

# CAUSES AND LEVELS OF TRUANCY AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS: A CASE STUDY OF RIVERS STATE, NIGERIA

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## Abstract

*The study was a case study design aimed at determining the causes and levels of truancy among secondary school students, using Rivers State, Nigeria. The research sample consisted of 105 teachers and was purposefully sampled. Four research questions and one hypothesis were posed, formulated and tested respectively. A structured questionnaire was developed, validated and administered to the respondents selected for the study. T-test, standard deviation and mean were used to analyze the data collected. The results indicated that there is a significant difference between family background and student factor. The implication of this is that the student's family background contributes greatly to the student's level of truancy. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected. Based on the findings, some recommendations were made towards the reducing the level of truancy among secondary school students.*

**Key words:** Nigeria, Rivers State, school, secondary school, students, truancy.

## Introduction

Truancy among students has become a growing problem. It is the act of deliberately missing one or more classes. Globally, truancy has been regarded as a cankerworm that has eaten deep into the fabrics of the educational programmes and has caused a lot of setbacks for secondary school students in their educational pursuits (Stoll, 1993; Gesinde, 2004; Adeyemi, 2006; Animasahun, 2007b). It leads to potential delinquent activity, social isolation, or educational failure via suspension, expulsion, or dropping out (Huizinga, Loeber, Thornberry & Cothorn, 2000; Huizinga, Loeber & Thornberry, 1994; Morris, Ehren & Lenz, 1991).

Truancy is any intentional unauthorized or illegal absence from compulsory schooling. It may also refer to students who attend school but do not go to classes. Truancy is non-school attendance behaviour. It is an irregular attendance of school. Truancy is a delinquent and anti-social behaviour (Animasahun, 2009). Animasahun (2007a) suggested truancy to be an act of staying off school, which is one of the several kinds of antisocial behaviours. Truancy has been conceptualized as unjustified intentional absence from school (Petegem, 1994). Fogelman and Hibbett (1995) opined that any absence from school without an acceptable reason is truancy. Gabb (1997) is of the view that a truant student leaves home but does not get to school or escapes from school or class to engage in any other activities that catch up his imaginations. Indeed, it is a type of deviant behavior exhibited by some students in schools without formal permission from the school administration or authority governing the institution.

Causes and levels of the contributing factors of truancy are numerous and diverse. Truancy results from several factors. Truancy is a four-fold problem which stems from the student, student's family background, the school and the community. Rohrman (1993) and Kinder, Harland, Wilkin & Wakefield (1995) submitted that child (personality), family, school and community are the causes of truancy. In the same vein, Osarenren (1996) see the home, school environment, peer group culture and society as causes of truancy among students.

Reports from various parts of the world upheld that truancy may be associated with adverse social and health outcome later in life. A number of studies have reported that adults who were truant as adolescents were more likely to experience marital or job instability and psychosocial maladjustment when compared to their counterparts who were not truant as adolescents (Hibbett, Fogelman & Manor, 1990; Tyrer & Tyrer, 1974; Hibbett & Fogelman, 1990).

Students, who commit truancy, commit deviant acts at a higher rate than students who stay in school. Deviant acts include, but are not limited to theft, burglary, robbery, drug use and sale, assault, various sex-related crimes, and even murder. A 1990 study by Obondo and Dhadphale reported that about 10% of school non-attendance by children in Kenya was due to truancy (Obondo & Dhadphale, 1990). Truancy breeds educational wastage and poor human power development (Rumberger, 1987; Nwagwu, 1999); production of hoodlums, social misfit, antisocial individual and eventual criminals (Animasahun, 2005) and gateway to crime (Adeyemi, 2011; Animasahun (2007a).

Rohrman (1993) stated that peers have an invaluable and influential role to play in providing both the support and context necessary for the learning of new skills and that they act as reinforcing agents of socialization. In own findings, Baker and Jansen (2000) believe that truancy leads to lower academic achievements. While Garry (2001) stated that truancy leads to delinquent and criminal activities. Also, Osarenren (1996) stated that children attempt to model their behaviours according to what represents the standard of their peer group.

