UNIVERSITY FOR DEVELOPMENT STUDIES, TAMALE

TRAINING TEACHERS AND PARENTS ON HOW TO MINIMIZE TRUANCY

CHALLENGES AMONG BASIC SCHOOL PUPILS OF SAVELUGU WEST CIRCUIT

OF THE GHANA EDUCATION SERVICE

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TRAINING TEACHERS AND PARENTS ON HOW TO MINIMIZE TRUANCY CHALLENGES AMONG BASIC SCHOOL PUPILS OF SAVELUGU WEST CIRCUIT OF THE GHANA EDUCATION SERVICE

BY

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APRIL, 2018

DECLARATION

Candidate's Declaration

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own original work and that no part of it has been presented for another degree in this University or elsewhere.

Candidate's Signature:…………………………   Date: …………………………….

Name: Alidu Alhassan

Supervisor's Declaration

I hereby declare that the preparation and presentation of the dissertation was supervised in accordance with the guidelines on supervision of dissertation laid down by the University for Development Studies (UDS)

Supervisor's Signature:……………………………… Date: ……………………………

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ABSTRACT

The researcher after critically observing basic school pupils' attitude towards school attendance in a considerable period of time noticed that some pupils skip class without permission in the West Circuit of Savelugu Nanton Municipality. This necessitated further inquiry about the causes, effects and possible ways to remedy the situation**.** The design employed to carry out the research was action research. The sample that represented the population of six hundred and thirty two (632) was made up of ninety (90) pupils/truants selected through stratified random sampling, fifteen (15) teachers sampled through purposive sampling and forty five (45) parents of truants sampled through stratified random sampling. The instruments used to collect data were observation and questionnaire afterwards, the data was analyzed using tables and charts. The findings that emerged from the study revealed some factors that cause truancy. These factors are irresponsibility of some parents pushed some pupils to cater for themselves. Some parents had no time for their wards hence had little interest to check on their attendance and punctuality, some of the teachers resorted to punishment rather than counseling to curb truancy challenges hence pupils escaped from class to avoid being punished. Some of the truants were lured by friends to go in for menial jobs like plucking and selling shea nuts, and dawadawa fruits to mention but a few. Appropriate implementation and various intervention strategies were employed to minimize the challenges. The study recommended among others that teachers should improve the monitoring and supervision of pupils' attendance. Parents must take up the responsibility of providing for their wards school needs and follow up to monitor their progress in school. Students should be sensitized on the need to be punctual.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated in memory of my late father (Alidu) and also my mother, Alidu Fatimata, to my wife, Iddrisu Tawakaltu and finally my daughters, Alidu A. Taqiyya and Alidu A. Shaakira.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0 Overview

In this chapter, the researcher presented and discussed the background of the study, problem statement, diagnosis, evidence of the study, causes, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, research questions, significance of the study, scope of the study and finally the researcher goes on to highlight the organization of the study.

1.1 Background to the Study

In Ghana, one can go to some offices and be told that, the officer responsible for a specific duty has gone out without the knowledge of his or her colleagues or superior. This has become a serious social canker, which if not checked would drawback the nation's development agenda. This unfortunate behaviour has spread through every sector of the society including the institutions of learning. Stemming from the school situation, some children usually leave the classroom when the school is in session without the knowledge of the classroom teachers or the school authorities. This practice is referred to as truancy and the person who indulges in it is referred to as a truant (Reid, 1999).

Truancy, or habitual act of being absent from school without permission is a major issue affecting the overall success of the schools (Reid, 1999). Truancy may be identified differently between different groups of people; however, consecutive unexcused absences from school is the most common and acceptable definition (Reid, 1999). According to Harnett (2007) absenting

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from school without permission is truancy whilst chronic truancy is not that there is no excuse provided but rather the excuse is not a valid one.

Baker and Nugent (2001) reported that hundreds of thousands of American students are absent from school without permission each day and this issue is ranked among the top ten problems facing schools across the country (Desocio, VanCura, Nelson, Hewitt, Kitzman& Cole, 2007). This therefore, contributes significantly towards the undermining of the American educational system. Truancy prevention is an area of great concern for educators, as well as parents. Students who are chronic truants dropout or engage in high risk behaviours that consequently entangle them in juvenile crimes (Baker and Nugent, 2001). The effect of this practice on the academic performance of the pupils cannot be over-emphasized.

Despite Ghana's recent achievements in primary school enrolment, distance to school, family irresponsibility, and poverty among many factors continues to impact strongly on attendance, educational attainment and in particular, on girls' educational prospects with continuing implications for truancy and drop-out (Evans & Holt, 2014).

It is therefore necessary for policies to be enacted and strategies to be adopted to minimize truancy in Ghanaian schools especially in Savelugu/Nanton Municipality so as to help raise the academic performance and standards of education high in the country.

1.2 Perceived Problem

The researcher observed that some pupils of Savelugu West Circuit always go to school late whilst others do not stay up to the closing time. It was noticed that pupils dodge from school to sell Shea nuts and also to engage in petty trading especially during Savelugu market days.

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This was observed to have a negative repercussion on the academic performance of pupils, hence prompted the willingness to conduct a research on this issue.

1.3 Problem Diagnosis

This research work was undertaken by the researcher to find out the possible causes of truancy of pupils of Savelugu West Circuit of the Ghana Education Service in Savelugu Nanton Municipality, the effect it had on the teaching and learning process in the school and also to suggest possible solutions.

Furthermore, there was the need to train teachers on the strategies to employ to ensure truants were regular and punctual to school and also educate parents on the importance of education so that they would have more interest in the attendance of their wards to school among other things. It also sought to advice parents to reduce responsibilities assigned to their wards so that they could come to school early.

1.4 Evidence of the Problem

The following evidence revealed the problem understudy.

i. The attendance register revealed that, the truants skip lessons from time to time and absent from school at least twice a week without permission.

i. It was observed that during terminal examinations most truants score below average.

iii. It was also observed that most of the pupils who were truants dressed shabbily to school and were also unkempt. As a result, they were normally teased by their colleagues and that affected their performance.

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iv.　　An interaction with the truants revealed that most of them found it difficult to express themselves in the English language and so found it very difficult to speak.

1.5 Causes of the Problem

Through the use of research instruments such as observation and questionnaire, the researcher found out that the causes of truancy was multi-faceted. It normally stems from the lack of knowledge of child psychology by care takers that have made the problem daisy.

More so, some of the pupils were influenced by peers who made petty amounts of money when they trade Shea nuts and involved menial jobs as such luring them into truancy.

Some parents gave pupils a lot of work at home. Some refused to take up their responsibilities whilst other care not about the welfare of their wards that made some pupils truants. There was a kind of moral laxity on the part of parents and the community to the need to help in curbing truancy.

By carefully observing instructions in class, it was clear that some teachers did not make the class lovely enough to attract or encourage truants to stay long in the class. Some teachers punished truants and did not resort to counseling so pupils were not motivated to stop the habit of being truants.

1.6 Problem Statement

The researcher upon observation of pupils in Savelugu West Circuit of the Ghana Education Service in Savelugu Nanton Municipality after a considerable length of time found out that, most pupils frequently stayed away from class for no tangible reasons.

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This was evidenced after the use of the daily marks of the class register for several days and weeks. The practice was usually most pronounced on market days which take place every six (6) days. Many of the pupils who came to school on market days run away from class during school hours. The suspicion was that, they want to go to the market and do menial jobs in order to get money.

Undoubtedly, this has dire consequences for the community in particular and the municipality in general hence the need for the research on the topic "Training teachers and parents on how to minimize truancy challenges among basic school pupils of Savelugu West Circuit of the Ghana Education."

1.7 Objectives of the Study

The following are the purposes of the study:

1.   To find out the causes of truancy among pupils of Savelugu west circuit of Savelugu Nanton Municipality

2.   To assess the effects of truancy on the academic performance of the pupils in the Circuit.

3.   To train the teachers and parents on how they could intervene to minimize the problem of truancy of pupils.

1.8. Research Questions

1.   What are the causes of truancy among pupils of Savelugu west circuit of Savelugu Nanton Municipality?

2.   What are the effects of truancy on the academic performance of pupils?

3.   What strategies could be used to train teachers and parents on how they could intervene to minimize the problem of truancy among pupils?

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1.9 Significance of the Study

The significance of this study is to create the awareness of students, teachers, parents and the general public on the negative impact of truancy in our society.

Teachers and parents trained would be able to assist pupils with such behaviours of truancy to develop appropriate attitudes rather than skipping classes which are commendable and appreciable to the school and the society at large.

The study will also serve as a reference document for government and other educational agencies to realize the effects of truancy on education and for that matter, come out with appropriate policies to control it.

Future researchers researching into the same topic would find the study helpful as it may serve as a guide for their research work and eventually will contribute to the development of knowledge.

Moreover, the researcher would develop some strategies to be adopted by teachers to take care of truants to improve upon their academic performance.

In a nutshell, stakeholders in education including Non-Government Organisations, curriculum planners and all agencies who invest into education will find this research work significant as it highlights the major strategies to minimize truancy that eventually leads to dropout, teenage pregnancy, absenteeism, drug abuse/addiction and many more social vices.

1.10 Scope of the Study

The researcher would have liked to extend the study to cover other circuits in the municipality since the problem is not peculiar in only one circuit but due to inadequate time limit

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expected of this type of research, the research work was restricted to only the pupils of Savelugu west circuit of Savelugu Nanton Municipality. Furthermore, the problems that hinder the academic performance of pupils are numerous but this research limited the scope to truancy on the part of the pupils.

1.11 Organization of the Study

The organization of this project is based mainly on the processes of the research work from the beginning to the end. This project work is made up of five (5) chapters. Chapter one (1) of the research deals with the introduction, the background of the study, perceived problem, diagnosis of the problem, evidence of the study, causes of the problem, statement of the problem, objectives of the study, the research questions, the significance of the study Scope of the Study and organization of the study. Chapter two (2) also deals with review of related literature; which has to do with what earlier researchers wrote about the above mentioned topic and the theoretical frame work. Chapter three (3) deals with methodology which describes the research methods used. Chapter (4) discusses the pre and post intervention results or finding of the data collected. Finally chapter five (5) deals with the summary, conclusion and recommendations.

1.12 Conclusion

Chapter one discussed the preliminaries of the research work and examined the major parts of the chapter briefly emphasizing on the important aspects. Existing theories relating to the problem investigated were reviewed in the background. How the problem came about was discussed in the statement of the problem. The objective and research questions guided and gave directions to the study and the significance of the study among others highlighted the benefits to be achieved from the study.

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CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 Introduction

This chapter seeks to review literature as it relates to the selected topic. The literature will be reviewed in the following sub headings; Conceptual Analysis, Aspects of the Problem under Investigation and Theoretical Framework.

2.1 Conceptual Analysis

A significant number of pupils of the entire student population of England, Wales, Scotland and Ulster miss class without authority and one in five students are identified as committing truancy in Scotland each day (Grant, 2007), thereby increasing the issue globally.

Raid (2006) explicitly identifies attendance as the single most critical variable in measuring student's achievement levels; therefore, it is imperative that corrective action and measures be taken against chronic absenteeism or truancy immediately. To eliminate or at least decrease truant behaviour, possible causes for the behaviour must be identified. The possible short term and long-term effects of unexcused school nonattendance are also of value in ascertaining the immediacy and importance of the issue. Next, possible solutions towards decreasing, preventing and or eliminating the behaviour altogether should be acknowledged. After considering several solutions, a conclusion will be presented in regards to which solution could help minimize the challenge or which remedy would be most beneficial to initiate.

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2.2. Aspect of the Problem under Investigation

2.2.1 Truancy and Absenteeism

Most schools in Ghana identify excusable reasons for absences such as illness, injury, medical appointments, death in the family and religious holidays. In most cases, the school requires a note from the parent that explains the reason for the child's absence.

According to Harnett (2007), unexcused absences fall into three main categories: failure to submit a note or documentation of the reason for an absence, submitting a note for an absence that does not constitute an excusable reason for an absence, and presence on school environs but failure to attend assigned class. According to Harnett (2007), "It is important to note that the primary issue of chronic truancy is not that there is not excuse provided but rather the excuse is not a valid one" (p. 39).

Parrish (2015) suggested that, different schools identifies excused and unexcused absences differently and accept a range of reasons for absences, the basics for classifying truancy as excused or unexcused has come under debate. It has been argued that the outcomes for students, schools and communities are same irrespective of the reasons for students missing school or if the absences were known by the parent (National Center for School Engagement, 2007). Although excused absences have an effect on learning, it has been suggested that unexcused absences have a greater negative effect on learning than excused absences. Unexcused absences have been linked to lower grades than excused absences (Finlay, 2006), as well as lower standardized test scores (Gottfried, 2009). According to Gottfried (2010), the effect of absence type on standardized achievement scores remains evident even when controlling for previous achievement. This is important because prior achievement is a significant indicator of a

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child's current GPA or standardized test performance (Gottfried, 2010). Similar findings were found in a recent study conducted by the Georgia Department of Education (2011). In this study, the relationship between types of absences excused or unexcused and school achievement was examined. This study found that unexcused absences resulted in a decrease in students' performance and achievements. These findings are further supported by a report from NCES (2009) that revealed that students with three or more excused or unexcused absences were less likely to score at above basic on the National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) than students with no absences. According to NCES (2009), this finding was upheld even when controlling for the variable or race or ethnicity.

According to Eaton, Brener and Kann (2008), students with a high number of unexcused absences have been shown to have lower motivation levels resulting in greater risk for school disengagement are more likely to engage in risk behaviours than those with no absences.

2.2.2 Reasons for Truancy

In a research work by Parrish (2015), students play truancy for a variety of reasons of which some are considered excusable and some are not. According to Balfanz and Byrnes (2012), reasons for nonattendance or truancy can be divided into three main categories. That is, students who cannot attend school due to illness, family responsibilities, housing instability, the need to work, or involvement with juvenile justice system; students who will not attend school to avoid bullying, unsafe conditions, harassment and embarrassment; and students who do not attend school because they or their parents do not see the value in being there, they have something else they would rather do or nothing to stop them from skipping school. Sheppard (2010) found that the majority of student truancy occurs with the knowledge of the parents.

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Older students, specifically, those in middle and high school are sometimes permitted to stay home and supervise younger siblings when they are sick and the parents cannot stay home from work (Sparks, 2011). Sheppard (2010) found that some parents allow their children to stay home simply to have a day off and without permission. According to Sheppard (2010), the degree to which a student is unexcused absent can be suggestive of the parent's attitude towards the child's school and toward the value of education in general. Henry (2007) found that the attitude a student's parents have about truancy plays a crucial role in determining whether a truant's behaviour will continue. When unexcused absences are tolerated by parents, it sends a message to the child about whether receiving an education is a valued part of the family (Sheldon, 2007).

