

IMPACT OF TRUANT BEHAVIOUR ON ADOLESCENT SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS' ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN KATSINA STATE

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Abstract

This study investigated the impact of truant behaviour on adolescent secondary school students' academic performance in Katsina state. The study was guided by two research objectives, two research questions and tested two null hypotheses, which include determining the impact of truancy on academic performance among secondary school students in Katsina zonal education quality assurance. A descriptive research design was adopted for the study and a simple random sampling technique was used to select two hundred and ninety seven (297) teachers from the population of one thousand three hundred and twenty four (1324). Students Truant Behaviour Questionnaire for Teachers (STBQ) by Rivers (2010) was used. The instrument was validated and the reliability was established at .709. Null hypotheses were tested at $P \leq 0.05$ levels of significance using chi-square, while simple percentage was used in answering research questions. Finding revealed that truant behavior has negative effects on student's academic performance due to its tendency to cause failures in terminal examinations and increase rate of dropouts in Katsina zonal education quality assurance. The result further revealed peer group significantly contribute to the act of truancy in our secondary school. Finally, some recommendations were made, which include, teachers and parents should put more effort to address cases of truancy in the school setting and ensure that their children are adequately provided for and morally trained and yield high academic performance and also teachers should establish rules and regulations in the classroom against disruptive behaviour.

Key words: Truant behaviour, academic performance, adolescent students.

Introduction

There is no doubt that educational standards at the secondary school level in Nigeria are on steady decline. Thus, performance of students appears to be failing to meet minimum learning requirements to acquire basic skills and competence. As a result, poor academic performance seems to be the order of the day as reflected in the students' examinations and test scores. In recent times, education has been recognized globally as one of the universal ways of survival and improvement of the well-being of individuals and society. The 6-3-3-4 System of Education established in 1982 was aimed at providing Universal Basic Education for the citizens in order to breed species of individuals with compassion for our great Nation, having national consciousness with the right attitude to life, properties and values required to move national development to the next level (Ogbonna, Chinasa, & Onwuchekwa, 2009 in Dorcas, 2019).

However, several factors have posed relentless restriction to the trend of the rapid development in education; for which truancy among student in secondary schools has been a cankerworm to education. This has raised several questions to the quality of education and educational administration in Nigerian secondary schools (Oghuwu, 2010). Musa (2014) identified the following negative impact of truancy on adolescent secondary school students that affect their present and future life in education. Truancy results in loss of intellectual development and lack of improvement of individual. It leads to poor academic performance at the end of the school periods, school terms and school year. Truancy as a threat to academic performances of the student is believed to reduce the quality of education the child receives. It reduces the standard of academic achievement of a child. It leads to the fall of educational standard in schools. It increases the rate of examination malpractices and poor examination results of both internal and external examinations. Truancy is also a factor that contributes to idealness, joblessness, unemployment and underemployment of most adults today, just because they engaged in the act of Truancy during their school days.

Truancy is one of the major antisocial discipline problems among secondary school students in Nigeria. The concept and acts of indiscipline have received a lot of attention by researchers. Peck (2003) in Musa (2010) and Adeboyeje, (2000) opined that the various behavioural disorders like stealing, violence, drug abuse, examination malpractice, sexual abuse and truancy have so undermined effective teaching-learning processes that some teachers have become helpless and disorganized in their task of impacting knowledge to the learners. (Oghuwu, 2010).

