

## **The Strategies Used by Teachers and Parents in Curtailing Truancy among Junior Secondary School Students**

**Musa Halilu**

Library Department

Abu Ali Library

Aminu Saleh College of Education Azare

Email: [Musahalilu64@Gmail.Com](mailto:Musahalilu64@Gmail.Com)

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The purpose of this paper is to deal with the problem of truancy with particular reference to influence of peer group, inadequate school materials, poor feeding at home, poor method of teaching, too much work in the morning at home before going to the school etc. this paper tried to find out the cause of the above problem. The paper also deals with what other authors said are the possible causes and solution to the problem. To get the actual causes of this problem, an oral interviews were conducted for various groups of people in the school and the community. Some causes of the problem were identified, solutions and recommendations which the reader shall come across were highlighted. If the government and the community jointly implement the recommendations given, future occurrence of similar problems can be averted.*

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### **INTRODUCTION**

Strategies to be used by teachers and parents in curtailing truancy among junior secondary school students here simply refers to result or outcome of methods apply by both parents and teachers towards curtailing truancy problem among junior secondary school students. Teachers and parents have the zeal in their mind of seeing that their children and students properly and punctually attend their schools in order to achieve the educational attainment. Truancy is one of the externalized behavior problems that interferes and disrupts schooling and relation with peers and adults. Student with this behavior have emotional disturbance or behavior disorder and are qualified to receive special education services.

### **CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

Truancy behavioral problem is one of the serious problems that some Nigeria secondary school students experience. It has become a national headache by most citizens. Various opinions have been expressed by parents, teachers and leaders as well as concerned individuals about the conduct and issue of truancy among the students in Nigeria. Ezeani (2006) truancy problem can be eliminated in our schools, if homes, schools and society relate closely and as well adopt a communicative approach, which should mostly involve both parent and the truant's along with the teachers.

A study by Robbins, and Ratcliff (1987) reported that student and boredom and loss of interest in schools because of irrelevant courses, unnecessary suspensions, poor teaching methodologies, poor subject mastery, in appropriate guidance and counseling and bad relationship

with teachers as their major factors in their decision to skip the schools. On the other hand, most of the school staff believe truancy is to be related primarily to students problems associated with family and peers. Obondo and Dphadphade (1990), studies have reported that student's truant behaviors in school have active potentials to curtail the possibilities of meaningful academics. Obonda and Dhadphade (1990), Olley (2006) and Ogbuvbu (2002), reports respectively, as academics under achievement, includes low grades failure to graduate, committing crimes in towns during school hours, demised earnings potentials during adulthood, in ability to related with peer and difficulty in making friends, low self esteems and loss of confidence etc.

## **CAUSES OF TRUANCY**

### **Home**

Several factors in a child's home or personal life can contribute to truancy. For e.g. if drugs or alcohol is used in the home, then children are at an increased risk of being absent from school. Emore (2006), pointed that children engaged with domestic activities especially girls, results to lateness and make them hang around out of school. Also, Oghuvbu (2008) pointed that lateness in among the major causes of absenteeism. Other problems such as divorce, physical or verbal abuse and frequent moving from place to place also cause chronic absenteeism. According to "Truancy as a contextual and school related problem; A comparative multilevel Analysis of country and school characteristics on civic knowledge among fourteen year knowledge among fourteen year olds, children from lower income families are more vulnerable to truancy when compared to higher income families and parents who are not involved in their child's school life. Uboyu (2004), who identified truancy as a result of nonpayment of school fees which he attributed to high lost of education, financial hardship and poverty among others.

### **School Factor**

A hostel school environment can also cause truancy students who lack friends or are being bullied are like by to skip school. This factor is especially applicable to students who look, act or dress differently. In addition, some kinds may face peer pressure to skips class. Truancy is seen among students who lack confidence in their mental abilities or have leaning abilities. High truancy rates are seen in schools that have antagonistic relationship between staff and students and a poor attendance policy. Oghuvbu (2002), who pointed that truancy could be caused as a result of teacher non commitment to duty, in appropriate guidance and counseling, inappropriate and adequate record up keep, especially records for effective objective of the student and lack of positive relationship between teacher and the students. Ubogu (2004) identified teacher negative attitude among the major causes of truancy in secondary schools while FRC/CEM cited as bad relationship with teachers.

