

Impacts of school type and students' class on school truancy among female teenagers in Aba, Abia State, Nigeria.

Miracle I. Mbagwu,

Department of Psychology, Imo State University, Owerri.

*Corresponding author: miracleify1@gmail.com, +234803-649-4206

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ABSTRACT

The study examined the impacts of school type and students' class on school truancy among female teenagers in Aba, Abia State of Nigeria. Using multistage sampling technique, a total of 582 female students whose ages ranged from 13 to 19 years with a mean of 14.78 and standard deviation of 1.46 were sampled for the study. Data was collected with School Truancy Questionnaire (STQ), A Cross-Sectional Survey Design was employed for the study. Three hypotheses were postulated and tested. Both Descriptive statistic and Two-Way Analysis of Variance were used in data analysis on the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 21.0. Results revealed that school truanting behaviour of private school females and junior female students were lower than those of public school and senior female teenagers in Aba respectively. There was no interaction effect of school type and class on school truancy among female teenagers in Aba. Based on the findings, recommendation was made among others that the government of Abia state should do well to develop School Truancy Policy. The policy should address the punishment to be given to any identified truants in the society and a reward to be provided to any student with 100% attendance each term or academic session.

Keywords: *Aba, Female Teenagers, Nigeria, School Truancy, School Type, Students' Class.*

INTRODUCTION

School truancy has been defined differently by professionals including Counsellors, Psychologists, Sociologists, Welfare Authorities and Educators. Ramberg, Laftman, Fransson and Modin (2019), posit that truancy is students distancing themselves from school. Mbagwu,

Annorzie and Ugwu (2018), simply defined school truancy as irregularity in school attendance. This actually describes the attitude of students who never attended school as regular as their parents and school authorities may require of them (Suleman, Hussain & Kayani, 2017). In the words of Gyimah and Yelkpereri (2017), truancy depicts a regular unexcused absence from classes or mandatory schooling.

However, the exact meaning of school truancy differs from school to school, as this is usually defined in the school's handbook of rules and regulations (Gentle-Genitty, Karikari, Chen, Wilka, & Kim, 2015). In this study therefore, the term school truancy explains the attitude of skipping class when in school and completely being absent from school without the consent of the classroom teacher, school authority or parents/guidance. This is because absence with the knowledge and permission of the classroom teacher, school authority and parents or guardians is not regarded as truancy.

Nigerian researchers have reported that both male and female secondary school students are involved in truanting behaviour (Adefunke, 2015; Mbagwu, et al. 2018; Melvina & Kingsley, 2016; Obiunu & Ozuri, 2018; Onwubiko, Omejua & Egwim, 2017). With the knowledge of the fact that school truancy is found among both gender, the present study focused on female teenagers only. Interest to this peculiar female study arose some years ago when the researcher worked in secondary schools at Aba, Abia State and Ebubu, Eleme, in Rivers State as School Administrator/class room Teacher and Counsellor respectively. The researcher observed then, that male students had less attendance related problems in school unlike the females. More female students' parents than the males' had one complaint or the other against their children's intentional unauthorized absence from school.

More so, being fully aware of the negative effects of school truancy especially among female students, it is clear stating the obvious that a lot of factors are responsible. Ramberg, et al.

(2019) in their study on School Effectiveness and Truancy reported that many of the causes of truancy are related to the type of school in existence, and their report emphasized the importance of good school environment in attraction of students to school. School types as studied by the present researcher are Public and Private Secondary Schools. In a study carried out by Prabha and Maheswari (2017) with public school students, 85.7% of the truant students expressed strong dislike for their school given reason of not having sufficient spacious classrooms and 91.4% of the respondents felt that the environment and physical buildings are not good enough. Prabha and Maheswari (2017) also observed that the students' opinion was that if their parents would take them away from public schools where they were to private school; they would stop playing truant. On the other hand, the study conducted by Audu, Pur and Wasinda (2017) among boarding and day students of public schools revealed no significant difference in truancy level of the students. In addition, the rate of truancy found among students in public school is as low as 30% (Audu, Pur & Wasinda, 2017).

