

TRUANCY AMONG PRIMARY SCHOOL PUPILS IN ZARIA LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF KADUNA STATE



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Abstract

This research work investigated the Causes and Effects of Truancy among Primary School Pupils in Zaria Local Government Area of Kaduna State. The research design adopted was a survey design. The objectives of this study includes; examine the causes of truancy among primary school pupils; investigate the effect of truancy among primary school pupils and; find out the solutions for truancy among primary school pupils in Zaria Local Government Area of Kaduna State. This study was conducted in some selected Primary Schools Zaria, Kaduna State. Purposive random sampling technique was used to sample two hundred (200) students consisting of 140 males and 60 females. Three research questions and three hypotheses guided the study. The instrument for data collection was the questionnaire which was duly validated and found to be reliable. Frequency and percentages were used to answer the research questions while independent sample t-test was used to test the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance. Results showed that there was no significant difference between male and female pupils on the causes of truancy among primary school pupils in Zaria Local Government Area of Kaduna State, there was a significant gender difference in favor of male pupils on the effects of truancy among primary school pupils, and there was a significant gender difference on the side of male pupils on the remedies for truancy among primary school pupils on Zaria Local Government Area of Kaduna State. It was recommended that the schools should ensure that truancy is reduced to the barest minimal by ensuring good student-teacher relationship is maintained, threat and bullying is reduced, security of the students is guarantee at all times. The parents of the pupils should ensure that the needs of their children are taken care of at all times, health condition of the pupils closely monitored always. Community should provide conducive environment for the pupils to acquire useful skills, rules and regulation should also be maintained and there should be effective communication channels between staff and pupils.

Truancy is a major societal challenges at the global level. It is the habitual act of being absent from school without permission and concrete reason and it is the major factor affecting the overall success of the school system. Baker, Sigmon, and Nugent (2001) reported that hundreds of thousands of school age children are absent from school without permissible excuses each day, and this will affect the future of the upcoming generations that are the leaders of tomorrow. Reid (2006) categorically identified attendance as the single most critical variable in measuring students' achievement levels; therefore, it is imperative that corrective action be taken against chronic absenteeism immediately.

Researchers have considered truancy as the cankerworm that has eaten deep into the fabric of the educational programmes and has caused a lot of setbacks for secondary school students in their educational pursuits (Stoll, 1993; Gesinde, 2004; Adeyemi, 2006; Animasahun, 2007). Most of the researches that have been conducted on truancy are mostly among secondary school students and higher institution students, with little attention given to cases of truancy in our primary schools in the country.

Causes of Truancy

The causes of truancy according to Zhang, Katsiyannis, Barrett, and Wilson (2007) are classified into four categories, they include; family factors, school factors, economic influences, and student variables. The family factors include, but are not limited to parents' education, parental supervision, and household income. Henry (2007) investigated a correlation of family factor with truant behaviour among eighth and tenth grades students absenteeism. He found that the lower the father's education, the more likely the child is to commit truancy. It is even worse if the mother is a drop out.

School factors that may cause truant behaviour include, but are not limited to 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. These students do not feel comfortable, wanted, valued, accepted, or secure; they are lacking a connection to a trustworthy somebody within the school. In oversized classrooms, students' diverse needs, whether they are instructional, social, or a various other, cannot consistently be met and student-teacher relationships cannot be developed. This leads to a school climate and attitude in which each individual must fend for himself.

Economic influences that may cause truant behaviour include, but are not limited to living situation and student employment. Henry (2007) discerned in his study that 33.5% of high school truants did not live with their mother or father, 27.6% lived with their father only, 19.8% lived with their mother only, and 14.4% lived with both parents. Therefore, the likelihood that a student would commit truancy increases when

the student lives with only one parent, and increases anywhere between 5.9% to 13.7% if the child lives with neither his mother nor father.

Student factors that may cause truant behavior include, but are not limited to physical and mental health problems, substance abuse, drug use, perception of self, and detachment from school. DeSocio, et al. (2007) identifies physical and mental health issues as contributing towards school absenteeism. They suggest that truancy coexists with student and family mental health disorders and may be an indicator for an existing or emerging mental health disorder, including post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, depression, and/or substance abuse. Supporting evidence from Henry's study (2007) implicates students that use alcohol one or more times a month as 26.5% more likely to skip school than peers who do not use alcohol, and if the student drinks to a level of intoxication his likelihood of skipping school increases to 31.2%. Moreover, 33.9% of the students who have been truant smoke cigarettes and 37.2% smoke marijuana at least once a month. It is also as a result of lack of proper parental and teachers supervision of school activities that causes truancy.