#### *Statement of the Problem*

Truancy is an educational, social and law enforcement problem. Truancy among adolescents jeopardizes chances of achieving their educational goals (Siziya, Muula & Rudatsikira, 2007). Student's non-attendance to classes is a problem that extends much further than the school. It affects the students, the family and the society on very high levels. Globally, truancy has been identified as the most powerful predictor of delinquency and indiscipline among youths. Absenteeism is detrimental to students' achievement, promotion, graduation, self-esteem and employment potential. Clearly, students who miss school fall behind their peers in the classroom. Consequently, this leads to low-esteem and increase poor academic performance that will cause student drop out of school. As a matter of fact, truancy threatens students' academic performance, progress; success can serve as an indicator of dysfunction in many other areas of human endeavour. If the matter is left unaddressed, truancy will contribute to a myriad of problems for young people during the school years and into adulthood. Therefore, the main research problem of this study borders on finding the causes and levels of truancy among secondary school students with Rivers State, Nigeria as a case study.

### *Scope of the Study*

The priority of this study is to ascertain the causes and levels of truancy among secondary school students. The areas covered in this study are as follows:

- i) Examine the student's causes and levels of truancy.
- ii) Examine how the student's family background contributes to the causes and levels of truancy.
- iii) Access the school's contribution to the causes and levels of truancy.
- iv) Examine the society's contribution to truancy.

### *Research Questions*

Based on the stated problems, the following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent does the student contributes to truancy?
2. To what extent does the student's family background acts as a contributing factor to truancy?
3. To what extent does the school environment contributes to the problem of truancy?
4. To what extent does the society contribute to truancy?

### *Hypotheses of the Study*

To facilitate the investigation of the problem of this study, one null hypothesis was formulated and tested at 0.05 level of significance: There is no significant difference between the student's family background factors and student's contributing factors as causes of truancy.

## **Research Methodology**

The population of this study comprises of the students in secondary schools in Rivers state, Nigeria. The respondents consist of 105 teachers randomly selected from the secondary schools in Rivers state. They were chosen by purposive sampling. The study relied on both secondary and primary data sources. Secondary sources comprises of journals, books, reports as well as internet. The key primary data gathering instrument was a questionnaire developed by the researchers to elicit information on the causes and the level of truancy among secondary school students in Rivers state, Nigeria. The instrument was validated and its reliability coefficient established at 0.85, which was considered adequate for the study. The questionnaire contained 40 structured items that were carefully and articulately framed and administered face to face to respondents bearing in mind that the responses so desired form the nucleus of the study. The design of the questionnaire was based on the research questions and the hypotheses raised in this study. The respondents to the instrument indicated one response option on a 4-point Likert-type summated rating scale of agreement with assigned values of Strongly Disagree (SD) -1, Disagree (D) -2, Agree (A) -3, and Strongly Agree (SA) - 4 in order of agreement

The options of the respondents were scored based on their responses using the 4-point rating scale response. The first aspect of analysis concerns a mean statistics in which table frequencies, mean scores and percentage were analysed and used to answer the research questions. Based on the scoring of the responses of 4-1 scale, the mean is high when it is equal to 2.50 and above and this suggests agreement. And low when it is less than 2.50 and this suggests disagreement. The inferential statistical tool of student-t-test was used to analyse the hypothesis. Research questions and hypothesis were answered and tested respectively in combined operations. The mean sub-scale for each group and the t-test was applied to the difference between groups on each sub-scale in the respondents' perception of student factors and family background factors.

## Result of the Study

### Research Question 1

The first research question purported to find out what extent does a student contributes to truancy? The results are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1. Analysis of Responses for Student Factors and Truancy.**

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Remarks
1	Poor self-concept cause a student to exhibit some levels of truancy	23 (21.9)	82 (78.1)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3.22	Agree
2	Low self-esteem cause a student to exhibit some levels of truancy	0 (0)	3 (2.9)	0 (0)	102 (97.1)	1.06	Disagree
3	Unidentified learning disabilities make a student to become a truant	0 (0)	0 (0)	105 (100)	0 (0)	2.00	Disagree
4	Language barrier causes a student to exhibit some levels of truancy	2 (1.9)	103 (98.1)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3.02	Agree
5	Student unrest causes a child to go truant	5 (4.8)	100 (95.2)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3.05	Agree
6	Poor health care cause a student to be truant	21 (20.0)	84 (80.0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3.20	Agree
7	Mental imbalance causes a student to exhibit truancy	103 (98.1)	2 (1.9)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3.98	Agree
8	Emotional instability causes a student to exhibit truancy	82 (78.1)	23 (21.9)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3.78	Agree
9	Poor academic performance causes a student to exhibit some levels of truancy	0 (0)	0 (0)	103 (98.1)	2 (1.9)	1.98	Disagree
10	The feeling of lack of control over life causes a student to become a truant	0 (0)	105 (100)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3.00	Agree

(Source: Authors' Field Survey, 2011).