Furthermore, school truancy has become a serious problem affecting teaching and learning in our educational system all over the world especially in Nigeria (Audu, Pur & Mbahi, 2017). Teenagers in Aba city of Abia state (within the age bracket of 13 and 19 years) are not different. Junior and Senior classes are the two categories of teenagers studied by the present researcher. Onyeaka, Kugbey, Ayanore and Asante, (2020) in their study observed that older adolescents were more likely to miss school than younger ones as school truancy seem to increase with age. As observed in Musa (2014), truancy among teenagers has contributed to poor examination performance and denial of future quality job. This may be why Afande and Maina, (2015) asserted that truancy costs teenagers education, resulting in reduced earning capacities. Finally, as a matter of concern, the society wants and needs teenagers (especially the females) to stay in school at least to improve the quality of their future lives in terms of vocational development, job opportunities, wealth and prestige.

Statement of the Problem

A preliminary review of the literature revealed that school truancy is a notable problem in Nigeria and other parts of the world (Audu, Pur & Mbahi, 2017; Eremie, 2015). To ensure that students attend school regularly, schools in Nigeria are compelled to record the attendance of learners in class registers every day both public and private secondary schools (Adefunke, 2015; Obiunu & Ozuri, 2018), the case of Abia State, especially Aba city, is not different. Despite these recording and monitoring procedures, learners continue to play truants on an almost daily basis. School truancy continues to be a serious problem that academics and educators found among students (Gyimah & Yelkperi, 2017; Mbagwu, et al. 2018; Obiunu & Ozuri, 2018; Suleman, et al. 2017), pointing to the fact that there is need for further and thorough investigations on the factors affecting school truancy among students in secondary school; for extended and proper counselling to students especially the truants. Scholars such as Seidu (2019) and Suleman, et al. (2017) consider school truancy as a cankerworm that destroys the educational programmes globally. Earlier researches on school type and truancy were focused more on boarding and day schools; few looked into school type in terms of public and private schools. This study will specifically add to the literature of truancy and school type in terms of public and private secondary schools. Previous studies agreed to the fact that truancy is common among teenagers in secondary schools, none of the studies informed the public the specific category of teenagers; junior secondary school students (juniors) or senior secondary school students (seniors) who get involved more in school truancy. This present study however, is set to providing such information with reference to Aba. The results from the study can be vital for School and Counselling Psychologists in the design of counselling programmes, which will help to curb the problem of school truancy in Aba City of Abia State specifically and in Nigeria generally.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of this present study is to, examine the impact of school type and student' class on school truancy among female teenagers in Aba City of Abia State, Nigeria.

Specifically, the study aims at:

- i. investigating the impact of school type on school truancy among female secondary school teenagers in Aba;
- ii. evaluating the difference between the junior female secondary school teenagers and senior female secondary school teenagers on truanting behaviour ; and
- iii. ascertaining the interaction effect of school type and students' class on school truancy among female secondary school teenagers in Aba.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this present study is Operant Conditioning Theory by Skinner (1938, 1948 and 1953). The theory explains how rewards and punishments can influence behaviour. Skinner (1953) identified two types of consequences that follow behaviour as; Reinforcement - referring to process of increasing the frequency of occurrence of behaviour by a reinforcer and Punishment- referring to the process of decreasing the frequency of occurrence of behaviour by a punisher. Operant conditioning certainly can be applied in homes, classrooms, prisons and psychiatric hospitals (Shrestha, 2017). An application of Operant Conditioning Theory to this present study lies on the simple premise that actions which are reinforced tend to be strengthened and more likely to reoccur in the future. Thus if a student plays truant and school administrators, teachers, and parents reward such, the student will probably be more likely to continue playing school truancy. Conversely, actions which are punished or have undesirable consequences tend to be weakened and less likely to reoccur in the nearest future. It also follows that if a student plays truant and the school administrators,

teachers and parents frown at it, such a student may not repeat the truanting behaviour in the future.

