



INVESTIGATION OF DELINQUENT BEHAVIOUR AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE OF STUDENTS IN BIOLOGY IN PUBLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN OBUDU LOCAL GOVERNMENT AREA OF CROSS RIVER STATE, NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT

This study investigated delinquent behaviour and academic performance of students in biology in public secondary schools in Obudu Local Government Area of Cross River State, Nigeria. To achieve the purpose of this study, three hypotheses were formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance. The Ex-post facto research design was considered most appropriate for the study. The simple random sampling technique was adopted in selecting five public secondary schools and a sample of hundred students was used for the study. A twenty-item four point Likert scale questionnaire and students' achievement test in biology were the instruments used for data collection. The instruments were validated and tested for reliability before they were administered to the respondents. To test the hypotheses formulated for the study, Pearson product moment correlation statistical tool was used for data analysis. The results obtained from analysis of data and testing of hypotheses revealed that there is a significant relationship between truancy, drug abuse, lateness to school and academic performance of students in the study area. Based on these findings it was recommended among others that stringent measures should be adopted to discourage students from absenting themselves from school in order to improve their learning outcomes and subsequent performance.

INTRODUCTION

The need to achieve positive academic performance is considered very important. As a result, most students tend to adopt various approaches that would enable them achieve high performance in their academic activities.

Some of these approaches have been considered illegitimate. This situation has grossly affected the performance of students in various subjects in school. It has been observed over the years that academic performance of students or learners in the educational system particularly the secondary school system has been declining at an alarming

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rate (Ukpelisho, Unimna & Basse, 2018). They further observed that majority of our students in recent times finished their secondary education yet they can neither read nor write with ease, nor express themselves without difficulty. This implies that students' academic performance is a measure of the extent to which students perform poorly or highly in accomplishing educational standard set by the school or the government at a given period (Ukpelisho, Arop & Unimna, 2017).

Therefore, students' academic performance in school has become a common concern of parents, teachers, counsellors, policy makers and psychologists. According to Bello (2016), parents devote a lot of resources to their children's education because they believe that good academic performance will provide a stable future for them. Uwaifo (2018) attributes the cause of poor performance of children to a combination of personal and social factors. The personal factors include the level of individual's intelligence, knowledge and ability while the social factors are family or parental influence, religion, culture, school and peer group.

Education has long been identified as a tool for national development because of its potentials in developing human resources. Education is a key factor in social mobilization, evolution and progress. Education is also believed to enhance an individual's capacity to contribute to his society's advancement. This explains the high premium and the huge investment placed on it and the impetus to expand educational opportunities by various governments. Consequently, every society utilizes education as a means of developing the abilities of its citizens to the full in order to earn a living in a congenial way as possible (Oden, 2015). The antecedence of success and failure in the school system has been the subject of much concern in recent years. Parents as one of the major stakeholders in education need to understand the developmental pattern of their children. This will enable them to use the appropriate rearing methods at each stage and also devise means of dealing with their numerous academic problems (Odok, 2017).

In every society, there are sets of norms, which members are expected to observe. However, not every member of the society abides by these norms. Today, more than ever, the issue of juvenile delinquency pricks at the conscience of many societies as it has become an endemic problem facing various families. Bello (2016) observes that delinquent behaviour have assumed an alarming proportion in Nigeria. Nigerians are disturbed and anxious as they are concerned with the various forms of delinquent behaviour that the youth and teenagers involve in. Certain delinquent behaviours have been observed to impact on the academic performance of students in school. Asu (2017) posits that truancy is a form of delinquent behaviour influencing students' academic performance in various subjects. It has been observed that some students deliberately stay away from school without any good reason. This act prevents them from attending lessons and subsequently performing poorly.

Drug abuse has been seen as another form of delinquent behavior among teenagers in school. Some youth engage in the use of various forms of illicit or banned substance that usually impair their reasoning. The abuse of certain drugs including cigarette, marijuana, cocaine, and other substances interfere with their behaviour pattern and affect their level of concentration in the classroom.

Lateness to school is a delinquent behaviour that has impacted students' academic performance negatively in most cases. Students who arrive in school after the stipulated time often miss several lessons because of lateness. Once late, most of the teaching/learning activities will elude the child, therefore putting him in a disadvantaged position as compared to his counterparts who arrived earlier. This can affect their academic performance negatively. The study is therefore concerned with investigating delinquent behaviour and academic performance of students in Biology in Public Secondary Schools in Obudu local government area of Cross River State, Nigeria.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The poor academic performance of students in public secondary schools in the study area has become alarming. This has become a source of concern to parents, teachers, educational administrators, the government and other stakeholders in education. This is because of the fact that, students' academic performance in subject like biology has been on a decrease. As a result, some students are not able to meet up with requirements for studying their desired course in the higher institution of learning. This situation has left many students and parents frustrated.

