

Causes and Consequences of Truancy Among in School Adolescents in Oyo North Senatorial District Nigeria

Foluke Nike Bolu-Steve *, Rasaan Abimbola Fadipe , Olajide Charles Kayode

Department of Counsellor Education, Faculty of Education, University of Ilorin, Kwara State, Nigeria.

*Corresponding Author: bolusteve2002@yahoo.com

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ABSTRACT

Background: Truancy is a common problem among secondary schools in Oyo North Senatorial District. This research was based on the causes and consequences of truancy among in-school adolescents in Oyo North Senatorial District of Oyo State.

Contribution: The findings of this study would be useful to the school authorities in making appropriate policies that can reduce the incidence of truancy in schools.

Method: Descriptive survey method was used to select 400 in-school adolescents using purposive, stratified and simple random sampling techniques. The instrument was self-designed questionnaire, tagged: "Causes and Consequences of Truancy Questionnaire (CCTQ)". The reliability was ascertained using test-retest method and a coefficient of 0.89 was obtained, while t-test and ANOVA were used for the null hypotheses at 0.05 level of significance.

Results: The findings of the study indicated that high level of poverty, lack of discipline and lack of guidance and counselling were the major causes of truancy among students, and its consequences were poor academic performance, repetition of classes and school dropout. The study revealed that there is no significant difference in the causes and consequences of truancy among in-school adolescents in Oyo North Senatorial District based on gender and school location.

Conclusion: It is therefore recommended that the government should create awareness programme on the causes and consequences of truancy on in-school adolescents.

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INTRODUCTION

Counselling is a unique discipline that contains various programs in educational system. A professional relationship empowers diverse individuals, families and groups to accomplish

wellness and career goals. Counselling is a therapeutic relationship between a professional counsellor and a troubled person (client or counselee) in a perceived temporary state of confusion. Thus, counselling helps in promoting well-being of students in schools. Education have a major role to play in transforming students' lives. There are several challenges encounter by students, which can lead to truancy.

The word truant derived from the French word *truand* and truancy is known as *dodging, skipping off, mitching, skiving, bunking-off and missing*, respectively. Truancy is a very dangerous delinquent behaviour among secondary school students [1]. This is because it can have negative impacts on their lives. Truancy affects students' education as it interferes with their concentration, ability to catch up with the learning and teaching process. This may result to poor academic achievement. Truancy is like termite, which demolishes the educational career of students. It refers to an illegal or illegitimate continual absence from school without permission. [2] defined truancy as absence that has not been authorized by the school and where leave has not been given or approved. Truancy is any illegal or intentional unauthorized absence from compulsory school. This also include students who go to school but do not attend classes. Truancy is an anti-social behaviour and it is a delinquent act [3]. Truancy is often defined as unjustifiable intentional absence from school [4]

[5] revealed that the various behavioural problems like drug abuse, violence, truancy, stealing and sexual abuse have so much undermined effective teaching and learning process. This has become a great concern to school administrators, family and the society. Truancy continues to be one of the growing problems as such; [1] considered this problem to be an issue that demands urgent attention. [3] mentioned some of the causes of truancy and these include:

Family factors: this could be linked to lack of parental guidance, constant occurrence of domestic violence in homes, drug or alcohol abuse and differing attitudes of parents towards the education of their wards.

School factors: emphasizes on school size, the attitude of teachers and administrators towards teaching and learning process. It also involves school procedures on how to deal with students who are absent in schools.

Economic influences: are factors that deal with financial issues. Parents who hold multiple jobs may not care about the school attendance of their children. This can lead to truancy.

Student variables: such as peer influence, behavioural problems, negative attitude towards schooling, drug and alcohol use etc.

[6] mentioned that poor child/ parents relationship, poverty are the major cause of truancy among in schoolchildren. Also, [7] identified illness, financial hardship, peer group influence, geographical area, and institutional schools related factors such as teacher's attitude, poor administrative procedure, and high cost of education as the major causes of truancy. Also, the distance that student has to cover to go to school, school location and family background can predispose secondary school students to truancy [8]. [9] emphasized that risky sexual behaviours and alcohol abuse are common among students who engaged in truancy

The consequences of truancy among secondary schools in Nigeria have been said to include delinquency, poor school performance, school dropout, substance use, and other risky and problematic behaviours [10]. Students who are absent in school perform poorly and are more likely to drop out, which negatively impacts on their learning potential. [11]. [12] also explained that truancy can lead to low motivation, lack of ambition, difficulty in keeping vital school records, abuse of alcohol and drugs, poor academic performance, school dropouts, teen-age pregnancy, and involvement in criminal activities (such as stealing, vandalism, and shoplifting). Studies like [3], [9] revealed that truancy has a far reaching and serious consequences on students, and its

impact could lead to low motivation and under-achievement.

[6] and [13] revealed that there is a high correlation between tireless truancy and family background. In conclusion, truancy can lead to the involvement of students in criminal activities [14]. Truancy can obstructs effective learning process and this could lead to poor academic performance [15]. [16] noted that student's engagement in truancy often-lead lower academic performance.

