



PARENTAL BACKGROUND AND LEARNERS' CLASS SKIPPING IN CALABAR SOUTH LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF CROSS RIVER STATE

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ABSTRACT

This study was designed to investigate parental background and learners' class skipping in public primary schools in Calabar South Local Government area of Cross River State, Nigeria. To guide the study, three research questions were posed and three null hypotheses were formulated. The instrument tagged "Parental Background and learners' Class Skipping Questionnaire (PBLCSQ)" was used to collect data. The research adopted the correlational design while simple random sampling technique was used to select a sample size of 300 pupils for the study. Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient Analysis and Independent t-test analysis techniques were used to test the hypotheses. All hypotheses were tested at .05 level of significance. Statistical analyses of data showed that parental friends, health and income issues significantly influenced learners' class skipping in public primary schools in Calabar South Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria. Hence, it was recommended that the learners and parents should be thoroughly informed about the school policy from time to time that leaving the school without permission may lead to suspension or expulsion of their wards from school.

KEYWORDS: Parental background, School Learner, Class Skipping, Primary Schools.

INTRODUCTION

In every teaching and learning situation, there are really two major actors, the teacher and the learners.

The success or failure of the teaching and learning enterprise hinges principally on what these two groups do with the learning environment. Our experiences in teaching

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prospective primary and secondary school teachers have convinced us beyond doubt that many primary school teachers adopt child – centered teaching approach in their classroom teaching. Child-centered teaching is placing the learner at the centered of the learning process in classroom. The teacher in the classroom provides learners with opportunities to learn independently and from one another and coaches them in the skills they need to so do effectively. Of course, most learners late to learn independently and as a result of this, many of them are fond of skipping classes.

Anyone familiar with Nigerian schools today knows that learners' class skipping is one of the serious and numerous problems confronting the teachers and even the administrative heads of schools. According to Smith (2007) is defined as any absence from class that is not authorized by the school. This includes those who do not attend class, who refuse to go to class, who leave the class or school without permission or who have problems being on time for class or leaving early from class. Leaving school at any time without answering roll calls or signing out is considered skipping.

Learners are not permitted to leave school during break time/lunch time or classroom. Learners who skip class will receive disciplinary actions such as number of strokes of cane, pick pin, grass cutting, run round the school compound ten or twenty times as the case might be and so on. Learners are made to understand that leaving the school compound without permission from the class teacher(s) or from the head teacher(s) may lead to suspension or expulsion from school.

Lassa (2014) disclosed many reasons why learners indulge in class skipping. According to the author, some learners skip class because they think that teaching by the teacher is very dull, they do not get excited about the way the lesson is being delivered by the teacher. Also, boredom is often a reason learners think skipping of a class is a good idea. Lassa added that being bored in class is too easy for most learners when the lesson delivered or taught by the teacher is not understood by the learners.

It is always a thing of great concern and worry to see young people loitering the streets with school uniform during school hours. This is so because they do not adequately understand

their actions or receive enough home training nor adequately understand their parent backgrounds. Important as these factors are in the child development processes, emphasis is laid on one of these factors which is parental background.

Many educators claim that parental background is important and influential to learning outcomes. Parents' attitudes immensely influence the academic performance of the child in school due to class skipping. Rossi (2017) observes that a child whose parents take great interest in what he or she does in school, through giving learning support to prompt provision of learning aids and encouragement may prevent a child from class skipping and also have great advantage over a child whose parent do not give such similar support.

Ruth (2013) observes that highly educated parents are usually in high professional jobs which enable them to earn more income (money) for their family and which is a motivating factor that discourages children's class skipping. On the contrary, there are other parents who have low or no form of education and thus have less money to provide for family needs. Children from these families are frequently made to skip a class on weekly basis in order to hawk in the street and in the market area to bring in money to help the family. Then parents who are mostly self-employed, also do not have much income to cater for the family. These families do not have the necessary facilities like textbooks, notebooks, writing materials, lockers and sometimes school fees talk less of other school charges for their children smooth learning in school. As a result, class skipping soon becomes the order of the day.

Given this background, this study is designed to determine the influence of parental background on learners' class skipping in public primary schools in Calabar South Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria.

Literature Review

Parental friends issues and learners' class skipping

Involvement of learners in class skipping is on the increase in Nigeria especially in the last two decades as reported by Igbimeria and Laub (2013). There arose an increasing concern from the teachers and administrative heads of schools on the seriousness of learners' class skipping perpetuated by parental friends (Magnay, 2015).