Several efforts have been put together to mitigate the poor academic performance of students. Some of these efforts include involvement of parents in the training of students, putting up stringent penalties including expulsion to serve as a deterrent, organization of extra-moral lessons for students, professional development of teachers to boost their competencies, mandatory entrance/admission tests among others. These efforts have yielded very little or no improvement in the academic performance of students in public secondary schools.

Biology is a core subject at the Senior Secondary School level and all students at this level are expected to compulsorily offer the subject. The general performance of students in the subject in recent times leaves much to be desired. It has been observed that among other things, factors within the school environment have been identified to play a significant role in determining students' academic performance in biology. Therefore, this study sought to find out if delinquent variables such as truancy, drug abuse and lateness to school have any relationship with academic performance of students in Public Secondary School in Obudu local government area of Cross River State, Nigeria?

Purpose of the study

The main aim of this research work was to investigate delinquent behaviour and academic performance of students in biology in public secondary schools in Obudu local government area of Cross River State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study sought to find out:

- i. If there is relationship between truancy and academic performance of students in biology in public secondary schools.
- ii. If there is relationship between drug abuse and academic performance of students in biology in public secondary schools.
- iii. If there is relationship between lateness to school and academic performance of students in biology in public secondary schools.

Research questions

The following research questions were formulated to guide the study:

- i. Does truancy have any relationship with academic performance of students in biology in public secondary schools?
- ii. What is the extent to which drug abuse relate with academic performance of students in biology in public secondary schools?
- iii. To what extent does lateness to school relate with academic performance of students in biology in public secondary schools?

Statement of hypotheses

The following hypotheses were formulated to guide the study:

- i. Truancy has no significant relationship with academic performance of students in biology in public secondary schools.
- ii. There is no significant relationship between drug abuse and academic performance of students in biology in public secondary schools.
- iii. Lateness has no significant relationship with academic performance of students in biology in public secondary schools.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Delinquent behaviour refers to as unlawful or criminal acts that do not conform to the moral or legal standard of the society. Asu (2017) is of the view that delinquent behaviour include; truancy, drug abuse, lateness among others.

Stoll (2012) sees truancy as "absence from school for no legitimate reason". He went further to state that many students do skip either single class or even a full day school at least once during their academic career. This is because they may want to attend a special event, prepare for promotion or simply take what is known in the world of work as a 'mental health day'.

economic background,31 were truants due to unfriendly environment in the school. Based on

This isolated incidence (truancy) is quite typical and likely to create problems which can lead to varied set of negative and even more dangerous consequences. This prevents students from acquiring relevant knowledge that would contribute to their learning outcomes in school and subsequent performance in their academic pursuit.

Peninsky (2013) wrote that when a child is a truant, it implies that he has been constantly absent from school for so many days, weeks or even months. Truancy, he further explains is a deliberate absence from school for no medical or justifiable reason, with or without parental knowledge. Peninsky's explanation of truancy agrees very well with the definition given in Colin's English Dictionary in which a truant is described as one's absent from duty without leave especially students who absent themselves from school. In the same manner, Nwana (2014) explained truancy to include intentionally absenting of oneself from school without permission, leaving without authorization and dodging of specific lesson periods. This does not promote effective learning among the affected students, who may likely not do well in various subjects as a consequence of absenteeism.

Truancy and academic performance in secondary school is a situation in which students develop and show adverse attitude and behaviour to learning. They absent themselves from classes using unnecessary excuses such as in genuine sickness, fake suspension by the class teacher or school authority and involvement in sport activities. Truancy can equally occur in boring and boredom classes, harsh teachers who are difficult to approach and in an unconducive school environment with attendant consequences on the academic performance of students in relevant subjects in school (Osarenren, 2015).

Geo-Opah (2013) in his study on the effect of delinquency on academic achievement of students, 168 secondary school students were used. He reported in his finding that, out of this 168 students,50were identified as truants and 118 as non-truants 35 of the truants were poor in academic achievement, while 15 were good academically,32were male truants and 18 were female, 16 of the truants were from low socio-

the statistical analysis of the data gathered, Geo-Opah (2013) reported the following findings; that truants are noted for poor academic performance. Both male and female commit acts leading to truancy children from low socio-economic background are more prone to truancy since they lack money and materials for schooling.

