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CAUSES, EFFECTS AND REMEDIES OF TRUANCY AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN JALINGO, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

Introduction: Truancy been one of the juvenile delinquent behaviour of secondary school students has affected students' academic performance and the society. This study was designed to ascertained the causes, effects and the ways to remedy the problem.

Purpose of the study: The study identified the causes, effects and remedies of truancy among secondary school students in Jalingo Taraba State, Nigeria.

Methodology: Descriptive design was used for the study. The population of the study comprised of all the 11,765 senior secondary school students in the 34 secondary schools in Jalingo. The sample size was 250 SS II students selected randomly from 10 senior secondary schools. Self-designed questionnaire tagged "Causes, Effects and Remedies of Truancy Questionnaire (CERTQ)" was used. The instrument was subjected to pilot testing using 50 respondents and Cronbach alpha was used to test the reliability. Reliability coefficient of 0.82 was obtained. The research instrument was administered directly to the students. Descriptive statistical techniques such as mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the research questions.

Results: The study found out that the causes of truancy are physical/mental ill-health, drug abuse, broken home, harsh disciplinary, lack of parental supervision, poor academic performance, poor parental income, unconducive school environment, bullying and wrong teaching methods. The effects of truancy are school dropout, poor academic performance, engagement in crime, violence, drug abuse, family instability and poor self-esteem. The remedies to truancy are review of disciplinary policies, supervision and monitoring of students' academic activities by parents, provision of adequate facilities in schools, intimating of students on the danger of drug abuse, taking care of students with physical and mental ill-health.

Recommendations/Classroom Implications: The study recommended among other things that parents should supervise and monitor their children academic activities and the government should provide adequate facilities in schools.

Keywords: Truancy, Causes, Effects, Remedies, Secondary Schools, Students



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PUBLIC INTEREST STATEMENT

This study will benefit the student, parents, school counsellors and the government. The students will learn the effects of truancy and how to remedy the act of truancy and desist from it if they are practicing it. Parents will advise and caution their children against indulging in truancy and provide them with necessary financial and materials support that will help them to attend school regularly. School counsellors can use the result from this study to counsel students on the effects of truancy and how to remedy it. The government can use the recommendation from the study to provide adequate facilities in schools in order to make the learning environment conducive for the students.

INTRODUCTION

Truancy among secondary school students has become a major challenge in Nigeria education system and is one the delinquent behaviours. Truancy is defined as the absence of a student from school deliberately without the knowledge and consent of the parents. Being absent from class and school affects students' ability to learn (Carter, 1999). Odoemelan (2004) also defined truancy as the act of staying away from school during school hours without the permission of the parents or the school authorities with a view to avoiding punishment, dodging specific functions and neglecting certain lawful school duties. Huzinga and Thornberry (2000) described truancy 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. Therefore, Truancy is the practice of staying away from school without permission. A child who is involved in the act of truancy is referred to as a truant. A truant is a child who skips school and instead goes somewhere else or wanders around (Sayeler, 1997). A truant leaves home but does not arrive at school; instead, he escapes from school or class to indulge in whatever activities that pique his interest (Gabb, 1997).

There are many reasons why students engage in the act of truancy which according to Zhang, Katsiyannis, Barrett and Wilson (2007) can be categorized into family factors, school factors and the student's factors. Family factors that may cause truant behavior are parents' education, parental supervision, and household income. Epstein and Sheldon (2002) expressed that about one third (1/3) to a half (1/2) of the cases of truancy came from the

low income class and single parenting. Some of the school factors that may cause truant behavior among secondary school students include school climate, class size, attitudes, ability to meet each student's diverse needs, and the school's discipline policy regarding truancy. According to Wilkins (2008), students that attend large schools may feel isolated or alienated in their school setting, so to escape these feelings they choose not to attend. In oversized classrooms, students' diverse needs, whether they are instructional, social and various others, cannot consistently be met and student/teacher relationships cannot be developed which leads to a school climate and attitude in which each individual must fend for himself. Student variables that may cause truant behavior include physical and mental health problems, and drug use. DeSocio, Linda and Harriet (2007) identifies physical and mental health issues that contributing toward school absenteeism. Kolsac (2017) found out that students that use alcohol or other hard drugs are more likely to skip school than peers who do not use alcohol.