Empirical Review of School Type and Students' Class on School Truancy

Matthew, (2020) studied the perception of teachers on school-based factors influencing absenteeism of students in Public Secondary Schools in Central Senatorial District of Ondo State, Nigeria. It was a descriptive-survey with two hypotheses to achieve the objectives. 150 government teachers, drawn from 15 Public Secondary Schools in the District served as the participants. The study found among others that a lot of school-based factors influenced absenteeism in schools, such as unattractive school environment, lack of recreational facilities; discouraging school curriculum; as well as recommend measures, such as the provision of instructional materials and facilities for schools. In the researchers view, teenagers in public school get highly involved in school truancy as this previous research suggests. Coincidentally, there is no comparison to what is obtainable in private schools as this previous research basically was conducted among teachers in only public schools. Unlike the study conducted by Matthew (2020), this present study however involves students as participants in both the private and public schools and therefore it is easier to compare truancy level in both school systems.

Prabha and Maheswari (2017) examined the causes of truancy with special reference to school factors. This study was conducted in a government higher secondary school, Karur District. The results revealed that among the respondents, majority disliked their school and the remaining liked their school. This vast majority (85.7%) of the respondents who disliked their school was of the opinion that they are not having sufficient spacious classrooms and 91.4% of the respondents felt that the physical surroundings such as ventilation and lighting is not at a good level. In the end, Prabha and Maheswari (2017) observed that the students were of the opinion that if their parents would take them to private school they would not play truants. This

earlier study however, raised the impression that truancy is more common with students in public school than those in private schools.

Suleman, et al. (2017) investigated the factors contributing to truancy among secondary school students in Karak District, Pakistan with a sample of 150 secondary school teachers. It was discovered that school environmental factors (e.g. autocratic environment) are the factors that compel a student to exhibit truancy (Suleman, et al., 2017). In contrast with the study examining Karak District, Pakistan adolescents which involved teachers as participants, the current study targeted Nigerian female Secondary School teenagers in Aba to understand impacts of school type and students class on school truancy. The earlier unlike this present study, did not provide information on the students' school type (public or private) as well as class (junior or senior) that are more prone to school truancy.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested in this study:

1. There will be a significant difference between the truanting behaviour of public school students and that of private school students among female teenagers in Aba.
2. School truanting behaviour of junior female teenagers will significantly differ from that of senior female teenagers in Aba.
3. There will be a significant interaction effect of school type and students' class on school truancy among female teenagers in Aba.

METHOD

Participants

The participants of this present study are from Igbo ethnic group. They are Five hundred and eighty-two (582) female students who were sampled from both public and private secondary schools in Aba, using Multi-Stage Sampling Technique. Participants included JSS1, JSS2, SSS1 and SSS2 students who were drawn from nine schools from Aba North, Aba South and Osisioma. Specifically, 290 (49.8%) of the participants were selected from public schools while 292 (50.2%) were selected from private schools. Ages of the participants ranged from 13 to 19 years, with mean and standard deviation of 14.78 and 1.46 respectively.

Instruments

One validated and reliable instrument was used to collect primary data for the study. The instrument has two sections A and B. Socio-demographic Variables, such as: age, class in school and school type were collected in Section A of the questionnaire. All participants are of same gender- females.

School Truancy Questionnaire (STQ) is contained in Section B of the questionnaire. It is a 17-item instrument developed and validated by Mbagwu, et al. (2018) to measure truanting behaviour of secondary school students. *STQ* is directly scored on 3-points likert format; 3- (often), 2- (Rarely) and 1- (not at all). Sample items of the questionnaire include 'I prefer going to play centres during school hours'; 'my classmates make jest of me for not answering questions in class so I prefer not to attend classes'. The validity and reliability coefficients of the instrument are as provided. Mbagwu, et al. (2018) through a pilot study involving fifty-five (55) students (22 males and 33 females) who were both selected from two Secondary Schools in Aba, reported an internal consistency with a Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Coefficient of

.89 and Guttman Split-Half Coefficient of .87, in addition a discriminant validity coefficient of .60 was obtained by correlating STQ with TABS by Omoluabi (1997) with samples from secondary school (Mbagwu, et al., 2018). To obtain a *STQ* score of an individual, the correct point of each item is added together to have a total score. The questionnaire has a mean of 44.33 which serves as the norm and standard deviation of 7.75. The items of the questionnaire are constructed in such a way that higher scores than the norm indicate school truanting behaviour while lower scores than the norm indicate non-school truanting behaviour.

