

Truancy and Academic Achievement Among Learners in Linear Programming: A Case Study of HAKENI Secondary School in Nkeyema District, Zambia.

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ABSTRACT

The study's objective was learners' academic achievement and truancy in linear programming. The main goals were to investigate truancy and its causes, and develop the remedies required to reduce absence. a group of 14 students from Zambia's Nkeyema District's HAKENI Secondary School. The findings show that learners' academic achievement in linear programming was impacted by truancy. The participants disclosed that truancy is caused by economical, familial, and psychological problems.

The findings were consistent with the negative school climate, which includes bullying, inadequate facilities, poor teacher-student relationships, and a lack of safety, and they encouraged the pupils not to attend. While the general consensus on truancy is bad, there are some nuanced perspectives that may provide benefits under some circumstances. Students may have the opportunity to experience learning outside of the regular classroom setting through truancy, which could promote the development of autonomous learning skills. If there is a lack of positive and exciting relationship between professors and students, pupils who feel alienated from the school may skip class. One may claim that truancy contributed to subpar results. In addition to attendance, school administrators need to consider the impact that student absences have on students' academic performance. In order to increase student attendance, they should also work to improve school-to-school contact programs.

Keywords: academic performance, school attendance, secondary schools, truancy.

INTRODUCTION

Truancy is an unexcused absence from school that has significant negative effects on academic performance. Truancy is often correlated with behavioral issues, including substance abuse and delinquency, which can further disrupt academic performance (Vaughn et al., 2013). It is often considered a form of educational neglect or delinquency, and it can lead to academic problems, legal issues, and other negative consequences. Schools and authorities typically have measures in place to address and reduce truancy, such as attendance policies, parental notifications, and interventions designed to identify and support students at risk of habitual absenteeism. When students are not in school, they miss critical instructional time, leading to gaps in knowledge and understanding (Gottfried, 2010).

Frequent absenteeism is related to higher dropout rates (Balfanz & Byrnes, 2012). Truancy has a detrimental effect on academic performance by reducing instructional time, lowering grades and test scores, and contributing to social and behavioral problems. Effective intervention strategies are essential to truancy and support students in achieving better academic outcomes.

CONTEXT

Truancy has significant negative impacts on academic performance. It is often considered a form of educational neglect or delinquency. However, schools and authorities typically put measures in place to

address and reduce truancy, such as calling attendance registers, informing parents, and supporting students at risk of habitual absenteeism.

In their study, Balfanz & Byrnes (2012) emphasized the link between long-term absences from school and academic achievement, particularly in math-related courses. It was discovered that a student's performance in linear programming, along with other academic courses, were being greatly impacted by truancy.

Comprehending intricate ideas like constraints, objective functions, and optimization strategies is necessary for linear programming. Absence from class results in a lack of critical instruction and clarifications, which causes comprehension gaps. Gottfried (2017) explores the consequences of truancy, providing information pertinent to linear programming. It was discovered that in order to build problem-solving abilities through practice and guided learning, consistent attendance is necessary. Less opportunity to interact with issues and get teacher input arises from truancy. Mastering linear programming takes constant practice. As concepts are built upon previously taught ideas, regular involvement in class activities and assignments is crucial, and absenteeism limits exposure to these activities. Chang and Romero (2008) talked about how crucial attendance is to academic achievement in general and mathematics in particular. The amount of content they've missed may overwhelm them, demotivating them to make up lost ground. Attendance enables students to interact with teachers and classmates, promoting group learning and doubt-explanation. Truancy limits these chances, which causes alienation and increased disengagement.

Lower performance on tests, particularly those involving linear programming, is frequently associated with truancy. Students who don't consistently show up for class are less ready for assignments and tests. Assignments that are necessary for learning linear programming concepts and getting feedback may be missing or incomplete because of truancy. Regular absentee students typically receive worse marks and perform worse on standardized tests. Because it guarantees ongoing learning and engagement in class activities, regular attendance at school is essential for academic success. A strong indicator of high school dropout is tardiness. Frequent absences result in the loss of important instruction, which can cause knowledge and skill gaps. Balfanz and Byrnes (2012) state that pupils who miss school receive subpar marks.