Students who are frequently truant from school miss out on learning opportunities that often place them at risk for academic failure, disengagement from school, truancy and eventually dropping out (Finlay, 2006; Gottfried, 2009). Eaton et al. (2008) found that students who were frequently absent, regardless of whether they had parent permission or not to miss school, were more likely to engage in risk behaviours than students with no absences. Henry (2007) found that 10% of 8th grade students reported they had skipped school in the previous 4- week period. Students who were reported to reside in single parent households, those with failing grades, those that did not believe that they would graduate and those who maintained employment outside of school were most likely to have skipped school.

According to MacGillivary and Erickson (2006), both the interview data and the focus group data from the study support that when students skip school they are at increased risk for engaging in 'risky behaviours.' Chronic truants reported "hanging out, cruising in cars and getting into trouble" while skipping school (MacGillivary & Erickson, 2006, p. 30). According to Railsback (2004) and Henry (2007), incidences of truancy increase during the middle school

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years. As a result of this finding, it has been suggested that early interventions is needed if schools are to be successful in combating truancy.

2.2.3 Causes of Truancy

Although the research on truancy is still being researched (Heilbrunn, 2007), it is clear that there is no single risk factor that leads to truancy but a variety of individuals, school, family and community factors (Baker, Sigmon, & Nugent, 2001; Hammond, Linton, Smink, & Drew, 2007; Heilbrunn, 2007). But to Zhang, Katsiyannis, Barrett and Wilson (2007), the causes for truancy can be positioned within four major categories. Parrish (2015) suggested the following categories which include family, school, economic and student influences.

2.2.3.1 Family Influence

The family factors that may cause truant behaviour include, but are not limited to parents' education, parental supervision and household income. In a recent study on eighth and tenth grade student absenteeism, Henry (2007) correlates family factors with truant behaviour. Henry's study illustrates that the lower the father's education, the more likely the child is to commit truancy. The chance the child would commit truancy was even higher if the mother was a high school dropout. Additionally, Henry's work proves that the longer a child is unsupervised after school, the more likely that child is to become a truant. Zhang, et al (2007) linked truancy to household income. That is, students are more likely to exhibit truancy if they live in families that are poor.

Family factors are those characteristics that occur within the home environment. Factors in the family domain, including poverty, inconsistent discipline and ineffective parenting skills,

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low family social support and high family mobility, parental emotional disorders, child abuse or neglect, single parent homes, large family size, transportation problems, family conflict and domestic violence have been identified as having a major impact on truancy (Epstein & Sheldon, 2002; McCluskey, Bynum, & Patchin, 2004; Teasley, 2004). Truant youth also been exposed to a variety of negative influences and behaviours in their homes. Often a time, truant students have a history of family conflict, domestic violence, child abuse and neglect, victimization, exposure to parental and family substances abuse (drug/alcohol abuse) and criminal behaviour (Baker et al., 2001; Bell et al., 1994; Dukes & Stein, 2001; NCSE, 2006; U.S. Department of Education [USDOE], 2006). In addition, Baker et al. (2001) cite problematic family dynamics and parental marital discord as triggers for school refusal behaviour by student.

Internal family behaviour problems and strife affect truancy rates, oftentimes family are unable to meet the basic needs of their children, which also may be a contributing factor to their children's truancy. Parental supervision and discipline are leading risk factors for truancy. Families where parents do not insist children attend school, or notice absenteeism often have truant children. When parents do not properly supervise their children or emphasize the importance of school attendance, students are more likely to become truant (USDOE, 2007). In addition, in a study by Corville-Smith et al. (1998) absentees perceived parent discipline as inconsistent and ineffective. This lack of parental discipline allows students to miss school with little to no consequences (except for those imposed by the school upon their return).

Additionally, Teasley (2004) found that family dynamics play a major role in absenteeism and truancy. Home dynamics such as crowded living conditions, frequent relocation and weak parent/child relationship have a negative impact on attendance. These home dynamics are more commonly found in lower SES families. O'Keefe's (1994) research on self-reported

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truancy indicates free school meal eligibility has a significant but small effect on measurable truancy. However, the correlation is weak. In contrast the correlation between free meals and absence levels was found to be much stronger, accounting for 42% of school level variance. According to Teasley (2004), truant students are more likely to come from single parent homes rather than two parent homes. Teasley (2004) also found that two likely to keep track of what is going on because the responsibility is shared and not reliant upon on parent. According to Teasley (2004), overprotective or over permissive parenting styles contribute to truancy and dropout as do families that are uninterested or unsupportive of education (Epstein & Sheldon, 2002). Parental support and/or lack of parent support for education is a significant risk factor for truancy (Baker et al., 2001). Parents/guardians who do not value education or do not reinforce educational goals are more likely to have a truant child (Bell et al., 1994; NCSE, 2006)

Parenting styles that foster communication between children and parents and strong parent-child relationships are closely associated with good attendance (Bell et al., 1994; Kleine, 1994; McNeal 1999). Rohrman (1993) found that permissive parenting styles allow children more autonomy in decision making and resulted in higher absenteeism. Weak parent-child relationships as well as low parent-school involvement also increase truancy risks. Parents' knowledge, attitudes and beliefs about attending schools can also have an impact on truancy. For example, immigrant parents may not be aware of or understand that attendance in schools is compulsory (DeKalb, 1999; Epstein & Sheldon, 2002). Some parents believe being absent from school for family-related reasons is accepted. Therefore, they may not insist that the child attend school. Researchers have also pointed out that family practices tend to have more impact on student attendance that does family reasons such as caring for siblings which are acceptable reasons for students to miss school (DeKalb, 1999). Such students may have to miss school in

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order to care for an ill family member or work to provide the family with an additional income source. According to Kleine (1994), children from families living in poverty, single – parent households or families with above average number of children are more likely to be truant than their peers. Other family-level risk factors include low levels of family involvement with school and low parental and sibling educational attainment (Hammond et al., 2007). The amount of time a parent spends actively involved in his/her child's education can be an important predictor of truancy. Parents who are involved in their child's education, whether through monitoring homework, performance, or participation in the parent teacher association are less likely to have a truant child (Epstein & Sheldon, 2002).

Another compounding risk factor is that higher socioeconomic parents are usually more involved with teachers and schools, often times truant children, who are more likely to come from an impoverished background have parents who are unable to be as involved due to work or other responsibilities (Bell et al., 1994; Kleine, 1994). Barth (1985) found that lack of resources, transportation and family social support can impact parents and thus prevent them from sending their child to school. In some cases, students are absent from school due to family health, children or financial concerns (Baker et al., 2001; Bell et al., 1994; NCSE, 2006; USDOE, 2007). Students may have to miss school in order to care for an ill family member, to care for a younger sibling, or work to provide the family with an additional income source. Children from families living in poverty, single-parent households, or families with above average number of children are more likely to be truant than their peers (Kleine, 1994).

Family interventions for chronic truancy, in general, have focused on either changing dysfunctional family patterns or encouraging more parental involvement in their child's education (Bell et al., 1994). Family therapy that enables children and their families to resume

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healthy growth and development has proved to be effective. Equally important and effective is involving parents in the education of their chronically truant children. In fact, families are now being recognized as an important influence on student attendance and an important resource for decreasing chronic truancy (Epstein & Sheldon, 2002). Parental contact by the school serves to improve attendance (Bell et al., 1994), including home visits in more several cases (Baker & Jansen, 2000). According to Epstein and Sheldon (2002), providing families with a school contact person with whom to discuss their children's attendance or other school-related issues has proven to be consistently effective practice. When patterns of chronic truancy persist with little or no parental response, court referrals or other sanctions may be effective in pressuring the parents to ensure the child's regular attendance and to impress on the child the concern the school has for each individual student (Barrington & Hendricks, 2001).

2.2.3.2 School Influence

School factors that may cause truant behaviour include but not limited to school climate, class size, attitude, ability to meet each student's diverse needs and the school's discipline policy regarding truancy. According to Wikins (2008), students that attend large schools may feel isolated or alienated in their school setting, so to escape these feelings they choose not to attend. These students do not feel comfortable, wanted, valued, accepted or secure; they are lacking a connection to a trustworthy somebody within the school. In oversized classrooms, students' diverse needs, whether they are instructional, social, or others, cannot consistently be met and student-teacher relationships cannot be developed. This leads to a school climate and attitude in which each individual must fend for themselves. Henry (2007) solicits that 23% of truants choose to skip school because they do not feel safe in their school environment. Tobin (2009)

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suggests that imposing more serious punishments has worsened truant behaviour, thus proving punishment to be counterproductive in the fight against chronic absenteeism.

Parents and students cite school-related factors as the main contributing factor for truancy (Reid, 2005). School factors such as school structure, school composition and school climate have a significant impact on a student's engagement or disengagement from school. The level of school connectedness of a student is a critical predictor/risk factor for truancy. In addition to truancy, low levels of school connectedness are also risk factors for school crime and school misconduct (Jenkins, 1995). The more connected a student is to school the less likely they are to become truant or engage in other school – related delinquent activities. One important aspect of school connectedness is relationships between students and teachers. In general, absentees have been found to have less satisfaction in their relations with school personnel, have less satisfaction with school and often dislike teachers (Corville – Smith et al., 1998; Malcolm, Wilson, Davidson, &Kirk, 2003). Poor relationships between teachers and students put students at risk for school truancy (Baker, et al., 2001; Dougherty, 1999). Other teacher – related risk factors for truancy include unsupportive teachers, differences in teaching and learning styles and lack of control by teachers in the classroom (Ehrenberg, Rees & Ehrenberg, 1991). Issues with the curriculum and/or content of lessons may also contribute to truancy rates. Many truant students report being bored in class due to unchallenging class and homework assignments and the content and delivery of the curriculum (Malcolm et al., 2003). Kim and Streeter (2006) found that students are more likely to skip school if they perceive it as boring, chaotic, or not intellectually challenging.

A school's overall climate can also put children at risk for truancy. A study conducted by Driscoll, Halcoussis, and Svorny (2003) compared district size, school size, and class size with

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test scores and attendance rates. They found district size had a negative effect on a student performance as measured by standardized test scores and a negative effect on attendance rate for elementary and middle school students (Driscoll et al., 2003). The Education Commission of the States (2011) found as school size decreases, student performance as measured by attendance rates, test scores and graduation rates increases. A study by the legislative Research Commission found that small schools foster higher attendance rate and when students move from larger to smaller secondary schools, attendance improved (Hager, 2006). Research surrounding school size has led to the conclusion that a school get bigger, student achievement declines and larger schools have higher rates of absenteeism, dropouts and discipline problems.

School composition or the general makeup of the school is another important factor that impacts a student's attendance (Eamon, 2005). Urban schools have consistently higher reports of absentee rates than other suburban or rural schools. Chronic truancy rates are estimated at approximately 8% for urban schools with daily absent rates of upward of 20% (Epstein & Sheldon, 2002). In addition schools that have an unwelcoming and unsafe environment due to bullying, gang-related violence or other violence also face higher truancy rates (Malcolm et al., (2003; NCSE, 2006).

School policies and programmes influence the climate of the school. Sheldom (2007) found several characteristics of schools where attendance was a problem. The characteristics included poor leadership, low drive for improvement, inexperienced persons in positions of responsibility, high staff turnover, low levels of expectations among staff and students and inappropriate policies. Principals often use out of school suspension as a disciplinary measure for truant students. Research indicates that this practice often leads to student disengagement and eventually school dropout (Kronick & Hargis, 1998). As reported in the VDOE Annual Report

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and Discipline, Crime and Violence, for the 2007 – 2008 school year, 16,372 Virginia students were suspended due to truancy. This number represented 12% of all short-term suspensions. Push – out policies such as suspension for truancy and automatics "Fs" for truant students are intended to curb attendance issues; however, policies such as these often lead to increased truancy rate (NCSE, 2006)

2.2.3.3 Economic Influence

Economic influences that may cause truant behaviour include, but not limited to living situation and student employment. Henry (2007) discerned that the likelihood that a student would commit truancy when the student lives with only one parent and increases if the child lives with neither his mother nor father. Moreover, Henry explains that students, who work a lot, greatly increase their chance of committing truancy.

2.2.3.4 Individual Influence

Individual factors focus on the attributes of the students such as their values, attitudes and behaviours and how these attributes contribute to their decision not to attend school.

Student variables that may cause truant behaviour include, but not limited to physical and mental health problems, substance abuse, drug use, perception of self and detachment from school. DeSocio, et al (2007) identifies physical and mental health issues as contributing towards school absenteeism. They suggest that truancy coexist with student and family mental health disorders and may be an indicator for an existing or emerging mental health disorder, including post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, depression and/or substance abuse. Supporting evidence from Henry's study (2007) implicates students that use alcohol, smoke and involve in drugs

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likely to skipping school. Even more defining, DeSocio et al (2007) indicate, that as many as 30% of youth who are absent on a given school day are representative of school disengagement, or detachment. According to Henry (2007), students that exhibit school disengagement, lack commitment to the school, are poor achievers and hold low aspirations for their futures.

2.2.3.5 Community Influence

Community factors often play a significant role in truant behaviour. Communities high in poverty, community safety issues and lack of overall community support often have higher rates of school truancy (Baker et al., 2001; USDOE, 2007).

Community safety issues affect truancy rate due to the fact that in some communities children fear violence that can occur near home or between home and school therefore choosing to stay at home for safety (NCSE, 2006). Another community issue that affects truancy rates involves the availability of drugs/alcohol within the community. If drugs and alcohol are readily available within a student's community, the student will have an increased risk of use which is a risk factor in truancy. Finally, impoverished communities often do not have the access to support system and resources that higher socioeconomic setting have. This means that these communities cannot provide extracurricular activities for students to engage in which is a protective factor for truancy.

Chronic truant behaviour is extremely costly to communities and society as a whole. Chronic truancy which often leads to school dropout has a direct financial impact on communities through lost income taxes due to unemployment and lower salaries, higher social service expenditures, criminal justice costs and the loss of federal and state education funding (Baker et al., 2001; Heilbrunn, 2007). According to a 1993 USDOE bulletin (cited in Baker et

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al., 2001), individuals who drop out of school have fewer job prospects, have lower salaries when working and are unemployed longer and more frequently than those who have high school diplomas. In 1999, 6% of high school graduates were considered in poverty while 14% of those in poverty had not completed high school (U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2001). The societal consequences associated with individuals who do not complete school weakens communities (e.g., lower family and individual incomes, loss of national income and tax revenue, higher unemployment as well as increased demand for social services, reduced political participation and higher health care costs). According to Baker et al. (2001), the financial impact of truancy can be measured in concrete ways: communities have a less educated work force, higher rates of unemployment, crime and incarceration.

2.2.4 Effects of Truancy

Henry (2007) indicates that truancy's consequences are extensive, resulting in negative implications for multiple levels of society. In the short-term, truancy can predict maladjustment, poor academic performance, school dropout, substance abuse, delinquency and teen-age pregnancy. In the long-term, evidence reveals that truancy is a predicator of poor adult outcomes including violence, marital instability, job instability, adult criminality and incarceration. Moreover, truancy exerts a negative effect on community because of its correlation with delinquency, crime and other negative adult outcomes.

