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# Forced Truancy and Its Impact on Youth Delinquency in Southeastern Nigeria

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# Walden University

College of Social and Behavioral Sciences

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2015

Abstract

Forced Truancy and Its Impact on Youth Delinquency

in Southeastern Nigeria

by

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MS, Kean University, 2000

BA, Kean University, 1989

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Public Policy and Administration

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November 2015

## Abstract

Forced truancy is a risk factor that influences juvenile behavior, requiring the joint efforts of school authorities, parents, and courts to address. It is a phenomenon where students desire attending school, but for reasons beyond their control, they are prohibited from attending classes. Some of these reasons are teachers' strike action, students' poverty, lack of educational infrastructures, and unsafe educational environment. Teachers' strike is a frequent occurrence in southeastern Nigeria caused by irregular payment of teachers' wages, benefits, and other remunerations. This case study of 3 secondary schools in southeastern Nigeria sought to understand the impact of forced truancy by examining the relationship between forced truancy and youth delinquency. Although previous studies have explored the causes of truancy, few studies have addressed the effect of forced truancy created by incessant teachers' strike. The theoretical framework that guided this study included Hirschi's social bond theory and Merton's social structure. Case studies were developed using data from the participants and review of documents. A maximum variation method was used for data collection through semi-structured that resulted in a review of archival records and open-ended interviews with students ( $S = 9$ ), teachers ( $T = 8$ ), and principals ( $SP = 4$ ). Descriptive case analysis were used to identify common themes and patterns using constant comparative techniques. Implications for positive social change include identifying areas that need improvement and recommending to legislators and education policy makers for the best approach to addressing the problem, where it has the potential to eliminate teachers' strike, reduce youth truancy, and improve student's academic performance.

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## Dedication

I dedicate this dissertation to my family, especially my wife, Chidi and my four children for their patience and unconditional support during my doctoral journey. I am grateful for my family's understanding of the challenges of the work, such as my frequent absences for research assignments, as well as permitting my extended absences for family social events.

I also dedicate this dissertation to the memories of my beloved late parents, my father Godfrey Enyiorji and my mother Gloria Enyiorji. Their emphasis on the importance of education inspired me to pursue the doctoral program. The hallmark of my parents' support was their encouragement for my wish to study abroad and their unconditional commitment to funding my education. Their moral and financial support inspired me to remain focused and to work hard in ensuring successful completion of my academic pursuits. Although my parents are not alive today to share this significant milestone with me, their loving spirit encouraged me, to strive ahead to complete the doctoral study. I miss them so dearly and pray that our great and caring Lord will comfort their souls.

Finally, I dedicate this study to the committed and dedicated students who receive their education in unsafe and dilapidated school buildings. Also to the committed teachers and principals who work long hours with no payment of their wages and allowances, sometimes for up to four months. Their hard work and dedication to the teaching profession are encouraging. I pray for their continuous commitment and support for the education of the children.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

### **Introduction**

Truancy is acknowledged as a major behavioral problem among elementary and secondary school students worldwide and has been defined in different ways by educators and researchers of social sciences. Some school districts define truancy as unexcused absences from school, while some districts have specified number of days that the student will have been absent to qualify as habitual truant. For example, the National Center for School Engagement defined the habitual truant as a student who has 4 to 5 days of unexcused absences in a semester (Raby, 2013). Most researchers refer to truancy as an intentional unexcused absence by the student (Reid, 2008). On the other hand, forced truancy, which is the topic of this study, is defined as unexcused absences from school caused by teachers' strike action, students' poverty, lack of educational infrastructures, and unsafe educational environment. Teachers' strike is a frequent occurrence in the southeastern region of Nigeria that emanates from a prolonged period of nonpayment of accrued wages, benefits, and other work-related compensations. Youth truancy and delinquency among secondary school students are priority social challenges facing school administrators and government authorities. In addition, the effect of teachers' strikes, students' poverty, and poor administration are major issues that have permeated the socio-economic fabric of Nigerian educational system in both urban and rural school districts. Recent research studies attributed truancy to poor school attendance (Darmody, Smyth, & McCoy, 2008, Reid, 2008).