Regular attendees get access to continual teaching that helps them succeed academically (Oghuvbu, 2010). According to Roby's (2004) School Attendance Hypothesis, students who attend class regularly may be better able to attain academic success. Nonetheless, keeping a daily log of student attendance is acceptable for educators (Bagaya, 2019).

According to Ford & Sutphen (2016), learning growth and attainment will stagnate in the absence of consistent attendance at school. Unregular attendance at school makes all national and international initiatives to make education universally accessible ineffective. Truancy has significant negative impacts on academic performance. When compared to urban or suburban settings, there are a number of distinct factors that contribute to the appearance of chronic absence, or truancy, in rural communities (Marique, et a 2013). According to Ebinum, Akamagune, & Ugbong (2017), there are major transportation issues in rural areas because schools are frequently placed far from students' homes. This distance may deter frequent attendance, particularly in the event that public transit is infrequent or unreliable. Unfavorable weather or bad driving conditions might make these problems worse.

It's possible that students must labor to provide for their families or practice subsistence farming, which can result in absenteeism. Cultural traditions that prioritize urgent job or family duties over learning may cause education to not be as highly regarded in certain rural communities (Wilkins, & Bost, 2016).

On their research, Arnold et al. (2005) established a course for additional investigation shows that resources like advanced classes, counseling services, and extracurricular activities may be scarcer in rural schools. Higher rates disengagement can result from a lack of stimulating learning opportunities. Suffice it to say that truancy patterns are greatly influenced by the unique socioeconomic, topographical, and cultural circumstances of rural communities. Tailored interventions that take into account these particular issues are necessary to address truancy in these settings.

Statement of the Problem

Truancy has an even greater negative impact in rural settings, where there is frequently less developed educational infrastructure. Missing class a lot lowers a student's likelihood of being interested in the material. Students who don't show up lose out on extra help. This has the potential to demotivate pupils to work even harder in their academic endeavors. Pupils who regularly show up for class perform better. However, the cause of truancy at HAKENI Secondary School is not known.

Objectives:

- a) Explore truancy and its causes
- b) Examine how Truancy affect Academic Achievement Among Learners in Linear Programming.
- c) Create the interventions needed to combat absenteeism.

Significance

The information gathered is useful to administrators in appreciating the need to eradicate truancy. By offering a thorough understanding of the reasons behind students' absences from school, the study would enable stakeholders to put targeted interventions into place that improve public safety, advance academic achievement, and advance social well-being in general. It could also help administrators put modalities for curbing truancy in place. Additionally, the study may contribute fresh data to the corpus of existing literature.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

The nature of this investigation was wholly qualitative. Shava and Nkengbeza (2020) define qualitative research as a phenomenological study that uses a naturalistic approach to understand events under specific circumstances. Using this technique, the researcher can draw conclusions about the experiences of the informants beyond what they are expressing. This approach placed subjectivity in the creation of knowledge (Guimond Plourden, 2009). The study's conclusions were interpreted in accordance with Van Manen's four (4) existential dimensions (1990–1997 in Guimond-Plourden, 2009). Because each of these existential qualities is ingrained in the life of a volunteer or any human being, the researcher merged them all.

Eligibility Criteria

Before any information was collected from focus groups and interviews, all participants signed informed consent forms that described the research design and expectations for both the researcher and the participants, the advantages of the study, and the concerns about voluntary participation, confidentiality, and anonymity. As soon as qualified participants completed the consent forms, schedules for focus groups and interviews were established.

Research Sites

An inquiry was conducted at HAKENI Secondary School of Zambia, in Nkeyema district of the western province.

Study Population

According to Babbie (2016), a population is the group of individuals or objects that researchers are interested in studying and collecting data from. This may be a reference to a particular demographic or to individuals dealing with a particular problem. Students in grade twelve, at HAKENI Secondary School, were the study's target population.