The effects of truancy are many and very obviously affect the truants' life academically now and in the future. Some of the effects of truancy according to Ogbonna, Chinasa and Grace (2012) are reduction in the quality of education, poor academic results of examination, having half-baked graduates and large number of school drop-outs and the effect on the general life style in future and in their adulthood after school days. Truancy is also a factor that contributes to idleness, joblessness, unemployment and underemployment of most adults today, just because they engaged in the act of Truancy during their school days.

According to Kanga and Jagero (2015) truancy is a problem in secondary schools, and it has negative consequences for truants, their schools, and society as a whole. They identified some of the negative repercussions of absenteeism on an individual, such as low academic performance, wasted learning time, strained relationships with teachers and parents, and eventual school dropout. Poor class and school performance, as well as time wasted by teachers following up on truants and counseling them, are all negative consequences for the school. Poverty for the truants' family in the future owing to unemployment, family instability, and insecurity as the truants go out stealing and engaging in other delinquent conduct both now and in the future as they become involved in robberies and other crimes due to their social status.

Afande and Mathenge (2015) found out that the different ways of managing truancy in secondary schools include the following: secured learning environments, early childhood education, early literacy development, practicing reinforcement and reward systems; effective monitoring of students by parents and guidance, regular taking of attendance, mentoring/tutoring, systemic renewal, family engagement, school community collaboration, using a variety of instructional approaches, learning communities within schools, career and technical education, student welfare, personalized learning, life skills education, tutoring and mentor systems, counseling therapy and alternative schooling. These approaches can help in preventing the act of truancy in secondary schools. According to Kanga and Jagero (2015) the remedies to truancy are strengthening of peer, joint group and individual counseling in secondary schools, involving parent and the surrounding school community in developing attendance and anti-truancy policies, effective monitoring of the truants by teachers and parents, creating a friendly school culture, developing attractive extra-curricular activities, holding regular motivation talks, organizing career guidance and helping

the students to remain focus on clear goals.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The school was formed as a social agent to mold children's habits, interests, attitudes, and feelings, as well as to transfer societal norms, culture, values, and traditions from generation to generation. Despite this, some students fail to show up for school. Many of children are now running away from school, despite the fact that their parents believe they are in school. While they are not in school, they are free to engage in a variety of juvenile delinquent activities such as fighting and drug usage. This is a really concerning issue in our classrooms. Truancy is a concern since missing kids are unable to participate in the school's numerous programs. This act if not checked will get to undesirable level and affecting the students by lowering their academic performance or dropping out of school and affecting the society at large. As a result, there is the need to identify the possible causes, effects and remedies of truancy among secondary school students in Jalingo, Taraba state, Nigeria.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study is to investigate the causes, effects and remedies of truancy among secondary school students in Jalingo. Specifically, the study identified the following:

1. Causes of truancy among secondary school students in Jalingo;
2. Effects of truancy among secondary school students in Jalingo;
3. Remedies to truancy among secondary school students in Jalingo.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the causes of truancy among secondary school students in Jalingo?
2. What are the effects of truancy among secondary school students in jalingo?
3. What are the remedies to truancy among secondary school students in Jalingo?

METHODOLOGY

Research Designs

The study adopted descriptive research design of survey type. The survey method is characterized by the random sampling of a large and small population in order to gather empirical information of current nature. The survey approach was used because the research entailed gathering data from students and so making broad generalizations. Survey research is the most commonly employed technique of observation. According to Evans (2005), the survey method is defined as the study of large and small populations by selecting and studying populations to determine the relative occurrence, distribution, and interrelationship of sociological and psychological factors.

Population and sample

The population of the study consisted of all the senior secondary school students in Jalingo Local Government Area, Taraba State, Nigeria. There are thirty-four (34) government owned secondary schools in Jalingo with a population of 11,765 senior secondary school students. The sample size for the study consisted of two hundred and fifty (250) SS I and SS II students from ten (10) secondary schools in Jalingo which were selected randomly. The researcher selected twenty-five (25) students from each of the ten schools selected.

