teachers, and principals (out of 115)	Percentage of female responses (out of 22)	Percentage of male responses (out of 18)
Student-related factors			
Weak academic base	24	77%	35%
Parental poverty	23	68%	40%
Low student attendance	7	23%	10%
Government policy			
Large class size	10	23%	25%
School calendar	7	23%	10%
Late textbook delivery	7	18%	15%
Corruption	6	14%	17%
Overage students	5	14%	10%
Automatic student promotion	4	9%	10%
NGO involvement	3**	9%	5%
Poor facilities and infrastructure			
Inadequate furniture, buildings, or security	8	23%	17%
Absence of security guard	3	9%	5%
Teacher collegiality			
Lack of respect	5	4%	20%
Teacher relationships	3**	4%	10%
Total number of responses	115	73	42

APPENDIX F:
COMPARING SALARIES AND YEARS OF EXPERIENCE

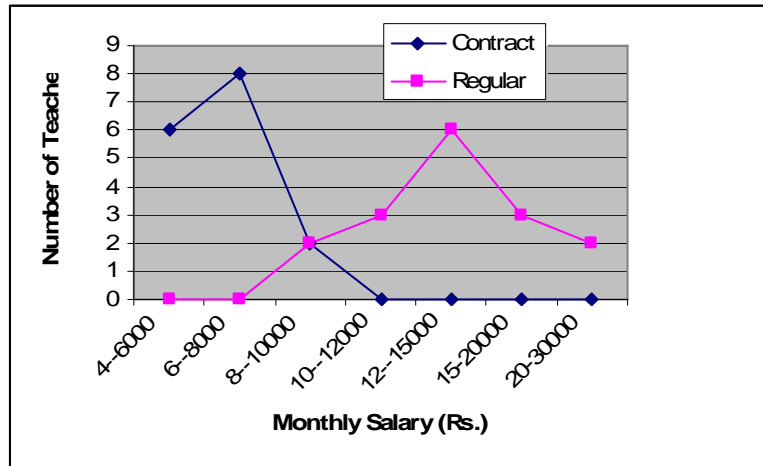


Figure F.1. Salaries of contract and regular teachers.

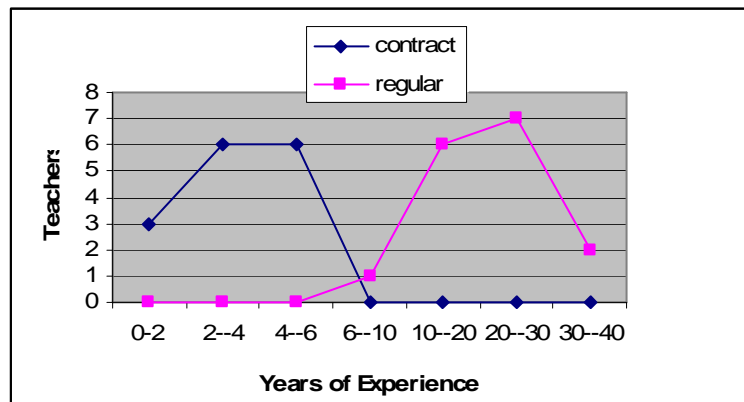


Figure F.2. Years of experience of contract and regular teachers.

APPENDIX G:
EXAMPLE OF CODING

The table below shows the start list codes in the left margin and the interacting and new pattern codes in the right margin.

Table G.1
Example of Coding Showing Descriptive, Pattern and Interaction Codes Relating Contract Policy Features and Absenteeism

Start list codes	Transcript text	Descriptive/pattern/interaction codes
CT_LV POL	<p>Text related to Research Question 2</p> <p>MH: What features of the contract policy affect absence?</p> <p>S1c1: Could be because there is not much leave allowed. I have to use all my casual leave when my children get sick. I also had to take unpaid leave since there is no maternity leave</p> <p>MH: Are there other terms of the contract that affect teacher absence?</p> <p>S1c1: We are told by the headmistress that you are on contract and have to perform well. You have no job security. And if the headmistress gave anything written like that about me, that “she does not perform well,” that would be a drawback for me. But I think the contract teachers may be a little more efficient in attending compared to regular teachers, because they might feel that they may get a bad report.</p>	<p><i>INC/SANC: FEWER LEAVE OPT (IS10)</i></p> <p><i>INC/SANC: LACK BENEf (IS2)</i></p>
CT_SUPR_ABS ACTION	<p>MH: Has any contract teacher been dismissed for unsatisfactory performance?</p> <p>S1c1: I have not heard of any case like that</p> <p>MH: So, you feel the contract makes a difference to teacher attendance?</p>	<p><i>INC/SANC: JOB SEC/CAREER (IS5)</i></p>
CT_COMP REG/ CON ABS	<p>S1c1: Yes, teachers are more conscientious because of it, but there is a problem that teachers leave because the job is nontransferable. Now they are talking about mutual transfer. But we can’t say yet whether this will be allowed. Teachers often have to move when they get married, so because they can’t transfer, they leave the job and wait for a new opening closer to where they live.</p>	<p><i>&INC/SANC: RESIG, NON-TRANS (IS11)</i></p>
CT_INC/REW LWR ABS	<p>MH: What makes contract teachers stay in the job?</p> <p>S1c1: I think if we got the facilities regular</p>	<p><i>&INC/SANC: RESIG, NON-TRANS (IS11)</i></p>

Start list codes	Transcript text	Descriptive/pattern/interaction codes
CT_ COMP REG/ CON ABS	<p>teachers get but the position remained a contract position, that would be good.</p> <p>MH: In what way?</p> <p>S1c1: Because the contract makes teachers more efficient, and this benefits the children. If there were allowances, medical leave, earned leave, and so on—some scale so that the salary can increase automatically. With regular positions, they know they won't lose their jobs, and they are not so qualified, so they are not as efficient as contract teachers. Attendance is better if you have a little fear, that if you don't work well, you could lose your job.</p>	<p><i>INC/SANC: LACK BENE (IS2)</i></p> <p><i>INC/SANC: LOW SAL (IS1)</i></p> <p><i>&INC/SANC: NON-RENEW, LOWSAL, LACK BENE</i></p>

In table G-1, interacting codes begin with &, and the main factor with which other factors are perceived to interact is underlined. For instance, the first part of the code *&INC/SANC: RESIG, NON-TRANS (IS11)* represents an interacting code for the open-ended question on contract features related to incentives and sanctions in the policy that affect absenteeism & (*INC/SANC*). The second part of the code, *RESIG, NON-TRANS*, indicates that that the respondent mentioned nontransfer as a reason for resignation while talking about the resignation feature of the contract policy. The code (IS11) represents an abbreviation for the code used in matrix tables for analyzing the findings.