Dittimiya (2011) in his view on the effects of truancy maintains that truancy among students affects their academic achievements. To him, truancy is a destructive and undeserving element of progress, training or mode of life. It is an impediment to national development. Lynn (2010) posited that truancy has a negative impact on students' academic performance. This is so, considering the fact that these students are frequently absent, they are not able to learn anything on a consistent basis. This is because they are busy doing other things outside the school. Even when they attend classes, their minds are not focused in studying but on what they are planning to do once the class is over. With such a negative attitude, it is hard to imagine how these students can ever achieve an excellent academic performance over the long term.

A great deal of scientific research examined the relationship between poor school performance and delinquency. The direction of the causal link between education and juvenile delinquency is fundamentally complex. Early aggressive behaviour may lead to difficulties in the classroom. Such difficulties, in turn, may result in a child's receiving unfavourable evaluations from teachers or peers. These, in turn, might result in delinquency. Equally, delinquency could be another manifestation of whatever characteristics got the child into trouble with school authorities in the first place (Bui, Elickson & Bel, 2012).

Loeber (2014) of the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center, Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic, cautioned that the relationship between delinquency and school performance should not be over simplified. It may be that progression from delinquent behavior to school failure is contingent on other factors, since not every off ending juvenile experiences school failure and not every failing student commits offenses. In addition, not every act of delinquency affects school performance in the same way. The

seriousness of delinquent behaviour may determine whether and to what extent school

general disregard for social norms are common behaviours bonding the members of these groups.

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performance suffers. It appears that poor school performance is a more severe problem among serious violent delinquents. In a review of the literature on the predictors of youth violence, Hawkins(2013)concluded that serious and violent delinquents had more school-related problems(e.g., low grades, truancy, suspension, dropping out, etc) than nonviolent children.

Advanced brain scan imaging has proven that the human brain is not fully developed at puberty as previously thought with maturation occurring as late as 24 years of age. While each drug produces different physical effects, all abused substances share one thing in common: repeated use can alter the way the brain looks and functions. Common effects of drug use on the brain that impact academic learning includes difficulty concentrating, inability to process information and problems with working memory (Daniel, 2016).

Olufemi (2017) reported that almost 50 percent of secondary school students say that they have used drugs at least once in their life time, and 18 percent reported using marijuana in the last few months. Prescription drug abuse is high-with nearly 1 in 10 secondary school seniors reporting non-medical use of the prescription painkiller Vicodin in the past year. The finding further revealed that despite the fact that adolescents have under-developed brains lacking the impulse control of adults, education and parent involvement can reduce a young person's risk for drug use and abuse". Kids who learn a lot about the risks of drugs and alcohol from their parents are up to 50% less likely to use than those who do not.

Drug use among students with multiple risk factors is more likely to lead to addiction and affect their academic standing. Other risk factors could include depression, navigating major life changes or living in a familial or community setting where drug use is prevalent. The people, students associate with and how they behave are often visible indicators of risk for trying drugs as well as possible signs of current drug use (Parlour, 2015).

Teenagers that use drugs may become a part of anti-social groups who are less likely to value education, structure and social propriety. Theft, cutting school, cheating, dropping out and a

The negative behaviours of this group mentality simultaneously create the desired sense of belonging while alienating oneself from the people who could help the most. Prolonged friendships like this (even without excessive drug use)increase the chance teens will continue to display socially deviant behaviour long after peers have matured and moved on to fulfilling long-term academic and career goals(Odok,2014).

The study by Awah (2016) examined drug abuse and academic performance of secondary school students in Emohua Local Government Area of Rivers State. It was a survey study. A sample of 300 respondents from five public secondary schools in Emohua Local Government Area participated in the study. Two research questions and two hypotheses guided the work. The findings of the study revealed that: students commonly abused drugs such as alcohol and hot drinks, tobacco, marijuana; peer group influence contributed to abuse of drugs by students and students who abused drugs recorded poor academic performance. Based on the findings, it was recommended among others that students should be educated and enlightened about the dangers of drug abuse.

Lateness to school in recent time is a major problem be deviling our schools particularly public schools. Lateness to school started long ago, everywhere in a way that cannot be controlled in recent time. Lateness merely means arriving after expected time or stipulated time. Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary defines lateness as arriving after the expected arrange or usual time. It is after the right, fixed to usual or expected time; therefore, lateness is the opposite of early. Lateness to school relates simply to the failure to be present at appropriate times for school activities/lesson (Gabriel,2014). It is simply arriving to school pass the stipulated time set by the school authority.