Elliot and Menard (2016) identified a typical sequence in the developmental links between peer associations and class skipping. Specifically, movement from purely non-skipping peer groups (students) to peer groups with minor skipping.

This transition was followed by movement from predominantly prosocial groups to groups mixed with respect to skipping and non-skipping peers. The transition typically proceeded the transition from peer group to one more uniform in its class skipping.

Ogbonna (2013) asserted that parent plays the function of giving the child early foundation in his learning process right at home but sometimes, the child's fathers' friends especially the uneducated parents who are not ready to send theirs to school may mislead those educated parents to stop sending their children to school.

Some parents have already vowed that instead of sending their children to school, they send them to go and learn trade or engage in any kind of handwork (Gierus, 2012).

Parental health issues and learners class skipping

Health has its many and varying definitions and meaning to people. According to John, Sutton and Colley (2013), health is a quality resulting from the total functioning of the individual in his environment that empowers him to achieve a personally satisfying and socially useful life. The World Health Organization (WHO, 2010) defined health as a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.

The enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of health is one of the fundamental rights of every human being without distinction of race, religion and political belief, economic or social condition.

In the developing countries of the world, such as Nigeria, a high percentage of the population is not enjoying health in the proper sense of it.

Mlacic and Goldberg (2016) in their comparative study found out that the learners from low parental background sometimes find it difficult to compete with learners from high parental background in the same academic achievement because in most cases, the learners from low parental background wrestled with

nutritional challenges which sometimes result to health issues.

Parental income issues and learners' class skipping

This is ability of parent to provide good model facilities, a conducive environment as well as guiding and favourable attitude to learning motivating thus, avoiding class skipping by the pupils

Gillian and Giani (2018) observed that the relationship between parental income issue and the class skipping of learners is well established in sociological research. Another dimension is the factor that may influence educational outcomes within low income status parents. They presented a new data from a sample of over 300 learners from financially disadvantaged backgrounds to estimate the extent of socio-economic, family, individual and contextual factors on learners' class skipping. Results obtained using binomial logistic regression techniques indicated that gender, unexplained observes parental educational attainment, housing type, ethnicity and learners' age were all statistically significant variables and predictors of class skipping.

In a comparative study, Enoch (2013) discovered that due to the parental income, many Nigerian are either not educated at all or stop schooling or drop out of school because their parents could not afford to send them to school. Some children are not able to attend any educational institution or have to skip school completely on the way or drop out of school because of the irresponsibility of their parents towards sponsoring them in school. Others according to the same author stop school or drop out of school as the result of the type of upbringing they received at home.

Statement of the problem

The major problem of this study is poor class attendance among primary school learners in the Calabar South Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria. In recent times, the Calabar South has experienced a declining trend in learners' learning in both primary and post primary schools as a result of learners' skipping of so many classes. This situation (class skipping among learners) has persisted in the area for long and has not witnessed any improvement in subsequent years. This situation is worrisome since no nation can develop beyond the quality of

its education system and moreso, these learners are the future leaders of the nation, which of course, is hinged principally on involvement of parents and government in doing the needful.

The Executive Secretary (ES) of Calabar South Local Government Education Authority is quite aware of this problem and has responded with serious intervention like the posting of inspectors to all schools for continuous quality control and putting task force on the road to check learners loitering with school uniforms during school hours. These efforts by the ES should have changed the poor class attendance (class skipping) picture of our learners in class/school ordinarily should there have been a complementary effort on the parent of these learners.

This continuous class skipping tendencies in the study are has left the researchers worried whether it is parental friends health or their income levels that are responsible for the ugly trend. The researchers' concern over these issues necessitated this study. The poser therefore is what is the relationship between parental background and learners' class skipping in Calabar South Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria? this is the problem which this study sought to address.

Purpose of the Study

The main purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which parental background relates with learners' class skipping in primary schools in Calabar South Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria.

Specifically, the study sought to:

- i. Examine the extent to which parental friends' issues relate with learners' class skipping.
- ii. Determine the extent to which parental health issues relate with learners' class skipping
- iii. To ascertain the extent to which parental income issues relate with learners' class skipping.

Research Questions

To guide this study, the following research questions were posed:

- i. To what extent does parental friends' issues relate with learners' class skipping?

- ii. What is the relationship between parental health issues and learners' class skipping?
- iii. What is the relationship between parental income issues and learners' class skipping?

Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance.

- i. There is no significant relationship between parental friends' issues and learners' class skipping.
- ii. There is no significant relationship between parental health issues and learners' class skipping.
- iii. There is no significant relationship of parental income issues on learners' class skipping.