However, before using *STQ* in this present study, the present researcher gave the instrument to five Experts in Education to assess the face validity of the content using a rating scale of 5 likert format from 5- 'the test is extremely suitable for a given purpose', 4 - 'the test is very suitable for the purpose', 3 - 'the test is adequate', 2 - 'the test is inadequate' to 1- 'the test is irrelevant and therefore unsuitable'. Three of the Experts rated the instrument 4 saying the test is very suitable for the purpose, while the other two of the Experts rated it 3 saying that the test is adequate to serve its purpose. This is a justifiable prove that the instrument has high face value. Secondly a pilot study to re-ascertain the reliability and then adopt the instrument to suit the current samples was conducted by the present researcher using 104 female samples (13 to 19 years of age) among secondary school students in Aba. The samples were selected from two schools: Fifty participants from Girls' Secondary School 1, Abayi Umucham, Aba (public), and fifty-four participants from Model International Secondary School, Obohia, Road, Aba (private). The two schools (public and private) were chosen because both public and private secondary students were involved in the main study, the same geographical location as the study area and therefore the participants have similar environmental characteristics. Oral and written Permission/Consents were obtained from the school authorities before the students were involved in the pilot study. Oral consents and assents were also obtained from the students. Only the students who were willing to participate and randomly selected were

involved in the pilot study. A Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient of .79 was obtained by the present researcher.

Procedure

On a visit to the concerned schools in Aba, the researcher obtained both oral and written permissions as well as informed consents from the school authorities to allow their students participate in the study. With the school authorities' permission, oral and written consents were sought from the students to participate in the study as well. Since the study comprised of both major and minor teenagers, written permission was sent to some required parents (parents of the minor teenagers, 13 to 17 years old participants). Assent was also obtained from the minor participants after their parents/guidance had granted their permissions as research ethics demands (Nwanne, 2012).

With the help of nine research assistants (one teacher in each school visited), the copies of questionnaire were distributed to only the randomly selected individuals. All students who were willing to participate in the study were given equal opportunity of being involved. They were first of all asked to pick a rumbled piece of paper written 'IN' or 'OUT' from a ballot bag. Those who picked 'IN' participated in the study while those who picked 'OUT' were not allowed to participate. The participants were duly informed about the nature of the study. They were assured that the study is purely for academic purpose and would have no harm or negative consequence on anyone. Questions from the participants on the mode of completion of the questionnaire were answered by the researcher; and they were guided on how to indicate their gender, ages, school types and class in the categories apportioned for it. It took about 35 minutes for the participants to complete the filling of the questionnaire in each case and the collection of data was done within six schooling days.

Meanwhile, a total of 620 copies of questionnaire were distributed in the nine schools visited for the three LGAs namely; Aba-North, Aba-South and Osisioma. Both public and private schools had equal distribution number of 310 copies each. Out of 620 copies of questionnaire distributed, 609 were returned (98% return rate), and only 600 were found appropriately completed by the researcher. However, when raw data was subjected to missing data screening and outliers in SPSS, only 582 participants' data were found useable for statistical analysis. It is important to note that no ethical principle was violated in the course of this investigation.

Design and Statistics

A Cross Sectional Survey Design was adopted in this study. This is because a sample of large population across schools (public and private), ages (13 to 19 years) and categories of female secondary school students (junior and senior teenagers) were studied within a specified time frame using questionnaire as a tool for primary data collection. The data collected for the study were analyzed using both descriptive statistics and Two-way Analysis of Variance on Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), version 21.0 by IBM incorporated. The descriptive statistics helped to determine the demographic, mean and standard deviation of the data collected. Hypotheses 1, 2 and 3 were tested with Two-way ANOVA to estimate the differences of the constructs (school type and student' class) on school truancy among students. Also, it determined if there is an interaction effect of the two independent variables (school type and class) on one continuous dependent variable (school truancy).

RESULTS

Table 1: Descriptive Statistic showing Mean and Standard Deviation Differences in School Truancy among Female Teenagers in Aba.

