

Truancy and Academic Performance of Colleges of Education Students in South-Western Nigeria: Implication for Evaluation

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KEYWORDS Academic Performance. Colleges of Education. Education. Evaluation. Students. Truancy

ABSTRACT This study investigated the existence of relationship between college physical environment and truancy behavior of college students. Moreover, the study shows the effect of gender influence on truancy behavior. Stratified and simple random sampling method was used to select 120 students each from four colleges of education. The total number of 480 students was involved in this study. The instruments used were three namely: Lecturers Record of Attendance, Statement of Students Result and "College Environment Questionnaires" (CEQ). The research questions answered in the study were four. The statistical tools used to analysis the data ranges from descriptive to Chi-square and t-test. CEQ was checked and validity of the instrument was established by a team educational evaluator. The reliability coefficient was established with test- retest at 0.75. The study shows that there is an existence of truancy among college students and it varies based on gender and the environment. It was concluded that truancy should be eradicated or reduced drastically in other improve on the academic performance of the students.

INTRODUCTION

Truancy is one of the major phenomenons that have attracted much attention in research both at national and international levels. Some notable educational research had so far been recorded (DeMarguis 2011; Jesse 2014; Rothman 2004; Morris and Rutt 2004; Daziel and Henthorne 2005; Reid 2010). In recent times, education has been seen as a fundamental human right that should be accorded to all human beings; also Abdulahi (2005) stated that education is seen as a social responsibility of government to its people. Consequently no nation, government, organization or family makes effective impart on daily basis to education without the relevant output that had clearer understanding of their obligation, functions and responsibilities; hence appropriate attention towards the growth and development of education is imperative. As important as education is in the life of any nation, the educational system of Nigeria has been described by Obemeata (1995) as an unprofitable venture, which has failed to yield the expected dividends.

However, the effort invested by the federal government of Nigeria on education had over the years proven a fruitful and promising reward to national development, despite this effort, it is

of no doubt that several factors for which truancy is one, has posed relentless restriction to the trend of the rapid development in education. According to Hazinga and Thornberry (2000) truancy is defined as having an unexcused absence from school for one or more part of the day for at least three school days during five-day school week. Moreover, Salford City Council Report (2008) defines truancy as the act when a child, who is believed to have been at school, fails to attend school classes without the permission or awareness of the parents or the school authority concerned. Therefore, Truancy can be seen as the practice of staying away from school without permission, this is common in Nigeria Colleges of Education because of the population of the students especially in some courses.

Ubogu (2004) highlighted the reasons for truancy as lack of good health, poverty, age, social status, environment, and institutional factor like teachers' behavior, lack of administrative skills and increase in school levy. Also, according to Emore (2005) school location, discipline in the school, family effect and school distance are mostly identified as major reasons while students leave school unnecessarily. Scholars identified in their various research that students perform better in their academics when they attend school regularly (Oghuvu 2006; Oluremi 2013

cited Obemeata 1995; Adoboyeje 2000; Obayan 2003). They revealed that the academic performance of learners is determined by the environmental factor of the school.

Truancy is also a factor that contributes to idleness, joblessness, unemployment and underemployment of most adults today, just because they engage in the act of truancy during their school days. Carol (2006) discovered that the effect of truancy is germane to academic performance of the students, he stated that decision not to come to school regularly is dominant where we parents have more than enough children in the family and the father's state of finances is very low. Similarly, Brillingston (1998) and Maaruf (2005) submitted that some of the truancy that occurred due to home factor is without the knowledge of the parents.

Some inevitable reports gathered from research stated that truancy leads to total drop out of students in schools at various levels. A study gathered through national reports identified that fifty-nine percent to sixty-five percent of students that drop out of school had in one way or the other skipped at least a year before finally dropping out (Bridgeland et al. 2006). Center for Children and Youth Justice in 2012 highlighted top five reasons for leaving school in an article titled; Truancy Reduction: Research, Policy and Practice.

1. When students were no longer enjoying the classes.
2. When students were absent for so many days and find it difficult to cover the missing gap.
3. When students engaged themselves with several discussion with people that have no interest in school.
4. When students exercise too much domination and not guided by any rule.
5. When students can no longer perform well in school academically.