Legend: SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree; D = Disagree; SD =Strongly Disagree

Table 1 presents the mean responses of student's factors that causes truancy. Results presented in Table 1 above indicate that 100% of the respondents agreed that poor self concept cause a student to exhibit truancy. The mean score of 3.22 confirms this. The implication of this is that if a student feels inferior to others there is the likelihood that the student would isolate him/herself from others and this will go a long way to affect his/her performance in class work.

From the table above, 97.1% of the respondents disagreed that low self-esteem caused a student to exhibit some levels of truancy. The mean score of 1.06 confirmed this. The implication of this is that his/her interaction and freedom with fellow students will not be cordial leading to ill feelings and gradual withdrawal from school. A critical observation of the respondents on Table 1, statements 3 and 9 has it that the respondents disagreed that an unidentified learning disabilities and poor academic performance caused a student to exhibit some levels of truancy. The mean score of 2.00 and 1.98 respectively confirmed this supporting statement.

The respondents agreed to the following factors as causes of truancy among secondary students: language barrier (with a mean score of 3.02), student unrest (with a mean score of

3.05), poor health care (with a mean score of 3.20), mental imbalance (with a mean score of 3.98), emotional instability (with a mean score of 3.78) and the feeling of lack of control over life (with a mean score of 3.00).

### Research Question 2

The second research question purported to find out what extent does a student's family background acts as a contributing factor to truancy? The results are shown in Table 2.

**Table 2. Analysis of Responses for Student's family Background Factors and Truancy.**

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Remarks
11	Financial difficulties cause a student to be truant	102 (97.1)	3 (2.9)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3.97	Agree
12	The death of a father can cause a student to exhibit some levels of truancy	1 (1.0)	104 (99.0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3.01	Agree
13	Lack of parental control and supervision result in a student exhibiting some levels of truancy	105 (100)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	4.00	Agree
14	Parents are high school dropout; make a student to exhibit truancy	0 (0)	1 (1.0)	100 (95.2)	4 (3.8)	1.97	Disagree
15	One parent household causes a student to exhibit truancy	1 (1.0)	103 (98.1)	2 (1.9)	0 (0)	3.00	Agree
16	Parental discord cause a student to exhibit truancy	0 (0)	103 (98.1)	2 (1.9)	0 (0)	2.98	Agree
17	Poor parent-student relationship causes a child to become a truant	3 (2.9)	2 (1.9)	100 (95.2)	0 (0)	2.08	Disagree
18	Divorce in a family causes a student to become a truant	103 (98.1)	2 (1.9)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3.98	Agree
19	When a student has alcoholic parents, the student will exhibit truancy	0 (0)	3 (2.9)	2 (1.9)	100 (95.2)	1.08	Disagree
20	A student whose parents lack appreciation for value of education can become a truant	0 (0)	105 (100)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3.00	Agree

(Source: Authors' Field Survey, 2011)

Legend: SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly Disagree

Results presented in Table 2 above show that 98% of the respondents agreed that student's family background causes a student to exhibit truancy. According to the result presented in Table 2, financial difficulties had a mean score of 3.97, with 100% of the respondents agreeing to that. The death of a father had 100% of the respondents agreeing to this factor, with 3.01 as the mean score, lack of parental control and supervision had a mean score of 4.00 with 100% of the respondents agreeing to this factor. One parent household had a mean score of 3.00 with 99.1% of the respondents agreeing to this factor and 1.9% of the respondents disagreeing. Parental disorder had 98.1% of the respondents attesting to this factor as a cause of truancy of the respondents objecting to that. The mean score of this factor is 2.98. Divorce in a family had all the respondents attesting to this factor with mean score 3.98. A student whose parents lack appreciation for value of education can become a truant with 100% of the respondents attesting to it, with mean score of 3.00.

Results in Table 2, further revealed that the respondents opposed to the facts that parents

who are high school dropouts, poor parent-student relationship and students with alcoholic parents exhibit truancy.

