

Investigation into the Causes of Truancy among Public Senior Secondary School Students in Azare Metropolis of Bauchi State, Nigeria

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Abstract: *Truancy is one of the problems affecting teaching and learning in our secondary schools these days. This study investigated the causes of truancy among public senior secondary school students in Azare metropolis of Bauchi state, Nigeria. Descriptive survey design was used and the sampled was 357 which were selected from the population of 5,219 by using disproportionate stratified random sampling technique. A questionnaire was used in the collection of data for this study and simple percentage and frequency were used in the analysis. The study found out that the causes of truancy emanating from the home of the students include helping parents in the household work, looking after young children in the house, lack of recognition by the parents etc. The study also found out that some causes of truancy which emanate from the children include low intelligence, weak physical health, social and emotional, maladjustment etc. It was also found out that some causes of truancy emanating from the school include fear of teachers, fear of school activities, difficulties of school subjects etc. Finally, the study recommended that well trained teachers are to be employed, guidance and counseling offices and counselors are to be available in schools, conducive atmosphere in schools should be provided, clubs and societies should be reactivated, sport and recreational activities should be provided and maintained by the schools.*

Key words: *Truancy, Public Senior Secondary Schools, Students*

I. Introduction

School is an agent of socialization as well as institution set up by the society in order to pass knowledge, skills, values, attitudes and other necessary qualities to the younger generations so that they become productive and leaders of tomorrow. Mahuta, (2007) was of view that a school is regarded as a centre of knowledge and it possesses the power to mould and shape the character of individuals in the society. Therefore, it is clear that school is a backbone and life wire of a society. In our schools, teaching and learning take place effectively when there is proper attendance on the part of both staff and students. However, present day students do engage in absencing themselves from school without concrete and reasonable reasons. Therefore, truancy become one of the problem seriously affecting teaching and learning, general performance and quality of our secondary school students as well as the quality of the education generally in developing nations like Nigeria. Even though teachers, school administrators, government and community are trying their best in order tackle truancy but it still persists in our schools.

Therefore, this study intends to investigate the causes of truancy among public senior secondary school students in Azare metropolis of Bauchi state, Nigeria. The study intends to dwell more on causes of truancy originating from the home of the students, from the students and from the schools.

Meaning of Truancy

The word truancy means "Run away from classes" and the students who always tend to keep themselves away from studies and avoid attending classes are called truants (Gosain 2013). In another vein, Stoll, (2002) in Chukwuka, (2013) defines truancy as "absence from school for no legitimate reason". Nwana, (2004) in Adekunle, (2015) added that truancy involves intentionally absencing of oneself from school without permission, leaving without authorization and dodging of specific lesson periods. Therefore, it is clear that in a situation where a student absent himself from school without any concrete reason and the parents are not aware about it can be regarded as truancy.

II. Review of Related Literature

Causes of Truancy

Generally, it is obvious that truancy is a problem that has many causative agents and homes of the students is regarded as one. The home of the child seriously contributes to his engagement in truancy. For instance, in a home where there is poverty, lack of concern on the child's education, child abuse, alcohol abuse and other improper ways of child upbringing can easily make him indulge in truancy. Hopskins, Green and Burns, (2011), Maduabuchi, (2013), van Breda, (2014) and Musa, (2014) were of the opinion that lack of parental guidance, poverty, drug and alcohol abuse, lack of family support, domestic problems, broken homes, family commitments including care duties in the home are some of the factors that make children engage in truant behavior. Adedipe (1998) in Musa, (2014) opined that children who are not adequately monitored by their parents may show a variety of unhealthy symptoms in behaviours. Adebisi (1996) in Musa, (2014) opines that broken homes is a factor that causes truancy and absenteeism in children because in most broken home there is no proper care for the child.

Some causes of truancy among students really come from the students themselves. For instance, low level of intelligence, peer influences; weak physical health, social and emotional as well as maladjustment do make students engage in truancy. Raid, (2006), Hopskins, Green and Burns, (2011), Maduabuchi, (2013) and Mangal, (2013) in Gosain, (2013) were of the opinion that children's need to catch up on homework or assessment tasks, illness, lack of social competence, mental health difficulties and physical health, lack of self esteem, social skills and confidence; poor peer relations, lack of academic ability are some of the causes of truancy mainly coming from the student themselves. Omoegun (1995) in Musa, (2014) was of the view that a child would rather prefer to spend most of his days in the midst of his peers where he would be happier and more relaxed and this gives room for undue peer influence particularly in antisocial behaviours like truancy.

