

# Effects of Truancy among Primary School Pupils in Oyo State of Nigeria and the Possible Remedies

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## ABSTRACT

*This survey research was carried out to investigate the effects of truancy among primary school pupils in Oyo State and possible remedies. The researcher designed a self-developed questionnaire titled “Effects of Truancy and Possible Remedies among Pupils in Oyo State(ETEPPR)” The questionnaire was classified into two sections namely Sections A and B. Section A contains the personal data of the respondents which include Age, School, Class, Sex, Family types and Religion. Section B contains fifteen items on the causes of truancy using 4 Likert scale. Four hypotheses were tested using t-test for hypotheses 1, 2 and 3 and Analysis of variance for hypothesis 4. Hypotheses 1, 2 and 3 were rejected since there were no significant differences while hypothesis 4 was accepted. Certain objectives were stated to be achieved for the purpose of the study. It is recommended among others that Government at all tiers need to provide necessary materials for the use of pupils in primary schools as well as adequate and proper planning by the policy makers and administrators. Parents should provide all necessary materials and be concerned about their wards. Teachers also need to give necessary and adequate care for their pupils within and outside the school premises. Also the role of school Counselors, Staff advisers and Headmasters should not be left undone in providing adequate support for their pupils in school. Government should legislate on truancy and state clearly the punishment that is meant for every offender including the ward’s parents. Education should be made compulsory for every child up to age 18.*

**Keywords:** *Truancy, skipping, bunking, skuling, skudding, hookey*

## INTRODUCTION

Truancy is a social phenomenon in Nigeria schools’ today which needs to be curbed because of the damages it’s caused to Nigeria educational system. Truancy as a social evil if not well dealt with in Nigeria schools will jeopardize the extravagant money being invested into education. Truancy is defined according to “Home – school mom charged with allowing truancy, 2005” in different ways such as “Skipping class” in the USA, in South Africa it is called bunking, skipping or jippo, Jamaica “Skuling”, Antigua and Barbuda “Skudding” Australia “truancy” United States and Canada “hookey”, “ditching”, “cutting class”. Distefano and Rudestan (2005) viewed truancy as an act of unauthorized or illegal absence from compulsory education which is caused by students out of their own free will without any authentic excuse

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as a result of medical ailment. They further expatiate the need for home schooling which guaranteed every child to attend public or private schools with a legal option for parents in many countries, while providing children with enabling environment as an option to public or private schools outside the individual's home. Patrick and Martin (2009) reveal that population sampled among individuals of aged 15 -16 years who has been born in 1979, where 70 schools were chosen to try to meet four requirements represent both state and independent schools and to allow analysis of urban and rural areas. These were addressed by randomly choosing 60 state schools from 13 different areas of the United Kingdom and by adding randomly chosen sample of 10 independent schools. The results proved that family structure, intact family and single parental, level of parental education, Parental control and caring really affect the pupils in school.

Jessor and Jessor (1977) also worked on truancy and poor academic performance has frequently been considered part of a general deviance or problem behavior syndrome. Grube and Morgan (1990); Miller et al (1995) also worked on deviance and how it affects pupils in primary schools. Majken (2005) findings on truancy shows that among 4000 students more than every third student had been absent during the last 14 days. The most irony of it is that truancy day is being celebrated in the developed countries of the world like Poland, Canada and have skip Day commonly called beach day in Eastern Canada (Elisabeth, 2006). She furthers explained that the date for skip day varies among different schools. This work deals with truancy and problems confronting pupils in primary schools. It reveals the shortcomings of truancy in Nigeria schools. It shows negative role played by wards' parents towards truancy in schools. It states the expected role to be played by government at all tiers; local, state and federal. It reveals the level of truancy and how it rampant in all schools. Causes of truancy according to David and Robert (2006) are peer group, separation or divorce within the family, abuse or neglect, mental and physical health issues, drug and alcohol abuse by a parent and/or the student. Others are moving repeatedly, low esteem, financial problems, lack of friends, safety concerns which may include pressure from gangs to threat and intimidation, lack of academic skills and boredom. The effects of truancy, according to David and Robert (2006) include:

- i Decrease earning ability
- ii Involvement in daytime crime, such as breaking and entering, vandalism, and shoplifting
- iii Increased risk of dropping out of school
- iv Two and a half times more likely to be on welfare
- v Involvement in gangs
- vi Struggling to catch up with school assignments
- vii Failing classes
- viii Risk of not obtaining a higher education