From the result, parents who are high school dropout had 99% of the respondents disagreeing to that, which had a mean score of 1.97. Poor parent-student relationship had a mean score of 2.08, with 95.2% of the respondents disagreeing to it. Student with alcoholic parents had 97.1% of the respondents disagreeing to this factor, with a mean score of 1.08. From the two observations above, it will be concluded on Table 2 that the number of agreed is seven and the number of disagreed is three, meaning that actually student's family background can cause a student to exhibit some levels of truancy.

### Research Question 3

The third research question purported to find out what extent does the school environment contribute to the problem of truancy? The results are shown in Table 3.

**Table 3. Analysis of Responses for School Factors and Truancy.**

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Remarks
21	Irrelevant curriculum causes a student to exhibit some levels of truancy	0 (0)	105 (100)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3.00	Agree
22	The student will exhibit truancy if there is an improper class placement	5 (4.8)	100 95.2)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3.05	Agree
23	Poor teaching and lack of interest in a subject cause a student to become truant	100 (95.2)	5 (4.8)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3.05	Agree
24	Reprimanded student exhibit truancy	102 (97.1)	3 (2.9)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3.97	Agree
25	Lack of parents school communication and involvement results in a student to becoming a truant	3 (2.9)	102 (97.1)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3.00	Agree
26	Low teacher expectation makes a student to exhibit truancy	0 (0)	5 (4.8)	0 (0)	100 (96.2)	1.10	Disagree
27	Too rigid administration policies cause a student to indulge in truancy	102 (97.1)	3 (2.9)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3.97	Agree
28	Lack of facilities in school cause a student to exhibit some levels of truancy	0 (0)	83 79.0)	1 (1.0)	21 (20.0)	2.59	Agree
29	The inability of the school to identify and provide services for problem students cause truancy	0 (0)	22 (21.0)	83 (79.0)	0 (0)	2.21	Disagree
30	Low inferiority complex causes a student to exhibit truancy	0 (0)	103 (98.1)	0 (0)	2 (1.9)	2.96	Agree

(Source: Authors' Field Survey, 2011)

Legend: SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly Disagree

Table 3 shows the results of school as a contributing factor to the causes of truancy among secondary school students. From the result, irrelevant curriculum had 100% of the

respondents agreeing to this factor, with a mean score of 3.00. Improper class placement had also 100% of the respondent agreeing to this factor with a mean score of 3.05. Poor teaching and lack of interest in a subject had a mean score of 3.05, with 100% of the respondent agreeing to this factor as a cause of truancy among secondary students. The result further shows that reprimanding students, lack of parents school communication and involvement and too rigid administration policies are factors that causes truancy among secondary students, with mean score of 3.97, 3.00 and 3.97 respectively. The respondents agreed that lack of facilities in school and low inferiority complex causes truancy among secondary students with 2.59 and 2.96 respectively as mean scores. On the contrary, low teacher expectation and the inability of the school to identify and provide services for problem students are contributing factors to causes of truancy among secondary students with mean score of 1.10 and 2.21 respectively.

*Research Question 4:*

The fourth research question purported to find out what extent does the community contribute to truancy? The results are shown in Table 4.

**Table 4. Analysis of Responses for Community Factors and Truancy.**

S/N	Statement	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Remarks
31	Lack of support for school by the community lead to truancy	102 (97.1)	3 (2.9)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3.97	Agree
32	Negative peer influences in the community cause a student to be truant	1 (1.0)	104 (99.0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3.01	Agree
33	Community cultural heritage cause a student to exhibit truancy	105 (100)	0 (0)	0 (0)	0 (0)	4.00	Agree
34	Gang activities in the community where the school is situated cause a student to be a truant	102 (97.1)	3 (2.9)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3.97	Agree
35	Community disputes/crises cause a student to be truant	102 (97.1)	3 (2.9)	0 (0)	0 (0)	3.97	Agree
36	Community upheaval and social change lead to truancy among students	0 (0)	102 (97.1)	3 (2.9)	0 (0)	2.97	Agree
37	Lack of irresponsible community service agencies result in students becoming truant	0 (0)	3 (2.9)	100 (95.2)	2 (1.9)	2.01	Disagree
38	Inadequate provision of transportation by the community leads truancy	0 (0)	103 (98.1)	0 (0)	2 (1.9)	2.96	Agree
39	High incidence of criminal activity result to students becoming truant	0 (0)	102 (97.1)	3 (2.9)	0 (0)	2.97	Agree
40	Kidnapping/hostage in society causes a student to exhibit truancy	0 (0)	103 (98.1)	2 (1.91)	0 (0)	2.98	Agree