The school is expected to provide conducive atmosphere for proper learning and teaching as well as serving as a place to be loved by the students. However, in some situations school assists in making students to engage in truancy. For instance, in a situation where a school is having teachers who are harsh to students, where there is high level of bullying, un-conducive school environment, boredom, poor management, poor relations with teachers and in some cases irrelevance of the curriculum, then there must be high tendency of truancy from the students. Raid, (2006), Hopskins, Green and Burns, (2011), Chukwuka, (2013) and Mangal, (2013) in Gosain, (2013) were of the view that harsh teachers, negative school experiences such as bullying, boring and boredom classes, un-conducive school environment, indiscipline prevalent in the school, lack of interesting and co-curricular activities are some of causes of truancy among students that come from the school itself.

Therefore, it is clear that the causes of truancy among students are many and varied. So attributing it to single cause is not possible. In relation to that Stoll, (1993), Rohrman, (1993), Gesinde, (2005) and Maduabuchi, (2013) were of the view that the causes of truancy are many and varied, and can come from the child, home (family), school, society and government at large.

Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of this study are to:

- i) Find out the causes of truancy that come from the homes of public senior secondary school students in Azare metropolis of Bauchi state, Nigeria.
- ii) Find out the causes of truancy originating from the students in public senior secondary schools in Azare metropolis of Bauchi state, Nigeria.
- iii) Find out the causes of truancy originating from the public senior secondary schools (themselves) in Azare metropolis of Bauchi state, Nigeria.

III. Research Design

The design that was used in this study was descriptive survey. It was used because it permitted the researchers to study small sample and later generalized the findings to the whole population. Osuala, (2001) was of the view that in survey research small sample is studied and the findings generalized to the whole population.

Research Questions

This study intends to answer the following questions:

1. What are causes of truancy among public senior secondary school students originating from the homes in Azare metropolis of Bauchi state, Nigeria?
2. What are the causes of truancy among public senior secondary school students originating from them (students) in Azare metropolis of Bauchi state?
3. What are the causes of truancy among public senior secondary school students originating from the schools (themselves) in Azare metropolis of Bauchi state?

Population of the Study

The population of this study was five thousand, two hundred and nineteen (5,219). The table below shows the distribution of the population.

Table 1: Showing the distribution of the population of the study.

S/No.	Name of School	No. of Students
1.	G. G. C. Azare	978
2.	G. C. D. S. S. Azare	914
3.	G. D. S. S. Azare	1,574
4.	G. D. S. S. Matsango, Azare	464
5.	G. D. T. C. Azare	518
6.	G. D. S. S. Nasarawa, Azare	651
7.	Married Women Sec. Sch. Azare	110
Total Population		5,219

Source: Katagum Zonal Education Office, Azare, 2015.

Sample for the Study

The sample for this study was three hundred and fifty seven. The sample was selected based on Krejcie and Morgan's table for determining sample as contained in Kolo, (1992). The table below shows the distribution of the sample for this study.

Table 1: Showing the distribution of the sample for this study.

S/No.	Name of School	No. of Students
1.	G. G. C. Azare	71
2.	G. C. D. S. S. Azare	61
3.	G. D. S. S. Azare	84
4.	G. D. S. S. Matsango, Azare	41
5.	G. D. T. C. Azare	41
6.	G. D. S. S. Nasarawa, Azare	52
7.	Married Women Sec. Sch. Azare	07
Total Sample		357

Source: Fieldwork, 2015.

Sampling Technique

Disproportionate stratified random sampling technique was used in selecting the sample for this study. This is because it permitted the researchers to have representation from all the public senior secondary schools in the study area. Kolo, (1992) was of the opinion that this kind of sampling entails that the random drawing of subjects from the population is not only stratified, but that the stratification reflects an appropriate proportion to the power of each strata of the society.

Instrument for Data Collection

A self design questionnaire was used in the collection of data for this study. The questionnaire comprises of fifteen items dwelling on the variables of the study. The "Yes" or "No" response format was used on the questionnaire.

Validity and Reliability of the Instrument

The instrument was validated by experts who have more than two decades of teaching research methods in College of Education, Azare. This was done in order to make instrument measure what it was set measure. The reliability of the instrument was determined using test-retest method of reliability. The instrument was first used on twenty members of the population and after one week the same instrument was administered to the same people. The two results were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and the result found was 0.7. This makes the instrument very reliable because it measured at different times what it was supposed to measure.

