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SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS AND PEER INFLUENCE AS CORRELATES OF TRUANCY AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL ADOLESCENTS IN DELTA STATE, NIGERIA

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This study examined school effectiveness and peer influence as correlates of truancy among secondary school adolescents in Delta State, Nigeria. The study adopted a correlational research design. The population comprised 29,409 Senior Secondary School Two (SS II) students in 477 secondary schools in Delta State. A sample of 450 students was selected using a multistage sampling technique. Data were collected using the School Effectiveness Rating Scale, Peer Influence Rating Scale, and Adolescent Truancy Rating Scale. The instruments were subjected to face, content, and construct validity, while their reliability was established using Cronbach's alpha, yielding coefficients of 0.74, 0.78, and 0.77 for school effectiveness, peer influence, and truancy, respectively. Of the 450 questionnaires administered, 405 were successfully retrieved and used for data analysis. Pearson Product Moment Correlation was used to answer the research questions and test the hypotheses at the 0.05 level of significance. The findings revealed a significant relationship between school effectiveness and truancy among secondary school adolescents. The study also found a significant relationship between peer influence and truancy among secondary school adolescents. The study concluded that both school effectiveness and peer influence are important factors associated with truancy among secondary school adolescents in Delta State. It was recommended that school administrators should improve school effectiveness by promoting supportive leadership, effective teaching, appropriate discipline, and positive teacher–student relationships. Schools should also promote positive peer relationships and establish effective attendance monitoring and intervention programmes.

Keywords: School effectiveness, peer influence, truancy, secondary school adolescents, Delta State.

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a critical period of human development characterised by significant physical, cognitive, emotional, and social changes. During this period, young people gradually develop greater independence, form their identities, establish important social relationships, and become increasingly responsive to the influence of the environments in which they live and interact. The school represents one of the most important social environments for adolescents because it provides opportunities for academic learning, social interaction, personal and character development, and preparation for adult life (Eccles & Roeser, 2011; Wang & Degol, 2016). Consequently, regular school attendance is essential for adolescents to participate meaningfully in teaching and learning and to derive the academic, social, and developmental benefits of formal education (Gottfried, 2014; Kearney, 2016).

Despite the importance of regular school attendance, some adolescents engage in behaviours that keep them away from school or prevent them from participating fully in classroom activities. One such behaviour is truancy. Truancy generally refers to unauthorised or unjustified absence from school or classes. It may involve missing individual lessons, leaving school without permission, or remaining absent from school without an acceptable reason. School attendance problems, including truancy, are increasingly recognised as complex phenomena that may result from the interaction of individual, family, peer, school, and broader contextual factors (Keppens et al., 2019).

Truancy is a major concern because persistent absence from school deprives adolescents of valuable instructional time and opportunities for academic and social development. Adolescents who frequently miss school may experience difficulties in keeping up with academic activities and may gradually become disconnected from the school environment. Truancy may therefore undermine the educational goals of both the student and the school. The growing concern about school absenteeism has consequently led researchers to examine the conditions within schools and the social relationships surrounding adolescents that may influence their attendance behaviour. One important school-related factor that may be associated with truancy is school effectiveness. School effectiveness refers to the capacity of a school to provide the organisational, instructional, and social conditions necessary for students to learn, participate, and achieve desirable educational outcomes. An effective school is generally expected to provide a supportive learning environment, effective leadership, clear academic and behavioural expectations, appropriate discipline, positive teacher-student relationships, and meaningful opportunities for student participation. These characteristics may influence adolescents' perception of the school and their willingness to attend regularly.

The relationship between the school environment and student absenteeism has received empirical attention. Hendron and Kearney (2016), for example, investigated the relationship between school climate and student absenteeism and found that aspects of the school climate were associated with chronic absenteeism and students' behavioural difficulties. Similarly, a multilevel study involving 25,776 middle and high school students across 106 schools found that student perceptions of school climate differentiated school-level rates of chronic absence, indicating that school conditions may be important in understanding patterns of absenteeism (Hendron & Kearney, 2016).