Statement of the Problem

The impact of truancy in colleges is very obvious and usually a negative one on Truants' present and future life in education. Truancy results in loss of intellectual development and poor academic performances of the students which in one way or the other reduce the quality of education of the child. Therefore, this study will investigate the implication of evaluation in

truancy and academic performance among students from colleges of education in south-western Nigeria.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the relationship that occurs as a result of the environmental factor and students' manifestation of truancy behavior in colleges of education. Also, it will examine the gender effect on truancy and the level of their involvement. Moreover, this study will determine whether truancy exists among colleges of education students in south-western Nigeria. It will enumerate the various causes of truancy in colleges of education. Finally, the study will focus on how truancy can influence the academic performance of colleges of education students.

Research Questions

1. To what extent does truancy affect the academic performance of student in colleges of education?
2. What is the relationship between truancy among colleges of education students and their environment?
3. What are the significant differences between the academic performance truants in term of gender?
4. What are the factors responsible for the causes of truancy in colleges of education?

METHODOLOGY

This study makes use of a descriptive survey research design. This supported the contribution of Kerlinger (1973) who stated that survey research design is a scientific tool employable when investigation issues through surveying the opinions, attitudes and perception of people as well as responsible measure of behavior. The population for this study involves all colleges of education students in south-western, Nigeria. One hundred and twenty (120) students each stratified according to their schools and courses were selected from the four colleges purposefully chosen for this study. In all a total of four hundred and eighty (480) students were involved in this study. Three research instruments were used for this study viz; Lecturers Record of Attendance (LRA) for 1st semester

in 2014/2015 session, Student Statement of Result (SSR) for the same semesters and College Environment Questionnaire (CEQ).

The cumulative lecturer’s attendance record is 100, also the cumulative student statement of result was 100 while CEQ was a thirty items instruments with response format of 4 Likert point scale. Reliability coefficient of the instrument was established by a team of educational evaluators from the University of Ibadan. The reliability coefficient obtained was 0.74. One of the method for establishing reliability of an instrument known as test-retest method was used within the interval of two weeks between the first test and second test. Data was analyzed with the use of statistical tools such as descriptive, chi-square and t-test.

RESULTS

Research Question 1

To what extent does truancy affects the academic performance of students in colleges of education?

The attendance recorded by 5 lecturers that took five different courses were considered. Students were expected to appear 20 times in each of the lecture making a total of 100 cumulative scores. The results (see Table 1) show that there

exist a significant relationship between academic performance and truancy among college students with a Chi-square value of 31.56 at 0.05. This implies that any students found absent from school or lecture unnecessarily will not likely perform well academically.

Research Question 2

What are the relationship between truancy among colleges of education students and their environment?

Table 2 shows that there exists a degree of significant relationship between college environment and truants behaviour with Chi-square value of 26.45 at 0.05. This implies that the conduciveness of the college environment enables the students to be interested in coming to school and attend lecturers regularly. The results indicated that majority of the students see the physical environment of the college to be good enough and suitable for teaching and learning.

Research Question 3

What are the significance differences between the academic performance truants in term of gender?

Table 3 revealed that there exists a significant difference between the performance of male

Table 1: Relationship that exists between truancy and college of education student academic performance

<i>Lecturer’s Attendance Record (LAR)</i> <i>(indicating number of times students appears in class for lecture)</i>	<i>Students statement of results</i>				<i>Total</i>	χ^2	<i>df</i>
	<i>Poor</i> <i>0-25%</i>	<i>Fair</i> <i>26-50%</i>	<i>Good</i> <i>51-75%</i>	<i>V. Good</i> <i>76-100%</i>			
Low punctuality (0 – 25)	19	12	06	02	39	31.56	4
Moderate punctuality (26 – 50)	10	18	14	12	54		
High punctuality (51 – 75)	16	24	43	51	134		
Very high punctuality(76 – 100)	06	42	79	126	253		
Total	51	96	142	191	480		

Table 2: Truancy and environmental relationship

<i>Lecturer’s Attendance Record (LAR)</i>	<i>Students’ physical environment</i>				<i>Total</i>	χ^2	<i>df</i>	<i>F</i>
	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Fair</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>V. Good</i>				
Low punctuality (0 – 25)	01	05	04	03	13	26.45	4	0.05
Moderate punctuality (26 – 50)	03	14	08	06	31			
High punctuality (51 – 75)	10	201	78	53	162			
Very high punctuality (76– 100)	14	12	218	30	274			
Total	28	52	308	92	480			

