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THE IMPACT OF LECTURERS TRUANT ATTITUDE AND STUDENTS ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE IN BAYELSA TERTIARY INSTITUTIONS

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Abstract
Issues of lecturers not being at their duty posts and abusing students in one way or the other have fueled concerns among the populace on the integrity of the educational system in Nigeria. The study looked at the impact of lecturer's truant attitude and students' academic performance in Bayelsa State. The study employed the descriptive survey research design. The study used a population of 2873 lecturers in tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State. The sample size is 483 respondents. Multi stage sampling procedure was adopted for the study. The study developed a questionnaire titled "Impact of Lecturers Truant Attitudes and Students Academic Performance" (ILTASAP). The instrument was validated by three experts from the Federal University, Otuoke. Split half method was used to determine the reliability of the instrument and Cronbach alpha was used to determine the reliability, which gave a value of 0.79. Mean and standard deviation was used to answer the research questions and t-test to test the null hypotheses. Findings showed that truant behaviours among lecturers were skipping classes, rudeness towards students, favouritism and overload of students with workload which they ought to have done. The study found a negative but not significant influence of lecturers' attitudes on students' academic performance. It was recommended that the school authorities should devise effective ways of dealing with truancy among members of staff.

Keywords: Truancy, Lecturer truancy, attitudes, students' performance, absenteeism

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Introduction

School is a significant setting in the process of development for every individual in the country where public education is made compulsory. School is considered as the extended home for individuals, as a lot of time is spent in school. Thus, the members in the school setting especially the teachers have a vital role to play in many aspects of students' attitude and motivation.

Research has shown that teachers as the closest social agent to students in school have contributed to truanting behavior among students. Teachers' characteristics and attitudes can contribute to truancy (Ishak & Finb, 2013).

Globally, truancy has been a major concern in the education system, because it affects performance and leads to wastage of time. Truancy is a stepping stone for delinquent and criminal activities. Truancy is a type of behavior displayed by students that has drawn the concerns of parents, educators, society and the Ministry of Education. Truancy is defined as habitual engagement in unexcused absence from school (Zhang et al., 2010). Teachers' characteristics such as rude, sarcastic, unfair, insult and embarrass students can influence truanting behavior though the impact is rather small (Bartholomew, 2009). Bartholomew (2009) reported that teachers' unpleasantness and hatred toward certain students can contribute to students' truanting behavior. Besides that, students are also inclined to skip school when they feel that teachers and schools do not care for them (Van Breda, 2006) or teachers apply authoritarian teaching methods (Wiles, 2000).

Azizi, et al. (2007) revealed that the aspect of teachers has the highest mean among all the predictors for truancy. Pursuing this further, Azizi, et al. (2007) point out that teachers who like to assign a lot of homework to students, are always late to class and fail to perform effective teaching will discourage students from staying in school. Findings of Mohamed and Hazni (2010) and Johari and Nik Selma (2011) support the role of teachers in influencing students to become truant. Muhammed and Suria (2012) reported that teacher's attitude can cause students' unexcused absence from schools. In their findings, 59.4% of the truants feel that their discipline teacher is unfair in punishing students, thus keeping students away from school. Furthermore, teachers who are very strict, serious and mean can make students skip school. Bartholomew (2009) stressed that high expectations of teachers on students' performance outside and inside the classroom produce positive impacts on students' truanting behavior.

A cursory observation by the researcher reveals that it is common practice among lecturers in public tertiary institutions in Bayelsa State to be absent from school from time to time, come to school late and go early. Some lecturers may be present in school, but not teaching during their approved lecture hours. Some conduct their private business during working hours. These have been going on unabated. Schools with high rate of academic staff absenteeism will find at hard to cover the contents of the curriculum, make students bankrupt in knowledge and undermine students' academic ability and achievement.