Further evidence was provided by Keppens and Spruyt (2019), who examined the relationship between authoritative school climate, school bonding, and class skipping among 2,539 secondary school students in Flanders. Their findings revealed that class skipping occurred less frequently in schools characterised by an authoritative climate. The study further showed that the relationship between authoritative school climate and class skipping was partly explained through enhanced school bonding. This finding suggests that when adolescents experience a school environment characterised by support, structure, and positive socialisation, they may develop stronger attachment to the school and be less likely to engage in truancy. These findings suggest that school effectiveness may be relevant to adolescents' attendance behaviour. When a school provides effective instructional practices, supportive relationships, clear expectations, appropriate discipline, and an environment in which students feel valued and connected, adolescents may be more inclined to attend regularly. Conversely, when students perceive their schools as unsupportive, poorly organised, uninteresting, or disconnected from their needs, they may become disengaged from school activities. Such disengagement may increase their tendency to skip classes or remain absent from school. Therefore, examining school effectiveness may provide useful insight into the school-related conditions associated with truancy among secondary school adolescents.

Apart from the school environment, peer relationships constitute another important influence during adolescence. Peer influence refers to the process through which adolescents' attitudes, decisions, and behaviours are shaped by their friends and social groups. During adolescence, young people spend increasing amounts of time with peers and may seek acceptance, approval, and a sense of belonging within their friendship groups. Consequently, peers may exert considerable influence on adolescents' behaviour, including behaviours relating to school attendance and academic engagement. Peer influence may be either positive or negative. Positive peer influence may encourage adolescents to attend school regularly, participate actively in learning, and conform to acceptable school norms. In contrast, negative peer influence may encourage behaviours that undermine educational engagement, including class skipping and unauthorised absence from school. Adolescents may be particularly vulnerable to such influences when they associate with peers who perceive truancy as acceptable or desirable.

In such situations, truancy may become reinforced through friendship networks and shared behavioural norms. Empirical evidence supports the relationship between peer processes and truancy. Rambaran et al. (2017) conducted a longitudinal study involving 342 adolescents aged 14 to 15 years and examined the relationship between peer selection, peer influence, academic functioning, and unexplained school absences. The study found that similarities in truancy among adolescents were explained by both peer selection and peer influence. The researchers further found that friendships were more likely to form and persist among adolescents with higher levels of truancy and that friends influenced one another's levels of truancy over time. These findings demonstrate that truancy may not only be an individual behaviour but may also be shaped and reinforced through adolescents' friendship networks. The findings of Keppens and Spruyt (2019) and Rambaran et al. (2017) demonstrate the importance of examining both school-related and peer-related factors in understanding adolescent truancy. While Keppens and Spruyt focused on the role of authoritative school climate and school bonding in class skipping, Rambaran et al. examined the dynamic processes of peer selection and

peer influence in relation to unexplained absences. These studies provide evidence that adolescents' attendance behaviourmay be influenced by the nature of the school environment as well as the characteristics and behaviour of their peer groups. However, the variables examined in these studies were largely operationalised as school climate, school bonding, peer selection, and peer network influence within contexts outside Nigeria.

The present study therefore focuses specifically on school effectiveness and peer influence as correlates of truancy. School effectiveness is considered relevant because the capacity of a school to provide an enabling and supportive environment may influence adolescents' level of engagement and commitment to regular attendance. Peer influence is equally important because adolescents' friendship groups may either encourage positive school attendance behaviour or reinforce class skipping and other forms of truancy. Examining these two variables together may provide a broader understanding of the school and social contexts within which truancy occurs.

In Delta State, Nigeria, secondary school adolescents are exposed to varying school conditions and peer relationships that may influence their attitudes and behaviours towards school attendance. Despite the importance of regular attendance to academic achievement and effective participation in school activities, truancy remains an issue requiring empirical attention. Although previous studies have examined school climate and school bonding in relation to class skipping (Keppens & Spruyt, 2019) and peer selection and peer influence in relation to unexplained absences (Rambaran et al., 2017), there remains a need for context-specific evidence on the relationship between school effectiveness, peer influence, and truancy among secondary school adolescents in Delta State, Nigeria. Examining these relationships is important because the findings may provide useful information for school administrators, teachers, counsellors, parents, and policymakers. Evidence on the relationship between school effectiveness, peer influence, and truancy could contribute to the development of strategies aimed at strengthening supportive and effective school environments, promoting positive peer relationships, and reducing truant behaviour among adolescents. It is against this background that the present study investigates School Effectiveness and Peer Influence as Correlates of Truancy among Secondary School Adolescents in Delta State, Nigeria.