Variables	Mean	Standard Deviation	Number
School Type			
Public	38.99	11.35	290
Private	32.30	11.40	292
Student's Class			
Junior	31.34	11.16	291
Senior	39.93	10.94	291

Table 1 above reveals the differences in mean and standard deviation scores on school truancy among students of different school types and classes. Female teenagers from public school have higher mean score ($M=38.99$) than their counterparts from private school ($M=32.30$). Similarly, female teenagers in senior classes have higher mean score ($M=39.93$) than their counterparts from junior classes ($M=31.34$). The table clearly shows slight low variation in school truancy for teenagers from public school ($SD=11.35$) than teenagers from private school ($SD=11.40$). Also, female teenagers in senior classes ($SD=10.94$) have lower variation in school truancy than their counterparts from junior classes ($SD=11.16$). The relative low variation of school truancy for teenagers from both public school and senior class indicates that they engage more in school truancy when compared with teenagers from private school and junior class.

Table 2: Results of 2-Way ANOVA Revealing the Roles of School Type and Students' Class on School Truancy among Female Teenagers in Aba.

Source	Type III Sum of Squares	Df	Mean square	F.	Sig.
School Type (A)	6401.051	1	6401.051	57.523	.000
Class (B)	610641.761	1	610641.761	95.634	.000
A*B	109.089	1	109.089	.980	.323
Error	63414.616	578	111.271		
Total	820666.000	582			

The result presented in table 2 above tested the three alternate hypotheses. Hypothesis one which assumed that there will be a significant difference between the truanting behaviour of public school students and that of private school students among female teenagers in Aba is accepted [$f(1,578) = 57.532, p < .001$]. This is evident in the descriptive statistic results presented in table 1, where the mean score of female teenagers in public school ($M = 38.99$) is higher than that of female teenagers in private school ($M = 32.30$).

Similarly, the second hypothesis which stated that school truanting behaviour of junior female teenagers will significantly differ from that of senior female teenagers in Aba is accepted [$f(1,578) = 95.634, p < .001$]. From the descriptive statistic (table 1), senior female teenagers scored higher in school truancy ($M = 39.98$) than the junior female teenagers ($M = 31.34$).

Finally, the third hypothesis for the study which stated that there will be an interaction effect of school type and students' class on school truancy among female teenagers in Aba, is rejected [$f(1,578) = .980, p = .323$]. Thus there is no significant interaction effect found in school type and students' class on female teenagers' school truancy.

DISCUSSION

The major purpose of the study was to examine the impact of school type, and students' class on school truancy among female teenagers in Aba City of Abia State, Nigeria. The first hypothesis which was accepted revealed a significant difference in school truancy between the public and private school students. The result is evident in table 1, where the mean score of female students in public schools was higher than that of their counterparts in private schools. This means that the truanting behaviour of public school female students was more than that of private school female students in Aba.

The present result is in line with the findings from previous empirical investigations on school truancy and the role of school type. Ramberg, et al. (2019) discovered that students from government schools were more involved in truancy than those from private schools. Also, the study of Prabha and Maheswari (2017) revealed the government or public school students' opinion that if their parents would take them to private school they would not play truants, indicating and supporting the view that truancy is more among students in public schools than private schools. However contrasting the present finding is the observation of Audu, et al. (2017) that the rate of truancy found among the public school students was as low as 30% pointing to the fact that truancy is less in public schools than private schools. In the researcher's view, plausible reasons why truancy is lower in private schools than public schools as the present result suggests could be differences in school administration and other environmental issues. Unlike what is obtainable in government schools, most private schools observe strict disciplinary measures against school truancy such as rules that parents/guardians should always inform the school if any child should miss school for any reason and failure to do so would impose suspicion on the child being a truant; also any identified truant could serve a punishment as the school stipulates. Moreso, Matthew, (2020) and Onyele (2018) support that

unattractive school environment, lack of recreational facilities, discouraging school curriculum and classroom mismanagement encourage truancy. This assertion further explains the reality of this present result that most private schools no doubt have good classroom blocks and dutiful administrators where teaching and learning are seriously monitored, and as such students are well motivated to be in school more regularly. Unlike public schools where teaching and learning may not be seriously monitored; dilapidated and uncompleted buildings are the order of the day; serving as hideouts for students thereby contributing to truancy.