When teachers play truant in the school only minimal learning can take place in self-motivated students especially at low level of education as in primary and secondary school levels of Nigerian education. Truancy, a term synonymous with absenteeism was defined as by Ivatts (2010) as the failure of employees to report for or to remain at work as scheduled. Specifically, teacher truancy was defined as the condition whereby the teachers are not present in school when they ought to be. Some researchers insisted that definition of teacher

absenteeism should be extended to include failure of teachers to come to school as well as failure of teachers to teach in the class even when they are present in the school (Onyekuru & Izuchi, 2017). Hence, teacher absenteeism was also defined by Castrol, et al, (2007) as the inability of teachers to attend school or being in school but fail to visit the class to teach or being in unfit condition to teach the children effectively.

In educational life, teachers may have a positive or negative effect on students' academic success, as well as on their social and personal lives. By understanding how teachers perceive their behavior towards students and how students are affected by it, we can determine what the content of student-teacher interaction should be. This perspective is thought to contribute to teacher training and professional development. It is possible to have positive and negative experiences with teachers.

Statement of the Problem

Insights on the role of teacher attitudes in causing learners to become disaffected with school generally seem to be small-scale. In addition to this is the complexity in deducing the extent to which the interaction between learner characteristics, institutional and academic factors can be associated with truancy. While truancy has always been thought of and studied as a student problem, it has allowed truancy to fester among academic staff. This in effect, has placed more burden on students to be self-taught and cater to themselves academically. Moreover, the continued absence of lecturers from school for whatever reason affects the overall quality of education.

Purpose of the Study

This study investigated the relationship between lecturers' truant behaviour and students' academic performance in colleges of education in Bayelsa State. The specific objectives of the study were to:

1. determine poor attitudes of lecturers towards students on campus
2. determine how lecturers truant behaviour related with students' academic performance in colleges of education in Bayelsa State.

Research Questions

1. What are the poor attitudes of lecturers towards students on campus?
2. What is the relationship between lecturers' truant behaviour and students' academic performance in colleges of education in Bayelsa State?

Research Hypotheses

Ho_1: there is no significant relationship between lecturers' truant behaviour and students' academic performance in colleges of education in Bayelsa State.

Literature review

Several factors as researched by Onyekuru and Izuchi (2017) have been suggested to influence the rate of truancy among teachers. These range from economic, social, health to environmental factors. Employers of teachers are obliged to pay teachers' salaries and allowance as at when due. Promotion, pension and gratuity should also come as at when due. Inability of employers of teachers to keep their own side of the contractual agreement between them and teachers compel the teachers to abandon their duty post to seek for alternative sources of income. Security of life is paramount in the lives of individuals. If the community in which the school is situated is enmeshed in violence arising from cult-related

activities, communal/land dispute, chieftaincy tussle (Onyekuru & Izuchi, 2017). Students as well as teachers may try to protect their lives by avoiding conflict areas including the schools. Sickness of teachers and their relatives, enrolment in further studies, lack of attendance registers or inability of the supervisors and principals to scrutinize the attendance registers with a view to punishing defaulting teachers to serve as a deterrent to others all contribute to teacher absenteeism (Onyekuru & Izuchi, 2017). Similarly, lack of standard facilities such as seats and chairs with sound ergonomic considerations, electricity supply, air-conditioned staffrooms, toilets, etc, make teachers uncomfortable in the school and less enthusiastic to go to school. Ivatts (2010) reported that teachers' gender, seniority, professional commitment, weak monitoring systems, incentives and sanctions, health, quality of school infrastructure, distance to school and community economic status are major factors that influence teacher absenteeism. A study by Chandhury et al. (2006) found that personal illness, relative sickness, lack of job satisfaction, lack of effective supervision and inspection of teachers, bad weather condition influenced truancy among teachers.

Theories of teaching and learning have long emphasized the important role teachers play in supporting students' development in areas beyond their core academic skill. By modeling strong organizational and management structures, teachers can help build students' own ability to self-regulate. Content-specific views of teaching also highlight the importance of teacher behaviors that develop students' attitudes and behaviors in ways that may not directly impact test scores. In mathematics, researchers and professional organizations have advocated for teaching practices that emphasize critical thinking and problem solving around authentic tasks (National Council of Teachers of Mathematics, NCTM, 2014).