Student dropout from school is the most obvious result of chronic absenteeism. According to Rodriguez and Conchas (2009), truancy and dropout rates are concentrated and worsening in racially segregated central cities in primarily large high schools attended by mostly low-income youth of color. Dropout rates in these areas are at twice the national average, nearly

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20% and exceed 50 – 60% in some areas of the United States. In these areas, more students are dropping out than graduating.

The most logical response: an increase in crime rates and the nation's incarcerated population. The most consistent finding regarding truancy and dropout rates is the correlation the behaviour has to high rates of delinquency (Mueller and Giacomazzi, 2006). These forms of delinquency include substance abuse, gang activity and later involvement in adult criminal activity such as burglary, auto theft and vandalism, thus leading to incarceration. For example, 94% of Rhode Island's juvenile offenders are or have been considered truant from school (Byer and Khun, 2007) On any given day, one in 10 males dropouts, or one in four black male dropouts are incarcerated or institutionalized in the United States (Dillon, 2009)

According to Spelman (2009), the United States houses a greater proportion of its citizens than any other country in the world and the direct costs of incarceration exceed $20,000 per prisoner per year, thus costing the U.S. public billions in tax dollars. The United States Department of Education reported that from 2005 – 2006 the average spending per pupil in elementary and secondary was $ 9,391. Therefore, it becomes apparent that the United States values murderers, rapists and burglars (some of which are high school dropouts) over its impressionable youthful learner population. Perhaps American education and American's prison system should move from a reactive to a more preventative paradigm when it comes to keeping students in school.

Middleton (2009) suggested that if truants of South Carolina's high school graduated with their given classes, their contribution to the economy would be roughly $ 8 billion dollars over their lifetime, thus supporting the view that educating children is far more beneficial than

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incarcerating their eventual haphazard adult product. Even more problematic, our nation's dropouts cost the nation approximately $260 billion in lost earnings and forgone taxes each year (Byer and Khun, 2007).

Another correlation that can be made between truancy, dropping out and then incarceration is the alarming rates of illiteracy within America's prison system. Byer and Khun (2007) states that 75% of America's population can be considered illiterate. What if educators were able to reach and educate those truant students, who later dropped out of school and committed various crimes?

2.2.5 Minimizing Truant Behaviour

According to a research by Rivers (2010) there are a considerable number of strategies and interventions that have been employed to combat truancy. Zhang (2007) recommends instructional, behavioural and community based interventions and has advocated for a programme titled Check and Connect, while Henry (2007) supports the family and instructional intervention approaches. DeSocio (2007) initiated a mentoring intervention programme whereas Reid (2006) investigated a five- tiered intervention approach titled School Based Scheme (SBS) piloted in the United Kingdom (UK). Each of the aforementioned strategies and interventions have exhibited at least minimal success within the schools they were initiated. What if the successful components of the previous strategies and interventions were selected and combined with one another to be used as a single force to combat chronic illegal absenteeism? Would this be possible? Could individual parts be dissected and then put back together like a puzzle to create the ultimate truancy combatant? Rivers, (2010) enumerated the following intervention measures that could help minimize truancy drastically.

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2.2.5. 1 School – Based Intervention

"Direct instruction" or an instructional approach that places an emphasis on the drill and practice technique throughout scripted, rehearsed and fast-paced lessons is a key phrase used in instructional intervention. This is especially useful in reading and math classes where students can receive immediate feedback. Furthermore, teacher praise and reinforcement has empirical support for increasing on-task behaviour and decreasing inappropriate behaviours (Zhang, 2007). Through instructional intervention, habitually absent students are encouraged to attend school through praise. However, the instructional intervention approach will not be enough to eliminate. Nevertheless, the strategy elicits empirical support for increasing on task behaviour, therefore, direct instruction could be one component used in the fight against truancy.

2.2.5. 2 Behaviour Support

Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) and Functional Behaviour Assessment (FBA) are two examples of behaviour based interventions. Positive Behaviour Support incorporates several empirically proven practices into a continuum of supports for students with challenging behaviour and these supports can either be universal and school wide or more intensively focused on the individual (Zhang, 2007). Functional Behaviour Assessment is an example of a more individual based intervention and is a process in which information is gathered about the functions of the student's behaviour. This can be used to maximize the effectiveness and efficiency of the student's behavioural support(s) and self-management. This process generally involves self-monitoring, self-evaluation and positive reinforcement. Moreover, this process is intended to teach students to take responsibility for their social behaviour and academic performance. The PBS and FBA also provide a paper trail needed to prove that steps have been

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taken in an attempt to improve student behaviour and more specifically in this case, student attendance.

2.2.5.3 Community – Based Intervention

Abolish Chronic Truancy Now (ACT Now) and Truancy Reduction Demonstration Programme (TRDP) are two popular community – based interventions. These programmes build on the strengths and resources in local communities to target truancy and offer incentives to students and their families for attending school. These community- based interventions include mentoring, intensive family interventions, case management or diversion programmes, welfare restrictions as an economic sanctions and expanding police authority (Zhang, 2007). Zhang states that attendance improves when students are given awards, communication with families is strong, parents are assigned a contact person at school and after school programmes are made available to students. However, it becomes obvious that if the entire community is not involved (e.g parents, educators, law enforcement, juvenile and family court judges, social service, etc), the programme will not be successful in preventing, decreasing or eliminating truancy. Still, it is of value to provide the community with an opportunity to become invested in its youth and the school's fight against truancy.

Check and Connect is a dropout prevention and intervention model that was developed to encourage middle school students that were at risk for dropping out of school to remain engaged in school and on track to graduate (Zhang, 2007). In this model, an assigned individual monitors student levels of engagement on a daily basis using multiple risk factors such as tardiness, skipping classes, absenteeism, behaviour referrals, detentions, suspensions, grades and accrued credits. This assigned individual is responsible for ensuring that a student is actually connected

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with the school and is indeed participating in the learning environment. This is the Check aspect of the programme. In the Connect portion of the programme, the assigned individual uses the indicators mentioned above to connect 'the at risk' student to either basis or more intense interventions. The basic interventions include sharing general information about the monitoring system with the student, providing regular feedback to the student about his progress in school, regularly discussing staying in school and its associated benefits and problem solving strategies that can be used to examine the potential risk factors that the student may be exhibiting. An example of a more intensive based intervention would be that of the FBA, which was discussed earlier. This programme would be excellent for chronically absent students because it allows for the fostering of an adult-student relationship based on human interactions and connections. It allows for the student to make a commitment not only to himself but also to a fellow being.

2.2.5.4 Family and Community Intervention

According to Henry's (2007) study, many backgrounds of family-related variables are associated with truancy. Therefore, family interventions would be appropriate to consider. Numerous researchers have found that parent training helps reduce aggressive, antisocial and delinquent behaviour among children (Dumas, 1989).

2.2.5.5 Mentoring Intervention

DeSocio (2007) started a mentoring programme that was designed to improve upon school attendance and grades. Her hypothesis was that many students who exhibit poor attendance feel hopeless and alienated; therefore, would benefit from having a personal mentor. Her findings were that the advocacy and encouragement of adult mentors helped to forge connections that encouraged engagement in school and counteracted the students' social

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anxieties and feelings of hopelessness. Again, this programme allows for the human-to-human connection to be forged, and instills a feeling of acceptance and accountability in both the student and the mentor.

Lastly, Reid (2006) examined England's use of a programme titled School Based Scheme, or SBS. School Based Scheme is a long-term strategic approach used to overcome major attendance difficulties. School Based Scheme places all students into one of five distinct stages. In stage one, the student attends school and all of his classes at least 92% of the time; therefore, minimal or no support is needed. In stage two, the student is attending 85 – 92 % of school and his classes, and at this point the student and his legal guardian(s) are sent an initial warning letter. In stage three, the student is attending school and classes 75 – 84% of the time and at this point the student and legal guardian(s) are asked to meet an attendance panel. In stage four, the student is attending school and classes 65 – 74% of the time, and the student and his legal guardian(s) are asked to attend a governor's attendance panel. This agenda is similar to that of stage three; however, at this point the school would issue a warning to the legal guardian(s) at the end of the meeting. In stage five, the child's attendance has fallen to 65% or less and the student and his legal guardian(s) attend to Local Education Authorities (LEA) panel, similar to the District's Board of Education in the United States.

2.3 Theoretical Framework

The theories discussed above could be seen relating to the theory of motivation because this is one theory that is associated with this study. Essentially because the study had everything to do with the behaviours of the learners with regards to attending and being punctual to class.

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Lack of motivation and truancy are correlated. Motivation is derived from the word 'motive'. Motive may be seen as the inner state of the mind that activate and directs our behaviour. It makes us move to act internally but externalized the act via our behaviour. Robbins, Kotze & Coulter (2003), motivation is one's willingness to exert efforts towards the accomplishment of a goal. The basic elements included in the process are motives, goals and behaviour. Almost all human behaviour is motivated. It requires no motivation to grow hair, but getting the hair cut does. Similarly, it requires no motivation to send your ward to school but it requires motivation to let the pupils stay in the school to acquire knowledge. Motives are generally directed towards goals. Motives create a state of physiological or psychological imbalance. Attaining goals restores balance. The series of activities undertaken to achieve a goal is behaviour. The activity a truant undertakes to be regular to school is a behaviour. Gyan (2007), in order to motivate a student, teachers must first of all know what are the motivational factors influencing the behaviour of persons.

2.4 Conclusion

The problem of truancy is multifaceted and requires a comprehensive intervention that targets ricks factors at the individual, family, school and community levels (Kearney, 2007). Although descriptive and predictive studies are important to our understanding events and issues preceding student truancy, chronic absenteeism and school dropout, studies that evaluate the effectiveness of truancy interventions are necessary to determine whether these programmes successfully serve their intended populations and meet project goals by improving truant student's psychosocial functioning and related behaviour (Doll & Hess, 2001).

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CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

This chapter presents and discusses the profile of the study area, research design, population of the study, sample and sampling techniques, data collection instruments, data collection procedure, data analysis and presentation and data quality and ethical issues.

3.1 Profile of the Study Area

Savelugu West Circuit is a circuit in Savelugu/Nanton Municipality located in the Northern Region of Ghana. The Circuit is one of the nine circuits in the municipality and endowed with a lot of shea nut trees, dawadawa trees and dams for vegetable farming. The circuit begins from a community called Kanshegu which is about one kilometer (1 km) away from the Tamale International Airport Junction towards the North on the Bolgatanga- Tamale route and ends at the western part of Savelugu Township. The people in the area are mostly Dagombas and a Muslim dominated community. The major occupation of the people in the area is purely farming and trading. The field survey conducted indicated that there are very few educated people in the circuit as compared to uneducated parents and that may suggest their less interest in discouraging their wards from truancy. Since the circuit especially Kanshegu and Nyoglo communities are surrounded with a lot of shea nut, Dawadawa and mango trees, some women around those communities mostly involve in the trade of making and selling of local shea nut butter (oil) whilst the men leverage on the fertile lands to engage in subsistent farming. Due to the poverty level in the study area, some of the parents allow the children to fend for

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themselves by picking and selling shea nuts and other fruits along the Tamale Bolgatanga road especially during instructional hours. Some parents who trade this commodity also involve their children in gathering the shea nut seeds for processing.

The issue of truancy leaves much to be desired, the academic performance of the pupils has been dwindling day in day out. The above and many other encouraged the researcher to look into the problem.

3.2 Research Design

Schinder (2003) describes research design as a mental plan of the research that highlights basic strategies applied to obtain relevant data for the research. This clearly defines how the researcher is going to put the phenomenon to test, measure and observe the aspects of the phenomenon that are of interest with the view of understanding and interpreting the facts.

The design used was action research. Action research deals with specified problem in a particular setting for example in a single classroom situation. In action research, the researcher works collaboratively with other people to solve perceived problems and aimed at improving a problem related situation.

Lehman and Mehrens (1971) point out that Action research is a type of applied or decision oriented research but with stipulations that the researcher is the same person as the practitioner who will make and live with the decision. Action research is therefore applied research conducted by the teachers, supervisors and school administrators themselves for dealing with classroom or school problems and improving classroom/school practices. The procedure

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included conceptualizing the problem, moving through several interventions and evaluations strategies to arrive at conclusions.

The design was chosen because of the following strengths.

It deals with the problems which hinder classroom teaching and learning process and helps teachers to understand what actually goes on in the teaching and learning situations. Secondly, it encourages teachers to be aware of their own practices, be critical of those practices and be prepared to change.

Action research provides teachers with the opportunity of acquiring a better understanding of all aspects of their own practices, be it in relation to subject, content, the curriculum or the methods appropriate to the level of the pupils in particular class. It provides a sort of in-service training to participating field workers e.g. teachers.

Again, action research is participatory and collaborative. It is Participatory in the sense that it involves the teacher in inquiry. It is also collaborative in the sense that it involves other people in the process. This value of action research allows both the teacher and the pupils to learn experientially about the research process by being there and by doing it.

Last but not least, action research generates new knowledge and also enables both teachers and pupils to develop appropriate intervention strategies aimed at finding solution to the problem identified in the field of their study.

Notwithstanding the above discussed strength of action research, it has weaknesses also. Action research is often remedial in that problem(s) identified instead of preventing the problem(s) from happening. Also, problems are posed when the population involved does not co-

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operate to solve the problem. Finally, the allotted time for this design of research is woefully inadequate.

3.3 Population of the Study

Kombo and Tromp (2006) described population as the group of individuals, objects or items from which a sample is taken for measurement. Target population on the other hand, comprises of the population of the study that consists of all possible respondents the researcher is interested in studying. The population comprised the representation of all students of Savelugu West Circuit. The Circuit has about thirteen Junior High School and Primary School. The Circuit is represented by three schools ie one being a Junior High School (JHS) and the others being the upper primary of two (2) schools. The JHS is Kanshegu M/A Junior High School which has a population of One Hundred and forty (140) pupils, Nyoglo Primary School has a population of two hundred and eighty (280) pupils and Kanshegu Primary has a population of two hundred and twelve (212) pupils.

3.4 Sample and Sampling Techniques

A sample is a set of respondents selected from a population for survey purpose. The Merriam Webster dictionary (2017) considers sampling as the act, techniques or process of attaining a representative part of a population for the purpose of getting an outcome or drawing a conclusion about the whole population.

Purposive sampling was used to select four (4) core subject teachers ie Mathematics, English Language, Mathematics and Social Studies and one (1) guidance and counseling teacher from each school making it five (5) teachers each from the three schools chosen. The sample was

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selected because they are convenient and they possess ample knowledge about truancy. In all fifteen (15) teachers were sampled from three schools to represent the population.

The pupils were selected through a stratified random sampling. The first stage of sampling was to get information from inadvertent sources from the school registers for all the forms or classes (form 1, form 2, form 3, P6, P5 and P4). After a list of pupils had been sorted out, considering that it is not the entire population of students who can take part in this study. The researcher identified those who are truants and placed them according to streams. That is boys' stream and girls' stream. From each stream, students will be randomly selected (Simple random sampling) that is, fifteen (15) from boys' stream and fifteen (15) from the girls' steam making it thirty (30) pupils from each school and totally ninety (90) pupils from the three schools.