Table 3: Gender truants differences and academic performance

<i>Sex</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>X</i>	<i>S.D.</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>t. cal</i>	<i>T. tab</i>
Male	198	86.70	12.48	245	2.26	1.86
Female	282	98.42	8.06			

x significant at $P < 0.05$

and female truants academically. The result shows an average mean 86.7 in the academic performance of the male meanwhile the female students academic performance average mean was 98.42. Result of t calculated (2.26) has a significance level 0.05 and at the degree of freedom of 245. This shows that truancy occurs among

male students rather than female counterpart. This may be among other reasons that the male students enjoy staying away from academic activities especially when the environment gives room for some extracurricular activities outside the college programme like game, party etc. due to peer influence.

Research Question 4

What factors responsible for the causes of truancy in colleges of education?

Table 4 shows the distribution of responses on the factors responsible for the causes of stu-

Table 4: Distribution of frequencies and percentage for the factors responsible for the causes of students' truancy in colleges of education

<i>S. No.</i>	<i>Items</i>	<i>SA</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>SD</i>
1	Lack of accommodation within the college affects my academic performance.	208 (-43.30%)	151 (-31.50%)	78 (-16.30%)	43 (-9%)
2	The management of the college have a nonchalant attitude to students misbehavior	38 (-7.90%)	96 (-20.00%)	198 (-41.30%)	148 (-30.80%)
3	The basic amenities for teaching and learning were not adequately provided	49 (-10.10%)	32 (-6.70%)	212 (-44.20%)	187 (-40%)
4	The location of the college affects learning	54 (-11.00%)	62 (-12.90%)	162 (-33.80%)	202 (-42.60%)
5	Computer games outside the college engage most of my time.	57 (-11.90%)	102 (-21.30%)	173 (-36.00%)	148 (-30.80%)
6	College provides feedback for the parents concerning students' academic	156 (-32.50%)	176 (-36.70%)	88 (-18.30%)	60 (-12.50%)
7	Population of the class is no encouraging for teaching and learning.	242 (-50.40%)	168 (-35.00%)	56 (-11.70%)	14 (-2.90%)
8	College rules and regulations are not in any way students friendly	203 (-42.30%)	177 (-36.90%)	63 (-13.10%)	37 (-7.70%)
9	Examination results and assessment of students learning are not encouraging	198 (-41.30%)	164 (-34.20%)	78 (-16.30%)	40 (-8.20%)
10	Textbook and handbook for the course are not easy to understand	78 (-16.30%)	29 (-6%)	242 (-50.40%)	131 (-27.30%)
11	There is provision for adequate security for the students	101 (-21%)	188 (-39.20%)	142 (-29.60%)	49 (-10.20%)
12	Admission of students to the college should be on merit	234 (-48.80%)	163 (-34%)	62 (-12.90%)	21 (-4.40%)
13	Students should participate in major competition both at local and national level	49 (-10.20%)	89 (-18.50%)	146 (-30.40%)	196 (-40.80%)
14	The lecture room should be well ventilated	213 (-44.40%)	164 (-34.20%)	85 (-17.70%)	18 (-3.80%)
15	High moral standard should be promoted among students	167 (-34.80%)	212 (-44.20%)	74 (-15.40%)	27 (-5.60%)
16	Parent should support their children when in school	179 (-37.30%)	186 (-38.80%)	75 (-15.60%)	40 (-8.30%)
17	Social amenities like water, electricity and internet facilities are to be provided in the college	218 (-45.40%)	108 (-22.50%)	96 (-20%)	58 (-12.10%)
18	Lecturers should not victimize students in the college	181 (-37.70%)	146 (-30.40%)	63 (-13.10%)	90 (-18.80%)
19	Cultism and other act of indiscipline should be checked	178 (-37.10%)	96 (-20.00%)	128 (-26.70%)	78 (-16.30%)
20	Teaching methodology adopted by the lecturers should be efficient	118 (-30.8)	182 (-37.90%)	95 (-19.80%)	55 (-11.50%)

dents' truancy in colleges of education. Four Likert point scale namely strongly agreed (SA), agreed (A), strongly disagreed (SD) and disagreed (D), but merging system was adopted for the purpose of interpretation, SA and A to form one pattern while SD and D formed the other pattern of responses. Accommodation should be provided within the campus to boost their academic performance as 74.8 percent agreed while 72.1 percent disagreed that the management has nonchalant attitude to students' misbehavior and 84.2 percent indicated that basic amenities for learning in the college were provided.