According to Huzinga & Thornberry (2000), as cited in Adefunke (2015), truancy is defined as having an unexcused absence from school for one or more part of the day for at least three school days during five-day school week. Moreover, Salford City Council Report (2008) defined truancy as the act when a child, who is believed to have been at school, fails to attend school classes without the permission or awareness of the parents or the school authority concerned. Truancy is an international unauthorized absence from school activities. Echebiwe (2009) in Ngutor, Moses & Solomon (2015) defined truancy as a situation when a child under sixteen years of age who is registered at school fails to attend classes without prior formal permission from the parent or school authority. Therefore, truancy is the practice of staying away from school without permission. A child who engages in this act is therefore referred to as a truant. This implies that every child is expected to be in school and must be present in school and class attendance

Ma'aruf (2005) identified four major home factors as being responsible for truancy namely: Poor relationship between children and parents; Poor physical conditions at home; Use of corporal punishment in the house; Lack of parental interest in the child's welfare. According to Scheff (2007), in Musa (2014) the reason a student develop truant behaviour in school are many and diverse, depending on the age and circumstances of each student. Sometimes a student will skip school because they feel unsafe at school or on their way to or from school. Other students may miss school because of family issues, financial demands, substance abuse,

or mental health problems. Factors contributing to truancy commonly stem from three core areas: school, family and community. Innate student characteristics and their experiences within all these areas will have a heavy impact on truancy rates.

The peer influence had been identified as a major factor influencing a child's truancy behaviour. Many researchers point out that one of the common causes of truancy and disruptive behaviour in children is the influence of friends and peers. Many times these peers are seen encouraging truancy as a status-seeking activity or as a way of joining in or blending in. What is classed as truancy can depend largely on the school's attitude to the 'truant' or their problems. Relationships with teachers, seen as lacking respect/fairness, play a large factor in truancy rates among children. Often times this inability to get along with teachers and/or students will result in disciplinary problems which may lead to suspension, or expulsion. For example inconsistent and ineffective school attendance policies, in conjunction with poor record keeping, may cause a school to inadequately identify a child's special education needs. Closely related to the issue of a child's relationship with school is the matter of bullying due to teachers' inability to control, or problems arising from the child's own personality or learning abilities.

The home is powerful determinant factors in the behaviour of children family factors that contribute to truancy in students are innately personal in nature. Parentally condoned absence is especially influential, as it reinforces the lack of consequences for irresponsible/unwanted behaviour on the part of the child. Parental attitudes to education are crucial to schools success in keeping children in school; often times a parent's condemnation of truancy is construed as the parent's not valuing education. It is worth noting that many parents indiscriminately sanction an absence by sending a note or making a call.

Statement of the Problem

Possible Effects of Truancy Henry (2007) as cited by Boga (2010) indicates that truancy's consequences are extensive, resulting in negative implications for multiple levels of society. In the short-term, truancy can predict maladjustment, poor academic performance, school dropout, substance abuse, delinquency, and teen-age pregnancy. In the long-term, evidence reveals truancy as a predictor of poor adult outcomes, including violence, marital instability, job instability, adult criminality, and incarceration. Moreover, truancy exerts a negative effect on community because of its correlation with delinquency, crime, and other negative adult outcomes. Student dropout from school is the most obvious result of chronic absenteeism.

The school has been established as the agent of the society to mould the habits, interest, attitudes and feelings of students and transmit the societal norms, culture, values and traditions from one generation to another. Despite this, some students still do not attend school classes. Many of our youths now run away from schools while in many of the cases, the parents believe they are attending school classes. While they are away from school, they exercise freedom in engaging in a lot of unwanted behaviour like fighting and drug abuse. This situation in our schools is highly worrisome. Truancy is a problem because the absent students cannot benefit

from the various programmes that the school offers. Effects of truancy have been reported to include lower academic achievements, delinquent and criminal activities. It has been established that truancy is become part of teaching learning.

However, it appears that few studies have been conducted in Katsina especially in Katsina zone education quality assurance, where educational performance of secondary school students appears to be poor and also seem to be degrading. This study aims to fill this gap by examining the effects of truancy on educational performance in the area with a view to providing recommendations that would help reverse the situation and rescue the educational system back to its formal glory.