Sample Size

Comprehensive examination of a particular phenomenon in relation to its actual environment. According to Yin (2018), the possibility of generalization is not always given as much weight in case study research since it typically concentrates on a limited number of examples. With six girls, five boys, and three teachers, the sample size was fourteen.

Sampling Techniques

Sampling is defined by Gray, Grove, & Sutherland (2016) as the process of choosing people or events to participate in a study. Purposive sampling, according to Leedey (2000), is a procedure where the researcher deliberately chooses which individuals to include in the sample. Additionally, in purposive sampling, the researcher determines what information is needed and identifies individuals who are willing to provide it based on their experience and knowledge endowment (Etikan et al., 2015). According to Denzin & Lincoln (2017), the learner's familiarity with the necessary material serves as the basis for this decision. Therefore, the researcher should completely understand the phenomenon rather than extrapolating results to a larger group (Makondo & Makondo, 2020). The study sample was composed of 14 participants (5 boys and 6 girls and 3 teachers) from HAKENI Secondary School.

Data Generation

In-depth Interviews

To grasp the issue, a thorough interview was conducted. In-depth interview guides were used. During face-to-face interviews, the researcher, with permission from participants, also used a voice recorder and a diary. The target audience was interviewed in-depth while the researcher took notes. Utilization has several benefits. Benefits include enhanced privacy and secrecy. In-depth interviews were conducted, participants were able to clear up any questions they had, and an abundance of insightful data was acquired. Furthermore, data analysis checklists were also used during the process of data production.

Group Discussions

Focus groups provide participants with empowerment since they empower them in and of themselves. Talking with one another promotes understanding and communication, particularly when talking about challenging topics. It makes it possible to look at the parallels between experiences and methods for promoting empathy and shared perspectives. The researcher allowed participants to go deeper into subjects that came up in their one-on-one discussions by taking a moderate approach. The instruments employed encouraged dialogue and engagement.

DATA GENERATION PROCEDURE

Before the data gathering process began, the researcher obtained approval from the headmaster of HAKENI secondary school, which was visited prior to the commencement to avail the subject at hand to all participants. We collected qualitative information from HAKENI Secondary School. In this process, participants were given consent forms, which they signed and returned to the researchers.

Finally, the data generation procedure was as follows:

Data Analysis Procedure

Data analysis as a process that involves organizing what you have seen, heard, and read so that you can make sense of what you have learned. Therefore, the gathered data was analyzed thematically. During this process, four (4) essential steps were followed, namely: raw data management, data reduction, data interpretation, and data representation. During the process of raw data management, the researcher undertook the process of data cleaning in order to remove redundant information from the gathered data. At this point, the only data that remained were those that were pertinent to the study questions. The researcher started chunking and coding by

identifying similar ideas that were later grouped together in order to come up with themes. Denzin (2017) defined coding as an interpretative technique that both organizes the data and provides a means to introduce the interpretations.

Further, data interpretation was the third stage, where there was clustering of data. Therefore, clustered data or ideas grouped together by the researcher are termed units of significance '(Sadala & Adorno, 2001). Eventually, there was data representation. This was a process where the researcher had to report or tell a story about the gathered data. After grouping participant ideas, a theme analysis of the commonalities was carried out.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical issues are essential to ensuring participant safety, well-being, and process integrity. Every participant received assurances that the data would be treated with extreme care, kept completely confidential, and used exclusively for that reason. Participants' names and comments will remain anonymous in order to protect their privacy (Israel & Hay, 2006). This was made possible by adhering to Kimmel's (2014) ethical criteria, which include obtaining consent, obtaining ethical permission, protecting participants' anonymity, and providing them with pseudonyms.

The participants received a detailed explanation of the research, potential risks and benefits, and stop participating at any time without facing any consequences. The best practices are voluntary, informed, and documented consent (Beauchamp & Childress, 2019). Researchers should avoid cherry-picking or misrepresenting their data and instead be transparent and accurate in how they report their conclusions (Creswell, & Creswell, 2017).