The parents of truants were also sampled using stratified random sampling. The number of truants' parents was equally the same number as truants sampled and so there was the need to get a sample of 45 of the truants' parents to represent the population. In the first stage, the parents of the truants sampled were written on pieces of paper and at the second stage, simple random sampling was used to sample fifteen (15) parents each to represent a school. In all the three schools, forty five (45) parents of truants were sampled for the study.

3.5 Data Collection Instruments

This portion highlights on the instruments used in collecting data and the procedure used in the data collection in carrying out the research work and how each has been applied and presented.

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3.5.1 Observation

In this method, the researcher observed (ie, by seeing, counting or measuring). The researcher did not depend on others for information and as such, the data was likely to be much reliable. The authenticity of the data depends on the honesty, sincerity and capability of keen observation of enumerators. Among many, the advantages of observation as an instrument are; it is possible to collect genuine information and the scope of bias due to respondents is completely eliminated. Nevertheless, observation is expensive method and it is not appropriate for a large area.

As the first instrument or tool used by the researcher in carrying out the project in the school, the researcher used observation to identify most of the problem pertaining truancy. The researcher tried to interact with pupils in a friendly manner anytime they dodge from school or refuse to return for class after break. The responses given were always taken note of. The researcher chose to use this instrument because if the pupils got to realize that they were understudy, accurate information could not be gotten. They may also give false information for their behaviours.

3.5.2 Questionnaire

Giri and Banerjee (2002) the term questionnaire means a list of certain systematically arranged questions pertaining to the subject of enquiry. It is necessary that a questionnaire is designed with due care so that necessary data may be easily collected. A draft questionnaire is usually formed in the first stage of a survey and tried over a group of people to detect any kind of fault in preparing the questions.

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This instrument is a structured questions meant to elicit responds from respondents regarding a particular issue. This was one of the main instruments used in this our research study. The printed questionnaires were administered on ninety (90) pupils, fifteen (15) to sampled teachers and forty five (45) to the parents of the pupils. In all, one hundred and fifty (150) questionnaires were administered before the intervention process and afterwards, the same questionnaires were re-administered to the same respondents after intervention process. In all, three hundred (300) set of questionnaire was administrated. At the end the two sets of responds from the sampled respondents both before and after were analysed.

3.6 Data Collection Procedure

3.6.1 Pre-Intervention

The researcher observed that some of the pupils do not stay in class for the whole instructional hours. It became a habit to those set of pupils especially during market days. In the process of discussion in class, the researcher asked the few truants questions based on the previous lessons and they could not answer.

The researcher again gave class exercise to test their understanding of the topic taught, then the researcher observed that some books did not contain the previous exercises as well as the day's exercise.

In the process of marking pupils' attendance register, the researcher observed that, some columns recorded a lot of zeros. These same pupils did not have marks recorded in their continuous assessment book. That prompted the researcher to find out who those pupils were. Having identified them, the researcher began findings about their behaviour by interviews. Each gave reasons for their deviant behaviours.

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A questionnaire was administered to that particular group of people to be able to strategize the measures to be employed by the researcher in dealing with this problem.

3.6.2 Intervention Stage

This section explores the measures taken to minimize truancy with the help of the data drawn from respondents ie teachers, pupils (truants) and parents. A wide range of strategies and measures were introduced to address local circumstances in four main facets; the school, parents, truants, other Non-Governmental agencies (NGOs)

3.6.2.1 Staff Training programme to Improve upon School Strategies to Minimize Truancy

The strategies adopted to help minimize truancy are as follows

Improving School ethos and Facility: In collaboration with the staff of the school, the school was made more attractive to pupils. An activity club, drama club, quiz club, and debating club was organized to encourage pupils especially truants and poor attendees come to school clubs to provide pupils with a good start to school day. Aside this, a school based in-service training was organized to improve the quality of teaching and learning by introducing teachers to the use of appropriate teaching and learning materials (TLMs) and improvised materials together with child centered approach in teaching to make teaching lovely. The in-service training was also geared towards helping teachers find ways to making classrooms more conducive to foster good relationships between teachers and pupils. Based on a review of a research, the U.S. Department of Education Institute of Education Sciences (2008) recommends the development of a school climate that provides students with a sense of belonging and personalized encouragement (academic, social, behavioural) with special attention placed on transition years to middle/junior high school and high school.

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Building Good Relationships with parents: The administrative head of the school was encouraged to ensure that forms mistresses/masters visit the family of truants or any pupil in their class who dodge without permission from school to ascertain the reason behind such behaviours. Parents were also encouraged to visit the school time to time to check-up on their wards. Constant and consistent communication with parents regarding truancy is very crucial towards minimizing truancy challenges including communication with families about all full days or partial days missed form school (Epstein & Sheldon, 2002). Parents should also be invited to participate on school and community committees that address the issue of truancy.

Group Competitions: These took the form of punctuality and staying in school up to the closing time. Each class ie (JHS 1-3 and Primary 4 – 6) of the schools sampled with a higher number of attendances and punctuality becomes the winning class. The winning class received awards which might be the status of being recognized at school assemblies, tangible prizes or their choice of class activity.

Group Work: The truants were attached to various groups in class for studies. These group members stay in the same area with the pupils understudy. The researcher normally gave the group homework so that they stay with their group members and each member is supposed to contribute in other to make the work complete. The researcher continued to observe the attendance of the pupils understudy after they associate and move with punctual classmates who were from the same area.

Counseling: The researcher encouraged counseling instead of punishment. Issues of truancy were to be referred to the school counselor to make students develop a clear

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understanding of how attendance impacts on grades and relationships with teachers and peer. The school guidance and counselor was therefore acting as a support team for the research study.

3.6.2.2 Parents Training Programme to Minimize Truancy

Continued contact with the family on regular basis in addition to interventions with the students will promote better behavioural outcomes (Kearney & Bates, 2005).

Spot Checks: Spot checks are particularly effective in combating specific lesson truancy. Parents can undertake spot checks randomly. These are often targeted at known points where pupils 'skive'. Such places often include toilets, unused rooms, bicycle sheds, 'blind spots' within schools (e.g at the front of unused buildings) or bushes. Parents who suspect their ward to be truants can be wise to undertake spots checks.

The issues on how to reduce the burden on the pupils especially the truant girls to enable them report to school early were discussed. To identify the problem above, the researcher together with the school authorities invited the parents of the pupils under study to find out whether the reasons (that is volume of work at home) given by the pupils were the actual causes of their truancy.

Parents were again sensitized on the need for girl child education and education of children at large and its impact in the economic, social and political development of pupils. Parents were encouraged to be one another's keeper and ensure that they join forces in the community by becoming vigilant in discouraging truancy in the community.

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3.6.2.3 NGO (Discovery Learning Alliance) Support

In order to help minimize the problem, the researcher solicited aid from a Non-Governmental Organisation known as Discovery Learning Alliance who supports schools with learning materials to help improve upon teaching and learning.

DLA gave the school two flat screen televisions and two video decks. The teachers strategically combined it with other teaching and learning materials to deliver active student-centered lessons that engaged students and enhanced learning, attendance and punctuality.

3.6.3 Post Intervention

The researcher observed the punctuality of the pupils understudy in the class from time to time, which served as an indicator for measuring the change in their behaviours. After barely three months of implementation of intervention, the researcher ensured frequent inspection, follow-ups and supervision to ascertain the implementation of the strategies and the fully participation of all individuals involved in this research work. It was realized after interventions that, the schools understudy were very conducive and invitational to all truants.

3.7 Data Analysis and Presentation

The pre intervention data and post intervention data collected using a questionnaire was tabulated for each and every question. The tables were in three columns ie Response, Number and Percentage. The 'Response' was the multiple choice answer chosen by respondents, the 'Number' indicated the number of responses to that multiple choice answer and lastly, the 'Percentage' column represented the percentage of the number of responses to a particular responds.

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Some of the salient data tabulated were analysed and presented using Microsoft Office Excel as a statistical tool hence figures like Column chart, bar chart and pie chart were used at times to display the data pictorially and diagrammatically for easy comparison and analysis.

3.8 Data Quality and Ethical Issues

Ethics involves the study of what is considered proper and what is considered improper behaviour with regards to morality and the obligation of individual to be upright. In a social survey such as this, ethics is considered the responsibilities that researchers have or should have towards those who participate in the research. Therefore assuring the participants in a research about your intention to protect their identity is very vital in every research. The researcher considered ethical treatment during the research process to reinforce sanity of the study. The pupils, parents and teachers understudy names were coded with numbers that linked with the data collected hence their names were not used in reporting the findings of this study. Pupils' demographic data were kept confidential and only the researcher had access to and all potentially identifiable data were destroyed after the conclusion of the study. Parents privacy were never invaded regarding the kind of duties they assign to pupils that make them become truants

With all these in place, issues of ethical concerns on privacy and confidentiality were to a large extent covered because all the participants were assured of anonymity of their given information.

Number checking was also used to enhance validity. This was made possible by the researcher asking the participants to cross check on their responses to ensure that information they shared was what was really captured by the researcher.

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3.9 Conclusion

This chapter explained how the research work was conducted. The profile of the study area was clearly linked with some of the reasons why truancy was prevalent in the municipality. Action research was employed together with questionnaire and observation as research instruments to find out the causes, effects and solution to truancy. Ninety (90) pupils, fifteen (15) teachers and forty five (45) truants' parents totaling one hundred and fifty (150) were sampled for the study. After the administration of the questionnaire, the causes came to light, intervention strategies were devised and through training session, the researcher trained both teachers and parents on how the issue could be minimized. After intervention, the same set of questionnaire was administered and it was realized that issue of truancy was minimized.

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CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the analysis and discussion of data collected from the field are presented. The reason for the analysis was to find out the extent to which each of the casual factors of truancy namely; the home, school, peers and the community were all accountable for the incidence of the problem of truancy.

4.1 Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

STUDENTS

Table 1: Age Distribution

Age	Number	Percentage (%)
10	27	30.00
11	23	25.55
12	10	11.11
13	8	8.88
14	9	10.00
15	11	12.22
16	2	2.22
TOTAL	90	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2017

In table 1 above, majority of the pupils understudy fell within the ages of 10 to 12 years since these age groups are mostly found in the upper primary. 27 pupils representing 30% were 10 years, 23 (25.55%) were 11 years, 10 (11.11%) being 12 years, 8 pupils representing 8.88%

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were 13 years, 10% (9) were 14 years, 11(12.22%) were 15 years and finally 2 pupils (2.22%) being 16 years.

Table 2: Gender distributions

Sampled Schools	Male	Female
Kanshegu M/A JHS	15	15
Kanshegu Primary (upper)	15	15
Nyoglo Primary (Upper)	15	15
TOTAL	45	45

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table 2 shows the gender distribution of pupils sampled for the study. The researcher carefully used stratified random sampling technique to select 15 females and 15 males from each sampled school to represent the circuit.

Table 3: Who do you stay with?

RESPONSES	Number	Percentage (%)
Father Only	7	7.78
Mother Only	17	18.89
Both Parents	26	28.89
Guardian	40	44.44
TOTAL	90	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2017

It could be seen in table 3 that pupils were asked whom they stayed with and the responses were collated. 7 (7.79%) pupils said they were staying with their fathers meaning their mothers are not staying with their fathers only. 17 (18.89%) stayed with their mothers only. It could be that the parents are divorced or one of them is dead. 26 (28.89%) where staying with

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both parents (mother and father) and 40 (44.44%) where staying with guardian or foster parents which could be any member of the extended family or family friends.

PARENTS

Table 4: Gender Distribution of Parents

Responses	Number	Percentage (%)
Male	23	51.11
Female	22	48.88
TOTAL	45	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table 4 shows a gender distribution of parents. Parents chosen randomly from the list of truants' parents were gender mixed. 23 (51.11%) were males whilst 22 (48.88%) were females.

Table 5: What are you to pupil(s)?

Responses	Number	Percentage (%)
Mother	13	28.88
Father	9	20.00
Guardian	23	51.11
TOTAL	45	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table 5 is the relationship with truants. 13 (28.88%) are mothers, 9 (20.00%) fathers and 23 (51.11%) are guardians or foster parents of truants.

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Table 6: What is the level of your education?

Responses	Number	Percentage (%)
Illiterate	26	57.77
JSS	9	20.00
Middle school	7	15.55
Secondary/Post-Secondary	3	6.66
Graduate/HND	0	0.00
TOTAL	45	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table 6 shows the level of education of parents. It could be noticed that most of the truants' parents 26(57.77%) are illiterates and that may suggest that they have no interest in encouraging their wards to be punctual or they might be contributory factors to the problem. Those who have little education that is JSS (20%), Middle school (15.55%), Secondary/Post-Secondary (6.66%) also have some of their children being truants. This is an indication that as the education of parents climbs, the chances of their children being truants are slimmer.

Table 7: What is your occupation?

Responses	Number	Percentage (%)
Farming	20	44.44
Driving	2	4.44
Trading	17	37.77
Government Worker	0	0.00
Unemployed	4	8.88
Others	2	4.44
TOTAL	45	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2017

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Table 7 comprised of the occupation some truants' parents engage in. This confirmed that farming (44.44%) is really the dominant occupation in the circuit followed by trading (37.77) and others; driving (4.44), etc.

TEACHERS

Table 8: Gender Distribution of teachers

Responses	Number	Percentage (%)
Male	8	53.33
Female	7	46.66
TOTAL	15	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table 8 shows the gender distribution of teachers. The teachers were purposively selected based on their interest in the subject matter and the type of subjects they teach. Mathematics, Science, English and Social Studies are the four core subjects studied in the Junior High School level and for that matter, those subjected teachers were purposively chosen. It was rather coincidental that the female proportion 46.66% was almost the same as the male proportion 53.33%.

Table 9: Select your professional statuses

Responses	Number	Percentage (%)
Professional Teacher	12	80.00
Non Professional Teacher	3	20.00
TOTAL	15	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2017

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Table 9 is the professional statuses of teachers. Only 3(20.%) were not trained teachers but the rest of the 12 teachers (80%) sampled for the study were professionals. This indicated that the causes of the truancy emanating from this angle may be minimal.

Table 10: Which subjects do you teach?

Responses	Number	Percentage (%)
Mathematics	3	20.00
English Language	3	20.00
Science	3	20.00
Others	6	40.00
TOTAL	15	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table 10 indicates the subjects teachers sampled teach. The researcher selected three core subject teachers from the JHS (Kanshegu JHS), guidance and counseling coordinator and the assistant headmasters of the three schools sampled. 3(20%) mathematics teachers, 3(20%) science teachers, 3 (20%) English language teachers, others (guidance/counseling and assistant heads/) 6 (40%).

4.2.1 Discussion of Pre – Intervention Results

PUPILS

Table 11: Are you regular and punctual to school?