- ix Truancy affects the entire primary school pupil when a teacher shows down to help the friend student.
- x An increase in crime means more victims
- xi Increased cost to the whole community for additional law enforcement.
- xii Welfare costs to society

The following null hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

- H<sub>0</sub>1 There is no significant difference between pupil from Christian and Muslim homes towards truancy.
- H<sub>0</sub>2 There is no significant difference between pupils from private and public schools towards truancy.
- H<sub>0</sub>3 There is no significant difference between male and female pupils towards truancy.
- H<sub>0</sub>4 There is no significant difference between pupils' parents social economic status towards truancy.

## **PARTICIPANTS AND PROCEDURE**

The survey design was the method chosen for this research work because it enables the researcher to elicit information from representative samples of the population to describe a real life situation. The main focus of this study was to investigate the effects of truancy among primary school pupils and possible remedies in Oyo State. The target population for this work comprises all the pupils in primary schools in Oyo State of Nigeria. Since it would be strenuous to gather data for the target population, the researcher now adopted a multistage sampling technique allowing the selection going through stages. In the first stage Oyo State was grouped into five, zones comprises of 33 Local Government Areas include; Ibadan, Ogbomoso, Oke Ogun, Ibarapa and Oyo town. In the second stage, the researcher is allowed to choose two local governments from each zone.

In Ibadan, Ibadan - North and Egbeda, Ibarapa East and Ibarapa Central, Ogbomoso North and Ogbomoso South from Ogbomoso zone, Iwajowa and Saki West from Saki zone and Atiba and Oyo West from Oyo zone having considered their proximity to one another. The third stage allowing the researchers to select one primary school from each 10 selected local government in each zone and 20 pupils were randomly selected from each school including private schools making 200 pupils from the total numbers 2,004 public schools and 971 private nursery/primary schools in Oyo State. To investigate the effects of truancy among primary school pupils and possible remedies in Oyo State, a self-developed questionnaire entitled: Effect of Truancy among primary pupils and possible remedies in Oyo State (ETEPPR) was designed for data collection. The Questionnaire designed for this study was that of Likert type scale. Allotment of points of the response in each item was done in the following order. Strongly Agree = 4, Agree = 3; Strongly Disagree = 2 and Disagree = 1.

The personal data of the respondent containing sex, religion, age, family status and classes while Section B comprises of 15 items on truancy which respondents responded to them in 4 Likert type scale. The Likert scale presents a number of a positive and negative statements regarding truancy. In the Likert scale therefore respondents whose score above 50 were regarded as truant while respondents whose score below 50 were regarded as non- truant.

Stangor (2004) defined reliability as the extent to which the instrument is free from random error, while Oladele (2000) also viewed as the consistency of a test measure over a period of time. The researcher adopted test-re-test method to test consistency of the instrument. A total of 20 copies of questionnaire were administered among 20 pupils in Ibarapa North Local Government who were not part of study. The same questionnaire were administered to the same set of pupils after a period of five weeks and the two scores were correlated using Pearson Product Moment Correlation Co-efficient and it yielded 0.75, the result was considered to be high enough for questionnaire of this type of research work.

According to Oladele (2000) validity is the extent or degree at which a test measures what is supposed to measure. The Questionnaire was given to four Lecturers in the Department of Early Childhood and Cared Education of Emmanuel Alayande College of Education Oyo Lanlate Campus who later confirmed and affirmed its content validity. The researcher also employed a research assistant for easier administration.

Two hundred copies of questionnaire were produced and administered among 200 pupils in the ten selected primary schools in Oyo State namely:

- Ibadan North - Merella International School
- Egbeda - Essence Private School, Oluwo, Egeda
- Ibarapa East - Saint John's Primary School, Oke Ola Eruwa
- Ibarapa Central - A. U. D Primary school, Iberekodo Igboora
- Ogbomoso North - Oke Elerin Baptist Primary Schools, Apake, Ogbomoso
- Ogbomoso South - Islamic Group of Schools, Ajegunle, Ogbomoso
- Iwajowa - Community Primary School, Ayetoro – ile
- Saki West - L.A. Primary School, Isale Taba, Saki
- Oyo West - L.A. Primary School, Awomoro, Oyo
- Atiba - Methodist Primary School, Oyo.