Theoretical framework

Self-Determination theory is a well-respected conceptual framework that helps explain motivation in learning environments. It highlights how relatedness, competence, and autonomy all contribute to intrinsic motivation and engagement. Self-Determination theory can shed light on the underlying motivational problems that lead to disengagement and absenteeism.

It provides a thorough framework for comprehending personality and motivation in people. According to Ryan & Deci (2017), people have basic psychological requirements that, when met, promote optimal performance, wellbeing, and intrinsic motivation. These requirements include the need to master one's conduct and goals, the need to feel in control of one's surroundings, and the urge to connect and feel engaged. Implementing Self-Determination theory in educational settings improves student motivation, engagement, academic achievement and has the potential to reduce absenteeism and enhance academic achievement in areas such as linear programming.

Principles of Autonomy Theory is an activity that should be done for its own intrinsic benefit rather than for a different goal (Ryan & Deci, 2017). A person's action is self-motivated and self-determined, according to the self-determination theory. It might boost students' intrinsic drive to attend class and perform well academically (Vallerand, Fortier, & Guay, 1997). The Self-Determination Theory was used for this study because it emphasizes the significance of educational attainment, attendance at school, and academic achievement. Academic success is supported by determination, which is the cornerstone for developing self-motivated learners.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Causes of Truancy in Schools

Absences from school without permission have consequence on educational institutions worldwide. According to Mwambazi, Mubanga, & Francis, (2023) revealed that there are numerous additional factors, such as psychological, family, and socioeconomic problems, also play a role in truancy. Truancy may result from a

parent's lack of interest in their child's education and monitoring. When a family is struggling financially, employment may take precedence over education, which causes kids to forgo school in order to work or take care of home duties (Epstein & Sheldon, 2002).

Students may be deterred from attending school by an unfavorable school climate that includes bullying, insufficient facilities, bad teacher-student relationships, and a lack of safety (Henry, 2007). Teenagers are particularly vulnerable to peer pressure. Students are more prone to imitate their peers' delinquent habits, such as absenteeism, in order to fit in or prevent being shunned (McNeal, 1999). Learners who experience social rejection or bullying may also avoid school if they feel cut off from their friends (Wehlage & Rutter, 1986).

Pupils from households with lower incomes miss school. It could be tough for them to attend while working to support their family or because they don't have access to necessities (Balfanz & Byrnes, 2012). There may be cultural norms that oppose school attendance in some areas, or education may not be promoted at all (Gabb, 2008).

Student 6 said that.

"I was not attending class regularly. I used to look for piecework to take care of my siblings. I was the eldest, and my parents could go for a long period, leaving us alone" (S6, 14.07.2024)

A lack of parental engagement and support can lead to truancy. Students from homes where education is not prioritized or where parents are unable or unwilling to engage miss school (Epstein & Sheldon, 2002). Equally, Reid (2005) reveals that poverty and related issues, lead to higher truancy rates. Negative school climates, including poor teacher-student relationships, a lack of safety, and inadequate support services, can contribute to truancy (Finn & Rock, 1997).

Student 7 said that,

"I followed my friends blindly. They constantly said that education does not make sense. So, I was misled and started missing lessons." (S7, 12.07.2024)

A curriculum that does not engage students or teaching methods that do not accommodate diverse learning styles can result in students feeling disconnected. Students living in unsafe neighborhoods stay home to avoid danger on their way to and from school (Rumberger & Lim, 2008).

It suffices to mention academic difficulties, lack of interest in school, peer influence, affect performance. Family dysfunction, lack of parental supervision, economic hardship affects school performance. So are poor relationships with teachers and inadequate engagement or support systems. Socioeconomic status, community crime rates, and cultural attitudes towards education affect learner performance.