Instrument for Data Collection

A researcher self-designed questionnaire tagged "Causes, Effects and Remedies of Truancy Questionnaire (CERTQ)" was used for the study. The questionnaire was divided into two parts (A and B). Part A obtained demographic information of the respondents; part B

elicited data on the research questions. Part B was divided into three clusters eliciting response on the causes of truancy, effects of truancy and remedies to truancy on four point Likert's scale of strongly agree (SA), agree (A), disagree (D) and strongly disagree (SD). The instrument was face and content validated by two experts one from the Department of Science Education and one from Measurement and Evaluation.

The instrument was subjected to pilot testing using 50 respondents different from those used for the study however, they have similar characteristics with subjects used for the study. Cronbach alpha was used. Reliability coefficient of .82 was obtained. The score was considered adequate for the study and the instrument found reliable for use.

Procedure for Data Collection

The researcher administered the instrument to the selected students in each of the selected secondary schools for the study using their teachers as research assistants. The students were allowed to fill the questionnaire and return it on the spot, this method was used to ensure 100% retrieval of the instrument.

Method for Data Analysis

Descriptive statistical techniques of mean and standard deviation were used to analyze the research questions. Mean score of 2.5 to 4.0 was accepted and below 2.5 rejected.

RESULTS

Research Question 1: What are the causes of truancy among secondary school students in Jalingo?

Table 1: Mean and standard deviation of students' responses on the causes of truancy

S/N	Causes of Truancy	Mean	Standard Deviation	Decision
1.	Lack of parental supervision	2.93	1.02	Accepted
2.	Poor parental income	2.67	.88	Accepted
3.	Parents' low educational background	2.41	.72	Rejected
4.	Broken family background	3.04	.94	Accepted
5.	Unconducive school environment	2.65	.89	Accepted
6.	Large class size	2.39	.77	Rejected
7.	Harsh disciplinary actions from teachers and senior students	2.93	.97	Accepted
8.	Wrong teaching methods making lessons uninteresting	2.54	1.02	Rejected
9.	Drug abuse	3.42	1.05	Accepted
10.	Physical/mental ill-health	3.51	.91	Accepted
11.	Bullying among students	2.61	.79	Accepted
12.	Poor academic performance	2.79	.96	Accepted

Results from Table 1 shows the causes of truancy among secondary school students in Jalingo. The causes of truancy according to the students are physical/mental ill-health, drug abuse, broken home, harsh disciplinary actions from teachers and senior students, lack of parental supervision, poor academic performance, poor parental income, unconducive school environment, bullying among students and Wrong teaching

methods making lessons uninteresting with mean scores of 3.51, 3.42, 3.04, 2.93, 2.93, 2.79, 2.67, 2.65, 2.61 and 2.54 respectively. The students considered parents' low educational background and large class size with mean score of 2.41 and 2.39 respectively as not causes of truancy.

Research Question 2: What are the effects of truancy among secondary school students in Jalingo?

Table 2: Mean and standard deviation scores of the effects of truancy among secondary school students in Jalingo

S/N	Effects of Truancy	Mean	Standard Deviation	Decision
13.	Poor academic performance	3.68	.86	Accepted
14.	Truants engage in drug abuse	2.72	1.06	Accepted
15.	Truants engage in violent activities	2.99	.76	Accepted
16.	Truants engage in criminal activities	3.46	1.01	Accepted
17.	School dropout	3.71	.98	Accepted
18.	Family instability	2.63	.91	Accepted
19.	Poor self-esteem	2.51	.89	Accepted

From Table 2 the respondents indicated that the effect of truancy includes school dropout, poor academic performance and engagement in criminal activities with mean scores of 3.71, 3.68 and 3.46 respectively. Other effects of truancy are that truants engage in violent

activities, drug abuse, family instability and poor self-esteem with mean scores of 2.99, 2.72, 2.63 and 2.51 respectively.

Research Question 3: What are the remedies to truancy among secondary school students in Jalingo?