According to Daniel (2016) lateness to school definitely leads to certain deficiencies in the attainment of the goals and objectives of the institution. The subject of lateness to school, though not specifically mentioned in the National Policy on Education, may however be related to certain elements in every aspects of the policy. For instance, the principles of "harmony" and

“equality” mentioned in the overall philosophy of Nigeria (pg.6 paragraph 2a) may be fundamentally

for some particular period of time. Additionally, his entry into the class causes distraction, not only to

derailed by lateness of pupils to school. Lateness to school also relates to Nigeria's philosophy of education, paragraph 4b of section 1,p.6 states that 'education fosters the worth and development of the individual for each individual's sake, and for the general development of the society'. It can be clearly seen that lateness to school can affect both the worth and development of the individual and that of the society.

Ugbogu (2014)identified the following factors as being responsible for students' lateness to school which have negative implications to their academic performance. He stated such conditions as follows: harsh weather condition, lack of transportation, going to bed late, watching of home movies and foreign films till day break, over involvement in domestic activities. All these subsequently affect their performance in class. The author equally stated that lateness to school is common among female students and that it is as a result of their involvement in domestic activities. Distance and school location are potential factors that account for pupils trekking up to six miles before they get to their school premises and when they get to their classes, they will be tired and can even sleep off while the teacher is teaching. This situation will hardly afford them the opportunity to perform well or excellently in instructional activities. They may end up learning little or nothing at the end of the day.

Ugbogu (2014)further asserted that the fact that some students deliberately decide to occupy themselves with television shows and cinema programmes, will definitely not allow them to wake up on time and they will surely end up getting to school late after the teacher might have given one or two learning instructions to other pupils. The pupils who go late to bed or watch films that make them keep vigil will not do well in class as they will use school hours to be sleeping while others are learning. This kind of behaviour creates interference in the effective functioning of the student.

Students who usually attend school late knowingly or unknowingly frequently disrupt their own education and to some level, the education of others. Because, normally, as it is the case, his coming to school late attracts sanctioning by way of caning, cutting of grass in the field, staying out

other students but to the teacher delivering lessons in the class. When this act continues, it will impinge on the educational progress of the student.

Okwubunka (2016)opined that the amount of time needed and taken to deal with a disruptive child in the classroom can effectively interrupt and undermine the education of other children. To be faced by such a situation is the classic dilemma of a teacher. He or she has to decide whether to deal with the student at the expense of the others or to remove the individual for the good of the whole. Okwubunka (2016) further posited that an early warning system for the child and the teacher can cushion the force of disruption and protect the education of the other children as well as help the individual. Regular school attendance is an important factor in school Success as researched by Rothman (2011).Research has shown a direct correlation between good attendance and students' achievement and poor attendance has been linked to poor academic achievement.

In all schools, the lessons are sequential in nature and learning can be disrupted if students miss crucial learning objectives which are particularly focused on at the start of a lesson. Students can feel self-conscious when they arrive late to class that everyone is looking at them when they enter. This can cause anxiety which releases adrenalin which can cause the student to be distracted from their learning for a lengthyperiod of time(Rothman, 2011).

METHODOLOGY

The study adopted ex-post facto research design. Isangedighi, Joshua, Asimand Ekuri (2004)described the ex-post facto research design as a systematic empirical inquiry in which the searcher does not have direct control of the independent variables because their manifestations have already occurred or because they are inherently not manipulated. The ex-post facto research design was considered most suitable for this study because the researcher does not have direct control over the independent variables since they have already occurred in the population and are inherently not manipulated. The population of this study consisted of all the

Senior Secondary School 2 students in the public secondary schools in Obudu local government

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area of Cross River State, Nigeria. It comprised both male and female biology students in the selected class. Statistics from the Ministry of Education shows that there are 1,922 SS2 students in the 2022/2023 session. The sample for this study consisted of two hundred (200) SS2 Biology students that were randomly selected from five Public Secondary Schools in Obudu local government area of Cross River State, Nigeria. Two instruments were developed by the researcher and used for data collection. The first was a questionnaire titled Delinquent Behaviour Questionnaire (DBQ). It was divided into two parts, Part A contained items on respondents' personal data, Part B was designed using four point Likert scale of Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D) and Strongly Disagree (SD). It contained items measuring the

variables of the study with each variable represented by five items in the questionnaire. The second instrument was an achievement test that measured students' academic performance of students in biology in public secondary schools. Cronbach Alpha reliability method was used to establish reliability of the research instruments. The researcher administered forty copies of the instruments to respondents in two Secondary Schools in the study area that were not part of the actual study. The data obtained were analyzed using Cronbach Alpha Coefficient to determine the internal consistency of each item in the research instruments. The Cronbach coefficient obtained ranged from .74 to .81 which showed that the research instruments were reliable.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Hypothesis 1: Truancy has no significant relationship with academic performance of students in biology.