Reid (2014) claims that familial factors contribute to truancy cases. Students who experience a lack of parental participation frequently don't feel supported or motivated to go to school. According to Gase et al. (2016), truancy is caused by socioeconomic status. Families that are struggling financially may unintentionally encourage truancy. For instance, students may skip class in order to work and provide for their families, or it may be because they are unable to access necessities like appropriate clothing or transportation.

According to Bhattarai, (2017) students may abandon school due to bullying, prejudice, or what they perceive to be a lack of support from their teachers. According to Attwood, and Croll (2015), truancy is caused by curriculum and teaching methods. Students may become disinterested in learning and resort to absenteeism if they feel that the material is too difficult or irrelevant. Pupils who experience mental health problems—such as anxiety, sadness, or ADHD—are more likely to miss school. These circumstances may make it more problematic to concentrate on academic work and attend classes (Egger, Costello, & Angold, 2003).

A student's life might be severely disrupted by substance usage. According to Henry and Huizinga (2007), substance abuse can also be a coping strategy for other underlying problems like stress or trauma. Being around classmates who skip school can make one more likely to miss work. Balfanz and Byrnes (2012) found that truancy is caused by the neighborhood environment. Truancy may arise by residing in an area with high rates of violence, crime, or drug use. Truancy is a difficult issue that necessitates extensive intervention solutions since these elements frequently interact in intricate ways.

Effects of Truancy

The regular absence from school can have a substantial negative effect on a student's performance. Missed classes due to truancy cause information gaps that make it more difficult for students to understand key concepts. Chronic absenteeism, according to Gottfried (2014), results in poorer academic achievement because kids miss important instructional time that is necessary for comprehending difficult courses like mathematics.

Truant students do worse since they don't have as much opportunity to practice and apply the lessons they have learnt. According to Kearney (2008), consistent attendance leads to better academic outcomes because it allows students to engage with the material on a constant basis and receive immediate feedback. Frequent absentee students may not get the help and feedback from their teachers that they need to master hard linear programming issues and repair mistakes.

Morrissey, Hutchison, and Winsler (2014) emphasize the significance of teacher feedback in mathematics education, pointing out that absentee students frequently miss this essential element, which has an impact on their performance. Reduced academic confidence and motivation are frequently linked to truancy. Students that lag behind their colleagues may experience discouragement, which will lower their effort and enthusiasm in courses such as linear programming.

Lower achievement results in linear programming examinations are frequently the result of students' inability to keep up with the curriculum, missing instructional time, low engagement, and diminished support. Students' performance in linear programming suffers because of truancy since it interferes with the learning process and reduces academic gains.

Student 1 said,

I used to miss school because my friends were teasing me. I had no proper school attire (S1, 12 .07.2024).

Pranking, especially when it takes the form of harassment, can have a big impact on students' absences from school. Students that are teased frequently suffer from mental anguish, anxiety, and a decline in self-esteem. They may see school as unfriendly due to unfavorable emotional atmosphere, which increases the possibility of absence as they attempt to escape the source of their pain. For the victim, teasing can foster a climate of fear and worry. Being taunted can induce emotional anguish, which might result in avoidance behavior at school. When students attempt to avoid the unpleasant experiences connected with going to school, they may become chronically absentee or truant because they feel unsafe or uneasy there.

According to a study by Kearney (2008), adolescents who are bullied or teased may truant from school as a coping strategy. Attendance issues might be further exacerbated by the fear of ridicule. Frequent bullying might cause students to lose interest in their academics. Over time, this disengagement could lead to a decrease in the motivation to attend school regularly. Boulton, Trueman, and Murray (2008) discovered that students who experience bullying, including teasing, frequently exhibit reduced academic engagement, which is linked to increased absentee and truancy rates.

When someone is teased, they may experience social isolation and feel cut out of their peer groups. The feeling of social exclusion might intensify the unfavorable school atmosphere and heighten the desire to stay away from school entirely. Wang, Selman, and Dishion's (2010) study emphasizes that unfavorable peer interactions,

such as teasing, can result in feelings of alienation and social isolation, which are both powerful indicators of absenteeism.