Objectives of the Study

The objective of the study includes to:

1. Determine the effect of truancy on the academic performance of students in secondary schools in Katsina zonal education quality assurance.
2. Determine whether peer group influence contribute to the act of truancy in secondary schools in Katsina zonal education quality assurance.
3. Examine the factors responsible for truancy in secondary schools in Katsina zonal education quality assurance.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised:

1. What are the effect of truancy on the academic performance of students in secondary schools in Katsina zonal education quality assurance?
2. Does peer group influence contribute to the act of truancy in secondary schools in Katsina zonal education quality assurance?
3. What are the factors responsible for truancy in secondary schools in Katsina zonal education quality assurance?

Hypothesis

The following research hypotheses were formulated:

1. There are no significant effect of truancy on the academic performance of secondary school students in Katsina zonal education quality assurance.
2. Peer group does not significantly contribute to the act of truancy in secondary schools in Katsina zonal education quality assurance.

Methodology

The population comprises all teachers in the twenty five (25) public senior secondary schools in Katsina zonal education quality assurance. The descriptive survey design was adopted to determine the impact of truant behaviour on academic performance among adolescent

secondary school students in Katsina zonal education quality assurance of Katsina state. A simple random sampling technique was used to select a sample of two hundred and ninety seven (297) teachers based on the recommendation of Research advisor (2006) from the population of one thousand three hundred and twenty four (1,324). Students Truant Behavior Questionnaire for Teachers (STBQ) by Rivers (2010) was used.

Results

Research Question 1: What are the effect of truancy on the academic performance of students in secondary schools in Katsina zonal education quality assurance?

Table1: The Effects of Truancy on Academic Performances of Students

| S/No | The Effects of Students' Truancy in Secondary Schools | SA (%) | A (%) | U (%) | SD (%) | D (%) | Total (%) |
|------|--|-------------|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 1 | Truancy in secondary school reduces the quality of secondary School Education | 197 (66) | 50 (16.66) | 0 | 30 (10) | 20 (6.67) | 297 (100) |
| 2 | Truancy results in poor Academic Performances at the end year school examinations. | 247 (83.3) | 30 (10) | 5 (1.67) | 10 (3.33) | 5 (1.67) | 297 (100) |
| 3 | Truancy affects the students' future status after their school days | 207 (70) | 45 (15) | 10 (3.33) | 20 (6.67) | 15 (5) | 297 (100) |
| 4 | Truancy in secondary schools leads to the production of school drop-outs | 247 (83.33) | 30 (11) | 0 | 15 (5) | 5 (1.67) | 297 (100) |
| 5 | Truancy reduces academic performance of students. | 262 (88.33) | 20 (6.67) | 0 | 15 (5) | 0 | 297 (100) |

Table 1 item 1 shows that 197 respondent representing (66%) of the respondent strongly agreed that truancy in secondary school reduces the quality of secondary School Education, 50% equally agreed to the statement, while 30 and 20 respondents strongly agreed and disagreed to the assertion. Item 2, 247 respondents strongly agreed that truancy results in poor Academic performances students at the end year school examinations, 50 (16.66%) are in agreement with the assertion, 5 respondents are undecided on the assertion whereas 30 and 20 strongly disagreed and agreed respectively to the statement. Item 3 also shows 70% (207) of the respondents strongly agreed to the assertion that Truancy affects the students' future status after their school days, 45 of the respondents also agreed with the statement, 10 (3.33%) are undecided on the issue, while 30 and 20 strongly agreed and disagreed with the assertion. Item 4 More so, on the effects of truancy on academic performances of students, 83.33% of the respondents strongly agreed that truancy in secondary schools leads to the production of school drop-outs, 30 also were in agreement with the statement, while 15 and 5 strongly disagreed and

agreed with the assertion. Item 5, 262 of the respondents also state that truancy reduces academic performance of students, 6.67% agreed with the statement, while the remaining 15 respondents totally disagreed with the statement. The implication of this analysis is that truancy is a major problem to the academic performance of students in secondary schools, based on the responses obtained from majority of the respondents which indicates that truancy is a major problem to academic performance of secondary school students in Katsina Zonal Education Quality Assurance.

Research Question Two: Does peer group influence contribute to the act of truancy in secondary schools in Katsina zonal education quality assurance?