In addition to this, 75.9 percent were of the opinion that the location of the college affects learning either positively or negatively. Over sixty-six percent disagreed that computer games engaged their time. Seventy percent indicated that the population of the class is too large and not encouraging. Concerning rules and regulation 79.2 percent agreed that they are not in any way students friendly. Approximately seventy-six percent agreed that the examination results are not encouraging while 77.7 percent disagreed that textbook and handout are not easy to understand. The total percentage that agreed that there is a provision for adequate security in the college is 60.2 while. 82.8 percent agreed that admission of students should be on merit. The percentage of those who indicated that participation in major competition is not necessary was 71.2 while 77.6 percent supported that lecture room should be well ventilated. Seventy-nine percent agreed on promotion of high moral standards and 76.1 percent indicated that parents should support their children in school. Those who agreed that social amenities should be provided in the college were 67.9 percent while 68.1 percent indicated that lecturers should not victimize students. In the same vain 57.1 percent indicated that cultism and any form of indiscipline should be checked while 68.7 percent agreed that teaching methodology used by lecturers should be efficient.

DISCUSSION

The study revealed that there exist a significant relationship between the academic performance of the college students and truancy. These findings agreed with Oluremi (2013) who revealed the existence of significant relationship between truancy and academic performance.

Also, Oyebamiji (1996) agreed that any child who stays away from school will miss so many lessons that he will as a result fall behind other children in class. Furthermore, Baker and Jansen (2000) opined that the effect of truancy includes lower academic achievement.

This study also indicated that there was an existence of significant relationship between college environment and truants behavior in the colleges. This findings is supported by the result of Okoro (2004) who explained that some students are compelled to divert to join friend who are not ready to be in school because of the pleasure and fun they obtain from their environments.

The study also shows a significant difference across gender and the academic performance of truants. The implication of this is that truancy is most common among male students and engaged in so many activities outside the school which affects their academic performance in one way or the other. This result was against the findings of Akinpelu (1998), who stated that there was no existence of significant difference between the academic achievement of male and female special needs students. Finally, this study submitted that some factors are responsible for the causes of truancy among colleges' students (Baker et al. 2001; Daining 2007; Epstein and Sheldon 2002; McCeuskey et al. 2004).

CONCLUSION

The study concluded that truancy is a serious problem in Nigeria especially in colleges of education and has a negative effect on the truants, parents as well as future life in education. Students who are frequently absent from school will have low academic performance. The causes of truancy are numerous and highly correlated; a students' decision not to attend school at one time or the other could be influenced by a number of physical, social, personal and environmental factors. Truancy is typically caused by factors from four levels: the individual, the family, the school and the neighborhood or community

Implications for Evaluation

The word 'evaluation' was coined from a Latin word "valeo" meaning "value" or to "assess the worth of a thing". In addition, we evaluate teachers, students, administrators, facili-

ties, service, budgets, instructional strategies etc. in order to judge the worth of any education enterprise. Evaluation in education gives direction and inputs to educational goals.

Therefore, lecturers in the colleges of education could be seen as an evaluator who determines the worth of the students through various means of assessment. Truancy, eventually leads to total drop-out in school. Researchers have demonstrated a substantial link between truancy and school completion. Majority of students who later dropped out of school showed significant indicators for dropping out as early as sixth grade.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The management of the school should emphasize the implication of absents from school during the orientation program organized for the fresher, and lecturers should strategize means of ensuring adequate attendance of student during lecture. The quality of examination questions and the conduct of examination is germane to the effectiveness of learning and a way of reducing truancy in school. Finally, truancy should not lead to drop-out in schools because any students dropped out of the school will not be rated high in the course of evaluation.

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Paper received for publication on March 2017
Paper accepted for publication on May 2017