Methodology

The sample for this study was drawn from primary five (5) and six (6) pupils in public primary schools in Calabar South Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria.

The study adopted the correlational research design. While the sampling technique was simple random sampling. A total of three hundred (300) pupils participated in this study in primary schools in Calabar South Local Government Area of Cross River State.

The instrument used for this study was a researcher(s) structured type opinion questionnaire tagged; Parental background and learners' class skipping questionnaire (PBLCSQ) (see Appendix A). It consisted of sixteen (16) items which the subjects responded to by ticking [√] from options in the appropriate column according to their level of degree of agreement or disagreement with each of the statements using a 4 – point Likert Scale (strongly Agree –SA, Agree – A, Disagree – D and Strongly Disagree – SD). The instrument had a Cronbach Alpha reliability estimates ranged from .72 to .78. Which was judged adequate for a measuring scale.

The same number of questionnaires that were sent out, were duly completed and returned. This represents a 100% return rate.

The statistical tools employed for analysis of data collected was the Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient (PPMCC). This is done on hypothesis –by-hypothesis basis.

Data Presentation

The mean(\bar{X}) and Standard Deviation (SD) of these research variables were computed and presented in Table 1

TABLE 1: Mean (\bar{X}) and Standard Deviation (SD) of subject in the study variables

Variables	No. of items	\bar{X}	SD
Parental friends' issues	4	2.490	1.581
Parental health issues	4	2.517	1.131
Parental income issues	4	2.463	1.323
Learners' class skipping	4	2.673	1.124

Hypothesis one

There is no significant relationship between parental friends' issues and Learners' class skipping. The independent variable in this hypothesis was parental, friends' issues while the dependent variable was learners' class skipping. The result of Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficient analysis is presented in table 2.

Table 2: Pearson Product Moment Correlation between Parental friends' issues and Learners' class skipping (N=300)

Variable	$\frac{\sum X}{\sum Y}$	$\frac{\sum X^2}{\sum Y^2}$	$\sum XY$	r-cal
Parental friends issues	747	1867	1999	.2894
Learners' class skipping	802	2151		

* P<.05, df = 298; critical-r = .1946

The result from Table 2 has shown that the calculated r-value of .2894 was greater than the critical r-value of .1946 at .05 level of significance with 298 degree of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis was rejected. This means that there is a significant relationship between parental friends' issues and learners' class skipping.

Hypothesis two

There is no significant relationship between parental health issues and learners' class skipping. The independent variable in this hypothesis was parental health issues while the dependent variable was learners' class skipping. The result of Pearson Product Moment correlation coefficient analysis is presented in Table 3

Table 3: Pearson Product Moment Correlation between Parental health issues and Learners' class skipping (N=300)

Variable	$\frac{\sum X}{\sum Y}$	$\frac{\sum X^2}{\sum Y^2}$	$\sum XY$	r-cal
Parental health issues	7.55	1907	2520	.2345
Learners' class skipping	802	2151		

*P<.05, df =298; critical- r = .1946

The result from Table 3 has shown that the calculated r-value of .2345 was greater than the critical r-value of .1946 at .05 level of significance with 298 degree of freedom. With this result, the null hypothesis was rejected. This means that there is a significant relationship between parental health issues and learners' class skipping

Hypothesis three

Table 4: Pearson Product Moment Correlation between parental income issues and learners' class skipping (N = 300).

Variable	$\sum X$ $\sum Y$	$\sum X^2$ $\sum Y^2$	$\sum XY$	r-cal
Parental health issues Parental income issues	7.39	1822	1077	.3308
Learners' class skipping	802	2151		

*P<.05, df =298; critical- r = .1946

The result from the analysis in table 4 gave a calculated r-value of .3308. The value was found to be greater than the critical r-value of .946 at .05 level of significance with 298 degree of freedom the null hypothesis was rejected. The means that there is a significant relationship

There is no significant relationship between parental income issues and learners' class skipping.

The independent variable in this hypothesis was parental income issues while the dependent variable was learners' class skipping. The result of Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient analysis is presented in Table 4.

between parental income issues and learners' class skipping.

Group 1: Low income issues: 4 – 10

Group 2: High income issues: 11 – 16

They were then subjected to independent t-test and the result of the analysis is presented in Table 4.