Truancy is a typical problem in Nigeria and in other countries of the world. It has far-reaching consequences on youth, families, and schools and communities [17]. There is no strong evidence to show that any positive impact has been made on school attendance despite significant efforts and millions of naira spent by the Federal government to reduce the incidence of truancy for the past 20 years, [6]. Between 2011 and 2021 in Nigeria, the patterns of absenteeism remained relatively stable, while the number of truancy cases steadily increased from 52% to 69% among secondary school students [9]. It was reported that about 32, 850 out of 450, 000 students are absent daily in schools (Oyo State Ministry of Education, 2021). This statistics shows that truancy is a big problem in this region.

Essentially, a lot have researches have been carried out on truancy. For instance, [15] carried out a study on truancy and academic performance of secondary school students in southwestern Nigeria.[18] looked at the causes of truancy among public senior secondary school students in Azare Metropolis, Nigeria. None of these studies focused on the causes and consequences of truancy among in school adolescents in Oyo North Senatorial District. Thus, this present study looked at the causes and consequences of truancy among secondary school students in Oyo North Senatorial District.

Research Questions

- (1)What are the causes of truancy among in-school adolescents?
- (2) What are the consequences of truancy among in-school adolescents?

Research Hypotheses

- (1) There is no significant difference in the causes of truancy among in- school adolescents in Oyo based gender.
- (2) There is no significant difference in the consequences of truancy among in-school adolescents in Oyo based on school location.

The main purpose of the study was to examine the causes and consequences of truancy among in- school adolescents in Oyo North Senatorial District in Oyo State, Nigeria. The study intends to investigate the influence of gender and school location in this study.

METHOD

A study design is a plan or blue print which specifies how data relating to a given problem should be collected and analyzed. The research design being a quantitative type, therefore the researcher adopted descriptive survey method to gather relevant information. Neuman (2000) defined descriptive method as preliminary step to be followed by researcher employing more vigorous control and objective methods. The researcher therefore, considered descriptive survey method the most appropriate because it entails the use of direct observation in the collection of data used in finding out the causes and consequences of truancy among secondary school students in Oyo North Senatorial District.

Therefore, Oyo State has three senatorial districts, namely: Oyo South, Oyo Central and Oyo North. The study was purposively carried out in Oyo North Senatorial District because it has thirteen local governments (Oyo North is comprised of two regions—Oke-Ogun region and three local governments in Ogbomosho), and four secondary schools were selected using simple

random sampling. At the second stage, stratified sampling method was used to select the respondents based on gender and class level. At the third stage, simple random technique was used to select 400 students in four secondary schools in Oyo North Senatorial District.

The validity of the instrument was established through five lecturers in the Department of Guidance and Counselling, University of Ibadan. To also establish the reliability of the instrument, the questionnaire was administered twice on a group of students at an interval of four weeks. The two scores were correlated using Pearson's Product Moment Correlation and the reliability coefficient of 0.89 was obtained. The researchers through literature review designed the instrument for data collection. The instrument was tagged: "Causes and Consequences of Truancy Questionnaire (CCTQ)". All the items in sections A and B were negatively structured. The instrument has three parts i.e. sections A, B and C. Section A contains personal information, section B contains causes of truancy while section C contains consequences of truancy on secondary school students. Sections B & C were patterned on a four (4) points Likert type rating scale format of: Strongly Agree; Agree; Disagree; and Strongly Disagree.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Research Questions

- (1) What are the causes of truancy among in-school adolescents in Oyo North Senatorial District?

Table 1. Mean and Rank Order of Causes of Truancy among Inschool-Adolescents in Oyo North Senatorial District

| N | Truancy is caused by: | Mean | Rank |
|----------|----------------------------------|-------------|------------------|
| 9 | High level of poverty | 3.79 | 1 st |
| 1 | Lack of discipline | 3.72 | 2 nd |
| 8 | Lack of guidance and counselling | 3.61 | 3 rd |
| 3 | Lack of self-confidence | 3.52 | 4 th |
| 5 | Poor health care | 3.24 | 5 th |
| 10 | Lack of transport facilities | 3.11 | 6 th |
| 7 | Negative peer influence | 3.00 | 7 th |
| 2 | Lack of writing materials | 2.98 | 8 th |
| 6 | Poor relationship with teachers | 2.88 | 9 th |
| 4 | Lack of parental supervision | 2.82 | 10 th |

The table shows that all items are above the average (benchmark) mean values of 2.5 for determining the major causes of truancy among secondary school students in Oyo North Senatorial District. However, items with mean values of 3.79, 3.72 and 3.61 respectively preceded others and were ranked 1st, 2nd and 3rd. The items indicated high level of poverty, lack of discipline and lack of guidance and counselling. On the other hand, items 2, 6 and 4 with mean values of 2.98, 2.88 and 2.82 were the least ranked items, that is, 8th, 9th and 10th. They indicated lack of writing materials, poor relationship with teachers and lack of parental supervision.

- (2) What are the consequences of truancy among in-school adolescents in Oyo North Senatorial District?