The data collected for this study were classified into two sections for analysis using frequency and simple percentage to analyze the demographic data provided by the respondents, while for the second part of the analysis, both the t-test statistics and Analyses of Variance (ANOVA) procedures were used to compare the mean scores of the variables.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Table 1 shows that the Critical t-value is 1.960 while the calculated t-value is -6.01. Since the absolute value of the calculated t-value less (-6.01) is more than the

control t-value (1.960), the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference between pupils from Christian and Muslim homes towards truancy is therefore accepted. The pupils from both religions that is, Christian and Muslim homes were not exempted from truancy. This might be as a result of delinquency, non-challant attitudes towards education among Christian and Muslim pupils from both religions. Table 2 shows that critical t-value is 1.960 while the calculated t-value is 1.385. Since the absolute value of the calculated t (1.385) is less than the critical t-value (1.960), the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference between pupils from Private and Public Schools towards truancy is therefore accepted. Pupils from private and public schools indulged in truancy and there were no differences in their practices from both schools. The pupils from private and public rate of truancy in school were both the same; the pupils from private and public schools rate of truancy were higher due to lack of materials such as textbooks and non-prompt-payment of tuition fees and other charges cause truancy.

Table 3 shows that the critical t-value is 1.960 while the calculated t-value is (-4.16). Since the absolute value of the calculated t-value t (-4.16) is more than the critical t-value, the null hypothesis which stated that there is no significant difference between male and female pupils towards truancy was therefore accepted. Male and Female rate of truancy were of the same rate. Both male and female were indulging in truancy. The result on table 4 shows that the calculated F-value (13.91) is higher than the critical F-value (2.60) at 0.05 alpha level of significance and the null hypothesis that there is no significant difference between pupils' parents socio-economic status towards truancy is therefore rejected. Pupils from high socio-economic class were also involved in high rate of truancy as a result of non-payment of tuition fees, distance/proximity due to inability to take their wards to schools and unnecessary engagement in other valuable things in the family, while parents from low socio-economic status were also refused to pay their pupils schools' fees and both have adverse effects on their academic performances.

**Table 1:** Means, Standard Deviation and t-value of pupils from Christian and Muslim homes towards truancy

Group	No. of Cases	Mean	S.D.	Degree of Freedom	T-value	Critical t-value
Christian	110	45.4373	7.692	198	-6.01*	1.960
Muslim	90	52.3778	9.133			

NB: \* = p < 0.05 **Source:** Survey, 2014

**Table 2:** Means, Standard Deviation and t-value of pupils from Private and Public Schools towards truancy

Group	No. of Cases	Mean	S.D.	Degree of Freedom	T-value	Critical t-value
Private	87	44.3218	8.056	198	1.385	1.960
Public	123	54.3333	8.639			

**Source:** Survey, 2014

**Table 3:** Means, Standard Deviation and t-value of male and female toward truancy

Group	No. of Cases	Mean	S.D.	Degree of Freedom	T-value	Critical t-value
Male	54	44.4359	7.885	198	-4.16*	1.960
Female	146	50.3055	9.018			

NB: \* =  $p < 0.05$

**Table 4:** Analysis of variance (ANOVA) shows the difference in pupils' parent economic status towards truancy

Source	Degree of Freedom	Sum of Square	Mean of Square	F-value	Critical F-value
Model	3	2878.8598829	959.6199610		
Error	196	13524.9351171	69.004770	13.91	2.62
Corrected	199	16403.7950000			

## CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study has some relevant recommendations for school counselors, policy makers, administrators, ministry of education at the federal, state and local government levels, parents, teachers, pupils and policy makers in handling and dealing with pupils' truancy in Nigeria schools. Recommendations were therefore made for possible solutions to curb truancy among pupils in primary school such as:

1. Government at all tiers need to provide necessary materials for the use of pupils in primary schools.
2. Adequate and proper planning by the policy makers and administrators.
3. Parents should provide all necessary materials and be concerned about their wards.
4. Teachers also need to give necessary and adequate care for their pupils within and outside the school premises.
5. Also the role of school Counselors, Staff advisers and Headmasters should not be left undone in providing adequate support for their pupils in school.
6. Government should legislate on truancy and state clearly the punishment that is meant for every offender including the ward's parent.
7. Education should be made compulsory for every child up to age 18 and the National policy on education should be duly recognized.
8. Education should be made free at primary level and private school should be reinforced.

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