Jesson and Gray (1990), pointed out that some students claim to dislike specific lessons and the methods used rather than the teachers themselves. Also, among other problem includes ineffective leadership and poor school policies which is however, in line with Ubogu (2004), who identified poor schools administration, harsh school polities, rules and regulations as the causes of truancy in schools and finally avoidance of corporal punishment by the students from both the teachers and Senior students was again in consistent with Davison and Kirt (2003), who advocate discipline rather than corporal punishment.

### **Academic Performance**

Being absent from class decreases a student's ability to learn. It is difficult to succeed if a student misses too much work because it is hard to catch up. In addition, absent students lose interest in schools which results in low academic performance. Although truancy has known effects on individuals truancy has negative effects on the orally leaning environment.

### **Delinquency**

Without proper supervision during the day, truant teens are more likely to get involved in criminal activities, such as vandalism or shoplifting. Truancy can also lead to delinquency if students begin associating with gangs. Being chronically absent from school causes children to engage in substance abuse. In fact, truancy is a risk factor for marijuana use.

### **TYPES OF TRUANCY**

Ezeani (2006) in chukwuka (2013) categorized truancy into three types. These are:

**Habitual Truancy** -is one of the type of truancy that occur when a student (truant) constantly and continually absent from school without the due knowledge or consent of his parents and school authorities. Habitual truants are mainly those students who miss numerous full days of school academic activities. The frequency of absentees has become a regular behavior or habit. It is very important to note that students who are habitual truants have high chances of falling behind. In their school work, decline in their academic performance and even lose their attachment or positive attitudes towards school (Ezeani, 2006).

**Occasional Truancy** - is another type of truancy occurs when a student does not constantly and continually absent himself or herself from school. In this type of truancy the students level of absenteeism from school without the permission of parents or school authority is irregular or not regular. For instance, a child whom the mother stops him/her going to school and was kept at home to help care to take of his/her younger brother/sister etc. are all example of occasional truant (Ezeani, 2006).

**Casual Truancy**- this type of truancy which occurs when the students absence from school is by chance. This truancy or unexcused absence from school is not regular and constant but happens by chance. For instance the students who remained lurking with sound of the school bell. So that they could attend those lessons, which interested in them (Ezeani, 2006).

### **GENDER DIFFERENCES IN TRUANCY**

Many studies have identified gender to be one of the strong factors in the study of adolescent truant behavior. Baker (2001) observed that truancy is more pronounced among boys than girls. Schulz (2001) explained that males have higher rates of truancy than females especially in serious violent and property crimes. Regarding gender differences in adolescent old and Feldman (2000) stated that in society female are expected to be compliant and nurturing while men are to be active, aggressive and competitive. According to Emore (1994) in Olurewi (2013) stated that lateness was common among the female students than male students this was as a result of their involvement in domestic activities by their parents and this sometime makes girls to play truancy.

## STRATEGIES IN CURTAILING TRUANCY AMONG STUDENTS

Since truancy has been identified as a problem caused by different number of ways and has affected the truant and even the society in one way or the other. To reduce this problem, all hands must be on deck. The homes, school and society must relate closely and as well as a communicative approach, which should mostly involve both the parents and the truants along with their teachers.

More so, teachers should be good role models. Some teachers have been found to be habitual latecomers and truants. Such teachers are bad models for the students kept under their care. On the other hand, adult members of the society must Endeavour to lead by example. Truants in the school must be assisted in all possible ways to develop the habits of self-control based on reasons rather than on force (Ezeani 2006).

Counseling can also be used in assisting truants to give up truancy. Falaye (2009) referred to an interact between two or more people during which the counselor assists the counselee to solve his or her problem. According to Shertze and Stone (1981) counseling is seen as a process in which the counselor assists the counselee to make interpretations of facts relating to a plan or adjustment which he needs to make. To this effect, when truants are identified, school counselors should ensure that they counsel the students so far identified as truants.