Table2: Peer Group Acts that Constitute Truancy

| S/No | Acts that Constitute Truancy | SA (%) | A (%) | U (%) | SD (%) | D (%) | Total (%) |
|------|---|-------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-----------|
| 1 | Students engage in other activities outside the school | 98 (33.33) | 69 (23.33) | 40 (13.33) | 50 (16.66) | 40 (13.33) | 297 (100) |
| 2 | Students are absent from schools without due permission from school authorities concerned | 197 (66) | 60 (16.66) | 0 | 30 (10) | 10 (3.33) | 297 (100) |
| 3 | Students visit other places of interest from school | 128 (43.33) | 50 (16.66) | 20 (6.67) | 59 (20) | 40 (13.33) | 297 (100) |
| 4 | Students come to school regularly but often go home whenever they like | 163 (55) | 55 (18.33) | 0 | 57 (19.33) | 22 (7.33) | 297 (100) |
| 5 | Students come to school at any time they like within the school hour | 217 (73.33) | 50 (16.67) | 0 | 20 (6.67) | 10 (3.33) | 297 (100) |

Response on the on peer group acts constituting truancy among secondary school students, Question 6 shows that 33.33% of the respondents strongly agreed that the act constituting truancy is when Students engage in other activities outside the school, 69 respondents were in support of the statement, 40 were undecided on the matter, while 50 and 40 strongly disagreed and disagreed with the statement. Question 7 also shows that 66% of the respondents believed that students absent from schools without due permission from school authorities is an act of truancy, 60 respondents support the argument, whereas 30 and 10 respondents totally disagreed with the statement respectively. 43.33% of the respondents believed that Students visit other places of interest from school, 50 respondents agreed with the statement, 20 were undecided on the statement, while 59 and 40 strongly agreed and disagreed with the statement.

Question 9 in the table also revealed that 163 respondents said that Students come to school regularly but often go home whenever they like, 55 respondents said the same, 57 and 22 respondents totally disagreed with the statement, 217 respondents strongly agreed that students come to school at any time they like within the school hour, 50 respondents support the assertion, 20 and 10 strongly disagreed with the statement. The implication of this analysis is that Students are absent from schools without due permission from school authorities concerned, they come to school regularly but often go home whenever they like and they come to school at any time they like within the school hour based on the responses obtained from majority of the respondents which are the major acts constitute truancy in Secondary Schools in Katsina Zonal Education Quality Assurance.

Research Question 3: What are the factors responsible for truancy in secondary schools in Katsina zonal education quality assurance?

Table3: Factors Responsible for the Acts of Students’ Truancy in Secondary Schools

| S/No | Factors Responsible for Truancy in Secondary Schools | SA (%) | A (%) | U (%) | SD (%) | D (%) | Total (%) |
|------|--|----------------|---------------|--------------|----------------|---------------|--------------|
| 1 | Long distance from home to school | 50 (16.67) | 59 (20) | 5 (1.67) | 143 (48.33) | 40 (13.33) | 297 (100) |
| 2 | Teachers’ methods of teaching | 232 (78.33) | 40 (13.33) | 0 | 20 (6.67) | 5 (1.67) | 297 (100) |
| 3 | Decline of interest in education by the students | 197 (66.67) | 35 (11.67) | 10 (3.33) | 30 (10) | 15 (5) | 297 (100) |
| 4 | Unattractive school and classroom environment | 267 (90) | 15 (5) | 0 | 10 (3.33) | 5 (1.67) | 297 (100) |
| 5 | Uninteresting school facilities and equipment | 252 (85) | 25 (8.33) | 0 | 5 (1.67) | 20 (6.67) | 297 (100) |
| 6 | School fee drive. | 197 (66.67) | 59 (19.67) | 0 | 30 (10) | 11 (3.67) | 297 (100) |
| 7 | Parents’ negative attitude towards education | 277 (93.33) | 15 (5) | 0 | 20 (6.67) | 0 | 297 (100) |
| 8 | Poor disciplinary measures in homes and schools | 247 (83.33) | 30 (10) | 5 (1.67) | 15 (5) | 0 | 297 (100) |
| 9 | Too much manual labour in schools. | 197 (66.67) | 50 (16.67) | 0 | 40 (13.33) | 10 (3.33) | 297 (100) |
| 10 | Bad peer group influence | 247 (83.33) | 30 (10) | 0 | 15 (5) | 5 (1.67) | 297 (100) |