Some researchers have claimed that there is a correlation between truancy and school dropout rate, and they have suggested that truancy could become a pathway to criminal behavior (Baker, Sigmon, & Nugent 2001; Ovink, 2011; Raby, 2013; Reid, 2008; Seeley, 2009; Trujillo, 2006; Yeide & Kobrin, 2009;). A key finding in the indicated that 20% of students suspended in the state of Colorado have a history of truancy, of which 80% of the dropouts are chronic truants (Trujillo, 2006). In another study conducted in the mid-Atlantic region, Burzichelli, Mackey and Bausmith (2011) observed that dropping out of school had a harmful effect on the youth and that there is a need for a coordinated strategy of parents and community to address the phenomenon of truancy. In the United States, for example, the services of court officials, community advocates, and social workers assist the school district in fighting truancy and rehabilitating youth truancy behavior (Johnson, Wright, & Strand, 2012). The collaborative efforts by the government and non-governmental agencies provide a cohesive approach to truancy intervention.

Youth rehabilitation is essential for truant students to be able to provide for themselves and their families. Van Fleet (2011) noted that access to education provides opportunities for youth with sound prospect of economic sustainability. Youth stand the chance of making decent living wage and leading law-abiding lives by having the proper education. Van Fleet also maintained that youth with education tended to live a healthier life. According to a report by the Center for Juvenile Justice Reform, quality education prepares children for smooth transition to adult life (Leone & Weinberg, 2012).

To address the transition to adult life, it is essential to understand the driving factors that lead youth to engage in criminal activities. These children may be exposed to the system through mental and physical abuse, or may be victims of child abuse by family or foster home. They might be victims of neglect or peer pressure that may lead to their engaging in delinquent acts and they are disproportionately from low-income families, and have experienced some form of physical or mental abuse from their adult guardian. Children who are exposed to a host of other risk factors such as delinquency, truancy, poor academic performance, substance abuse, and prostitution are vulnerable to delinquent acts. Leone and Weinberg (2012) contended that the risks factors intensify when the children remained unchecked, which sometimes lead to greater involvement in criminal activities. As observed by Leone and Weinberg, providing timely intervention can be helpful in redirecting these youth to lead law-abiding lives.

Truancy is a challenge that school administrators, teachers, and parents grapple with on a regular basis with no permanent solution insight. Nevertheless, school-related problems such as truancy, poor academic achievement, and youth delinquency have prevented many youths from actualizing the dream of a stable income and healthy life. Bazemore, Stinchcomb, and Leip (2004) suggested, “Student truancy in secondary schools has increasingly been identified as a primary problem that merits the attention of the criminal and juvenile justice systems” (p. 269). The truancy phenomenon is prevalent among poor families in society. Van Fleet (2011) lamented the low rate of youths advancing to secondary schools because of their delinquent behavior. Van Fleet observed that most of these youths are from the world’s poorest nations. A study of gang members

in Lagos, Nigeria, revealed that 92% of the 202 students interviewed had dropped out of secondary school (Salaam, 2011).

My study captured the voices of truant students who experienced teachers' strike actions and highlighted the paths that led them to truancy in a particular town, in southeastern Nigeria. The study also examined the state government's approach to addressing these problems, especially in providing funding for secondary schools, paying teachers' wages and other remunerations. In Chapter 1, I will articulate the statement of the problem, the purpose of the study, the research questions, the theoretical framework, the assumptions, and the significance of the study.

### **Background**

In 1941, under British colonial rule, the first administrative of juvenile justice was established in Nigeria (Fourchard, 2006). Since then, no significant effort has been made to improve the juvenile justice system to protect the welfare of the children due to lack of monetary funds (Fourchard, 2006). In addition, there are no adequate services to address the truancy phenomenon, or institute prevention programs to curb the rate of youth truancy and delinquency in the South East geopolitical zone that comprises five states: Abia State, Anambra State, Ebonyi State, Enugu State, and Imo State. Prior to the pre-colonial era and regionalization of the states, Southeastern Nigeria was the home of many ethnic groups, and the major ones include Igbo, Ijaw, and Ibibio (Kifordu, 2011).

Youth truancy in the Nigeria context was first defined by the British colonial government in 1943, in the Children and Young Persons Law (CYPL) (Penal Reform International, 2003). CYPL provides guiding principles for the promotion and welfare of

the young and protection of the rights of youth offenders (Penal Reform International, 2003). CYPL was designed to apply to the northern and southern protectorates of Nigeria by the order of the British colonial government. The next law enacted in 2003 was the Child Rights Act (CRA): this law was established to protect the interests of children and women as well as to protect their human rights. The important aspects of this law include the right of the child to parental care, protection and maintenance (Toyo, 2006). CRA also provides the right of the child to universal primary education and protection for a special needs child (Toyo, 2006). CRA challenges the state and federal governments to provide a safe and structured learning environment for the children. Toyo further opined that the act empowers the court to make special protection and supervision orders for children in need.