Table 2. Mean and Rank Order of Consequences of Truancy Among in-school Adolescents in Oyo North Senatorial District

| N | Truancy can lead to: | Mean | Rank |
|----|--|------|------------------|
| 9 | Poor academic performance | 3.59 | 1 st |
| 1 | Repetition of classes | 3.25 | 2 nd |
| 8 | School dropout | 3.24 | 3 rd |
| 4 | Criminal activities like fighting and stealing | 3.17 | 4 th |
| 5 | Abuse of drugs and alcohol | 3.13 | 5 th |
| 10 | Social isolation | 3.06 | 6 th |
| 6 | Lack of ambition | 3.00 | 7 th |
| 2 | Sexual immoralities | 3.00 | 8 th |
| 3 | Bullying | 2.99 | 9 th |
| 7 | Low self-esteem | 2.82 | 10 th |

Items with mean values of 3.59, 3.25 and 3.24 respectively preceded others and were ranked 1st, 2nd and 3rd. The items indicated poor academic performance, repeat of classes and school dropout. On the other hand, items 2, 3 and 7 with mean values of 3.00, 2.99 and 2.82 were the least ranked items, that is, 8th, 9th and 10th. They indicated sexual immoralities, bullying and low self-esteem.

Hypothesis One:

There is no significant difference in the causes of truancy among in-school adolescents in Oyo North Senatorial District based on gender

Table 3. Mean, Standard Deviation and t-test showing differences in the Respondents' Expression on the Causes of Truancy based on gender

| Gender | N | Mean | SD | df | Cal. t-value | Crit. t-value | p-value |
|--------|-----|-------|-------|-----|--------------|---------------|---------|
| Male | 250 | 66.03 | 12.88 | 398 | 0.21 | 1.96 | 0.00 |
| Female | 150 | 66.27 | 12.29 | | | | |

Table 3 shows that the calculated t-value of 0.21 is less than the critical value of 1.96, with corresponding p-value of 0.00 which is less than the 0.05 level of significance, hence the hypothesis is retained. This indicated that the gender of the respondents has no influence.

Hypothesis Two

There is no significant difference in the consequences of truancy among in-school adolescents in Oyo North Senatorial District based on school location.

Table 4. Mean, Standard Deviation and t-value showing the consequences of truancy among in-school adolescents based on School Location

| Sch. Locale | N | Mean | SD | df | Cal. t-value | Crit.t-value | p-value |
|-------------|-----|-------|-------|-----|--------------|--------------|---------|
| Rural | 250 | 60.36 | 14.56 | 398 | 2.19 | 2.96 | 0.00 |
| Urban | 150 | 65.03 | 11.41 | | | | |

* Significant at 0.05 alpha level

Table 4 shows that the calculated t-value of 2.19 is less than the critical value of 2.96, with corresponding p-value of 0.00 which is less than the 0.05 level of significance as the such the hypothesis is retained.

The outcome of the study revealed that high level of poverty is the main cause of truancy among in school adolescents in the District. [9] observed that many in-school adolescents lack resources to purchase food items. They missed classes because they need to fetch for themselves. The study collaborates with the findings of [19] and [3] who revealed that high level of poverty, lack of discipline and lack of direction are the major causes of truancy among adolescents. Therefore, poor relationship with teachers, lack of parental supervision and lack of writing materials are the common causes of truancy.

Poor academic performance is the major consequence of truancy in this study. This is in line with [3], [12], [9] who observed that poor academic performance, school dropout, abuse of drugs and alcohol were major consequences of truancy. Also, sexual immoralities, bullying and low self-esteem are considered as consequences of truancy among in-school adolescents in Oyo North Senatorial District. The study corroborates with that of [7] who revealed that students avoid going to school due many reasons such as lack of motivation, use of corporal punishment by teachers and low academic performance.

Respondents were not different in their perception on the causes of truancy among in school adolescents. The finding is in agreement with the studies of [1] who found that gender did not determine whether an adolescents would indulge in truancy or not.[20] study found that both male and female students get involve in truancy.

This study also shows that respondents had the same perception on the consequences of truancy in Oyo North Senatorial District based on school location. This is in line with the findings of [21] who discovered that school location did not determine whether an adolescents would indulge in truancy or not. [22] study revealed that no significant difference existed between students living in rural and urban areas. [23] explained that adolescent from urban areas who performed less in school get involved in truancy and they often drop out of school. They also noted that, students from urban centres skipped school than students in rural areas and this mostly result into poor academic performance [24].

CONCLUSION

The study revealed that high level of poverty is the major cause of truancy among in-school adolescents while the consequences include poor academic performance. Also, the study revealed that there was no significant difference in the causes and consequences of truancy in-school adolescents in Oyo North Senatorial District based on gender and school location. Parents should ensure that their children are provided with essential needs (such as food, cloth, shelter, safety and security) and writing materials to reduce high rate of truancy in schools. Counsellors should provide adequate counselling for adolescents against all forms of truancy through information and orientation services in schools. There should be awareness programmes by government agencies, and non-governmental organizations for parents and students on the causes and consequences of truancy.

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