Data Analysis Procedure

The data collected from the instrument was a discrete one; therefore simple percentage was used in the analysis.

Data Presentation and Analysis

This section focuses on the presentation and analysis of the collected data from the respondents.

Research Question 1: What are causes of truancy among public senior secondary school students originating from the homes in Azare metropolis of Bauchi state, Nigeria?

Table 3: Showing the Response of Research Question One

S/No.	Items	Responses	
		Yes %	No %
1.	Do you assist your parents in carrying out any duty at home during school hours?	65	35
2.	Do your parents give you guidance in relation to your education?	38	62
3.	Do your parents provide all the necessary requirements of your education?	45	55
4.	Do you face any form of abuse from home (Broken home) which forces you to engage in truancy?	62	38
5.	Do the indulgence of your parents in alcohol or drug abuse makes you engage in truancy?	28	72

Source: Fieldwork, 2015

In table 3 above, 65% of the respondents were of the view that they engage in truancy because of the assistance they rendered to their parents at home. In another vein, 62% of the respondents were saying that their parents do not care to give them any guidance with regards their education and that led them to engaging in truancy. About 55% of the respondents were of the opinion that their parents do not provide them with the necessary requirements of education and because of that they engage in truancy. But about 62% of the respondents were saying that they normally face one form of abuse or the other because of broken home which force them to become truants. Finally, 28% of the respondents were of the view that they indulge in truancy because their parents engage in alcohol or drug abuse.

Therefore, it is clear that public senior secondary school students in Azare metropolis of Bauchi state engage in truancy due to the fact that they engage in assisting their parents at home, lack of guidance on their education from parents, parents inability to provide for the requirements of the education of the children as well as facing one form of abuse or the other from the home which are broken ones. However, the parents' indulgence in either alcohol or drug abuse has little impact in making children engaging in truancy in the study area. Home is an important agent of socialization and education of children, but turn around to cause truancy among the students or make them to be truants.

Research Question 2: What are the causes of truancy among public senior secondary school students originating from them (students) in Azare metropolis of Bauchi state?

Table 4: Showing Responses on Research Question Two.

S/No.	Items	Responses	
		Yes %	No %
1.	Do your friends or peers influence you to engage in truancy?	83	17
2.	Does your ill health condition makes you engage in truancy?	42	58
3.	Does your low intelligence or low academic ability make you engage in truancy?	59	41
4.	Does your poor relationship with your colleagues makes you engage in truancy?	62	38
5.	Does your urge to be economically sound in order to take care of your education makes you engage in truancy?	72	28

Source: Fieldwork, 2015.

In table 4 above, 83% of the respondents were of the view that they were influenced by the peers to engage in truancy. But 42% of the respondents were saying that they were truants because of their ill health while 59% were of the view that they engage in truancy because of their low academic inability. On the other hand, 62% of the respondents were of the opinion that their poor relationship with colleagues, particularly bullying makes them engage in truancy while 72% were of the view that they engage in truancy because they want be economically sound to take care of the requirements of their education.

Therefore, it is clear that peer influence, low academic ability, poor relationship with colleagues (bullying) and willingness of the students to be economically sound in order to take care of their education make them engage in truancy in senior secondary schools of Azare metropolis of Bauchi state. However, the issue of ill health condition of the students has little impact in making them engaging in truancy. The public senior secondary school students in Azare metropolis also cause truancy for themselves.

Research Question 3: What are the causes of truancy among public senior secondary school students originating from the schools (themselves) in Azare metropolis of Bauchi state?

Table 5: Showing Responses on Research Question Three.

S/No.	Items	Responses	
		Yes %	No %
1.	Are your teachers harsh to you in such a way that makes engage in truancy?	58	42
2.	Is your school environment not conducive in such a way that it makes you engage in truancy?	73	27
3.	Is your school management's non-challant makes you engage in truancy?	68	32
4.	Does high level of indiscipline in your school makes you engage in truancy?	60	40
5.	Does lack of interesting co-curricular activities in your school makes you engage in truancy?	71	29

Source: Fieldwork, 2015.

In table 5 above, 58% of the respondents were of the opinion that teachers are harsh to them or they have poor relationship with their teacher and this makes them indulge in truancy. 73% of the respondents were of the view that un-conducive school atmosphere or environment force them to engage in truancy while 68% were of the view that it is the non-challant attitude of the school administration toward all matters affecting the school that make them engage in truancy. In another vein, 60% of the respondents were of the opinion that the high level of indiscipline existing in the schools makes them engage in truancy while 71% were of the view that the schools lack interesting co-curricular activities make the school boring for them and ultimately make them engage in truancy.