Effects of Truancy

Henry (2007) indicates that the consequences of truancy 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.

Student dropout from school is the most obvious result of chronic absenteeism. According to Rodriguez and Conchas (2009), truancy and dropout rates are concentrated and worsening in some community in the United States of America. This usually leads to higher crime rates and breach of peace globally.

Remedies for Truancy

A considerable number of strategies and interventions that have been employed to combat truancy. Zhang (2007) recommends instructional, behavioural, and community based interventions, and has advocated for a programme titled Check and Connect, while Henry (2007) supports the family and instructional intervention approaches. DeSocio (2007) initiated a mentor intervention program whereas Reid (2006) investigated a five-tiered intervention approach titled School Based Scheme (SBS) piloted in the United Kingdom (UK). Direct instruction or instructional approach that places an emphasis on the drill and practice technique throughout scripted, rehearsed, and fast-paced lessons, is a key phrase used in instructional intervention. This is especially useful in reading and math classes where students can receive immediate feedback. Furthermore, teacher praise and reinforcement has empirical support for increasing on-task behaviour and decreasing inappropriate behaviours (Zhang, 2007).

Through instructional intervention, habitually absent students are encouraged to attend school through praise.

Okwakpam and Okwakpam (2012) investigated the causes and level of truancy among secondary school students in Rivers State. The study was a case study design aimed at determining the causes and levels of truancy among secondary school students, using Rivers State, Nigeria. The research sample consisted of 105 teachers and was purposefully sampled. Four research questions and one hypothesis were posed, formulated and tested respectively. A structured questionnaire was developed, validated and administered to the respondents selected for the study. t-test, standard deviation and mean were used to analyze the data collected. The results indicated that there is a significant difference between family background and student factor. The implication of this is that the student's family background contributes greatly to the student's level of truancy. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected. Based on the findings, some recommendations were made towards the reducing the level of truancy among secondary school students.

Musa (2014) investigated absenteeism and truancy and their impact on the academic performance of secondary school students in Ogun State. A survey research design was employed and two hypotheses were generated and tested in the study. Respondent were two hundred SSS2 students that were randomly selected from five selected secondary schools. They responded to Non-School Attendance Assessment Scale that was used for data collection for the study. Data were analyzed using simple percentages and weighted mean, and all the hypotheses were tested at 0.05 level of significance. Findings revealed that peer group factors, socio economic background of the students, poor academic performance of students, are contributory factors to absenteeism and truancy in our secondary schools. It was suggested that, parents should guide their children and be of good models, also they should pay serious attention to financial and material needs of their children.

Adelabu, Oyelana and Adelabu (2016) study examines the influence of socio-economic status on truancy among secondary school students in Nigeria. The aim of their study was, through a review of literature methodology, to investigate the extent to which the influence of socio-economic status on truancy among secondary school students in Nigeria could be reduced. The findings show that students that came from moderate family socio-economic background stayed at school more than the less privileged students who came from low family socio-economic background. In view of the above points, it is recommended that for vast punctuality of students to be adequately maintained within secondary schools in Nigeria, government should provide the necessary learning materials, conducive environment, sufficient and qualified teachers for effective teaching. In addition, the government should establish the monitoring and evaluating team to visit various schools and assess both teachers and students promptness. The study also recommends that all teachers should create positive interest among their students and encourage them to always show more interest on the

school extra-curriculum activities or classroom activities in order to stay in the school. Parents should visit their children at schools for at least once or twice in a month and the students in question should be willing to learn at any point in time.

Mlowosa, Kalimang'asi and Mathias (2014) examined the impacts of truancy in academic performance among secondary school students in Kigamboni Ward in Temeke Municipality. The research findings indicated that 51.7% of the respondents agreed that truancy is a latent base for poor academic performance among secondary school students in Kigamboni ward. Then a wake-up call for government and society to redefine the effectiveness of the current education curriculum and education policies is needed. In contrary, poor performance in Tanzania secondary schools is not only caused by attendance characteristics alone but other factors such as like poverty, early child pregnancy, drug abuse, poor parental guide, peer groups and lack of seriousness in classroom, also cause poor performance.

From views expressed by respondents in the field, this research recommends that education stakeholders together with the government in collaboration with Ward Executive Officers and Village Executive Officers should make sure that every school age individual attends school. Those parents and guardians whom their children do not attend classes regularly should be arrested and the rule of law to play its role. The study further recommends that parents should educate their children the dangers of early pregnancies and marriages, children should be given sexual education, the school laws related to pregnancies should be strengthened as well as the government should consider alternative means of ensuring that those children who have lost their parents attend school and are handled accordingly.