Depression and anxiety are two long-term psychological impacts of teasing that are linked to higher absence rates. Reducing absenteeism rates requires addressing bullying and fostering a positive learning environment in the classroom.

Student 2 said that.

"I used to miss lessons because the place I used to stay was far from school. So, I could attend lessons, and sometimes I could not." (S2, 12.07 2024)

Truancy can be considerably influenced by a student's distance from school, especially in areas where pupils have a long commute to school. This new information supports the findings of Gershenson & Hayes (2018), who claimed that extended commutes can cause weariness, which can lower a student's incentive to attend lessons. Early mornings and lengthy commutes can lead to chronic absence, especially among learners. Students who live far from school to regularly get to school in places with poor public transportation. If students have access to costly, risky, or unreliable transportation, they may omit lessons.

Student 4 said that.

"I used to fight friends, so I was suspended from school. This meant staying away from school for a long time" (S4, 13.07.2024).

Students who are suspended can feel alienated from their classmates, which would make them even less welcome at school. Rumberger & Losen (2016) claim that suspensions commonly cause students to miss crucial class periods, which has a detrimental effect on their academic achievement. Instead of overcoming the difficulties of catching up, students who are struggling may choose to give up completely. The difficulties in the classroom after a suspension can lead to a pattern of missing school. A pattern of recurrent suspensions for comparable misbehavior causes some learners to become even more estranged from the educational process and raises the likelihood of long-term absenteeism. Peterson & Skiba (1999). Suspensions can be a source of worry and anxiety, particularly for students who are already dealing with psychological problems. Students may choose to completely ignore school out of fear of receiving more disciplinary penalties or failing their classes. Suspensions stigmatize students and lower their self-esteem.

Due to their attempts to avoid the school setting, students who are stigmatized may experience sentiments of hopelessness or inadequacy, which in turn may contribute to truancy (Mallett, 2016). The likelihood of truancy increases as a result of suspensions, especially if they are not handled with the proper support and interventions.

Student 5 said that

"I used to miss school because my teacher used to punish me a lot. He made me hate school" (S5, 13.07.2024)

Punishment, when used as a disciplinary tool in schools, can sometimes lead to unintended negative consequences such as truancy. Punitive measures can create a climate of fear and anxiety among students. When students associate school with negative experiences like punishment, they may begin to avoid it altogether by skipping school. This avoidance is a defense mechanism to escape environments where they feel threatened or humiliated. According to Arum (2003), excessive or harsh disciplinary actions can alienate students, leading to disengagement and increased absenteeism. When students feel unfairly treated or overly punished, they may lose trust in their teachers and the school system. Raffaele Mendez (2003) explains that negative interactions between students and teachers can contribute to truancy.

Punitive actions often label students as "troublemakers. Once labeled, students might feel marginalized and disconnected from the school community, prompting them to skip school. Punished students may seek out peers who share similar experiences with punishment, forming groups that are disengaged from school. These

peer groups can reinforce negative attitudes towards school and encourage behaviors such as truancy. Peer groups significantly influence students' decisions to attend or skip school, especially when these groups are formed around shared negative experiences like punishment. Repeated punishment can cause one to lose interest in school-related activities, particularly if students feel they are being punished rather than supported in their learning. As their engagement decreases, so does their attendance.

Suffice to mention that punishment in schools, if not handled with care, can create a cycle where students feel disconnected, fearful, and stigmatized. A more supportive and understanding approach to discipline might mitigate these effects.

Student 11_said that,

“I have been missing lessons through and through because of not wanting school. I don’t think I can even pass” (S11, 14.07.2024).

This opinion is consistent with that of Alexander et al. (1997), who similarly claim that higher rates of student absences cause academic underachievement. The arguments made by Maynard et al. (2013) that low academic achievers are unable to handle the negative self-esteem that results from their poor performance or that they should retake classes.

