

**THE EFFECT OF TRUANCY ON ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF
SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN EBONYI STATE**

REV. JAMES, A. EKPE

**SCHOOL OF EDUCATION, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATIONS,
EBONYI STATE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, IKWO.**

Abstract

A descriptive survey was used with a sample size of 30 males and 30 female respondents. Questionnaire was developed and used for data collection while the data were analyzed using frequency, percentage and cumulative percentage. This study intended to investigate the effects of truancy in the academic performance of secondary schools students in Ebonyi State. The findings indicated that a high percentage of the respondents agreed that truancy is a talent base for poor academic performance among students. Then this became a wakeup call to both the Government and educational policy makers to define our education policies and strengthen school discipline. In line with the current position of Ebonyi State Government, parents and guardians whom their children do not go to school should collaborate with the Government to nip in the bud this ugly trend.

Keywords: Truancy, Academic performance and Secondary school students.

Introduction

Truancy poses a great danger in our educational system in Nigeria particularly in Ebonyi State. In the related study conducted in Tanzania reported that there is a high prevalence of truancy and this indicates the main reason for school dropout in 2008. In all respects, education is the transmission of the values and accumulation of knowledge to the society. It is meant to guide students in learning the culture of the society, molding the character and behavior in the ways of adulthood which will further direct citizens towards playing effective roles in the larger society.

Restuta (2002) concluded in a study that parents are the child's first most important teachers since they teach them the values, attitudes and habits that enhance their positive adjustment in the wider society. This further shapes the character of the children which will remain with them throughout their life, but ironically, few parents have neither time nor the competent ability to teach their children. The resultant effect is that they turn to educators. So educators play a major role in the educational processes of the individual child.

While the term knowledge has to do with the information, understanding and the obvious skills that an individual gain

through education or experience, training on the other hand, deals with the acquisition of knowledge, skills, and competences as a result of the teaching of vocational or practical skills and knowledge that relate to specific useful competences. Therefore, educational attainment is an important determinant of one's better adjustment to life in all respects. Therefore, if any one misses education as a result of truancy, such a person cannot think further than he/she sees, mostly people with no education have few chances or opportunities of securing job knowing full well and keeping in mind the high rate of unemployment in Nigeria which is on the increase today. It is also noted that a person who is uneducated is rather living in isolation simply because such a person cannot match today's world and its challenges and developments. Obondo et al (1990) reported that 10% of school non attendance by children was due to truancy. In the same vein, Ollay (2003) reported in a study of 169 street students in Ibadan South West Nigeria, and found that 47% of them had a history of truancy. These studies and may more, prove the fact that truancy is an important contributor to non-attendance to school.

Rozumah (2003) was of the view that movement of students from one class to another provides some of the students the opportunity not to go to the class and makes them to dare to play truancy. Truancy has been known to be one of the ten major problems in schools, which negatively affect the future of the student. Indeed absentee rate is said to have

reached as high as 30% in some cities of the developed countries of the world. This assertion is buttressed by the fact in a study by Azizi (2010) that in New York alone, 150,000 out of 1, 000,000 students are absent in school on daily basis. The Los Angeles unified school District reports that about 10% of its students are absent in school daily.

Nigerian educational system is under performing and excludes a range of children, primarily those who are poor, those from difficulty family backgrounds, and those with special needs. Such children are at the risk of non-enrolment, exclusion, truancy and dropping out of school.

Truancy has a potential to curtail possibilities of meaningful academic achievement. It is a predictor of health problems seen among adolescents because they indulge in all criminal and immoral tendencies such as drug and drug abuse, alcoholic abuse and sexual immorality. Azizi (2010) opined that the unsupervised period of time that adolescents have when they are truants allows them to initiate and maintain unhealthy lives and behaviours. Truancy in childhood may be associated with adverse social and health problems in life. Studies by Ekpe, (2015) revealed that adults who were truants as adolescents were more likely to experience marital or job instability and psychological maladjustment when compared to their counter parts that were not truants as adolescents.