Responses	Number	Percentage (%)
Yes	0	0.00
No	90	100.00
TOTAL	90	100.00

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Source: Field Survey, 2017

Pupils were asked to be objective about their regularity/punctuality which is, coming to school and staying in school/class up to the closing time. Objectively, all the 90 pupils representing 100% sampled said no. It really justified their attitude as attested in the attendance register.

Table 12: Do your parents/guardian provide your needs?

Responses	Number	Percentage (%)
Yes	79	87.77
No	11	12.22
TOTAL	90	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Pupils were asked whether their needs where provided by parents or guardians. 79 (87.77%) responded affirmatively whilst 11 (12.22%) said their needs are not provided. The chart below illustrates pictorially the data.

Figure 1: Do your parents provide your need?
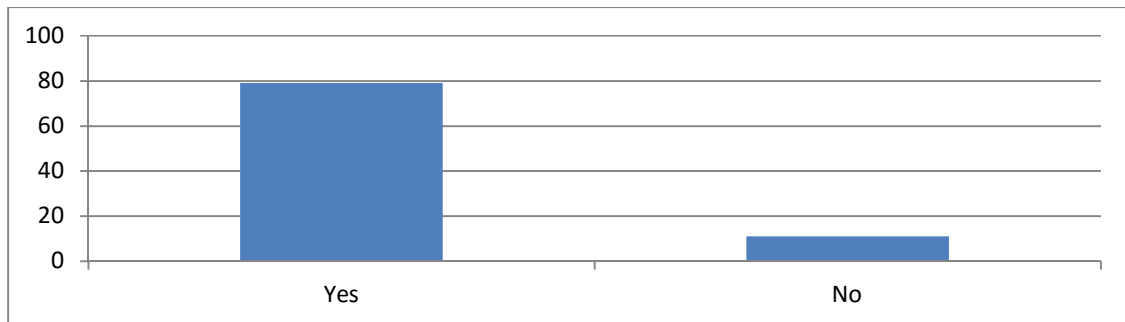
Source: Field Survey, 2017

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Figure 1 is a response to whether parents provide the needs of pupils. 79 responded affirmatively by responding to 'Yes' whilst 11 said their needs are not provided (No).

Table 13: Who provides your needs?

RESPONSES	Number	Percentage (%)
Father Only	23	25.55
Mother Only	30	33.33
Both Parents	13	14.44
Guardian	19	21.11
Self	5	5.55
TOTAL	90	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table 13, indicates those who provide the needs to truants. 23 (25.55%) claimed their fathers provide their needs; school fees, money to come to school and clothing etc. 30 (33.33%) said it is their mothers, 13 (14.44%) said both parents, 19 (21.11%) said their guardian and 5 (5.55%) fend for themselves. The chart below illustrates pictorially the data.

Figure 2: Who Provides Needs of Truants

Source: Field Survey, 2017

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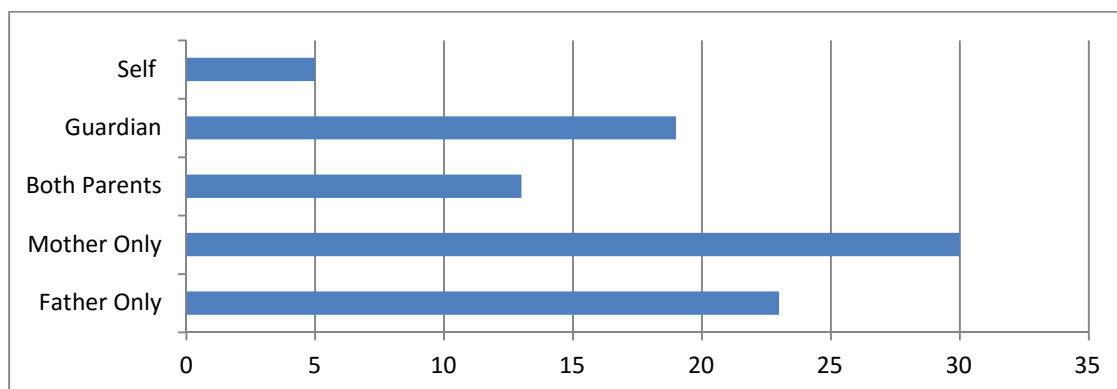
Figure 2 indicates those who provide the needs to truants. 23 said their fathers, 30 said it is their mothers, 13 said both parents, 19 said their guardian and 5 fend for themselves.

Table 14: Will you be punctual if your needs are provided?

Responses	Number	Percentage (%)
Yes	80	88.88
No	10	11.11
TOTAL	90	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Truants were asked whether they will be punctual if their needs are provided. Table 14 suggested that 80 (88.88%) responded to 'yes' but few of the truants 10 (11.11%) responded 'No'. The chart below illustrates pictorially the data.

Figure 3: Will you punctual if your needs are provided?
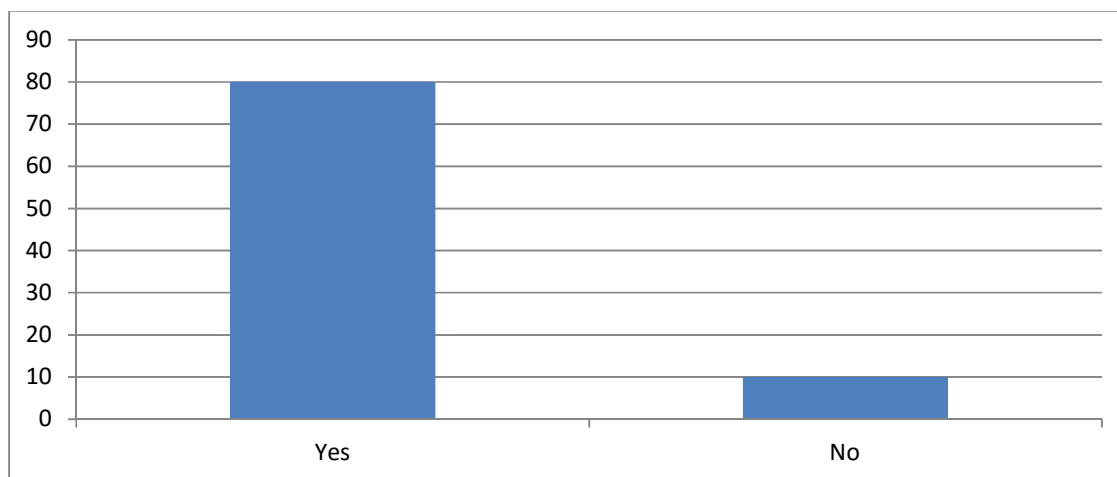
Source: Field Survey, 2017

In Figure 3, Truants were asked whether they will be punctual if their needs are provided. 80 responded to 'yes' but few (10) responded to 'No'.

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Table 15: Do you stay out of school in order to work for your needs?

Responses	Number	Percentage (%)
Yes	5	5.55
No	85	94.44
TOTAL	90	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table 15 indicate that most of those pupils 85(94.44%) who stay out of school or skip classes do not do that to go out and work to cater for their needs. But 5 pupils representing (5.55%) said they dodge from class to work for their needs. The chart below illustrates pictorially the data.

Figure 4: Do you stay out of class to work for your needs?
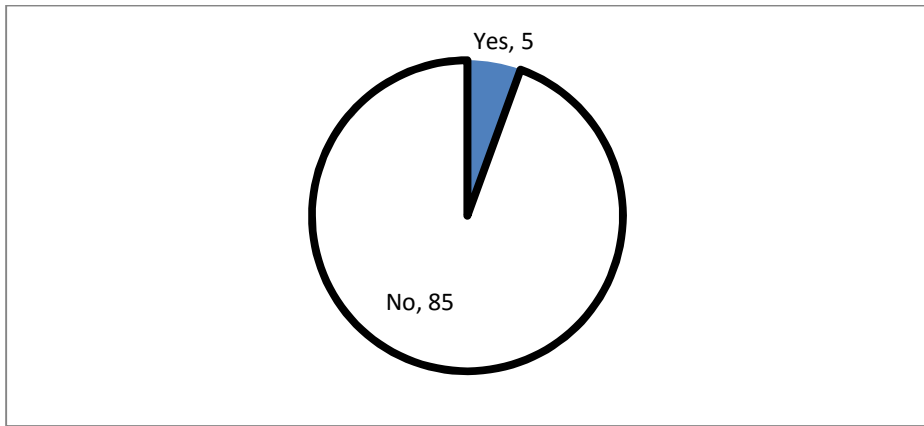
Source: Field Survey, 2017

Figure 4 indicates that 85 truants skip classes not to cater for their needs whilst 5 truants do so to cater for their needs. It should be made clear that, this particular need is the basic human needs like food, clothing, and shelter.

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Table 16 : Do your parents know you play truancy?

Responses	Number	Percentage (%)
Yes	49	54.44
No	41	45.55
TOTAL	90	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Some of the truants' parents are aware that their children play truancy. 49 (54.44%) responded that their parents are aware of their behaviour but 41 (45.55%) said their parents are not aware of the behaviour. The chart below illustrates pictorially the data.

Figure 5: Do your parents/guardians know you play truancy?
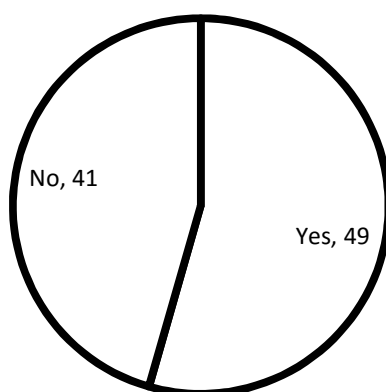
Source: Field Survey, 2017

In figure 5, some of the truants' parents are aware that their children play truancy. 49 said their parents are aware of their behaviour but 41 said their parents are not aware of the behaviour.

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Table 17: Do your parents stop you at times from going to school?

Responses	Number	Percentage (%)
Yes	37	41.11
No	53	58.88
TOTAL	90	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table 17 shows whether parents at times stop pupils from going to school in order to take up certain duty at home. 37 (41.11%) answered yes whilst 53(58.88%) answered No. The chart below illustrates pictorially the data.

Figure 6: Do parents at times stop you honouring some lessons?
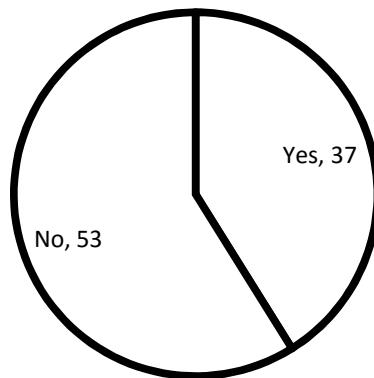
Source: Field Survey, 2017

Figure 6 shows a pie chart of a response to a question whether parents at times stop pupils from going to school in order to take up certain duty at home. 37 answered yes whilst 53 answered 'No'.

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Table 18: Why do you stay out of class?

Responses	Number	Percentage (%)
Go to farm	37	41.11
Go home	13	14.44
Go to trade	28	31.11
Loiter	7	7.77
Others	5	5.55
TOTAL	90	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table 18 revealed some answers to why truants stay out of class. 37 (41.11%) actually said they skip class to go to farm, 13 (14.44%) dodge class to go home and complete some assignment/work meant for them, 28 (31.11%) go to sell and buy or hunt for dawadawa seeds or shea nuts fruits to sell, 7 (7.77%) loiter around market places, uncompleted building or with colleague truants, 5 pupils rather answered others which may mean they don't want to show where they go to or their answer is not part of the possible answers. Below illustrates the data.

Figure 7: Why truants stay out of class
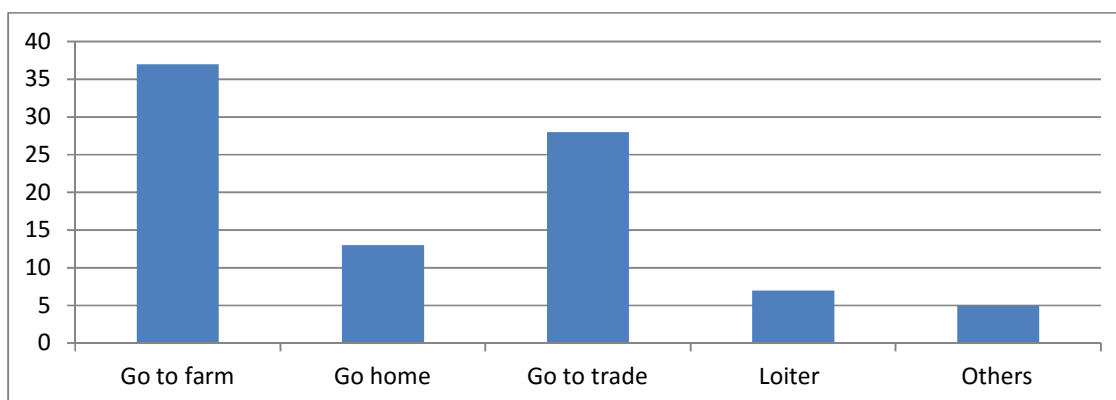
Source: Field Survey, 2017

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Figure 7 is a column chart that revealed some answers to why truants stay out of class. 37 actually said they skip class to go to farm, 13 go home, 28 go to trade, 7 loiter, 5 pupils rather ticked 'others' which may suggest their unwillingness to disclose their hideout.

Table 19: Do you like being in school?

Responses	Number	Percentage (%)
Yes	65	72.22
No	25	27.77
TOTAL	90	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table 19 clearly indicate that most of the truants 65 (72.22%) actually like to be in class/school but certain reasons beyond their capability push them to stay out of class or skip class. 25 (27.77%) responded to 'No" meaning the class is not conducive enough to accommodate them. The chart below illustrates pictorially the data.

Figure 8: Do you like being in class?
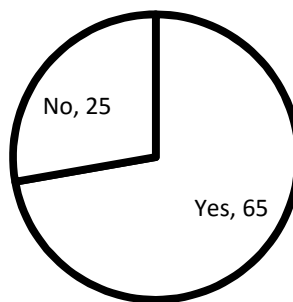
Source: Field Survey, 2017

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Figure 8 is a pie chart that clearly indicates that most of the truants 65 actually like to be in class/school but certain reasons beyond their capability push them to stay out of class or skip class. 25 responded to 'No" meaning the class is not conducive enough to accommodate them.

Table 20: Do you face difficulties in studying certain subjects?

Responses	Number	Percentage (%)
Yes	55	61.11
No	35	38.88
TOTAL	90	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table 20, shows that 55 (61.11%) of the respondents (pupils) have challenges in understanding certain subjects whilst 35 (38.88%) said they were okay with the teaching and learning with all the subjects. The chart below illustrates pictorially the data.