(Source: Authors' Field Survey, 2011)

Legend: SA = Strongly Agree; A = Agree; D = Disagree; SD = Strongly Disagree

Results in Table 4 shows that the community contributes to the problem of truancy among secondary school students. Lack of support for school by the community had 100% of the respondents attesting to this factor as a cause of truancy among secondary school students, with a mean score of 2.96. Negative peer influences in the community had a mean score of 3.98; community cultural heritage had a mean score of 4.00; gang activities in the community had a mean score of 3.97; community disputes/crises had a mean score of 3.97; community upheaval and social change had mean score of 2.97. Inadequate provision of transportation by the community had a mean score of 2.96; high incidence of criminal activity with a mean score of 2.97 and kidnapping/hostage in society with a mean score of 2.98. A glance at the same Table 4 also shows that 97.1% of the respondents disagreed that the community contributes to truancy by opposing the fact that lack of irresponsible community service agencies result in students becoming truant with a mean score of 2.01. From all ramifications and observation, it should be strongly believed that the percentage of agreed is far above the percentage of disagreed, meaning that conclusion can be drawn that actually the community contributes to truancy among secondary school students.

*Hypothesis I (Ho1)*

There is no significant difference between the student’s family background factors and student’s contributing factors to truancy.

**Table 5. Computation of results using t-test analysis showing differences between family background and student factors.**

Variable	N	X	S	t-cal	t-tab	Remarks
Family Background Factors	105	29.07	0.35	12.598	2.00	Reject Ho
Student Factors	105	28.29	0.77			Significant

p < 0.05

Legend: N = Number of respondents; X = Mean score; S = Standard deviation; t-cal= t-calculated value; t-tab = t-tabulated value; Ho = Hypothesis.

Results from Table 5 shows that family background recorded mean score of 29.07 with a standard deviation of 0.35. While the student factors have a mean score of 28.29, with a standard deviation of 0.77. The t-calculated value of 12.598 which is greater than the t-tabulated value of 2.00 suggests that there is a significant difference between family background and student factor. The implication of this is that the student’s family background contributes greatly to the student’s level of truancy. Hence, the null hypothesis was rejected.

**Discussion**

The findings of the present study revealed that poor self-concept causes a student to exhibit some levels of truancy. Also, the finding of the present study revealed that low self-esteem cannot cause a student to exhibit some levels of truancy. This finding disagrees with Reids (2002), Kinder, Harland, Wilkin& Wakefield (1995) and Uwakwe (1998) who found that low self-esteem and lack of self-esteem causes truancy.

Poor health care causes a student to be truant. This finding agrees in support with Gesinde (2004) who found that psychiatric disturbances causes a student to be truant. The result of this study also revealed that student unrest causes a child to go truant. This finding concurs with



Bandura (1997) who reported that aggressive behaviour causes truancy among students. The result of the present study reveals that emotional instability causes a student to exhibit truancy. This finding is in agreement with

Animasahun (2005) who found that lack of readiness to learn, lack of motivation, the fear of unknown, poor parenting, misplaced priority, bad role models, over indulgence, excessive domestic work, spiritual factors causes truancy among secondary school students. Also, the study disagrees that poor academic performance causes a student to exhibit some levels of truancy. This finding debunks Gray and Jesson (1990), and Reids (2002) who found that scholastic failure, learning problems and learning style causes student truancy.

In the area of student's family background as a contributing factor responsible for truancy among secondary school students, the study found that financial difficulties, the death of a father, lack of parental control, one-parent household, parental discord, divorce in the family and a student whose parents lack appreciation for value of education are factors in the student's family background that can cause a student to exhibit truancy. This finding is in consonance to Reids (1999) who reported that the characteristics of the background of student involved in truancy are "parents lack appreciation for value of education".

Financial difficulties in the family according to the finding of this study is a contributing factor to secondary school students becoming truancy. This finding agreed with the views of Siziya, Muula & Rudatsikira (2007) who observed that many students go hungry sometimes because of lack of food at home because they are from poor households. They in turn miss class because they need an opportunity to fend for themselves. This could be done through begging or scrounging for food. Truant and hungry students may also be involved in piece work to earn some money to purchase food. Also, this finding agrees with Garry (2001) who reported that inadequacies in the home and Osarenren (1996) reporting that capacity to make petty cash to augment family income and unfavorable home circumstances cause truancy.