The teacher is also an important factor who can significantly impact the de(motivation) of students. In particular, teachers' discouraging attitudes and discouraging teaching approaches can cause demotivation to learn in English (Wang & Littlewood, 2021). Demotivation refers to a student's unwillingness to learn (Dornyei and Ushioda, 2013). Demotivation results from external factors (Wang and Littlewood, 2021). In other words, the absence of motivation can be named demotivation or motivation. A demotivated student feels that studying is useless. When a teacher has a discouraging attitude toward students or any issue, students are less likely to show their interest to learn in that situation. Consequently, students' motivation level goes down, and they feel demotivated.

Ishak and Finb (2013) studied truants' and teachers' behaviors in the classroom. The objective of this study is to identify the characteristics of teachers' behavior which impact on truancy among secondary school students. The sample consisted of 472 truants who have routinely skipped school from 10 to more than 40 days per year. Information about the samples' truancy was provided by the school administration. The findings indicated that there were 15 types of teachers' behaviors which affect truant behaviors of students. The characteristics of 'teacher serious in teaching' has the highest mean and 'teachers are biased toward male students' has the lowest mean.

Milcah (2019) examined teachers' Selected Factors on Truancy among Adolescents in Secondary Schools in Kenya. The respondents were three hundred and twenty that were randomly selected from two thousand three hundred and eighty four. The instruments for data collection were student's questionnaire, deputy principal's questionnaire, record analysis and researcher's observations schedules. Data was analysed through descriptive statistics and Chi-square was used to test for the association between the teachers' factors and truancy. The findings revealed that some teachers were not involved in the discipline of the students.

Further, the study observed that the teachers were administering harsh punishment and in most cases the punishments were not proportional to the offence committed. In addition, the guidance and counselling services were not effective in most schools.

Onyekuru and Izuchi (2017) investigated truant behaviours among secondary school teachers in Emohua Local Government Area of Rivers State. This descriptive study investigated truant behaviours among secondary school teachers in Emohua Local Government Area of Rivers State. Three research questions were answered and two hypotheses tested at 0.05. Teachers' attendance data were obtained from attendance registers provided in the schools. The results of the study show that overall rate of teacher absenteeism in Emohua Local Government Area was 38.62%. Rate of absenteeism among female teachers was found to be significantly higher than that of the male teachers, while the rate of absenteeism among married teachers was significantly higher than that of the single teachers.

Kahveci (2023) assessed the positive and negative effects of teacher attitudes and behaviors on student progress. Using a qualitative research approach, the study adopted a basic interpretative research design. The study involved 229 undergraduate students studying at two state universities in Türkiye. Under the headings of positive and negative themes, participants explained the most influential teacher behaviors and attitudes they encountered in primary, secondary, or high school. A total of 183 positive and 187 negative narratives were analyzed. Positive teacher behaviors and attitudes were grouped under three categories: effective communication and ethical attitude, professional competence and dedication, and individual support and trust. Students have been found to be more confident, motivated, and satisfied with their learning, and are more likely to trust their teachers when they exhibit these behaviors. Negative behavior and attitudes were classified into discrimination and injustice, classroom management and communication problems, and occupational incompetence and irresponsibility. In addition to reducing students' motivation to learn, self-confidence, and respect for teachers, these negative behaviors impede their social development.

Methodology

This study was conducted in colleges of education in Bayelsa State, Nigeria. The study employed the descriptive survey research design in the study. The study population is 2873 respondents, comprising 237 lecturers in colleges of education and 2638 students in Bayelsa State. The sample size is 483 respondents. Multi stage sampling procedure was adopted for the study. Cluster sampling was used to sample each college of education in the State. Thereafter, the lecturers in the school were sampled using random sampling and students were proportionately sampled. The study developed a questionnaire titled "Impact of Lecturers Truant Attitudes and Students Academic Performance" (ILTASAP). The instrument was validated by three experts from the Federal University, Otuoke. Split half method was used to determine the reliability of the instrument and Cronbach alpha was used to determine the reliability, which gave a value of 0.79. Mean and standard deviation was used to answer the research questions and t-test to test the null hypotheses.

Results

Research Question 1: What are the poor attitudes of lecturers towards students on campus?