Due to the fact that truancy is a problem that not only affects the students, but also the students family, school and entire society, Micheal (2005) in his article titled “manual to combat truancy” suggested five primary elements of educational strategy to combat.

- 1- **Involve parents in all truancy prevention activities:-** according to this element, parents play the fundamental role in the education of their children. Nobody else comments greater influence in getting young person’s to go to school everyday and recognizing how a good education can define his future than the parents. For families and school to work together to solve problems like truancy there must be mutual trust and communication. Schools can also help by being “family friendly” and encouraging teachers and parents to make regular contact before problems arise. Schools should help in training of teachers to work with parents, homing or appointing a parents liaison and to arrange for parents meetings through which parents will have a voice in school decisions, by so doing the problem of school truancy will be reduced.
- 2- **Establish ongoing truancy preventions programmes in school:-** Research findings has reviewed that truancy is a symptom of a much larger problem. In order to curb this ugly incidence, schools should address underlying needs of each child to ensure that truancy is not a re-occurring behavior. Also students’ basic educational needs such as conducive teaching and learning environment, adequate instructional materials and other academic facilities/resources like library, laboratory and technical workshops etc should be provided attendance (Micheal, 2005).
- 3- **Ensure that students receive from sanction for truancy:-** for effective reduction truancy, schools must communicate from any students and that any students found in this act must face severe and firm punishment frm related school authorities.
- 4- **Create meaningful incentives for parental responsibility:-** this is also another suggested element on how truancy can be curtailed among students. Following this principle the school should create incentive progeamme both for the parents and children. Positive

incentives such as participation in to any parent who plays positive role in truancy reduction among students. On the other hand negative sanctions like fines should be administered to parents who are never about their wards irregular attendance to schools, all this will help to promote parental responsibility towards the reduction of truancy (Micheal, 2005).

- 5- **Involvement of law enforcement agency in truancy reduction:-** In order to enforce regular school attendance policies, school officials should establish close linkage with law enforcement agents like police, probation officer, juvenile and family court officials etc to help prosecute any student caught playing truancy (Micheal, 2005).

To crown it all, government should help the police department and court system to establish and run temporary detention centers where they can drop-off school truants. Anti-truancy initiative like operation sweep students truants in neighborhoods. With these suggestions, truancy among tertiary institution will be reduced if not eradicated.

According to Baker, Sigmund, and Nugent (2001), programs risk factors have several key elements:-

- Parental involvement
- Involvement of community resources
- Meaningful sanctions or consequences for truancy
- Meaningful incentives for attendance
- Ongoing school based truancy reduction programs

These components include both for youth and their families. Frequently, since truancy is related to community, family, and individual factors, programs include some form of case management, so that the youth and family are referred to services offered through various agencies and entities in the community.

Truancy prevention programs are designed to promote regular school attendance through one or more strategies, including the following:

- a. Court alternatives
- b. Monitoring programs
- c. Law enforcement participation
- d. Increasing parental involvement
- e. Truancy awareness campaigns
- f. Other strategies, such as improving parents teacher communication and drawing upon community resources

There are also many different types of interventions used as a strategies for truancy reduction. Broad categories include school based programmes and community based programmes.

### **School Based Programmes**

Many programmes are based in schools, especially when they aim to identify truancy and absence problems before they reach a chronic level and before patterns become entrenched and harder to reverse. The following programs are just few examples of the variety of school based programs that have been implemented and evaluated for truancy reduction.