The CRA framework provides indicators to measure the development and socioeconomic status of the child. Youthful exuberance is the period of exploration, a challenging time encumbered by temptations, conflicts, truancy, and delinquent acts. Balfanz, Durham, and Plank (2008) observed that truancy is a key indicator for youth delinquent behavior, which affects their school attendance and is a factor in their involvement in other criminal activities. Truancy and delinquency are prevalent among the youth, an issue that requires detailed study to determine the causes of, and solutions to, the phenomenon. In a study on this subject, Igwe (2013) presented information on youth truancy and families. Igwe emphasizes lack of educational assistance such as counseling programs for the youth that can help in redirecting criminal behavior to a law-abiding life in the community. Salaam (2011) offered an in-depth knowledge of the

problem that stems from poverty, dysfunctional families, and the prevalence of youth delinquent behaviors.

Youth criminal involvement tends to be a contributory factor for dropping out of school and having unstable employment (Reid, 2010; Salaam, 2011; & Seeley, 2008). A study conducted by The International Child and Youth Care Network (2003) reported that 60% of the youth in police custody are arrested for truancy. Furthermore, lack of parental care, and poverty influences youth truancy behavior and involvement in other criminal activities (Alemika & Chukwuma, 2005; Reid, 2010; Salaam, 2011). Seeley (2008) noted that truancy is a major risk factor for first-time drug abusers. Kim and Barthelemy (2011) added that truancy affects most aspects of the youth social life and could lead to marital problems, difficulty in maintaining employment, and frequent violence.

Given the aforementioned truancy issues, managing students becomes more problematic for teachers and school administrators who require an active guidance program. Oko (2010) noted that the inability of teachers and school authorities to implement a successful guidance program to rehabilitate youth offenders is an indication of deviation from the school's mission that may lower the quality of education and further influence the youth to engage in truancy and other delinquent behaviors. In fact, youth from poor families tend to engage in delinquent behavior and attend schools with lower academic standards. In contrast, children from wealthy families are more favored to attend best schools with high academic standards. Banerjee and Duflo (2011) considered the approach as unfair and a waste of talent for children who may have succeeded in life as college professors or leaders of major industry. This study

underscored the effects of the truancy problem and developed a comprehensive and critical research study on the phenomenon.

### **Problem Statement**

Forced truancy affects youth, families, and communities. School-aged youths roam the streets, engage in street vendor hawking, and go to the movie theater when they should be attending school (Gesinde, 2004). Statistics shows “sixty percent of juvenile crime occurs between the hours of 8 a.m. and 3 p.m. when children should be attending school” (Seeley, 2009, p. 211). According to Abraham, Ememe, and Egu (2012), in developing countries such as Nigeria, the increase in youth truancy, as well as the overall school dropout rates, is attributable to teachers’ incessant strike actions. The endemic problem of frequent teachers’ strikes and chronic truancy are major high-risk factors that leads to school dropout, illegal activities, and delinquent acts such as daytime burglary, robbery, bullying, and drug abuse (Seeley, 2009). While teachers are out on strike rather than in the classroom teaching, some students stay at home alone without supervision. With no opportunity for home educational learning, the youth’s scholastic opportunities are compromised during prolonged strike impasses.

Multiple factors can force youth to embrace truancy rather than attending school since government and responsible authorities have failed to provide stable and comfortable learning environments. As a result, some of these youth are likely to drop out of school, abscond from school for a long time, or eventually get involved in dangerous criminal behavior. Equally dangerous as engaging in crime, students can become victims of crimes, as can be seen in the incessant kidnapping and killing of innocent citizens that

ravaged the southeastern region in 2005 through 2010, as well as the recent Boko Haram terrorist atrocities on schoolchildren in Nigeria (Ahokegh, 2012).

Academic researchers have uncovered a concentrated and increased interest in youth truancy (Gesinde, 2004; & Heilbrunn, 2007; Ovink, 2011; Raby, 2013; Reid, 2010; Seeley, 2009; Zhang, 2010). Very few studies have focused on how students perceive teachers' strike actions and how they affect students and school attendance. Therefore, a gap exists in this regard.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to gain deeper insights into the constructed reality and perception of students affected by teachers' strikes. I investigated the impact of teachers' strike actions that may have contributed to increases in students' truancy and delinquency in three selected secondary schools in southeastern Nigeria. Specifically, I was interested in understanding the impact of teachers' strike action among the secondary school students. The study sought to explore the students' experience as well as the teachers', and the school administrators' understanding of the state government's role towards forced truancy, which accounts for most of the youth's criminal activities (Ogbodo, 2004).