A further explanation to this present finding is derived from Skinner's (1948; 1953) Operant Conditioning Theory which lies on the simple premise that actions which are reinforced tend to be strengthened and more likely to reoccur in the future. Conversely, actions which are punished or have undesirable consequences tend to be weakened and less likely to reoccur in the nearest future. This implies that truancy may be more in public schools because students who engage in such may have been ignored (i.e. reinforced) in a particular way by both school authorities and parents. Unlike in private secondary schools where such an act of truancy by students may have been frowned at (i.e. punished) by both school authorities and parents.

In hypothesis two, it was discovered that school truanting behaviour of junior female students was lower than those of senior female students in Aba (a proof that the hypothesis was accepted as well). The result was evident in the descriptive table where senior female teenagers scored higher in school truancy than their junior counterparts. Generally, the result of the current study revealed that both junior and senior students tend to have low scores in school truancy, evidence that school truancy of students in Aba is at a reduced rate. Despite the fact that both groups of students have reduced rate of truancy, senior students in both public and private schools have higher mean score than their junior counterparts, an indication that senior students are more involved in school truancy than the junior students.

It is important to state clearly that there is no reviewed previous study directly explaining truancy differences between the junior and senior secondary school students. However, the observation made by Onyeaka, Kugbey, Ayanore and Asante, (2020) that truancy among adolescents increases with age such that the older adolescents were more likely to miss school than younger ones can be related to this present finding. The fact remains that most students in senior secondary schools are late adolescents who are 15 to 19 years of age (as observed in the present study); also referred to as older adolescents by Onyeaka, Kugbey, Ayanore and Asante, (2020). At this stage of their lives, they have quest for autonomy, exploratory and adventure. They explore their environments as such are more distracted with dating and sexual relationships, taking many risks (which include skipping of school and classes) without minding the later consequences (Onukwufor, Ugwu, Umukoro & Ahamefule, 2015). This same senior students who find it difficult remaining in school/classes as the present study implies, are likely to be such students who most times fake suspension from school so that when everybody leaves for daily engagements in the morning hours, they can go to any place they deem exciting to them like joining peers in clubs/eatery places, cinema houses (Dahl, 2016), visiting their peers in their houses or visiting male friends of theirs.

Moreso, during adolescence (especially late adolescence period), an individual's thoughts, perceptions as well as responses get coloured sexually (Kar, Choudhury & Singh, 2015). In recent years, internet has brought a revolution in adolescents' attitude and perception towards sexuality. With the quest to get information online about sex, some senior students may exempt themselves from classes to have internet access through cyber cafés or personal cell phones which its use in classes may be prohibited by school authorities in most secondary schools. In addition, some senior secondary school students who love education but lack finance from parents would go hawking on the streets during school periods with the intention of supporting their parents financially (Onyele, 2018). Others who value money more than education tend to

skip school with the sole aim of planning on how to get rich quick. Some do menial jobs while others get involved in internet frauds (*yahoo, yahoo*).

The third hypothesis was rejected an indication that there is no significant interaction effect of school type and students' class on school truancy among female teenagers in Aba. This unveils the fact that truanting behaviour of teenagers in secondary schools can be influenced by either the type of school the students attend or the class they are in but these two factors do not have interactive effect on students' truanting behaviour. Again, there could be other factors not verified in this current study that may be motivating the teenagers' truanting behaviour in secondary schools. Many students who exhibit poor school attendance most times feel alienated and discriminated in class. It is not out of place stating the fact that at times, the feeling of alienation and discrimination among teenagers may not be noticed by teachers, parents or guardians who are meant to be their care givers. With this unnoticed feelings, some students wander about while their mates remain in school leaving their parents with the false believe that they are in school. The personality type of the students which is more of internal trait may also affect the attitude of students towards regular school attendance.