The Multnomah country, are, school Attendance Initiative (SAI) is a no punitive, culturally appropriate approach to help students maintain regular attendance. One of SAI goals is to

identify attendance problems early before so they take their roll and become serious. The primary intervention strategy consists of outreach to families of students, in support of their efforts to improve their children's attendance. Rather than focusing on family's deficits, SAI staff members help identify its strengths, which are in turn supplemented with school based services such as extended day activities, family engagement, and the parents organizing for school success program. A Los Angeles country, Calif, truancy reduction program called Abolish Chronic Truancy (A.C.T) targets elementary school children who have excessive absences. The program places prosecutors in the schools to work with administrators, teachers, parents or guardians, and students to intervene at the very beginning of the truancy cycle, before the problem is ingrained. A.C.T uses a series of graduated interventions to hold students and parents accountable for attendance problems. The program sends a letter to parents of students with attendance problems. Parents and children are invited to meet with the deputy district attorney. Also parents are representatives from community based organizations and schools, to offer parenting classes counseling, and other needed services. If attendance problems continue, parent is invited to meet individually with a school attendance review team, including the deputy district attorney and school officials. If truancy continues, students are referred to the school attendance review Board, which includes members from probation, mental health, and other agencies. If all of these steps fail a case is filed in court against the parents/guardians and/or the child. Throughout the involvement of the district attorney's office, school personnel conduct many family interventions, including home visits, meetings, phone conversations, and written communications. Bigs in school (Big Brothers Big Sisters) is a one to one

Mentoring program that takes place in the school setting/ school Based Mentoring (SBM) differ from the more traditional community based mentoring approach is several important ways. Mentors in SBM programs spend more time working on academics or doing home work with their mentees, and they also have more content with teachers and feel more effective in influencing their mentees educational achievement. The goal of virtually all mentoring programs is to support the development of healthy youth by addressing the need for positive adult contact, thereby reducing risk factors for negative behavior and enhancing protective factors for positive behavior.

### **Community Based Programs**

These programs have been implement and evaluated for truancy reduction.

The Truancy Assessment and Service Centers (TASC) are mobilizing all segments of the community based approach. TASCs mental health and social services, law enforcement, and courts and take a comprehensive approach to address problems of diverse populations in their neighborhoods. The centers provide children in Kindergarten through fifth grade early identification, assessment, and prompt delivery of coordinated interventions to prevent continued unexcused absences from school children who have five unexcused absences are referred to the TASC program and screened for treatment. Since these collaborations have been put in place, the truancy centers have been empowered to remove barriers to overall program effectiveness and fill on other identified gaps in services previously facing at risk families.

The Kern country (Calif) Truancy reduction program emphasizes daily school attendance through a collaborative effort of parental participation, school involvement, and case work management. The program focuses on early intervention and stresses collaboration between schools and juvenile probation officers. Components include assessment, home visits, weekly school contacts, counseling with the student and family, referrals to community resources, mentoring and evaluation. Students referred to the program are usually monitored for an entire academic year. Since the program began, chronic school absences and tardiness have decreased at participating schools.

## **CONCLUSION**

Since truancy has been identified as a problem caused by different number of ways and has affected the truant and even the society in one way or the other. Therefore the phenomenon should be accorded the seriousness it deserve to ensure that the menace has been waved out from the society though appropriate measures (i.e. identified solution to truancy by the researcher) so that we have in peace and harmony, healthy and educated society for the benefit all.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 1- Parent should provide adequate financial support and good moral training to the children. And school should frequent supervision, adequate arrangement should be made by parents to ensure that their children are going to school on time to avoid hanging around out of school for fear of punishment for late and also parents should stop involving their children with unnecessary domestic activities motivate them prevent them from interacting with children not schooling at home with might influence hindered their interest.
- 2- The school administration should make all that is possible to strengthen its policies and ensure good leadership is enthroned and adequate arrangement to ensure that teachers are committed to their duties and keep records of studies adequately and also guidance and counseling services unit should be established and where is in existence should be strengthened and studies should be encourage to attend on issues concerning their academic achievement other related issues, corporal punishment should be evolved and the punishment should commensurate the offence committee by students and the offenders should be left to know or realized the gravity of their offence made and its resultant effect on them.
- 3- Adequate infrastructural facilities should be provide by government to enhanced smooth and atmospheric conducive for teaching and learning processes, also teacher retraining programs for development and improvement should be adequately provide and also teachers should be adequately remunerated and supervised by the ministry of education not fished out those found waiting in the.

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