Statement of the Problem

Truancy among secondary school adolescents remains a serious educational concern because frequent absence from school or deliberate class skipping deprives students of valuable learning opportunities and may result in academic difficulties and school disengagement. Despite the importance of regular school attendance, some adolescents engage in truant behaviour, raising concerns among teachers, parents, school administrators, and other stakeholders. Truancy may be influenced by several school and social factors. School effectiveness, reflected in a supportive learning environment, effective instruction, appropriate discipline, and positive teacher-student relationships, may influence adolescents' willingness to attend school.

Similarly, peer influence may either encourage regular school attendance or promote class skipping and other forms of truant behaviour. Previous studies have examined school-related factors and peer processes in relation to truancy (Hendron & Kearney, 2016; Keppens & Spruyt, 2019; Rambaran et al., 2017). However, there is limited context-specific evidence on the relationship between school effectiveness, peer influence, and truancy among secondary school

adolescents in Delta State, Nigeria. Therefore, the problem of this study is to determine the relationship between school effectiveness and peer influence and truancy among secondary school adolescents in Delta State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The following research questions were raised to guide the study.

1. What is the relationship between school effectiveness and truancy among secondary school adolescents in Delta State?
2. What is the relationship between peer influence and truancy among secondary school adolescents in Delta State?

Hypotheses

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

1. There is no significant relationship between school effectiveness and truancy among secondary school adolescents in Delta State.
2. There is no significant relationship between peer influence and truancy among secondary school adolescents in Delta State.

Methodology

The study adopted a correlational research design. The design was considered appropriate because it enabled the researcher to determine the relationship between school effectiveness, peer influence, and truancy among secondary school adolescents in Delta State. Correlational research design is suitable for determining the nature and extent of relationships among two or more variables. The population of the study comprised 29,409 Senior Secondary School Two (SS II) students drawn from 477 secondary schools in Delta State, based on data obtained from the Ministry of Education for the 2022/2023 academic session. The sample for the study comprised 450 Senior Secondary School Two (SS II) students selected using a multistage sampling technique. At the first stage, the three senatorial districts of Delta State-Delta Central, Delta North, and Delta South—were identified. Through simple random sampling, 10 secondary schools were selected from each senatorial district, giving a total of 30 schools. At the second stage, 15 students were selected from each of the sampled schools, resulting in a total of 450 students. The respondents were distributed equally across the three senatorial districts, with 150 students selected from each district.

Data for the study were collected using a structured questionnaire comprising the School Effectiveness Rating Scale (SERS), Peer Influence Rating Scale (PIRS), and Adolescent Truancy Rating Scale (ATRS). The School Effectiveness Rating Scale was adapted from Baldwin et al. (1993). The original instrument contained 30 items but was reduced to 14 items after validation. The Peer Influence Rating Scale was adapted from Werner-Wilson and Arbel (2000) and originally contained 50 items, which were reduced to 16 items after validation. The Adolescent Truancy Rating Scale was adapted from Gonzálvez et al. (2017). The original 66-item scale was reduced to 28 items after validation. All the scales were rated on a 4-point Likert scale.

The validity of the research instrument was established through face, content, and construct validity procedures. The instrument was initially scrutinised by the research supervisors and subsequently presented to three experts from the Department of Guidance and

Counselling, Faculty of Education, Delta State University, Abraka, for assessment. Thereafter, the instrument was pilot-tested using 100 students from Edo College, Benin City, Edo State. The responses obtained were subjected to factor analysis. Principal component analysis was used to determine content validity, while rotated factor loading using varimax rotation and Kaiser normalisation was used to establish construct validity.

The reliability of the instrument was established through a pilot test involving 100 students from Edo College, Benin City, Edo State. The internal consistency of the instruments was determined using Cronbach's alpha. The reliability coefficients obtained were 0.74 for the School Effectiveness Rating Scale, 0.78 for the Peer Influence Rating Scale, and 0.77 for the Adolescent Truancy Rating Scale. These coefficients indicated that the instruments possessed acceptable levels of internal consistency and were considered reliable for use in the main study. Before the administration of the instrument, permission was obtained from the principals of the selected schools after the objectives and significance of the study had been explained. Three research assistants were recruited and trained to assist with the administration and retrieval of the questionnaires. A total of 450 copies of the questionnaire were administered to the selected respondents, out of which 405 were successfully retrieved and found suitable for analysis, representing a response rate of 90%. The remaining 45 copies were not retrieved or were unusable due to student absenteeism, incomplete responses, or failure to return the questionnaires. The data collected were analysed using descriptive statistics and Pearson Product Moment Correlation. The research questions were answered using Pearson Product Moment Correlation to determine the strength and direction of the relationships between school effectiveness, peer influence, and truancy among secondary school adolescents. The strength of the relationships was interpreted using Cohen's benchmark for correlation coefficients. The hypotheses were tested at the 0.05 level of significance.