In addition, I examined the relationship between youth truancy and delinquent behavior in the three selected schools. Participants interviewed for this study were 12<sup>th</sup>-grade students, teachers, and administrators in order to elicit relevant data needed for the study. The study also helped in understanding the reality of teachers' strike action on the truant students who experienced the phenomenon. Furthermore, I explored how teachers'



strikes play a role in students' truancy behaviors and other criminal activities in the southeastern region. Specifically, this study investigated the concerns of the students who experienced the strike actions. The students' perception of truancy as well as the experiences of teachers and administrators to reduce truancy in the region helped to fill the gap in existing literature. If left unchecked, truancy behavior as societal problems will increase.

### **Research Questions**

The overarching research question that this study sought to answer was, "To what extent does the perception of the teachers' strike affect the behavior of secondary school students?" The following research questions guided the study:

1. What effect do teachers' strike actions have on the students and their studies?
2. How do teachers and administrators describe their experience during the strike action period?
3. How can students, teachers, and administrators collaborate to encourage students' attendance and graduation?
4. How do teachers' strike actions affect students' attendance behavior among the secondary schools in southeastern Nigeria?

Thoughtful investigation of these research questions can provide solutions to addressing the problem, offer recommendations to policy makers, as well as create economic and social awareness for the people.

### **Theoretical Foundation for the Study**

Yin (2009) emphasized the need for researchers to develop a theoretical base in order to have sufficient knowledge of the study. From a sociological point of view, youth truancy is a deviant behavior. The following analysis focuses on four theories of youth crime. Hirschi's (1969) social bond theory sought to investigate the effect of truancy and its impact on youth delinquency. Hirschi maintained that youth with strong family ties tend to comply with the norms of positive behavior because deviation may affect the relationship. Youth truancy is no longer limited to schools in urban cities like Lagos, Ibadan, Kano, and Kaduna, but has extended to schools in the rural areas. For this study on forced truancy and its impact on youth delinquency, I focused on Sutherland's differential association theory, Hirschi's social bond theory, Colvin and Pauly integrated-structural marxist theory, and Merton's social structure theory as the theoretical lenses through which to understand the meaning of the phenomenon.

#### **Differential Association Theory**

In spite of numerous studies and theories on truancy and delinquency, the rate of youth truancy has increased over the past decade. Similarly, researchers and policy makers have expended resources to identify the reasons why students choose to engage in criminal behavior. Differential association as espoused by Sutherland (1970) provided the insights and contributed to the theoretical framework of this research study. Sutherland contended that youth delinquency is a learned behavior through association with others. In addition, Sutherland argued that juveniles interact and work together with their peers to achieve a common goal; however, they achieve these goals through different

approaches. Furthermore, Sutherland indicated that the youth who have a strong attachment to criminal behavior tend to engage in criminal activities. For example, youth using alcohol and drugs are more likely to be involved in criminal behavior than youths who refrain from substance abuse.

### **Social Bond Theory**

Social bond theory holds that what restrains people from becoming deviant is the relationship they have with their significant others such as families, teachers, and friends (Hirschi, 1969). Social bond theory consists of attachment, commitment, involvement, and beliefs (Hirschi, 1969). According to Hirschi, youths who maintain attachment with their significant others tend to establish higher quality relationships than individuals with no attachment. For example, the chance of a child with a strong family tie engaging in criminal activities is less compared to a child from a dysfunctional family. The child's attachment to family can restraint him or her from engaging in criminal behavior.

Next is the commitment a child makes to social institutions like family, school or church. For instance, a child's commitment to the church or school may serve as deterrence from involvement in delinquent acts. Darmody, Smyth, and McCoy (2008) contended that students with minimal truancy records tend to have less delinquent behavior compared to students with high record of truancy. Moak and Moore (2005) argued that youths who do not attend school have more idle time at their disposal that may encourage them to engage in delinquent acts. The involvement element holds that the more time a youth is involved in conventional activities, the less time the youth has for unconventional activities.