Figure 9: Do you face difficulty in studying some subjects?
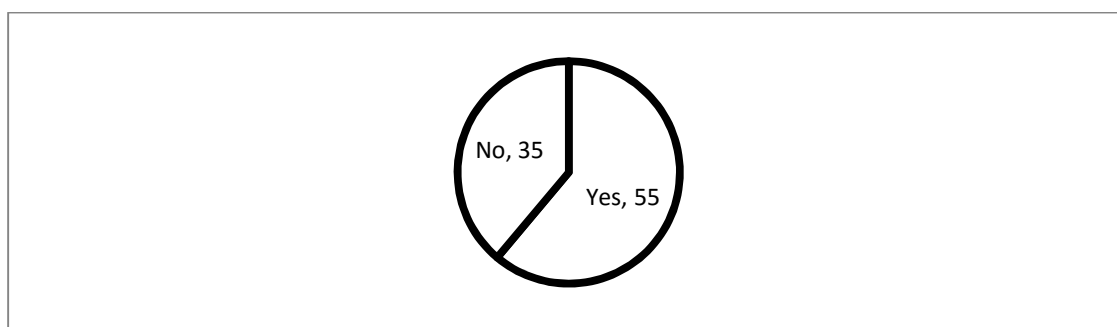
Source: Field Survey, 2017

Figure 9 is a pie chart that shows that 55 of the respondents (pupils) have challenges in understanding certain subjects whilst 35 said they were okay with the teaching and learning processes.

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Table 21: Do you like your teacher(s)?

Responses	Number	Percentage (%)
Yes	70	77.77
No	30	33.33
TOTAL	90	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2017

70 pupils representing 77.77% said they liked their teachers and would wish to continue to be with them. 30 pupils representing 33.33% said they don't like teachers and would wish they are replaced. The chart below illustrates pictorially the data.

Figure 10: Do you like your Teacher(s)?
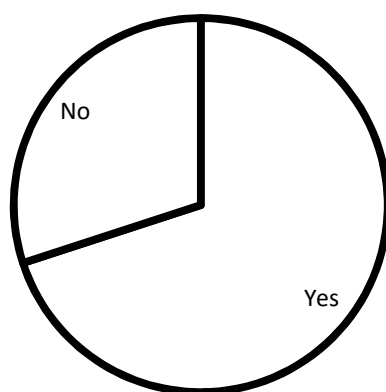
Source: Field Survey, 2017

In figure 10, the pie chart shows that 70 pupils said they liked their teachers and would wish to continue to be with them. 30 pupils said they don't like the teachers and would wish they are replaced.

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Table 22: Which subject do you dislike the most?

Responses	Number	Percentage (%)
Mathematics	36	40.00
English Language	19	21.11
Integrated Science	22	24.44
Others	13	14.44
TOTAL	90	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table 22 shows subjects truants like the most. Mathematics 36 pupils, English Language 19, Integrated Science 22, and others (Social Studies, BDT, ICT, Ghanaian Language etc) 13. The chart below illustrates pictorially the data.

Figure 11: Which subject do you dislike the most?
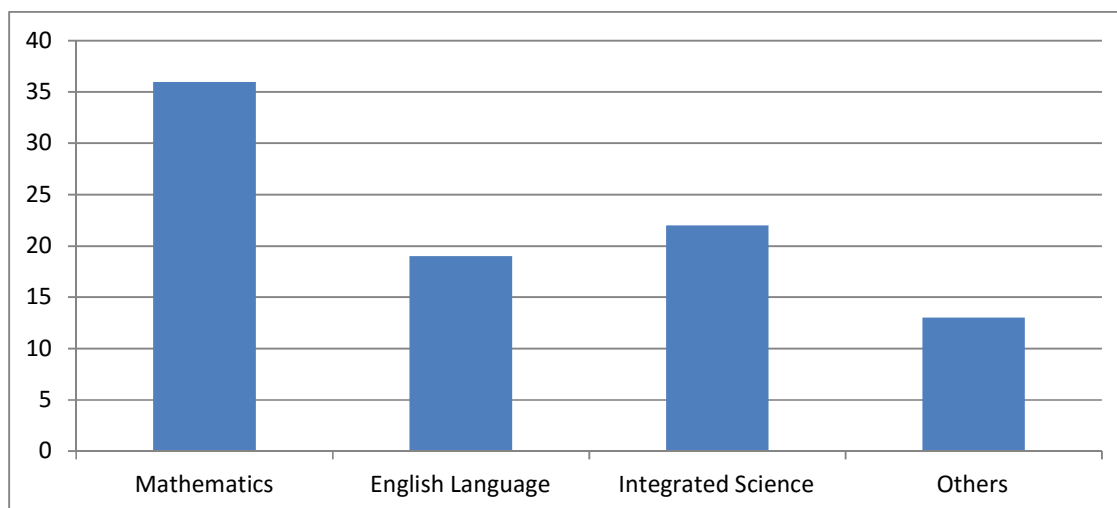
Source: Field Survey, 2017

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Figure 11 is a column chart which shows subjects truants like the most. Mathematics 36 pupils, English Language 19, Integrated Science 22, and others (Social Studies, BDT, ICT, Ghanaian Language etc) 13.

Table 23: Do you always complete and submit your homework in time?

Responses	Number	Percentage (%)
No	77	85.55
Yes	13	14.44
TOTAL	90	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table 23 shows whether truants complete and submit their homework in time. 77 representing 85.55% responded to 'No' whilst 13 respondents representing 14.44% responded to 'Yes'. The chart below illustrates pictorially the data.

Figure 12: Do you complete and submit your home work
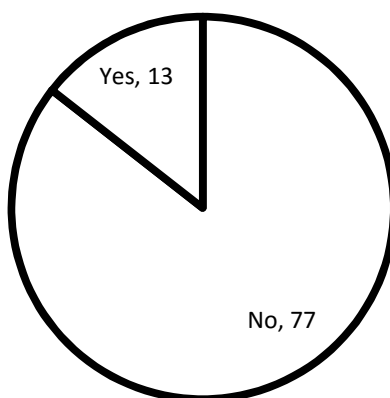
Source: Field Survey, 2017

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Seventy seven (77) representing (307.9º) answered that, they do not complete and submit their home works or assignment whilst thirteen (13) representing (51.9º) said 'yes'. Meaning, they complete and submit their homework or assignments.

Table 24: Do you go to school if you fail to do your homework?

Responses	Number	Percentage (%)
Yes	81	90.00
No	9	10.00
TOTAL	90	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2017

It was not actually the fear of not completing and submitting home work that intensified truancy in the circuit. 81 (90%) went to school irrespective of not completing homework. But only 9 (10%) skip class if they failed to do their homework. Below illustrates the data.

Figure 13: Do you go to school if you fail to submit your homework?
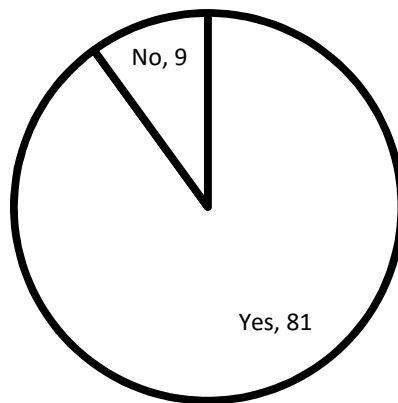
Source: Field Survey, 2017

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Figure 13 is a pie chart of whether truants go to school if they failed to submit their homework. 81 pupils go to school irrespective of not completing homework. But only 9 pupils skip class if they failed to do their homework.

Table 25: How do your teachers address your truancy problem?

Responses	Number	Percentage (%)
Punishment	55	61.11
Counseling	17	18.88
Others	18	20.00
TOTAL	90	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table 25 indicates how teachers handle truancy cases in the school. 55 pupils (61.11%) said they are punished if they skip class. 17 (18.88%) said they were counseled after failure to correct the problem using punishment. 18 (20.00%) said otherwise. Which could mean their answer was not found in the possible answers or they really do not want to comment on such.

Figure 14: Actions taken to minimize truancy challenge
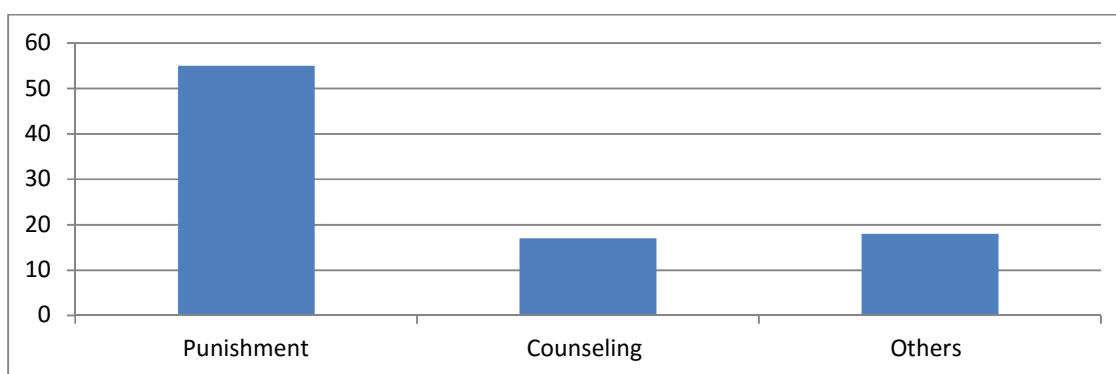
Source: Field Survey, 2017

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Figure 14 is what pupils think their truancy challenge is addressed. 55 pupils said they are punished. 17 said they are counseled. 18 chose 'others' which could mean that their answers were not found in the possible answers provided or they really do not want to comment on it.

Table 26: How is the relationship with your teacher(s)?

Responses	Number	Percentage (%)
Very Satisfied	9	10.00
Satisfied	47	52.22
Fairly satisfied	23	25.55
Unsatisfied	11	12.22
TOTAL	90	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table 26 shows pupil – teacher relationship. 9 (10%) felt very satisfied with pupil-teacher relationship, 47 (52.22%) felt satisfied, 23 (25.55%) felt fairly satisfied and 11 (12.22%) felt unsatisfied with pupil – teacher relationship. The chart below illustrates pictorially the data.

Figure 15: Pupil – Teacher Relationship
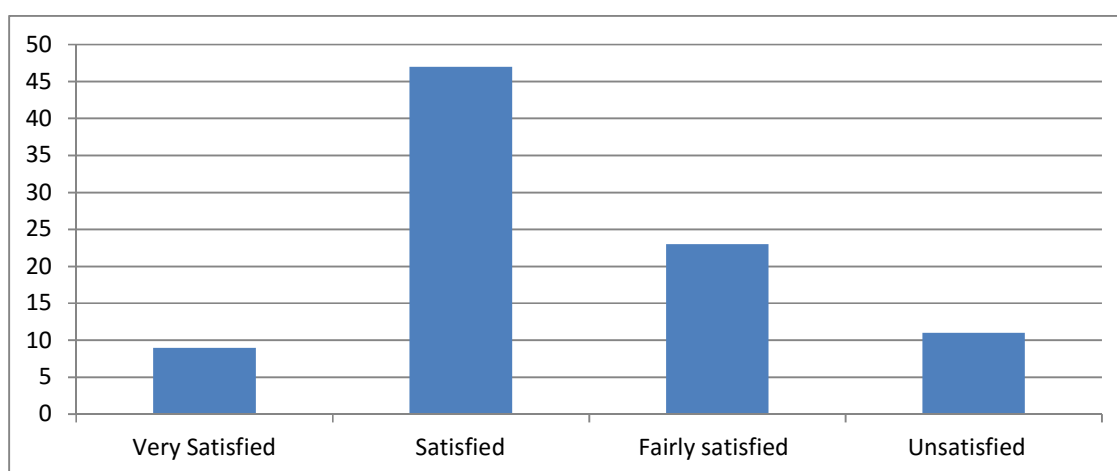
Source: Field Survey, 2017

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Figure 15 shows pupil – teacher relationship. 9 felt very satisfied, 47 felt satisfied, 23 felt fairly satisfied and 11 felt unsatisfied.

Table 27: What do you dislike most about the school?

Responses	Number	Percentage (%)
Teachers' attitude	8	8.88
Teachers' methods	15	16.66
Subjects Difficulties	18	20.00
Punishment	33	36.66
Lack of Play activities	10	11.11
Others	6	6.66
TOTAL	90	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table 27 indicates the dislike of pupils about the school. The responses where; 8, 15, 18, 33, 10, and 6 that matches with teacher's attitude, teachers' methods, subject difficulties, punishment, lack of play activities and others respectively. It was clear that punishment by school authorities was the main issue most truants were pointing at followed by teachers' methods and subject difficulties. The chart below illustrates pictorially the data.

Figure 16: What pupils dislike about their school

Source: Field Survey, 2017

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Figure 16 indicates the dislike of pupils about the school. The responses where; 8, 15, 18, 33, 10, and 6 that matches with teacher's attitude, teachers' methods, subject difficulties, punishment, lack of play activities and others respectively.

Table 28: Do some of your friends play truant?

Responses	Number	Percentage (%)
Yes	40	44.44
No	50	55.55
TOTAL	90	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table 28 shows whether some of the truants' friends are also truants. It is commonly said, show me your friend and I will tell you who you are. 40 (44.44%) of truants said their friends are truants but 50 (55.55%) attested that their friends were not truants. The chart below illustrates pictorially the data.

Figure 17: Do some friends play truancy?
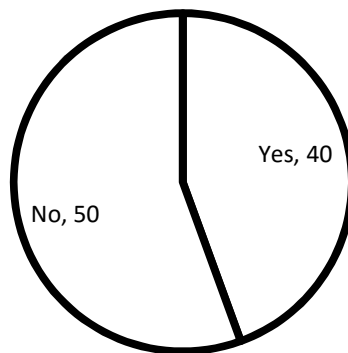
Source: Field Survey, 2017

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Figure 17 shows whether some of the truants' friends are also truants. 50 respondents attested that their friends were not truants whilst 40 pupils agreed with the notion.

Table 29: How tight are you with your friends?

Responses	Number	Percentage (%)
Not Tight	25	27.77
Tight	25	27.77
Very Tight	40	44.44
TOTAL	90	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Truants were asked how close they were to friends. Table 29 clearly indicates that 25 (27.77%) said they were not tight friends, 25 (27.77%) said they were tight friends and 40 truants representing 44.44% said they were very tight friends. The chart below illustrates the data.

Figure 18: How tight is the friendship with colleague truant?
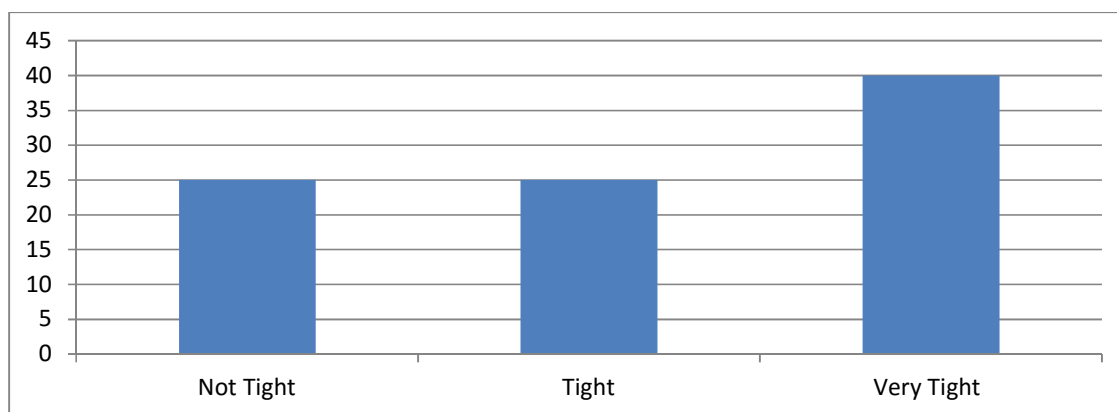
Source: Field Survey, 2017

Figure 18 shows how truants were close to friends who were also truants.