Presentation of Results

Research Questions

Research Question 1: What is the relationship between school effectiveness and truancy among secondary school adolescents in Delta State?

Table 1 Correlation Matrix and Descriptive Statistics ofschool effectiveness and truancy among secondary school adolescents

Variable	Mean	SD	SE	AQ	CS	CEG	HE	IE	EP	Truancy
SE	42.96	5.99	1							
AQ	9.39	1.63	-.17	1						
CS	8.74	1.81	-.27	.71*	1					
CEG	6.75	1.41	-.29	.71*	.44*	1				
HE	5.80	1.12	-.09	.70*	.44*	.33*	1			
IE	6.35	1.35	-.19	.55*	.36*	.34*	.32*	1		
EP	5.92	1.68	.10*	.70*	.34*	.32*	.41*	.19*	1	
Truancy	62.21	16.61	.09*	.61*	.22*	.26*	.31*	.15*	41*	1

Predictor(S): School Effectiveness (SE), Academic Quality(AQ), Caring Staff (CS), Clear Educational Goals (CEG), High Expectations (HE), Inclusive Environment (IE), Empathy (EP)
Dependent: Truancy

Table 1 presents the inter-correlation matrix and descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) for school effectiveness (SE) and its components of academic quality (AQ), caring staff (CS), clear educational goals (CEG), high expectations (HE), inclusive environment (IE), and empathy (EP), in relation to truancy among secondary school adolescents in Delta State. The correlation values show that school effectiveness negatively correlated with most of its components, including AQ (r = -0.17), CS (r = -0.27), CEG (r = -0.29), HE (r = -0.09), and IE (r = -0.19), suggesting that higher school effectiveness is associated with lower levels of these components. Interestingly, empathy (EP) had a slight positive correlation (r = 0.10) with school effectiveness.

In relation to truancy, academic quality (r = 0.61), empathy (r = 0.41), and high expectations (r = 0.31) showed moderate positive correlations, indicating that these components of school effectiveness are related to increased truancy among students. Meanwhile, caring staff (r = 0.22), clear educational goals (r = 0.26), and inclusive environment (r = 0.15) showed weak positive correlations with truancy. These findings suggest that while elements of school effectiveness are conceptually meant to reduce truancy, in this context, some appear positively associated with it.

Research Question 2: What is the relationship between peer influence and truancy among secondary school adolescents in Delta State?

Table 2: Correlation Matrix and Descriptive Statistics of peer influence and truancy among secondary school adolescents in Delta State

Variable	**Mean**	**SD**	PI	SN	IF	CR	AM	Truancy
PI	26.92	5.21	1					
SN	5.96	1.78	.53	1				
IF	10.30	3.29	.43	-.76	1			
CR	4.67	1.86	.69	.84*	.59*	1		
AM	5.98	1.63	-.46	-.01	-.16	.156*	1	
Truancy	62.21	16.61	.53	.43*	.69*	-.46	.35*	1

Predictor(s): Peer Influence (PI) Social Norms (SN), Identity Formation (IF), Conflict Resolution (CR), Academic Motivation (AM)
Dependent: Truancy

The data presented in Table 4.8 provides insight into the relationship between peer influence and truancy, along with the effects of specific components such as social norms, identity formation, conflict resolution, and academic motivation among secondary school adolescents in Delta State. To begin with, peer influence (PI) has a moderate positive correlation with truancy (r = .53). This suggests that students who are more susceptible to peer influence are more likely to engage in truant behaviour. In essence, when adolescents are significantly affected by their peer group, they tend to skip school more often, likely due to peer pressure or the desire to conform to group behaviours that devalue school attendance.

Looking at the specific components of peer influence: Social norms (SN) shows a moderate positive relationship with truancy (r = .43). This indicates that students who internalise the behaviours and expectations of their peer groups, especially if those norms are negative, are more likely to engage in truancy. Identity formation (IF) has a strong positive correlation with

truancy (r = .69), the highest among the variables. This implies that as adolescents try to form their identities, often influenced by peers, they may experiment with behaviours such as skipping school, particularly if such actions are seen as a way of asserting independence or gaining peer approval. Conflict resolution (CR) is moderately and negatively correlated with truancy (r = -0.46). This suggests that students who possess effective conflict resolution skills are less likely to be truant. Good conflict management may reduce peer-related stress or school-related disagreements that could otherwise lead to absenteeism. Academic motivation (AM) shows a moderate positive relationship with truancy (r = .35). Interestingly, this may suggest that while some students are motivated academically, other factors such as peer influence might still lead them into truancy. This counterintuitive result may require further qualitative exploration to unpack the underlying dynamics.