On factors responsible for truancy in secondary schools question 11, shows that 16.67% of the respondents believed that Long distance from home to school is one of the factors responsible for truancy, 59 respondents are in support of the motion, 5 are undecided, while 143 and 40 strongly disagreed and disagreed to the statement. The question 12, shows that 232 of the respondents said that teachers' methods of teaching is responsible for truancy, 40 of the respondent are in agreement with the statement, 20 and 5 strongly disagreed and disagreed that teacher's method of teaching is responsible for students truancy.

The table also shows that 66.67% of the teachers agreed that decline of interest in education by the students or students is responsible for students truancy, 11.67% agreed with the statement, 3.33% and 10% has strongly disagreed and disagreed with the statement. The question 14, shows that 267 of the respondents said that Unattractive school and classroom environment is responsible for truancy, 15 of the respondent are in agreement with the statement, 10 and 5 strongly disagreed and disagreed with the statement.

The question 15, shows that 252 of the respondents said that Uninteresting school facilities and equipment is responsible for truancy, 25 of the respondent are in agreement with the statement, 5 and 20 strongly disagreed and disagreed with the statement. The question 16, shows that 197 of the respondents said that school fee drive is responsible for truancy, 59 of the respondent are in agreement with the statement, 30 and 11 strongly disagreed and disagreed with the statement.

The question 17, 93.33% representing 277 of the respondents strongly agreed that parents' negative attitude towards education is responsible for pupil's truancy behaviour 5% were in agreement with the statement, while the remaining 20 respondents disagreed with the assertion. The question 18, 247 respondents strongly agreed that poor disciplinary measures in homes and schools is responsible for student/students truancy, 30 respondents were in support of the assertion, 5 were undecided on the matter, whereas the remaining 15 respondents totally disagreed with the statement.

The question 19, 197 (66.67%) of the respondents strongly agreed to the assertion that too much manual labour in schools is one of the factors responsible for truancy, 50 respondents support the motion, while 40 and 30 strongly disagreed and agreed with the statement respectively. The last question in the table indicated that, 247 respondents believed bad peer group influence bad peer group influence is one of the factors responsible for students truancy, 30 of the respondents also agreed that bad influence is one of the factors responsible for truancy, while 15 and 5 of the respondents strongly agreed and disagreed with the assertion. The implication of this analysis is that teachers' methods of teaching, Unattractive school and classroom environment, uninteresting school facilities, parent negative attitude, poor disciplinary measures and above all bad peer group influence based on the responses obtained from majority of the respondents are the factors responsible for truancy in Secondary Schools in Katsina Zonal Education Quality Assurance.

Hypothesis One: There are no significant effect of truancy on the academic performance of secondary school students in Katsina zonal education quality assurance.

Table 4: Chi-square results of relationship between truancy and academic performance

| O | E | O-E | (O-E) ² | Σ (O-E) ² |
|-----|----|-----|--------------------|----------------------|
| 247 | 10 | 237 | 57600 | 5617 |
| 30 | 5 | 25 | 625 | 125 |
| | | | | $X^2 = 5742$ |

The critical value of 3.84 is obtained from the chi-square table at alpha level of 0.05 or 5% and the calculated value is obtained at 5742, the calculated value is greater than the critical value and as such the researcher rejected the null hypothesis which state that there are no significant effects of truancy on the academic performance of Secondary School Students in Katsina zonal education quality assurance, and accepted the alternative hypothesis which state that there is a significant effects of truancy on the academic performance of Secondary School Students in Katsina zonal education quality assurance.