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PARENTS

Table 30: Do you know your ward is a truant?

Responses	Number	Percentage (%)
Yes	30	66.66
No	15	33.33
TOTAL	45	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Parents were asked whether they knew their child is a truant. Surprisingly, 30 pupils (66.66%) said they knew but 15 pupils representing 33.33% said they knew anything like that. The chart below illustrates pictorially the data.

Figure 19: Do you know your child is a truant?
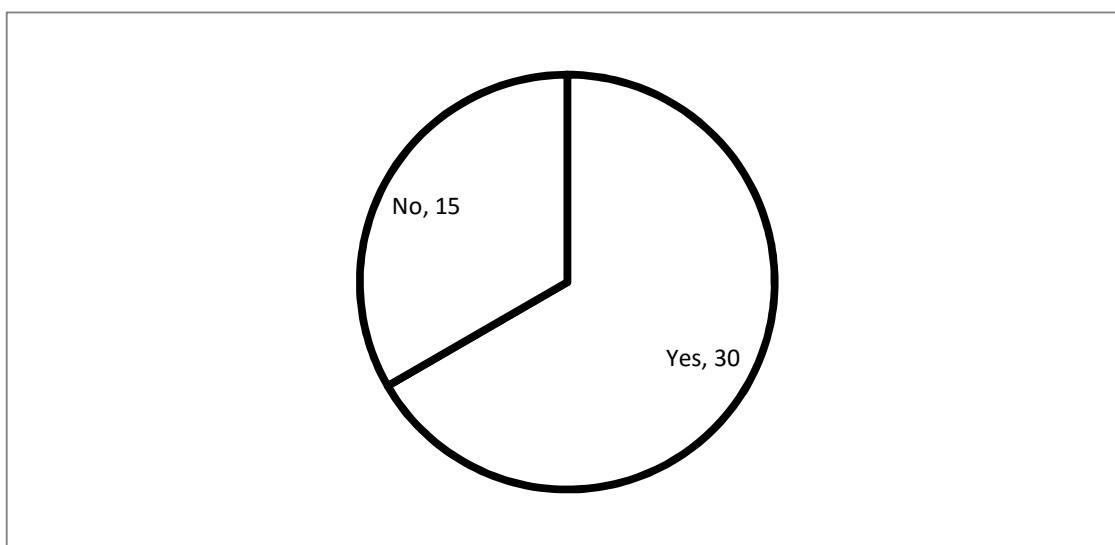
Source: Field Survey, 2017

Figure 19 clears indicates that most parents of truants were aware their wards play truancy.

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Table 31: What action do you take against your truant ward?

Responses	Number	Percentage (%)
Punishment	8	17.77
Report to School	2	4.44
Counseling	10	22.22
Do Nothing	25	55.55
TOTAL	45	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table 31 presents the actions parents took against their truant children. 8 (17.77%) resorted to punishment, only 2 (4.44%) parents reported this to the school authorities, 10 (22.22) counseled their wards but 25 (55.55) actually did nothing about the situation. This is regrettable. The illustration can be seen in the chart below.

Figure 20: Actions parents took against truant child
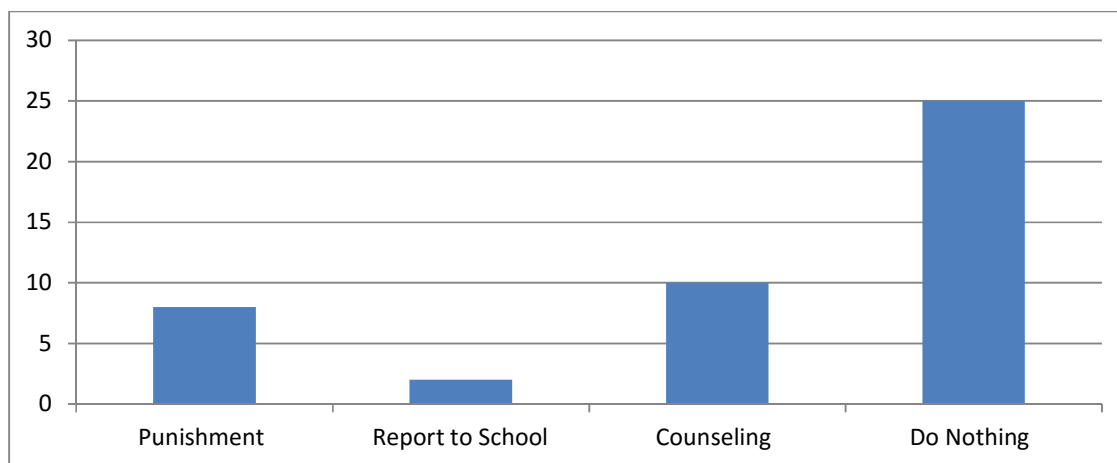
Source: Field Survey, 2017

Figure 20 clearly indicates that most parents actually did nothing about the situation. This was regrettable.

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Table 32: When your ward plays truancy, where do you think he/she might be?

Responses	Number	Percentage (%)
Home	12	26.66
Trading	12	26.66
Farm	10	22.22
Loitering	5	11.11
Others	6	13.33
TOTAL	45	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table 32 shows the response of the where about of truants when they play truancy. Most of the parents 12(26.66%) said truants go for menial trading and the same number of parents 12(26.66%) said they come back home to help them. 10 parents representing 22.22% said they go to farm, 5 (11.11%) believed truants roam aimlessly. 6 (13.33%) parents decided to respond to others which could either mean their answers are not captured in the objective answers or simply they do not want to comment appropriately on the issue. The illustrations is below.

Figure 21: Where truants might be when they play truancy
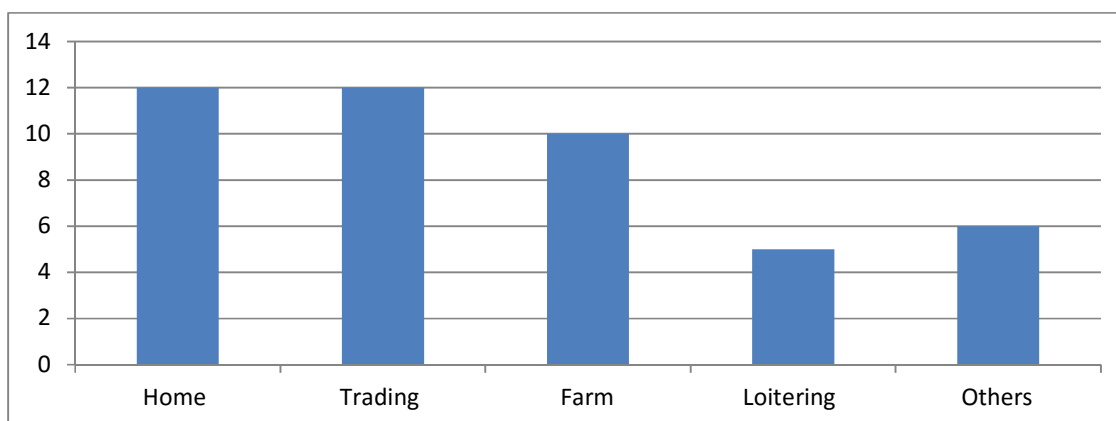
Source: Field Survey, 2017

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Figure 21 shows the response of the where about of truants when they play truancy, some of the pupils skip class to go to farm, some dodge class to go home and complete work, some go to trade whilst others loiter around market places, uncompleted buildings with colleagues truants.

TEACHERS

Table 33: Do you use appropriate TLMs in teaching?

Responses	Number	Percentage (%)
Yes	6	40.00
No	9	60.00
TOTAL	15	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Teachers were asked whether they use appropriate TLMs in teaching.. 6 teachers responded to the affirmative that represented 40% and 9 teachers (60%) responded to No. An oral interview suggested that, teachers were not motivated to use TLMs in teaching due to class size, costly materials among many reasons. The chart below illustrates pictorially the data.

Figure 22: Do you use TLMs in teaching

Source: Field Survey, 2017

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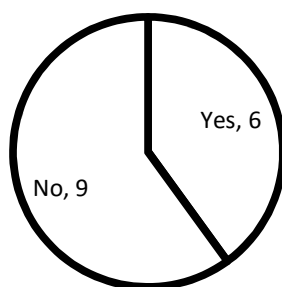
In figure 22, it could be seen that not all the teachers use TLMs in teaching. 9 out of 15 teachers do not use TLMs in teaching but the rest resorted to the use of TLMs in teaching. Table 33 captures the response of the 15 teachers sampled for the study

Table 34: How do you make your class lovingly?

Responses	Number	Percentage (%)
Using rewards	2	13.33
Inspiring	2	13.33
Using appropriate methodology	7	46.66
Others	4	26.00
TOTAL	15	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Teachers chose the above responses to indicate how they make their lessons interesting among many things. Table 36 shows that, 2 teachers (13.33%) use rewards, 2 (13.33%) use inspiration, 7 (46.66%) use appropriate methodology and 4 chose 'Others' (different ways) other than the listed to making class lovingly. The chart below illustrates pictorially the data.

Figure 23: How teachers make their lessons lovely
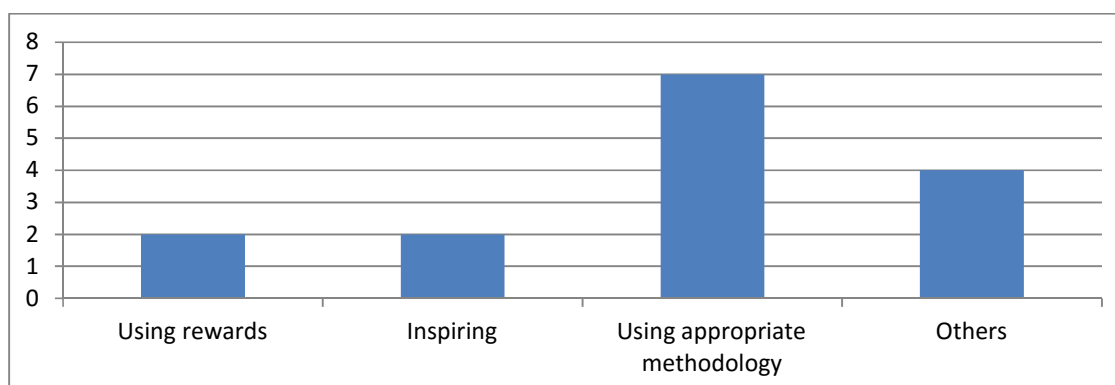
Source: Field Survey, 2017

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Figure 23 shows how teachers chose the above responses to indicate how they make their lessons interesting among many things. Majority used appropriate methodology and the least number of teachers used rewards to make teaching lovely.

Table 35: What actions do you take on truants?

Responses	Number	Percentage (%)
Punishment	5	33.33
Report to Parents	3	20.00
Counseling	5	33.33
Do Nothing	2	13.33
TOTAL	15	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Teachers took the following actions to deal with truants. 5 (33.33%) used punishment as deterrent measure, 3(20%) reported to parents for parents to admonish their wards, 5(33.33%) counseled truants and actually 2 teachers (13.33%) did nothing. The chart illustrates the data.

Figure 24: Actions taken by teachers to minimize truancy

Source: Field Survey, 2017

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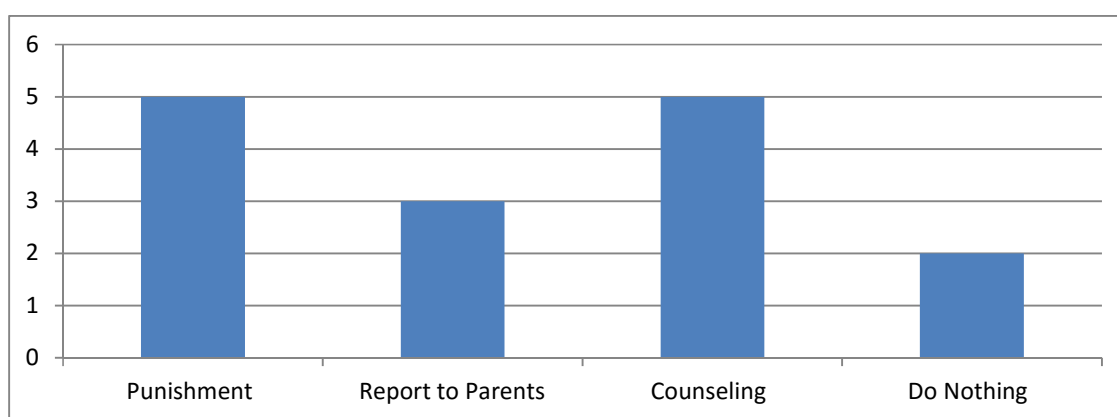
Teachers took the following actions to deal with truants ie punishment as deterrent measure, reporting to parents for parents to admonish their wards, counseling truants and doing nothing.

4.2.2 Discussion of Post Intervention Results

After intervention, the same set of questionnaire was administered to respondents especially truants to ascertain the impact of the intervention to their behaviours. The responses below saw a massive minimization of truancy in the three schools sampled for the study in the Savelugu west circuit of the Ghana Education Service.

Table 36: Do you play truancy?

Response	Number	Percentage (%)
Yes	5	5.55
No	85	94.44
TOTAL	90	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table 36 shows that 5 truants (5.55%) still play truancy and 85 (94.44%) do not play truancy. This is a massive improvement of the pre – intervention results which saw 100% of truants claiming to be truants.

Table 37: Will you be punctual if your needs are provided?

Responses	Number	Percentage (%)
Yes	90	100.00
No	0	0.00
TOTAL	90	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2017

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Truants have now seen the need to be in school and the school is now conducive for them. 100% ie ninety (90) truants said if all their needs are met, they put aside that behaviour. They are now taught with adequate TLMs and parents have started taking up their responsibility which helped to minimize truancy.

Table 38: Do your parents know you play truancy?

Responses	Number	Percentage (%)
Yes	5	100.00
No	0	0.00
TOTAL	5	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Since parents were trained on how to minimize truancy, the number of parents who supported truancy and do less to discourage it dwindled. Table 38 indicates that 5 pupils still believe their parents are aware anytime they skip class. This confirms previously in Table 38 that 5 pupils still have challenges of truancy. It was discovered from an interview that, those truants are nursing mothers who skip class to go and breastfeed their babies. The remaining 85 pupils never attempted this question, since they no more play truancy.