Academic Achievement

Truancy is strongly associated with lower grades and decreased academic performance. Students who fall, miss important instruction, and struggle to catch up with their peers (Gase, 2016).

Truancy often leads to lower academic performance due to missed instructional time. Lowered grades and a decreased chance of pursuing higher education are just two long-term detrimental educational effects that might result from truancy (Balfanz & Byrnes, 2012). Frequent absences from school can lead to delinquent behavior, such as drug misuse or illicit behavior, which can further hamper a student's ability to advance academically (Vaughn et al., 2013).

Merits of Truancy

Although truancy is typically seen unfavorably, there are some nuanced viewpoints that could indicate advantages in some situations. Truancy might offer students a chance to explore learning outside of the traditional classroom setting, which could foster independent learning skills (Lam, & Law, 2007). In cases of extreme stress or burnout, a brief period away from school might offer a recover and return to their studies with renewed focus (Kearney, & Graczyk, 2014).

Demerits of Truancy

Regular truancy can lead to lower academic performance due to missed instruction and learning opportunities (Gottfried, 2017). Truancy can lead to decreased engagement and a reduction in academic motivation (Siahaan & Latupeirissa, 2018). Truancy can set a precedent for future absenteeism, which can perpetuate a cycle of disengagement and poor academic outcomes (Bowers, 2010).

Truancy, frequently leads to more serious social and behavioral issues (Henry, 2010). Short-term advantages like self-directed learning or a chance to relax could come from truancy. Studies show that absences often result in missed instruction time, which leads to gaps in learning and reduced academic success (Ehrlich, Nizalova, & Overman, 2015). Regular school attendance helps students prepare for and perform better on these assessments (Havnes, & Mogstad, 2015). It also negatively affects students' grades. Missing lessons means missing out on assignments, exams, and important instruction, leading to lower grades. overall (Fletcher, & Godfrey, 2016).

Truancy and Long-Term Academic Outcomes

Since truancy has a significant connection with worse academic achievement, it can have substantial long-term effects. Regular absentee students typically have worse grades, poorer test scores, and higher dropout rates (Gottfried, 2009).

Student 8 said that.

“I was missing school because of my condition. I often fell sick, and my friends were laughing at me. I became uncomfortable and started missing classes” (S8.13.07.2024).

Frequent absenteeism affects future educational and career opportunities (Losen & Skiba, 2010). They argue that absenteeism can be an early indicator of students' potential academic and behavioral issues.

Student 9 said that,

“I used to feel isolated from others because of illness. My friends used to discriminate against me hence missing lessons” (S9, 14.07.2024)

Factors such as family problems, mental health issues, and the school environment can all contribute to absenteeism (Henry & Huizinga, 2007). It is adequate to say that truancy is influenced by family issues, school issues, and personal struggles. Reducing absenteeism requires addressing these underlying issues (Gove & Tangen, 2008).

Curbing Truancy

Addressing truancy requires a multifaceted approach that considers these various factors. Addressing truancy involves prevention, intervention, and creating a supportive school environment. Interventions might include improving parental involvement, enhancing the school environment, providing mental health support, and creating engaging and relevant curricula. Implement systems to identify and address truancy early (Lehr, Sinclair, & Christenson, 2004). By implementing these strategies, schools can create a more supportive environment that addresses truancy and improves overall academic performance. Identifying at-risk students early and providing support through counseling, mentoring, and academic assistance.

Teacher 1 emphasized that,

“I make sure that all my learners are pre occupied with work at school and home. Whoever misses school I call their parents” (T 1, 14.07.2024).

The assertion agrees with Epstein & Sheldon, (2002) who observed that engaging families and communities can address truancy. Involving parents in their children's education, addressing family-related issues, implementing programs that engage students and make learning relevant to their life, and maintaining clear attendance standards and positive school environments can reduced truancy.

Effective interventions targeting truancy can lead to improved academic outcomes. Programs focusing on truancy, such as family dynamics and school engagement, can help improve students' academic performance (Bowers, 2010). Truancy can exacerbate educational inequalities, particularly for students from disadvantaged backgrounds who may already face significant academic challenges (Gottfried, 2014).