The finding of this study had it that single parenthood cause truancy among secondary school students. This finding agrees with Gray and Jesson (1990) that students from single parent's family have poorer attendance rate than those from the more traditional family.

According to the finding of the study, lack of parental control and supervision result in a student exhibiting some levels of truancy. The finding is in support of Siziya, Muula & Rudatsikira (2007) who reported that some parents rarely checked homework, neither understood the problems and worries of students nor supervise the students.

The finding of the study has it that parent discord is a contributing factor to truancy among secondary school students. The finding further corroborates with Omoegun (1995), Osarenren (1996) and Owodunni (2008) that children from hostile home environment would rather prefer to spend most of his days in the midst of his peers where he would be happier and more relaxed.

On the third research question, the analysis of the data revealed that the school to some extent contributes to the causes of truancy. This is depicted by the 100% of the respondents who agreed to that fact. Irrelevant curriculum, improper class placement, poor teaching and lack of interest in a subject, lack of parents school communication and involvement, too rigid administration polices, lack of activities in school and low inferiority complex contributes to truancy among secondary school students. This finding is in line with the views of Boyson (1974) who found that ordinary boys and their parents know that schools are for schooling and they see little point in attending schools which cause to offer it. Also, this finding supports Owodunni (2008) who reported that the student will exhibit truancy if there is an improper class placement.

Also, the finding is support of past studies by Gabb (1997) who opined that poor learning conditions, being ill-equipped to tackle normal pressure of school which occurs as a result of poor teaching and lack of interest in a subject that cause a student to become truant and Adana

(1987) and Igborgbor (1984) who reported that fear of punishment, ridicule, scolding, shame of setbacks and examinations causes truancy among students.

The results on Table 3 revealed that the school greatly contributes to truancy among secondary school students. These results concurs with Harte (1995) and Oloko (1996) who opined that unmet educational needs, placement problems, hostile atmosphere of the school teachers' professional misconduct causes truancy and Osarenren (1996) that teachers' discriminative and harsh behaviour couple with teachers' absenteeism causes truancy among students. The study further revealed that poor school climate causes truancy among secondary school students. This finding is in agreement with Rothman (2001) and Oyesola (2002) who observed that poor school climate, causes truancy among students. Omoegun (1995) is of the view that the main function of the school is the provision of care and guidance. To him, this includes the provision of conducive learning environment and acquisition of adequate learning facilities and other conveniences. This corroborates the findings of this study.

On the basis of the fourth research question, the study also found that the community contributes to some extent to the causes of truancy. This is manifested by the 97% of the respondents who affirmed to that. Among the factors in the community that contributes to the causes of truancy include lack of support for school by the community, negative peer influences in the community, gang activities in the school is situated, community disputes/crisis, inadequate provision of transportation by the community, high incidence of criminal activity and kidnapping/hostage in society. Based on the results for the fourth research question, there was a 100% confident level which confirmed that the community influences the causes of truancy. This finding is in supports of Osarenren (1996) who found that general indiscipline of the society causes of truancy.

## Conclusion

The aim of this research was to find out the causes of truancy among secondary school students in Rivers State, Nigeria had been examined in this study. Based on the findings of this study, truancy is detrimental to students' achievement, promotion, graduation, self-esteem and employment potential. Clearly, students who miss school fall behind their peers in the classroom. This, in turn, leads to low self-concept or esteem and increase in likelihood that at risk students will drop out of school. Students' truancy is a problem that extends much further than the school. It affects the students, the family, the school and the community at large. The student, his/her family background, the school and the community are contributing factors to the causes of truancy among students in secondary schools in Rivers State, Nigeria.

## Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. There should be an empowerment programme for students. This will help in addressing early marriage and parenthood problems.
2. Parents should work with school administrators, counsellors and teachers to ensure that students remain in the school. They assist in homework and encouraging parental decisions in school administration (El-Ibiary & Youmans, 2007).
3. Teachers should help in arranging for help with making up, missed work, tutoring, placement in a special programme, and/or a transfer to another school.
4. Parents should embark on school visit. This will strengthening the relationship between the school and the home and encourages parents' participation in school activities. Thus, ensuring proper attendance of their wards to school.
5. The school should play/prepare interesting and irrelevant curriculum to suit the needs of the students and the community.

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