Table 39: Do your parents stop you at time from going to school?

Responses	Number	Percentage (%)
Yes	5	5.55
No	85	94.44
TOTAL	90	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2017

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Table 39 still confirms that same number, 5 (5.55%) are still stopped by parents at times to skip class. 85 pupils representing 94.44% are of the view that, their parents no more interfere in their school attendance. It is an achievement and progress from onset before the intervention process.

Table 40: Do you like being in school?

Responses	Number	Percentage (%)
Yes	89	98.88
No	1	1.11
TOTAL	90	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table 40 shows whether pupils like being in school or class. Almost all the pupils sampled 89 (98.88%) said they now enjoyed the ambiance of the school and one (1.11%) still do not like being in school.

Table 41: Do you face difficulties in certain subjects?

Responses	Number	Percentage (%)
Yes	20	22.22
No	70	77.77
TOTAL	90	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2017

70 pupils (77.77%) of pupils now find perceived difficult subjects now easy this is as a result of the Teaching and Learning materials acquired from Discovery Learning Alliance that sought to using videos to supplement TLMs` in the school for better teaching and learning processes. 20 (22.22%) still find it difficult understanding some subjects.

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Table 42: How do you teachers address your truancy problem?

Responses	Number	Percentage (%)
Punishment	15	16.66
Counseling	60	66.66
Others	15	16.66
TOTAL	90	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2017

The trends have change from the onset. Table 42 indicates the sort of ways teachers adopted to addressing truancy problems. 60 (66.66%) of pupils are now counseled in the best way to instill pride in pupils to learn and make progress. 15 (16.66%) continue to punish despite the many ways taught in the teachers training programme organized during the intervention stage. 15 pupils mentioned other ways employed by teachers which is not captured in the set of questionnaire.

Table 43: How is the relationship with your teacher(s)?

Responses	Number	Percentage (%)
Very Satisfied	55	61.11
Satisfied	17	18.88
Fairly satisfied	9	10,00
Unsatisfied	9	10.00
TOTAL	90	100.00

Source: Field Survey, 2017

Table 43 saw how pupils rated their teachers after intervention process. 55 pupils 61.11% were very satisfied with the progress adopted by teachers so far, 17 (18.88%) were satisfied, 9 (10.00%) chose fairly satisfied and 9 of the pupils (10%) again chose unsatisfied. The responses

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shown indicates that majority of the pupils now have confidence in the teachers in helping address your challenge and only a few still have issues on the progress adopted by the teachers.

4.3 Findings and Discussion

The questionnaire revealed that the problem associated with truancy is multi-dimensional: pupils', truant parents' and teachers' perspectives.

The results indicated that most of the truants were staying with single parents especially their mothers and due to the poverty level of the study communities, the mothers who are breadwinners and provide the basic needs of pupils have to supplement their labour with that of their wards so as to help boost the economic status of the family. As a result, some pupils follow their parents to plug and sell fruits especially shea nut fruits, trade, farm and markets sometimes during classes hours and thereby contributing to truancy challenges. It was also revealed that, since most parents knew the where about of their wards during school hours, they tend to do nothing about the issue when consulted or raised during Parents Teachers Association (PTA) meetings. It was again realized that pupils were willing to stop truancy if all their needs were met.

Quite apart from parents' influences, some pupils were lured by peers who make petty amounts of money when they trade shea nut along the Tamale – Bolgatanga route and on market days. Based on that, majority of truants did not like being in school and as such find it difficult studying and understanding basic concepts in most subjects especially in Mathematics, Integrated Science, English Language and Social Studies.

Moreover, it was also revealed from the results that teachers in the study communities resorted to punishment as a corrective measure for truancy reduction instead of counseling as

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such aid in fueling the issue the more. Teachers did not encourage the completion and submission of homework even though they gave home and assignments to pupils as a result truants did not find the need to do and submit homework or assignments. Due to the attitude of teachers in handling cases of truancy, truants have less confidence and less satisfied with teachers even though the results of the study hypocritically suggested that majority of truants liked their teachers. Finally, the post intervention results from the questionnaire revealed that the situation was minimized drastically and truancy reduced significantly.

4.4 Challenges and Hindrances

One limitation of this research study was that, during the data collection, pupils' responses to questionnaires about themselves could be inaccurate and might affect the results of the study. Due to truancy, some of the pupils might be unavailable in the school throughout the period of intervention and that might affect the results of the study. The period used to collect and analyze the data might be inappropriate and so therefore could affect the outcome which may not reflect the true situation on the ground.

4.5 Conclusion

The purpose of the study was to find the causes, effects and ways to minimize truancy. A set of questionnaire was used to elicit responses from respondents namely, teachers, truants and parents of truants based on the research questions and objectives of the study. The results of the questionnaire were analysed using tables and figures most especially, column charts, bar charts and pie charts. The findings were therefore presented in a summary form so that general impression of the trend of truancy was created and thereafter, the findings were evaluated and examined to align with current theoretical position on the issue.

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CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.0 Introduction

This part of the action research study deals with the summary, conclusion and recommendation.

5.1 Summary

The major concern of the researcher in this study was to find out the possible causes of truancy and how it could be minimized to improve upon the academic performance of pupils in the West Circuit of Savelugu - Nanton Municipality of Ghana Education Service.

In view of this problem, a review of literature was carried out by reading from different authors on how they saw the problem. Some of the writers attributed the problem to be societal, irresponsibility of parents, peer influences and hostile relationship between teachers and pupils among many other problems.

Based on the problem identified, the researcher used instruments such as observation, questionnaires and interviews to collect data to investigate why the problem existed.

From the answers given by the school authorities, pupils and the parents, it was revealed that the cause of truancy was three dimensional – Pupils, Parents and Teachers. Some of the truants dodged from class during instructional hours because they disliked certain subjects or teachers. Some of the truants were lured by friends to go in for menial jobs like plucking and selling shea nuts, dawadawa fruits, pomade to mention but a few.

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Some truants were not taken care of by their parents and so had to cater for themselves by working on the streets and other places. Parents had no time for their wards hence had little interest to check on their attendance and punctuality.

Another problem found was that, some of the teachers resorted to punishment rather than counseling to curb truancy challenges hence pupils escaped from class to avoid being punished. Teaching and learning materials were inadequate and so therefore teachers did not use the appropriate teaching and learning materials in delivering lessons.

5.2 Conclusion

In conclusion, it could be noted that both parents' and teachers' attitude towards truancy were some of the major factors hindering effective teaching and learning. The researcher organized a two - day training programme and trained teachers on the strategies to make classrooms more conductive and interesting to arouse the interest of truants. Parents were also trained on how to encourage and motivate their wards to stay in school, desisting pupils from trading (buying and selling) during school hours and also visiting their wards in school to find out more about their performance and progress in school.

Teachers applied the knowledge and skills gotten from the workshop and also used the flat screen televisions and video decks received from Discovery Learning Alliance to help them teach effectively. They resorted to counseling of truants and appropriate school environment was ensured. Parents took it upon themselves to check on their wards' attendance, progress and performance in class hence the problem of truancy was minimized drastically.

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5.3 Recommendation

The research work could be considered successful since it had enabled the researcher to achieve the goals and objectives set for the study. Thus, the researcher has been able to discover some causes of truancy, effects of truancy on the academic performance of pupils and some solutions to the problems.

The researcher has made some positive impact on the education of the pupils and professional qualities of teacher as well as good parental care. This is because some appropriate measures have been identified with regard to the issues discussed. The researcher wished that the results of this research work would help improve upon the academic performance of pupils to enhance the professional qualities and arouse interest among parents with regard to education of their wards. Recommendations are therefore made for teachers, school authorities and parents.

Teachers

Acknowledge students when their attendance increases. Even when attendance is not perfect, student should be rewarded for making an effort to come to school more regularly. Doing so focuses on the positive change the student is making and encourages him/her to continue coming to school.

Teachers should assign roles such as "board cleaners", "office girls" to pupils who are found absenting themselves from school. Make them feel welcome by getting to know their names and greeting them. Show them that you are glad to see them and are happy that they are at school.

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Classroom interaction must be improved to motivate students to participate fully in the interactions in classroom. This has the tendency of not only improving the confidence and learning ability of the learner but also the tendency of decreasing truancy. Teachers must endeavor to improvise teaching aids to bring about effective teaching and learning in their subject areas.

School Authorities

It is also recommended that, school authorities should organize speech and prize giving days to reward pupils who excel academically as well as those who are regular and punctual to school. When this is done, it would encourage truants and habitual late comers to change their attitudes towards attendance to school.

School authorities must adopt and apply a consistent school policy regarding truancy. In order for the policy to be effective, pupils must be made aware of the policy, held accountable for their actions and the policy must be followed consistently. The consequences for truancy such as detention in school, suspension, counseling etc are enforced each and every time a child is truant.

In-service training must continuously be organised to teachers to update their competencies in teaching. When teachers' competencies increase the chance of teachers being able to manage issues of this nature is high hence this would inspire students to stay in school.

Monitoring by the school heads and the circuit supervisors should also be intensified to put teachers on their toes.

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Parents

During PTA meetings, parents should be encouraged to monitor their wards to find out possible problems that could lead to being truants. Parents should be encouraged to sit with wards regularly to inform them about importance of school and obtaining a good education. They should be made aware that school is a priority and that missing school is not satisfactory to you.

More so, parents ought to understand why their wards do not want to go to school. There might genuine reasons why some pupils want to miss school. It could be because of bullies, academic difficulties or peer pressure. When this is known, the remedy could be easy establishing.

Aside this, parents should establish a good working relationship with the school and particularly their wards' teachers. By maintaining communication and collaboration between home and school it is more likely that you will be able to help your child succeed in school.

In a nutshell, truancy may occur for various reasons, it is important to understand why a particular pupil is not attending school and intervention to truancy should be collaborative and include the student, family, school, community and law enforcement when necessary.

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APPENDIX A

SAMPLE OF QUESTIONNAIRE

ASSESSMENT OF TRUANCY IN THE SAVELUGU WEST CIRCUIT OF THE GHANA EDUCATION SERVICE IN SAVELUGU – NANTON MUNICIPALITY

PRE – INTERVENTION QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TRUANTS

You're kindly requested to be cooperative and free to give your views. Before we start our interview, I would like to assure you that the information you give will be strictly confidential and your name will not appear in the transcript.

1. How old are you?

9 years □   10 years   □   11 years   □   12 years □   13 years   □   14 years □   □   15 years   □ 16 years   □ others (specify)…………………

2. What is your sex?

Male   □   Female □

3. Who do you stay with?

Father only □   Mother only □ Both Parents   □ Guardian   □

4. Are you regular to school?

Yes   □   No   □

5. Do your parents provide your needs?

Yes □   No   □

6. Who provides your needs?

Father only □   Mother only □ Both Parents □   Guardian   □ self   □

7. Will you be punctual if your needs are provided?

Yes □   No   □

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8.   Do you stay out of school in order to work for your needs?

Yes □   No   □

9.   Do your parents know you play truancy?

Yes   □   No   □

10.   Do your parents stop you at time from going to school?

Yes □   No   □

11.   Why do you stay out of class?

Go to farm   □   Go home □   Go trade   □   Loiter   □ Others □

12.   Do you like being in school?

Yes   □   No   □

13.   Do you face difficulties in certain subjects?

Yes □   No   □

14.   Do you like your teacher(s)?

Yes   □   **No**   □

15.   Which subjects do you dislike most?

Mathematics □   English Language □   Integrated science □   others   □

16.   Do you always complete and submit your homework in time?

Yes □   No   □

17.   Do you go to school if you fail to do your homework?

Yes   □   No   □

18.   How do you teachers address your truancy problem?

Punishment   □   Counseling □   others   □

19.   .How is the relationship with your teacher(s)?

Very satisfied □   satisfied □   fairly satisfied □   Unsatisfied   □

20.   What do you dislike most about the school?

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teachers' attitude □   teachers' methods □   subject difficulties   □ punishments   □ lack of play activities □   others   □

21.   Do some of your friends play truant?

Yes   □   No   □

22.   How tight are you with your friends?

Not tight   □   tight   □   very tight   □

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APPENDIX B

ASSESSMENT OF TRUANCY IN THE SAVELUGU WEST CIRCUIT OF THE

GHANA EDUCATION SERVICE IN SAVELUGU – NANTON MUNICIPALITY

PRE – INTERVENTION QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARENTS

You're kindly requested to be cooperative and free to give your views. Before we start our interview, I would like to assure you that the information you give will be strictly confidential and your name will not appear in the transcript.

1.   What is your gender?

Male □   Female   □

2.   What are you to pupil(s) ?

Mother □   Father   □   Guardian □   others   □

3.   What is your level of your education?

Illiterate □ JSS □   Middle School □   Secondary/Post Secondary □   Graduate/HND □

4.   What is your occupation?

Farming □   Driving   □ Trading   □ Government worker □   unemployed   □ others   □

4.   Do you know your ward is a truant?

Yes □   No   □

5.   What actions do you take against your truant ward?

Punishment □   Report to school □   counseling □   Do nothing   □

6.   What activity does your child engage in at home?

Trading □   farming □   helping parents □   others   ……………..

7.   Who provides the basic needs of your wards?

father   □ mother   □ Guardian   □ both   □

8.   When your ward plays truancy, where do you think he/she might be?

Home   □   trading □   farm □   loitering   □ others   □

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APPENDIX C

SAMPLE OF QUESTIONNAIRE

ASSESSMENT OF TRUANCY IN THE SAVELUGU WEST CIRCUIT OF THE GHANA EDUCATION SERVICE IN SAVELUGU – NANTON MUNICIPALITY

PRE – INTERVENTION QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TEACHERS

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1. What is your sex?

Male □ Female □

2. What is your professional status?

Professional teacher □ nonprofessional teacher□

3. What subject do you teach?

Mathematics □ English Language □ Integrated Science□ Others ………………

4. Do you use appropriate TLMs in teaching?

Yes □ No □

5. How do you make your class lovingly?

Using rewards □ inspiring □ Using appropriate methodology□ /TLMs □ others □

6. What actions do you take against truants?

Punishment □ Report to parents □ counseling □ Do nothing □

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ASSESSMENT OF TRUANCY IN THE SAVELUGU WEST CIRCUIT OF THE GHANA EDUCATION SERVICE IN SAVELUGU – NANTON MUNICIPALITY

POST – INTERVENTION QUESTIONNAIRE FOR TRUANTS

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Yes   □   No   □

2. Will you be punctual if your needs are provided?

Yes   □   No   □

3. Do your parents know you play truancy?

Yes □   No   □

4. Do you like being in school?

Yes □   No   □

5. Do you face difficulties in certain subjects?

Yes □   No   □

6. Do you like your teacher(s)?

Yes   □   No   □

7. How do your teachers address truancy problems?

Punishment □   Counseling □   others …………………………

8. How is the relationship with your teacher(s)?

Very satisfied □   satisfied □   fairly satisfied   □ unsatisfied □

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