Kanga (2015) in his study on the factors contributing to truancy in secondary schools in Meru South District, Kenya. The study collected views from principals, class teachers, counselling teachers and form two students, purposive and stratified random sampling method was used to select a sample size 298 students 8 Principal 8 counsellors and 8 class teachers. Questionnaire was used to collect data. Data was analysed quantitatively using statistical package for social sciences (SPSS) version 11.5 for windows and presented using frequency distribution table, bar charts and percentages. The study found that unsupportive school culture; family, social economic and psychological factors significantly contributed to truancy. The effects of truancy were identified as poor academic performance for the truants, their class and school the school, wastage of learning time, dropping out of school, poverty to the individual and family in future, involvement with delinquent behaviour, family instability, social maladjustment and insecurity in the family. The study recommended that education managers hold regular meetings with principals and teachers to sensitize them on truancy and discuss ways of dealing with truancy in their schools.

Ishaq and Fin (2015) investigated Factors Contributing to Truancy among Students: A Correlation between Predictors. The objective of this study is to identify the contributory factors of truancy and the correlation between the factors among secondary

school students. The sample comprised 472 truants from Malaysia who have been routinely absent from school for 10 days to more than 40 days per year. Results demonstrated that teacher's personality, students' attitudes toward school, environment in school, school administration, teachers' teaching, and environment outside school, peers and family are significant contributory factors of truancy. Significant positive correlations between all the factors causing truancy were found. Correlation between teachers' teaching and teachers' personality was the highest whereas the lowest correlation was revealed between school administration and family.

Ehintero (2015) investigated Truancy among Public Secondary School Students. Implications for Counseling. The study adopted survey design. The population for the study comprised secondary school students in Osun State. The sample consisted of one hundred and seventy-five (175) students. From the 3 senatorial districts in the state, one senatorial district was randomly selected. Five Local Government Areas (LGAs) were randomly selected from the senatorial district. Ten secondary schools were selected from the five LGAs, two secondary schools from each LGA. The research instrument titled Questionnaire on Truancy was used to collect data for the study. Data collected were analyzed using percentage and chi-square. It was found from the study that more male students 77(44.0%) have been absent from school without permission from the school authority than female students 40(22.9%). Truancy is prevalent but more among male students than female students. Prevalent among students of age range 13-15 years (62.9%). It was also found that student related factor 48.6%, peer related factor 31.4% and school/teacher related factor 14.3% were factors predisposing students to truancy. It was therefore concluded that truancy is prevalent in schools and it is pertinent to understanding truancy and improving school facilities and qualities of guidance and counseling services rendered to curb truancy among school students

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of this study is to examine the causes, effects and remedies for truancy in primary schools in Zaria Local Government Area of Kaduna State. The specific objectives amongst others are to:

1. Examine the causes of truancy among primary school pupils in Zaria Local Government Area of Kaduna State.
2. Ascertain the effects of truancy among primary school pupils in Zaria Local Government Area of Kaduna State.
3. Highlight the remedies of truancy among primary school pupils in Zaria Local Government Area of Kaduna State.

Research Hypothesis

Three research hypotheses were formulated to guide the study.

1. There is no significant difference between male and female pupils on the causes of truancy among primary school pupils in Zaria Local Government Area of Kaduna State.
2. There is no significant difference between male and female pupils on the effects of truancy among primary school pupils in Zaria Local Government Area of Kaduna State.
3. There is no significant difference between male and female pupils on the remedies for truancy among primary school pupils in Zaria Local Government Area of Kaduna State.

Methodology

The study employed the use of survey research design. The population of the study was 58, 809. Accidental and voluntary sampling technique was used to select the sample size of two hundred (200) pupils. A well-structured questionnaire was used as an instrument for data collection. The instrument was validated by three experts from the department of educational psychology, Federal College of Education, Zaria and was found to be reliable for use. Thirty copies of the instrument was administered to primary school pupils in Sabon-Gari Local Government Area of Kaduna State and the cronbach alpha reliability was 0.629. The researcher met the pupils in their various classrooms after taking permission from the Head teachers of the schools and personally administered the instrument and retrieved back immediately. The data was analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS).

Results

The data and result of each of the hypotheses are presented on the following tables

Hypothesis One

There is no significant gender difference among primary school pupils on the causes of truancy.