Implications of the Study

The findings of this study have both theoretical and practical implications to school administrators and proprietors, teachers, students, school and counselling psychologists, guidance counsellors, parents, government, and the society at large. It also has implications to researchers for understanding the impacts of school type and students' class on school truancy among female teenagers in Aba.

- Theoretically, the findings have proven beyond doubt that there is no record of 100% attendance every school period among teenagers in secondary schools. While school type and students' class play significant roles in truanting behaviour among secondary

school students, the interaction of school type and students' class play no significant roles in such misbehaviour. The secondary school administrators (principals, Proprietors, Deans, head of units, counsellors and teachers) should understand that they have a huge role to play in the control of school truancy among secondary school students.

- The practical implications of this study cannot be over emphasized. Since the study has showed that truancy is more with public school students than private school students, the outcome of this study has implication for school administrators and teachers. There is need for the school administrators and teachers to plan the school activities (especially in government schools) in such a way that students' school attendance will be monitored strictly in school, while parents and every other members of the society should participate in the tracking of students' unauthorized school absenteeism.
- The information that senior secondary school students get involved more in school truancy than junior secondary school students as shown by this present study has a wide range of implications to school counsellors and students especially the senior secondary school students. It is expected that the findings of the present study will be inculcated to the senior secondary school students by the school counsellors who will possibly enlighten them on the dangers of school truancy. It is believed that by so doing, the students will make conscious efforts to avoid school truancy.
- Finally, the findings of this study have a recognized implication for other researchers. It is important to note that prior to this study, there was no found or reviewed study that clearly explained truancy rate between junior and senior students; also study among the female teenagers alone was not identified. This present study, no doubt, has added to the existing literature on variables that predict school truancy among female secondary school students. Specifically, the information that senior secondary school students get

involved more in school truancy than their junior counterparts has been provided and among female teenagers only. It is believed that the results of this present study will motivate and serve as part of literature to build the works of other researchers who may want to carry out similar studies on school truancy.

Limitations of the Study

This present study has some peculiar limitations just like every other well designed scientific study. Regarding the research participants, only JSS I, JSS 2, SSS 1 and SSS 2 students were included in the study. The exam class students (JSS 3 and SSS 3) were absent in school at the time of data collection of this present study. Therefore, the sample does not allow for a generalization of the findings to a larger population of all junior and senior secondary schools. The exam class students can be included in the future research.

Although the participants for this study are randomly selected from nine secondary schools (6 governments and 3 privates), they were from one state (Abia) out of the 36 states in Nigeria. As such, the participants will not be concluded to be representatives of teenagers across the nation. Thus, the finding of this present study will be interpreted with caution to avoid faulty/hasty generalization. Future research should cover more states for wider representation and generalization.

Recommendations

1. Development of school truancy policy by the government of Abia state: As the study revealed school type and students' class play major roles in school truancy, it is hoped that these factors that predict school truancy and its influence on learning of students would be brought to the notice of Policy makers and educational authorities such as the

Ministry of Education. With the information, School Truancy Policy should be developed by these education stakeholders (government) through the ministry of Education. The policy should state clearly the punishment to be given to any identified truants in the society and a reward (reinforcement) to be provided to any student with 100% attendance each term or academic session. The policy should cover public and private schools. The essence is to promote 100% school attendance and discourage school truancy in the society.

2. School psychologists and counselling psychologists to be employed in secondary schools: School Authorities should see to it that School Psychologists and Counselling Psychologists are employed in all Nigerian secondary schools (private and government owned) to assist guidance counsellors provide Truancy Prevention Programmes for at-risk students as well as Truancy Intervention Programmes for identified truants.
3. Establishment and Running of Truancy Prevention and Intervention Programmes in Secondary Schools by Association of Counselling Psychologists in Nigeria (ACPIN): Since there is no school with 100% attendance in each school session, Association of Counselling Psychologists in Nigeria (ACPIN) should ensure that Truancy Prevention and Intervention Programmes are established and efficiently ran in secondary schools. ACPIN should then provide in-service training that is aimed at preparing School and Counselling Psychologists, Guidance Counsellors and Educators in general to deal with the challenges of school truancy and other school misbehaviours found among students.

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