Table 4: independent t-test analysis of influence of parental income issues on learners' class skipping (N = 300)

Parental income issues	N	\bar{X}	Sd	t-cal
Low	120	1.092	0.757	3.44
High	180	1.371	0.566	

P<.05 df = 298, critical t= 1.96

The result of the analysis in Table 4 gave a calculated t-value of 3.44. This value was found to be greater than the critical t-value of 1.96 at .05 level of significance with 298 degree of freedom. The null hypothesis was rejected. This means that parental income issues has a significant influence on learners' class skipping in Calabar South.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Parental Friends' Issues and Learners' Class Skipping

The study results show that there is a significant relationship between parental friends' issues and learners' class skipping. This is particularly so because the majority of the pupils strongly agreed that their parents find themselves seriously attached to their friends in decision making and everything they do concerning their children's education. Moreso, they always try to place their friends' advice above theirs in almost everything they do.

The findings of this study is in agreement with studies done by Ogbonna (2013) who reported that parent plays the function of giving early foundation in the learning process right at home but sometimes, the child's fathers friends especially the uneducated parents who are not ready to send theirs to school may mislead those educated parents to stop sending their children to school.

Parental Health Issues and Learners' Class Skipping

The data analysis of the second hypothesis revealed that there is a significant relationship between parental health issues and learners' class skipping. This is so because there is no child in his or her right sense who knows that the father or mother is in a critical condition, not feeling well or not being in a good mood will want to go to school especially when he or she is the only person around to run errand for the parent at that moment.

This discovery is in agreement with Mlacic and Goldberg (2016) who found that the learners from low parental background sometimes find it difficult to compete with learners from high parental background in the same academic environment because in most

cases, the learners from low parental background wrestled with nutritional challenges which sometimes result to health issues.

Parental Income Issues and Learners' Class Skipping

The data analysis of the third hypothesis revealed that there is a significant relationship between parental income issues on learners' class skipping. This is so because many respondents (pupils) disclosed from the study instrument that their parents made them to skip classes due to the irresponsibility of their parents towards sponsoring them in school.

This discovery is in line with the findings of Enoh (2013) who found out that due to the low parental income, many Nigerians are either not educated at all or stop schooling or drop out of school because their parents could not afford to send them to school. Some children are not able to attend any educational institution or have to skip school completely on the way or drop out of school because of the irresponsibility of their parents towards sponsoring them in school. Others according to the same author stop school or drop out of school as the result of the type of upbringing they receive at home.

CONCLUSION

From the analysis of results, this study has provided anempirical evidence that parental background has a significant relationship with learners' class skipping in schools. In this study, an attempt has been made to look at the various parental background that gave rise to the learners' class skipping in primary schools in Calabar South Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria such parental background range from parental friends, health and income issues.

IMPLICATION

The findings of this study imply that parents will be well informed of the causes and negative effects of class skipping and how to curb them.

The finding also implies that both governments should take necessary steps to avoid frequent class skipping in the school to improve teaching/learning situation in schools.

The implication of the study will help learners to be alive to their reasonability and to be punctual to classes rather than skipping them.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of the study, the researchers made the following recommendations.

❖ Parents should be sensitized on the need to make education of their children and wards a priority in the face of the present economic predicament by adequately providing for their school materials.

❖ The adage that “A hungry man is an angry man” holds in this situation, parent should ensure their children eat well before leaving to school, their school fees and other school materials such as textbooks, exercise books and pens provided on time.

❖ The learners should be informed about the school policy from time to time that leaving the school without permission may lead to suspension or expulsion from school.

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APPENDIX A

PARENTAL BACKGROUND AND LEARNERS' CLASS SKIPPING 1UESTIONNAIRE (PBLCSQ)

SECTION A: PARENTAL FRIENDS' ISSUES

S/N	ITEMS	SA	A	D	SD
1.	My parent has many friends (men and women)				
2.	My parent often find themselves seriously attached to their friends in decision making.				
3.	My parents try not to place their friends' advice above theirs.				
4.	My parent always allows friends to decide for them what they should do or not.				
SECTION B: PARENTAL HEALTH ISSUES					
5.	My parent do not care about our health				
6.	My parent rarely buy drugs for any sickness and diseases.				
7.	My parent make sure we eat balanced diet at least once in a week.				
8.	My parent have employed a nurse for the family.				
SECTION C: PARENTAL INCOME ISSUES					
9.	My parents are salary earners.				
10.	My parents are educated people.				
11.	My parents always give/buy food for the family.				
12.	My parent hardly provides school materials for me.				
SECTION D: LEARNERS CLASS SKIPPING					
13.	I can only skip class when I am very sick.				
14.	I cannot leave class without permission.				
15.	I like leaving class/school only during break time.				
16.	Punishment from teachers can stop me from skipping class.				