Hypotheses Testing

Hypothesis 1: There is no significant relationship between school effectiveness and truancy among secondary school adolescents in Delta State

Table 3: Multiple Regression Analyses of school effectiveness and truancy among secondary school adolescents

	Sum of Squares	**Df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**
Regression	22248.755	6	3708.126	16.49	.000
Residual	90624.623	403	224.875		
Total	112873.378	409			

Coefficients[a]

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			
	B	Std. Error	Beta(β)	T	Sig.	Remark
(Constant)	87.455	5.542		15.780	.00	S
Academic Quality	.299	.826	.029	.361	.72	NS
Clear Educational Goals	2.307	.823	.196	2.803	.01	S
High Expectations	1.432	.951	.097	1.506	.13	NS
Inclusive Environment	5.443	.859	.442	6.339	.00	S
Empathy	3.961	.724	.400	5.469	.00	S
School Effectiveness Rating Scale	-2.559	.480	-.923	-5.328	.00	S

a Predictor(s): School effectiveness (academic quality, caring staff, clear educational goals, high expectations, inclusive environment, empathy)
b Dependent: Truancy

Table 3 showed a significant relationship between school effectiveness and truancy among secondary school adolescents in Delta State. From the regression analysis, the F-value was 16.49, with a significance level (p-value) of .000, which was less than 0.05. This indicated that the overall model was statistically significant; thus, the null hypothesis was rejected. In other words, school effectiveness and its components collectively had a significant influence on truancy levels. However, when examining the individual predictors, the coefficients revealed varying contributions: Clear Educational Goals (p = .01), Inclusive Environment (p = .00), Empathy (p = .00), and the School Effectiveness Rating Scale (p = .00) significantly predicted truancy. In contrast, Academic Quality (p = .72) and High Expectations (p = .13) did not significantly predict truancy, as their p-values were greater than 0.05. The aspects of school effectiveness that significantly influenced truancy were clear educational goals, inclusive environment, empathy, and the overall school effectiveness rating, whereas academic quality and high expectations did not show a significant individual effect.

Hypothesis 2: There is no significant relationship between Peer Influence and truancy among secondary school adolescents in Delta State

Table 4: Multiple Regression Analyses of Peer Influence and Truancy among secondary school adolescents in Delta State

	Sum of Squares	**Df**	**Mean Square**	**F**	**Sig.**
Regression	58824.750	4	14706.187	110.197	.000
Residual	54048.628	405	133.453		
Total	112873.378	409			

	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients			
Model	B	Std. Error	Beta(β)	T	Sig.	Remark
(Constant)	37.76	3.36		11.22	.00	S
Social Norms	.48	.39	.05	1.21	.22	NS
Identity Formation	2.82	.25	.56	11.36	.00	S
Conflict Resolution	-1.96	.34	-.22	-5.80	.00	S
Academic Motivation	.27	.40	.03	.68	.49	NS

a Peer Influence (PI), Social Norms (SN), Identity Formation (IF), Conflict Resolution (CR), Academic Motivation (AM)
B *Dependent: Truancy*

The result presented in Table 4 shows that the overall regression model was statistically significant, as shown by an F-value of 110.197 and a significance level of p = .000. This indicates that, collectively, peer influence and its components significantly predict truancy among the adolescents surveyed. However, when each component was examined individually, varying results were observed. Identity formation emerged as a strong and significant positive predictor of truancy, with a beta value of 0.56 and a p-value of .000. This suggests that

adolescents who are influenced by peers during the process of shaping their identity are more likely to engage in truant behaviour. On the other hand, conflict resolution demonstrated a significant negative relationship with truancy, with a beta value of –0.22 and a p-value of .000. This indicates that adolescents who possess effective conflict resolution skills are less likely to skip school. In contrast, social norms and academic motivation were not found to be significant predictors of truancy. Social norms had a beta value of 0.05 with a p-value of .22, while academic motivation had a beta value of 0.03 with a p-value of .49. These results suggest that, independently, these variables do not have a meaningful influence on truancy in this context.