Therefore, it is clear that harsh teachers, un-conducive school environment, poor school management, high level of indiscipline in schools as well as lack of co-curricular activities in the schools make the public senior secondary school students in Azare metropolis engage in truancy. The public senior secondary schools as centers of learning also cause truancy among the public senior secondary schools in Azare metropolis of Bauchi state.

Discussion of Findings/Results

The discussion of findings is presented according to the research questions raised in this study.

Research Question One

The results of the analysis of research question one showed that parents (home) by engaging children in performing one or the other form of work, their inability to give necessary educational guidance to the children, inability of provide for educational requirement of the children as well as abuse at home particularly broken ones make public senior secondary school students in Azare metropolis engage in truancy. Therefore, this study tallies with the findings of Adebisi, (1996) in Musa, (2014), Adedibi, (1998) in Musa, (2014), Hopkins, Green and Brown, (2011), Maduabuchi, (2013), van Brenda, (2014) who were of the opinion that poverty, lack of concern for child's education, child abuse, alcoholic abuse, lack of parental guidance, broken homes and domestic violence are some of the main causes of truancy originating from the home of the child. The study also found out that the indulgence of parents in alcohol and drug abuse is having little or no impact on child's truancy in public senior secondary schools of Azare metropolis and this contradict their findings.

Research Question Two

The findings of research question two showed that peer influence, low intelligence, poor relationship and students urge to be economically sound to take care of their education make them (students) engage in truancy in public senior secondary schools in Azare metropolis. Therefore, this study tallies with findings of Raid, (2006), Hopskin, Green and Burns, (2011), Maduabuchi, (2013), Mangal, (2013) in Gosain, (2013) and Omoegun, (1995) in Musa, (2014) who found out that children's need to catch up on homework or assessment tasks, illness, lack of social competence, mental health difficulties and physical health, lack of self esteem, social skills and confidence, poor peer relations as well as lack of academic ability. The study also found out that the problem of ill-health has little impact in making the students engaging in truancy but their eagerness to be economically sound to take care of their education force them to.

Research Question Three

The findings of research question three showed that harsh teacher, un-conducive school environment and school management's non-challant attitude, high level of indiscipline as well as lack of interesting co-curricular activities make public senior secondary school students in Azare metropolis engage in truancy. Therefore, the study tallies with the findings of Raid, (2006), Hopskin, Green and Burns, (2011), Chukwuka, (2013) and Mangal, (2013) in Gosain, (2013) who found out that harsh teachers, negative school experiences such as bullying, boring and boredom classes, un-conducive school, lack of interesting co-curricular causes truancy among students.

IV. Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions were made:

That truancy exists among public senior secondary school students in Azare metropolis of Bauchi state. In addition to that the truancy was caused by many factors coming from the home or parents of the students, such as engaging children in carrying one activity or the other at home (assisting parents), inability of parents to provide for the educational requirements of their children, lack of proper educational guidance, child abuse particularly from broken homes. It was also concluded that the parents' indulgence in alcohol and drug abuse has little or no contribution to students' truancy.

That peer influence, low intelligence or low academic ability, poor relationship and students' urge to be economically sound to take care of their education are the causes of truancy emanating from the students of public senior secondary schools in Azare metropolis of Bauchi state. The study also concluded that students' level of ill-health has little contribution in making the truants.

That the harsh teachers, un-conducive school environment and school management non-challant attitude, high level of indiscipline as well as lack of interesting co-curricular activities are some of the causes of truancy coming from the schools in Azare metropolis of Bauchi state.

V. Recommendations

As a result of the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

- ❖ Teachers should try as much as possible to see parents and find out why their children are engaging in truancy, where parents are found wanting, proper advice and guidance are supposed to be given them (parent).
- ❖ The schools should develop strong school and community relationship where parents can be given proper advice on the issue of truancy.
- ❖ Guidance and counseling officer should be provided in each secondary school so as to give proper guidance to students who are truants.
- ❖ Teachers should be supervised by the school authority to avoid being harsh to students.
- ❖ Professionally and adequately trained teachers are to be employed so that they take good care of their students.
- ❖ There should be proper and adequate supervision and inspection of public senior secondary schools by the inspectorate division of state ministries of education so as to check school' managements.
- ❖ The schools should provide co-curricular activities for the students in order to make the place comfortable for them.

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