Table 3: Mean and standard deviation of students' response on the remedies to truancy among secondary school students in Jalingo

S/N	Remedies to Truancy	Mean	Standard Deviation	Decision
20.	Supervision and monitoring of students' academic activities by parents	3.49	1.05	Accepted
21.	Financial commitment by parents to their children's academics pursuit	2.52	.84	Accepted
22.	Provision of adequate facilities in schools to make school environment friendly and conducive for learning	3.37	.98	Accepted
23.	Review of disciplinary policies to avoid unnecessary punishment	3.51	.81	Accepted
24.	Intimating students on the danger of drug abuse	3.22	.78	Accepted
25.	Students with physical and mental ill-health should be taken care of	2.97	.95	Accepted
26.	Counselling of students with poor academic performance	2.83	.91	Accepted

Table 3 indicates that the remedies to truancy are review of disciplinary policies to avoid unnecessary punishment with mean score of 3.51, supervision and monitoring of students' academic activities by parents with mean score of 3.49, provision of adequate facilities in schools to make school environment friendly and conducive for learning with mean score of 3.37, intimating of students on the danger of drug abuse with mean of 3.22, students with physical and mental ill-health should be taken care of with a mean score of 2.97. Other suggested remedies are counselling of students with poor academic performance and financial commitment by parents to their children's academics pursuit with mean score of 2.83 and 2.52 respectively.

DISCUSSIONS

Causes of Truancy

The study found out based on the responses in Table 1 that the causes of truancy according to the students are physical/mental ill-health, drug abuse, broken home, harsh disciplinary actions from teachers and senior students, lack of parental supervision, poor academic performance, poor parental income, unconducive school environment, bullying among students and Wrong teaching methods making lessons uninteresting. Ill-health always cause students to miss

school. This agrees with the finding of DeSocio (2007). The findings also agrees with that of Ogbonna *et al.*, (2012) who found out that teachers method of teaching, unattractive school and classroom environment and parental negative attitude account for truancy in school. The findings of the study also agreed with Adeboyeje (2000) and Obayan (2003) which revealed that classroom environment exert some dominant influence on students' academic performance thereby lead to truancy.

Effects of Truancy

From Table 2 the study found out that the effect of truancy among secondary school students are school dropout, poor academic performance engagement in criminal activities, violent activities, drug abuse, family instability and poor self-esteem. School dropout and poor academic performance were considered the major effect of truancy. The study concurred with the findings of Kanga & Jagero (2015) who found out that poor academic performance, involvement in delinquent behavior, family instability, social maladjustment, stealing and robbery as well as insecurity in the society as effects of truancy. The result is also in agreement with the work of Ogbonna *et al.*, (2012) who found out that truancy results in poor academic

performance, school dropout and engagement of students in delinquent behaviours.

Remedies to Truancy

As remedies to truancy the study found out that school authorities should review disciplinary policies to avoid unnecessary punishment, supervision and monitoring of students' academic activities by parents, provision of adequate facilities in schools to make school environment friendly and conducive for learning, intimating of students on the danger of drug abuse, students with physical and mental ill-health should be taken care. The finding of this study is in agreement with that Kanga & Jagero (2015) who found out that counselling of truants by teachers and parents can help students to be rescued from the act of truancy, and also provision of conducive environment can serve as remedy to truancy.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that the causes of truancy are physical/mental ill-health, drug abuse, broken home, harsh disciplinary actions from teachers and senior students, lack of parental supervision, poor academic performance, poor parental income, unconducive school environment, bullying among students and Wrong teaching methods making lessons uninteresting.

The study also found out that the effects of truancy are school dropout, poor academic performance, engagement in criminal activities, violent activities, drug abuse, family instability and poor self-esteem. School dropout and poor academic performance were considered the major effect of truancy.

The remedies to the act of truancy are review of disciplinary policies to avoid unnecessary punishment, supervision and monitoring of students' academic activities by parents, provision of adequate facilities in schools to make school environment friendly and conducive for learning, intimating of students on the danger of drug abuse, students with physical and mental ill-health should be taken care.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommended among other things that;

1. Parents should supervise and monitor their children academic activities so that they can know when the child is indulging in the act of truancy.
2. The government should provide adequate facilities in schools to make school environment friendly and conducive for learning this will reduce the rate of truancy among secondary school students.
3. The school authorities should review disciplinary policies to avoid unnecessary punishment and bullying by teachers and senior students.
4. School counselling unit should counsel students on the danger of engaging in truancy and other delinquent behaviours such as drug abuse, violent and crime.
5. Parents should take care of their children with physical and mental ill-health by seeking medical care.

Conflict of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest

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Disclaimer Statement: This work is not part of any dissertation or theses presented to any institution. It is an independent research carried out by the author.

Note on Author

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