Table 1: Summary of Independent Sample t-test on Gender Differences on the Causes of Truancy among Primary School Pupils in Zaria

Gender		Mean	sd	t-calculated	t-critical	df	Sig (p)
	N						
Male	140	29.71	3.78	1.810	1.96	198	.139
Female	60	23.33	3.16				

From table 1 above, the t-calculated value of 1.810 is less than the t-critical value of 1.96 at 0.139 level of significance. This implies that there was no significant difference between male and female pupils on the causes of truancy among primary school pupils in Zaria Local Government Area of Kaduna State. The mean scores of the male pupils of 29.71 and the mean scores of the female pupils of 23.33 indicate no significant difference on the causes of truancy in primary schools in Zaria Local Government Area of Kaduna State.

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant gender difference among primary school pupils on the effects of truancy.

Table 2: Summary of Independent Sample t-test on Gender Differences on the Effects of Truancy among Primary School Pupil in Zaria

Gender	N	Mean	S d	t-calculated	t-critical	df	Sig (p)
Male	140	26.00	3.00	2.216	1.96	198	.044
Female	60	20.00	3.55				

From table 2 above, the t-calculated value of 2.216 is more than the t-critical value of 1.96 at 0.044 level of significance. This implies that there was a significant difference between male and female pupils on the effects of truancy among primary school pupils in Zaria Local Government Area of Kaduna State. The mean scores of the male pupils of 26.00 and the mean scores of the female pupils of 20.00 indicate a significant difference on the effects of truancy in primary schools in Zaria Local Government Area of Kaduna State.

Hypothesis Three

There is no significant gender difference among primary school pupils on the remedies for truancy.

Table 3: Summary of Independent Sample t-test on Gender Differences on the Remedies for Truancy among Primary School Pupils in Zaria

Gender	N	Mean	S d	t-calculated	t-critical	df	Sig (p)
Male	140	28.57	5.57	2.302	1.96	198	.035
Female	60	32.33	2.57				

From table 3 above, the t-calculated value of 2.302 is more than the t-critical value of 1.96 at 0.035 level of significance. This implies that there was a significant difference between male and female pupils on the remedies for truancy among primary school pupils in Zaria Local Government Area of Kaduna State. The mean scores of the male pupils of 28.57 and the mean scores of the female pupils of 23.33 indicate no significant difference on the remedies of truancy in primary schools in Zaria Local Government Area of Kaduna State.

Discussion

The main purpose of this study was to examine the causes, effects and remedies for truancy among primary school pupils in Zaria Local Government Area of Kaduna State. Data collected was analysed using independent sample t-test to examine the difference between male and female pupils on the causes, effects and remedies for truancy among primary school pupils.

Hypothesis one which states that there was no significant difference between male and female primary school pupils on the causes of truancy is retained. Implying that there was no significant difference between male and female pupils on the causes of truancy in primary schools in Zaria Local Government Area of Kaduna State. The male and female pupils have the same views on the causes of truancy among primary schools pupils in Zaria Local Government Area of Kaduna State. Adelabu, Oyelana and Adelabu (2016) and Musa (2014) observed that students from a moderate family socio-economic background stayed at school more than less than the less privilege students from low family socio-economic background.

Hypothesis two which states that there was no significant difference between male and female primary school pupils on the effects of truancy is rejected. Implying that there was a significant difference between male and female pupils on the effects of truancy in primary schools in Zaria Local Government Area of Kaduna State. The findings of this study support that of Ehindero (2015) who found that more male students were absent from school without permission from the school authority than female students.

Hypothesis three which states that there was no significant difference between male and female primary school pupils on the remedies for truancy is rejected. Implying that there was a significant difference between male and female pupils on the remedies for truancy in primary schools in Zaria Local Government Area of Kaduna State. Zhang (2007) recommends instructional, behavioral, and community based interventions, and has advocated for a program titled Check and Connect, while Henry (2007) supports the family and instructional intervention approaches. Appropriate remedies that are peculiar to our Nigeria environment should be adopted.

Conclusion

This study investigated the causes, effects and remedies for truancy among primary school pupils in Zaria Local Government Area of Kaduna State. It was concluded that there was no significant difference between male and female students on the causes of truancy among primary school pupils in Zaria Local Government Area of Kaduna State, there was a significant difference between male and female students on the effects of truancy among primary school pupils in Zaria Local Government Area of Kaduna State, and it was discovered that there was a significant difference between male and female on the remedies for truancy among primary school pupils in Zaria Local Government Area of Kaduna State.

Recommendations

The followings are the recommendations for this study;

1. Factors that will cause truancy among primary school pupils should be avoided, teacher-pupil relationship and school-home relationship should be maintained at all time.
2. The school environment should be habitable for the pupils to learn, and teachers should be motivated to put in their best for the interest of the learners.
3. School rules and regulations should be enforced and regular PTA meetings should also be organized so that parents can get feedback on the performance of the pupils in the schools.

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