==== *The Effect of Truancy on Academic Performance of Secondary School Students* ====

The noted habits of students who are truants are smoking, fighting each other, as well as observe behaviours which results in child dumping, running away from home, free sex and mingling. According to Belthelheim (1950) as reported by Ezeuwa (2014) in his work on truant behaviours, truants dare to commit crimes of very high magnitude such as joining bad syndicate, gangsterism, murder, with or without firearms burglar, rape, prostitution, gambling, vandalism, drug abuse, alcohol and pornography. Truancy is detrimental to students' achievement, promotion, graduation, self-esteem and employment potential. It is on record that students who miss classes, lessons and school, fall behind their peers in the classroom. These graduates to low self-esteem, and increase in the likelihood that such will drop out of school.

Robins et al (1978) as in Ojebola (2013) reported in a longitudinal study of African-American males who were often truants in school, 75% failed to graduate. About 1,250 secondary school students in Ohaukwu Local Government Area are not attending classes regularly due to lack of basic needs. However, the situation has attributed to truancy which diminishes students' performance. The above situation can be related to other schools within Ebonyi State.

Related studies on the subject matter of truancy based on education were done as recorded in Encyclopedia Vol Vi, E. pp 87-103. Most countries of the world spend a huge amount of money to provide formal education to their citizens. The

study explain that the school system of all nations provide the necessary vocational and entrepreneurial education which will in turn provide the students with the competencies that will enhance their adjustment in the wider society.

It is also on record that most parents do not visit schools except in response to problems. This means that parents' involvement in the activities of the school likely to be related to their own educational levels, hence, many illiterate parents may need encouragement to become involved in the activities of schools. Parents' attitudes towards education with particular reference to encouraging girls to acquire good education are equally critical to students' performance. Potentiality exists for academic based parents in all schools according t to Restuta (2002).

Truancy is a serious problem for most schools in Ebonyi State. In most of these schools, attendance deteriorates in the higher classes. This can be noted in some situations where students in SS3 are seen to dump their schools in search of a miracle centre in "far from the town" schools. The most common reasons given by students for absenteeism are illness or death of parents and caregivers has become a recurring decimal resulting to chronic truancy.

Sample size area of study procedure:

The random sampling system was used for the study. The data was obtained from the sample as indicated above. A total of

60 respondents comprising of 30 males and 30 females respectively was chosen.

Data Collection

The collection of data was made through a closed and open-ended structured questionnaire. It was administered in a most moderate English language to be able to convey to the respondents the clear intention of the study to avoid misunderstanding of the provisions of the questionnaires.

Analysis of Data

The analysis of data was done using Frequency, percentage and cumulative percentage. This study explores the extent to which truancy leads to poor academic performance among secondary school students.

Findings:

Truancy and academic performance among secondary school students.

Table 1: Truancy and Academic Performance among Secondary School Students: (N=60)

Responses	Frequencies	Percent	Cumulative percent
Strongly agree	31	51.7	51.7
Agree	23	38.3	90.0
Undecided	4	6.7	96.7
Strongly disagree	2	3.3	100.0
Total	60	100.0	

The result in table 1 above showed that out of 60 respondents, 31(51.7%) strongly agreed that poor academic performance among secondary school students is as a result of truancy, 23(38.3%) of the respondents agreed that poor academic performance among secondary school students is as a result

of truancy. This spells significantly that poor academic performance among secondary school students is due to truancy. Since students are not regular in attendance to school and classes. This means that they have nothing to answer as they were not in the class during the delivery of lessons.

The number of days a student is likely to attend to school in a month period.

Table 2: Percentage ratings of number of days a student attends school in a month: (N= 60)

==== The Effect of Truancy on Academic Performance of Secondary School Students ====

Days	Frequencies	Percent	Cumulative percent
5	8	13.3	13.3
10	73	11.7	25.0
20	33	55.0	30.0
30	12	20.0	100.0
Total	60	100.0	

The information above suggests that majority of the respondents which are students attend school for at least 20

days a month which culminates to 55.0%, parents do go to school once in a while when there is need to.