Hypothesis Two: Peer group does not significantly contribute to the act of truancy in secondary school in Katsina zonal education quality assurance.

Table 2: Chi-square results of relationship between truancy and peer group influence

| O | E | O-E | (O-E) ² | Σ (O-E) ² |
|-----|----|-----|--------------------|----------------------|
| 247 | 15 | 232 | 55225 | 3588.3 |
| 30 | 5 | 25 | 625 | 125 |
| | | | | $X^2 = 3588.3$ |

The critical value of 3.84 is obtained from the chi-square table at alpha level of 0.05 or 5% and the calculated value is obtained at 3588.3, the calculated value is greater than the critical value and as such the researcher rejected the null hypothesis which state that Peer group does not significantly contribute to the act of truancy in our Secondary School, and accepted the alternative hypothesis which state that peer group significantly contribute to the act of truancy in secondary schools in Katsina zonal education quality assurance.

Discussion of Findings

The study revealed that there was a significant relationship between truancy and academic performance of students. The finding agrees with Nwadiani (2009) as cited in Ngutor et.al (2015) which states that truancy could result into poor academic achievement, losing friends and parties and disruption in class. The study also found that there was not a significant relationship between the school physical environments and truancy behaviour among students. The study corroborated with Adeboyeje, (2000), and Obayan (2003) and Garry (2001) which revealed that classroom environment exert some dominant influence on learners' academic performance. Poor school physical environment with problems of inadequate chairs and tables, lack of space to move freely in the classrooms due to overcrowding of students in small size classes could constitute barriers and obstacles to learning. The unhealthy physical environment could also lead to absenteeism or truancy of students.

This finding also tends to agree with several studies and assertions which include, Yahaya et.al. (2010) in Musa (2014) in longitudinal study of African-American males, found that of those students who were often truant in high school and secondary 75% failed to graduate. Failure to graduate, in turn, is associated with diminished earning potential in adulthood and other poor outcome. The finding of the present study is in agreement with the finding of Ngutor, Moses and Solomon (2015) that their study found truant behavior has negative effects on a student's academic achievement due to its tendency to cause failures in terminal examinations and increase rate of dropouts.

This finding collaborates with arguments by Geo-Opah (2003) in Sambe et.al. Al (2015) that students who are truants have the tendency to drop out of school, as schooling does not make meaning to them. The students see schooling as punishment and something they are doing for the interest of their parents and not for their self-interest. Heilbrunn's (2007) analysis also seems to point to this direction, which suggests that truancy is related to dropout. In the process of his analysis of the cost of truancy on public spending, he appears to argue that truancy has an immense influence on dropout rates and that if reduced, spending on social services could also be reduced. However, the finding is in contrary with the finding of Eisen et al. (2015) cited in Dorcas (2019) in which they found different results where the study indicated that there is no statistically significant relationship between class attendance and academic performance by adjusting the control variables which includes gender and ages.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study it has been concluded that truant behaviors have profound effects on the academic performance of secondary school students in Katsina zonal education quality assurance. However, constant absence from school has serious negative consequences both for truant students or youth themselves and for communities, these effects tend to be negative as truancy could lead to poor performance or failure in terminal examinations. Also, it has the tendency to increase the rate of dropouts in secondary schools in the area. Therefore, Merton's Anomie theory, which supposes that socially accepted goals such as education and

hard work could assure success seem to agree with the findings. Thus, students who study hard can achieve more academically, while those who do not are bound for failure.

Recommendations

The following recommendations based on the findings have been made:

1. Parents should put more effort to ensure that their children are adequately provided for and morally trained.
2. There should be enlightenment campaigns by government agencies, and non-government organizations for parents and children on the dangers inherent in truancy.
3. The school authority and teachers should ensure conducive school physical environment for good working relationship between teachers and students.
4. School administrators should supervise adequately the keeping and utilization of attendance registers for effective management of student.

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