Numerous detrimental repercussions of truancy exist for long-term educational and socioeconomic outcomes in addition to short-term academic performance. Addressing the underlying causes and implementing effective interventions can help mitigate these effects and support students in achieving better academic and life outcomes. Increasing family involvement, strengthening school engagement, and offering support services to at-risk students are all effective ways to reduce absenteeism (Balfanz & Byrnes, 2012). According to Kearney and Bensaheb (2006), effective tactics include enhancing family involvement in the educational process, providing counseling services, and raising school engagement levels.

Kearney & Bensaheb (2014) review various interventions for managing school refusal behaviors, which include truancy. They emphasize the importance of addressing underlying issues and creating supportive environments to improve both attendances.

Effective policy measures can prevent truancy include establishing clear attendance policies, providing support services and fostering positive school environments (Gottfried, 2014). Gottfried (2014) affirmed that improving attendance can lead to better academic outcomes and recommends various strategies for schools and policymakers to support students' regular attendance.

By implementing targeted interventions and supportive policies, educators and policymakers can work on academic outcomes for students.

Teacher 2 said that,

"I frequently advise parents to make sure their children don't miss school. Students who don't consistently show up for class do poorly in this school. The smartest students in the class are mostly attentive learners. Regular attendees might benefit from the teacher's advice because teachers have more time to address individual academic issues" (T2, 14.07.2024).

The aforementioned perspective agrees with Thatcher et al. (2007)'s assertion that frequent attendance at school serves as a stand-in for learner motivation. Learners who "always" attend classes outperform those who "seldom" or "never" attend. Similarly, regular attendance at school correlates with higher academic grades, according to research by Sekiwu et al. (2020). Students who attend class do better academically because they have more time for meaningful engagement with teachers about academic subjects.

Black et al. (2014), noted that long-term absenteeism is the only thing impeding student success and a sign of other problems like socioeconomic hardship, health difficulties, or social and cultural marginalization.

Student 11 said that,

"There was less supervision at my school. My teachers were not noticing my being at school" (S11, 15.07.2024)

This assertion coincides with Marburger (2001), which showed that variations in student performance can be primarily linked to prolonged absences from school brought on by insufficient teacher supervision. This result is in line with earlier studies by McCluskey et al. (2004), which shows that low attendance can seriously harm students' academic growth; Attendance Works (2014), which reiterates the link between chronic absence and school dropout and shows that dropout rates are positively correlated with slow academic progress and repeat classes in high school; and Alexander et al. (1997), who similarly note that higher dropout rates are likely to result in academic retardation and make graduation more challenging.

Frequent absences from school have scholastic difficulties and long-term educational setbacks for students. Understanding and reducing the numerous psychological, social, and environmental elements that lead to absence is necessary.

CONCLUSION

Academic achievement is significantly impacted by truancy. Students who frequently miss school tend to have lower grades, diminished educational attainment compared to their peers with regular attendance. Frequent absences disrupt students' learning processes, resulting in missed instructional time, gaps in knowledge, and a decreased understanding of the curriculum, which negatively impacts their academic performance. Not only do these problems impact attendance, but they also lower academic achievement.

Addressing truancy effectively requires a multifaceted approach. Recognizing truancy patterns early can help intervene before the issue becomes more severe. Providing students with support such as counseling,

mentoring, and academic help can control truancy. A proactive and supportive approach is essential for improving both attendance and academic success (Miller & Hodge, 2015).

RECOMMEDATIONS

Curbing truancy in schools is a multifaceted challenge that involves strategies across various domains, including policy implementation, community involvement, and individual student support.

1. Teachers should implement systems to identify at-risk students early and provide targeted support.
2. Teachers should create a conducive school climate by fostering an environment that supports students' emotional and social well-being.
3. Engaging students by developing curricula and activities that are engaging and relevant to students' interests and future goals.

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