Table 3: Percentage ratings some possible causes of poor academic performance (N = 60)

Responses	Frequencies	Percent	Cumulative percent
Drug abuse	9	15.0	15.0
Truancy	14	23.3	38.3
Peer groups	8	13.3	51.7
Early child pregnancy	4	6.7	58.3
Lack of seriousness in classroom	25	41.7	100.00
	60	100.0	

From the outcome of table 3 shown above, lack of seriousness in class is the major factor that contributes to poor academic performance among secondary school students which is 25(41.7%) of the respondents which reported lack of seriousness in classroom to be the most contributing factor that leads to poor academic performance. 14(23.3%) said

poor academic performance is due to truancy. 9(15%) said it is due to drug abuse. 8(13.3%) responded that it is due to peer groups while 4(6.7%) believes that poor academic performance is caused by early child pregnancy.

Table 4: Percentage ratings on how poor parental guide causes truancy.

Responses	Frequencies	Percent	Cumulative percent
Strongly agree	35	38.3	58.3

Agree	21	35.0	93.3
Undecided	3	5.0	98.3
Strongly disagree	1	1.7	100.0
Total	60	100.0	

Table 4 above represents the respondents' responses on the relationship between poor parental guide and truancy 35(58.3%). Strongly agreed that truancy is due to poor parental guide

21(35%). The majority of respondents agreed on the statement that poor parental guide influences truancy among secondary school students.

Influence of drug abuse on Students poor academic performance.

Table 5: Percentage ratings on Influence of drug abuse on Students poor academic performance

Responses	Frequencies	Percent	Cumulative percent
Strongly agree	31	51.7	51.7
Agree	18	30.0	81.3
Undecided	4	6.7	88.3
Disagree	5	8.3	96.7
Strongly disagree	2	3.3	100.0
Total	60	100.0	

The results above showed that 15.7% of respondents agreed on the possibility of influence of drug abuse on poor academic performance among secondary school students.

Conclusion

The result obtained by the study revealed that poor academic performance by secondary school students cannot and must never be insulated from truancy and other related issues as discussed above. A staggering revelation showed that truancy is a big problem in Ebonyi State of Nigeria. This is shown in the figure of

51.7% of the respondents who were of the agreement that poor performance of students in secondary school can be related to truancy. This is a wakeup call to Ebonyi State ministry of education and all education policy makers. It is noted that lack of seriousness in classroom, drug abuse, peer group/pressure, poor parental guide and others are not helping matters either. They all contribute to poor academic performance of secondary school students in Ebonyi State of Nigeria.

=====*The Effect of Truancy on Academic Performance of Secondary School Students*=====

Recommendations

Education stakeholders should partner with Ebonyi State Government to curb this hydra headed monster known as truancy. The task force set up by the state government (Ebonyi) to curb truancy and absenteeism should be given the needed bite and co-operation by all and sundry to enhance the total eradication of truancy among secondary school students.

Parents who are equally stakeholders should educate their children and wards on the obvious implications of truancy. They should equally not shy away from giving sexual education to their children especially the girl child to avoid early childhood pregnancy. Poor and homeless students should be given a scholarship and financial backing to pursue academics by both the government and philanthropists to enable them attend school.

References

- Azizi Yahya (2010). *The effects of various modes of absenteeism problem in school on the academic performance of student in secondary schools*, vol 12, No, 4.
- Blaike, N. (2000). *Design of social Research*. The logic of anticipation. Policy press in association with Blackwell publisher Ltd.
- Ebonyi State policy on curbing truancy among students (2016). Vol 1: No 1. Pp 24.
- Ezenwa L. (2014). *Truant behavior, seminar paper on students' indiscipline*. Encyclopedia, the free Wikipedia Vol. vi, E. pp 81-103(Retrieved, 2018)
- Ojebola B. (2006). *Essentials of study skills*. NGB Books.
- Obondo E., and Dhadphale (1990). *School attendance and the effect of truancy among students and their poor performance*. A case of Kenya Students.
- Ollay, V. (2003). *The study of street students and its effects on academic performance in secondary schools and its consequences on the society and economy of Nigeria*. Ibadan printing Press.
- Rosurnah, P. (2003) *School enrolment, performance and access to education in Tanania*. Research report No 031.1. Mkuki na Nyota publishers.
- Shirima, Resuta (2002). *Research report on the cause and effect of truancy among primary school pupils in Tanzania*.