Table 1: Pearson product moment correlation analysis of the relationship between truancy and academic performance of students in biology in public secondary schools, in Obudu local government area, Cross River State (N=200)

Variables	N	\bar{X}	SD	Cal-r	P-value
Truancy	200	12.31	2.11	0.871*	.000
Academic performance of students in Biology	200	12.99	2.23		

*Significant at 0.05; df = 198; Critical r = 0.165

The results of analysis presented in Table 1 showed that the calculated r-value of 0.871 is higher than the critical r-value of 0.165 at 0.05 level of significance with 198 degree of freedom. This implied that the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between truancy and students' academic

performance in biology in public secondary schools in Obudu local government area of Cross River State.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between drug abuse and academic performance of students in biology in public secondary schools in Obudu.

Table 2: Pearson product moment correlation analysis of the relationship between drug abuse and academic performance of students in Biology in public secondary schools in Obudu local government area, Cross River State(N= 200)

Variables	N	\bar{X}	SD	Cal-r	P-value
Drug abuse	200	12.68	2.32	0.654*	0.00
Academic performance of students in Biology	200	12.99	2.23		

Significant at 0.05;df= 198, Critical r = 0.165

The results of analysis presented in Table 2 showed that the calculated r-value of 0.654 is greater than the critical r-value of 0.165 at 0.05 level of significance with 198 degree of freedom. This implied that the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, there is significant relationship between drug abuse and students' academic

performance in Biology in public secondary schools in Obudu local government area of Cross River State.

Hypothesis 3: Lateness to school has no significant relationship with academic performance of students in public secondary in biology.

Table 3: Pearson product moment correlation analysis of the relationship between lateness to school and academic performance of students in public secondary in biology in Obudu local government area, Cross River State(N=200)

Variables	N	\bar{X}	SD	Cal-r	P-value
Lateness to school	200	11.71	2.15	0.582*	000
Academic performance of students in Biology	200	12.99	2.23		

*Significant at 0.05; df=198, Critical r = 0.165

The results of analysis presented in Table 3 showed that the calculated r-value of 0.582 is higher than the critical r-value of 0.165 at 0.05 level of significance with 198 degree of freedom. This implied that the null hypothesis was rejected. Therefore, there is a significant relationship between lateness to school and students' academic performance in Biology in public secondary schools in Obudu local government area of Cross River State.

Discussion of Findings

The finding obtained from analysis and testing of hypothesis one revealed that the null hypothesis was rejected. This implied that there is a significant relationship between truancy and academic performance of students in Biology in public secondary schools in Obudu local government area of Cross River State. This finding could be as result of the fact that several students are fond of

staying away from school either for fear of certain subjects or punishment. This deprives them access to relevant information that would have enhanced their learning. This finding is in agreement with the findings of Lynn(2010)who posited that truancy has a negative impact on students' academic performance.

More so, the findings obtained from analysis and testing of hypothesis two revealed that the null hypothesis was rejected. This implied that there is significant relationship between drug abuse and academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Obudu local government area of Cross River State. The findings of this study is in agreement with the findings of Awah (2016) who reported that students relationship between who abused drugs record poor academic performance.

The findings obtained from analysis and testing of hypothesis three revealed that the null hypothesis was rejected. This implied that there is a

Awah, R.U., 2016. School disciplinary climate: Characteristics and effects on eighth grade achievement. *Alberta Journal of Educational Research*, 5(2),169-178.

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significant relationship between lateness to school and academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Obudu local government area of Cross River State. These findings could be as result that most students in public secondary schools trek long distances to school, while others engaged in one form of trade or the other. This leads to students going late to school and not being able to attend some lessons, which affects their academic performance negatively.

The findings of this study is in agreement with the findings of Daniel(2016)who reported that lateness to school definitely leads to certain efficiencies in the attainment of the goals and objectives of the institution.

CONCLUSION

Base on the findings of this study, it is therefore concluded that delinquent behaviour (truancy, drug abuse and lateness to school) and academic performance of students in public secondary schools in Obudu local government area of Cross River State has significant relationship.

RECOMMENDATION

Base on the results of the findings, it is therefore recommended that:

1. Stringent measures should be adopted to discourage students from absenting themselves from school in order to improve their learning outcomes and subsequent performance.
2. Students should be counseled regularly to continue to stay away from drugs in order to help them improve their learning outcomes.
3. Students who have formed the habit of being perpetually late to school should be adequately penalized in order to serve as deterrent to other students in the school.

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