Table 1: Summary of Mean of respondents on teachers' poor attitudes

S/N	Poor attitudes of lecturers: how would you agree that your lecturer sometimes exhibit the following attitudes	Mean	Std Dev	Remarks
1	Lecturers are always stern	3.59	0.90	*A
2	Lecturers often skip classes	3.72	0.64	**SA
3	There is favouritism in class	3.64	0.87	A
4	Lecturers are biased, attention is given to students who contribute to school such as prefects, librarians	3.44	0.87	A
5	Lecturers have no initiative to teach	3.33	1.04	A
6	Lecturers overburden us with work after school	3.46	1.04	A
7	Lecturers are not concern about my problem	3.81	0.61	SA
8	Lecturers often scold and nag at the students	3.04	1.23	A
9	Lecturers do not give feedback on tests/assignment	2.90	1.28	A

***A-Agree; **SA-Strongly Agree**

The poor attitudes of lecturers were rated by students and reported in Table 1. The table presents the mean and standard deviation of students' assessment of poor attitudes of lecturers. The result shows that all the items have mean responses above 2.50, indicating that respondents agreed that lecturers sometimes, exhibit poor attitudes. The poor attitudes by lecturers are being rude, skipping classes, favouritism, not showing empathy to students' plight, not giving feedback on tests/assignment and scolding and nagging at the students among others.

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between lecturers' truant behaviour and students' academic performance in colleges of education in Bayelsa State?

Ho_1: there is no significant relationship between lecturers' truant behaviour and students' academic performance in colleges of education in Bayelsa State.

Table 2: Summary of correlation test for relationship between lecturers' truant behaviour and students' academic performance

		Lecturer_Truant_behaviour	Student_Perfo
Lecturer_Truant_behaviour	Pearson Correlation	1	-.113**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.070
	N	236	236
Student_Perfo	Pearson Correlation	-.113**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.070	
	N	236	236

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

Table 2 presents the summary of the correlation for relationship between lecturers' truant behaviour and students' academic performance. The result shows that correlation index

is- 0.113, indicating a negative relationship between lecturers' truant behaviour and students' academic performance. The result also shows a probability value of .070. Since the p-value is greater than the alpha level of .05, the result is statistically not significant. Hence, there is no significant relationship between lecturers' truant behaviour and students' academic performance in colleges of education in Bayelsa State.

Discussion of Findings

The result of analysis identifies and rates lecturers' poor attitudes as viewed by students. The poor attitudes by lecturers are being rude, skipping classes, favouritism, not showing empathy to students' plight, not giving feedback on tests/assignment and scolding and nagging at the students among others. This finding is supported by Onyekuru and Izuchi (2017) who investigated truant behaviours among secondary school teachers. The results of the study showed that teacher absenteeism was high.

This finding is further supported by Milcah (2019) who studied teachers' selected factors on truancy among adolescents in secondary schools in Kenya. The findings revealed that some teachers were not involved in the discipline of the students. Further, the study observed that the teachers were administering harsh punishment and in most cases the punishments were not proportional to the offence committed.

The result of analysis also showed that there is a negative bit not significant relationship between lecturers' truant behaviour and students' academic performance in colleges of education in Bayelsa State. This shows that lecturers' truant bahviour has a negative effect on students. This finding agrees with Kahveci (2023) who assessed the positive and negative effects of teacher attitudes and behaviors on student progress. The study found that negative behaviour and attitudes were classified into discrimination and injustice, classroom management and communication problems, and occupational incompetence and irresponsibility. In addition to reducing students' motivation to learn, self-confidence, and respect for teachers, these negative behaviors impede their social development.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it is concluded that against the ethics of the profession, lecturers' truancy is on the rise and it is having a negative effect on students' performance. Poor attitudes of teachers have a negative effect on students' performance and relations.

Recommendations

1. The school authorities should devise effective ways of dealing with truancy among members of staff.
2. The administrators of the colleges of education must work on the discouraging attitude of the teachers and modify their teaching approaches. This will not only reduce students' disappointment but also improve their motivation to learn.

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