Discussion of Findings

School effectiveness and truancy among secondary school adolescents

The first research question and hypothesis show that there is a positive and significant relationship between school effectiveness and truancy among secondary school adolescents. This finding implies that schools that exhibit higher levels of organisational effectiveness tend to foster environments that promote students' sense of belonging and academic motivation. The reason for this finding is that when students feel valued and supported, they are more likely to attend school regularly. Conversely, in schools perceived as ineffective, where teaching quality is poor, disciplinary structures are inconsistent, or student-teacher relationships are weak, students may become disengaged and more prone to truancy. Supporting this view, Amberg et al. (2019) investigated the links between three teacher-rated features of school effectiveness school leadership, teacher cooperation and consensus, and school ethos and student-reported truancy among 4,956 upper secondary school students in Stockholm. Their findings indicated that higher teacher ratings of school effectiveness were associated with a lower likelihood of truancy at the student level, suggesting that effective school characteristics may contribute to reducing students' inclination to play truant. Furthermore, Virtanen et al (2014) opined that the psychosocial climate of a school, including teacher support and peer relationships, strongly predicts school attendance. A negative climate can lead students to disconnect from school life, thereby increasing the risk of truancy. Taken together, these findings suggest that improving school effectiveness is not only vital for academic achievement but also for reducing truancy rates among adolescents. Effective schools create supportive, engaging, and structured environments that naturally discourage absenteeism by meeting both the academic and socio-emotional needs of students.

Peer influence and truancy among secondary school adolescents

The second research question and hypothesis show that there is a positive and significant relationship between peer influence and truancy among secondary school adolescents. The reason for this finding is so because Adolescence is a developmental stage where peer relationships become increasingly influential, often shaping behaviours, attitudes, and decision-making processes. The finding aligns with Aqeel and Rehna (2020), who believed that adolescents are highly susceptible to peer pressure, and when their peer group normalises or encourages school absenteeism, they are more likely to adopt similar behaviours to gain acceptance or avoid rejection. Truancy, in this context, becomes a shared activity that reinforces group identity, especially in peer circles where academic disengagement is prevalent. Eremie and Gideon (2020) also found that negative peer associations can significantly impact students' school attendance, particularly when those peers model and reinforce antisocial behaviours, including truancy. Without strong parental or school-based counter-influences, adolescents may

prioritise peer approval over academic responsibilities. Therefore, the significant relationship between peer influence and truancy can plausibly be attributed to the social pressure adolescents face to conform to group norms. When peers value school attendance and achievement, truancy decreases, but when peers devalue education, adolescents may be drawn into patterns of absenteeism in a bid to belong.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it was concluded that school effectiveness and peer influence are significantly related to truancy among secondary school adolescents in Delta State. The significant relationship between school effectiveness and truancy indicates that the nature of the school environment is associated with adolescents' attendance behaviour. Schools that provide supportive leadership, effective teaching, appropriate discipline, positive teacher–student relationships, and a conducive learning environment are likely to promote students' engagement and regular attendance, whereas ineffective school conditions may contribute to students' disengagement and truant behaviour. The study also concluded that peer influence is significantly related to truancy among secondary school adolescents. This implies that adolescents' attendance behaviour may be influenced by the attitudes and behaviours of their peer groups. Adolescents who associate with peers who engage in or encourage class skipping and absenteeism may be more likely to exhibit similar behaviours, while positive peer relationships may encourage regular school attendance and academic engagement.Therefore, the study concludes that truancy among secondary school adolescents is associated with both the effectiveness of the school environment and the influence exerted by peers. Efforts aimed at reducing truancy in secondary schools should consequently focus on improving school effectiveness while also promoting positive peer relationships and discouraging negative peer influences.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations were made:

1. School administrators and educational authorities should improve school effectiveness by providing supportive leadership, effective teaching and learning practices, appropriate disciplinary measures, and positive teacher–student relationships to promote students' engagement and regular school attendance.
2. School counsellors, teachers, and parents should organize programmes that promote positive peer relationships and educate adolescents on the consequences of negative peer influence, particularly behaviours that encourage class skipping and truancy.
3. Secondary schools should establish effective attendance monitoring and intervention programmes through regular communication among teachers, parents, counsellors, and school administrators to identify students who are prone to truancy and provide timely academic, social, and counselling support.

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