According to Hirschi (1969), the more youths partake in extra-curricular activities, the less time they have to engage in delinquent behavior. The belief element states that the respect a youth has for social and legal norms reduces the youth's engagement in delinquent behavior. Hirschi maintained that the more knowledge the youths have in any skill building activities, the more likely they stay out of trouble. Hirschi's four tenets of social bond theory provide the theoretical framework for this study's research question and problem statement. Sutherland and Hirschi's theories offer valuable insights into youth delinquent behaviors as well as the effect of family and socio-economic factors.

### **Integrated-Structural Marxist Theory**

Mark Colvin and John Pauly's integrated-structural marxist theory emphasizes the coercive nature of low income and, dead end jobs that affects parents' attitude towards their children at home (Regoli, Hewitt, & Delisi, 2010). According to Colvin and Pauly, (as cited in Regoli et al., 2010), the reproduction of coercive control is accomplished in four ways:

1. IQ and aptitude testing are likely to identify more negatively bonded students and their placement in lower level tracks.
2. Negatively bonded children may give behavioral cues to school authorities that identify them as potential problem students.
3. The differential placement of lower-class students into lower class-levels tracks will lead to a greater strain on, and separation of, those students.

4. Differential financial resources of schools in lower, working, middle-class neighborhood will produce differences in the availability of rewards and punishments in the school setting (p. 242)

Colvin and Pauly's integrated-structural marxist theory suggests that children separated from their parents and their schools are more likely influenced by their peers to partake in violent or delinquent behavior. This theory aims to address the societal factors that influence youths to engage in truancy.

### **Social Structure Theory**

Another theory that explains socially deviant behavior like truancy is anomie, which was first formulated by Emile Durkheim in 1897 and later adopted by Robert Merton in 1938 (Merton, 1996). Anomie is considered as one of the oldest social deviance theories, and it highlights the effects of the attenuation of social culture. The aim of broaching this theory is to explain how social structures exert pressure on the youth in southeastern Nigeria to engage in delinquent behavior. Merton made a distinction between cultural and social structures. According to Merton (1996), cultural structure focuses on goals individuals strive to attain in their lifetime, which include economic wealth and social recognition. The cultural goals are shaped through institutionalized legitimate means such as regulations, values, and norms, while social structure emphasizes social relationships maintained through pleasure derived from the achievement of goals (Merton, 1996). Merton hypothesized the status of anomie within an organization that distinguished between cultural and social structures.

The individual's social position within the social structure determines the power and access to institutionalized legitimate means (Merton, 1996). The anomie theory as envisaged by Merton (1996) postulated that:

When the institutional system is regarded as a barrier to the achievement of legitimized goals, the stage is set for rebellion as an adaptive response. To pass into organized political action, allegiance must not only be withdrawn from the prevailing social structure but must be transferred to new groups possessed of a new myth. (p. 150)

For example, in Nigerian society, possessing high social status through achievement of economic goals provides the individual access to the institutionalized means. Most of these individuals with visible social status come from middle and upper class economic strata. In contrast, lower class individuals have fewer resources at their disposal to achieve culturally defined objectives. Therefore, the expediency to strive to culturally acceptable goals is limited by the institutionalized means.

Some researchers ask how Merton's theory of anomie explains truancy, though. The theory explains the cultural goals the students have toward educational success and the complexities of the students' chances of accessing institutionalized legitimate means. Merton's theory examines how social structure exerts pressure on students for educational success and identifies five modes of adaptation as shown in Table 1, which include; conformity, innovation, ritualism, retreatism, and rebellion.

Table 1

*Types of Youth Truancy*

Modes of Adaptation	Types of Truancy	Cultural Acceptable Goals	Institutionalized Means of Success
Conformity	Good Student	+	+
Innovation	Occasional Truant	+	-
Ritualism	Passive Truant	-	+
Retreatism	Chronic Truant	-	-
Rebellion	Rebel Truant	±	±

*Note.* (+) = Acceptance; (-) = Rejection; (±) = Rejection of the acceptable norm with a substitution of new values. Adapted from “*On Social Structure and Science*,” by R. K. Merton, 1996, Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press.

*Conformity* refers to the good student who complies with the school attendance rules and uses legitimate means to achieve educational and economic goals (Merton, 1996). The student has no problem with truancy and may not engage in delinquent behavior. The student’s educational and economic aspiration in the society is sustained based on his/her conformity to the established, culturally acceptable goals.

*Innovation* refers to the occasional truant who embraces education as an approach to achieving economic and educational success in society (Merton, 1996). However, the student lacks legitimate means to achieve this success. According to Merton’s anomie theory, the student and his/her family have no social position within the social structure (Merton, 1996). The innovative student either explores other legitimate means to acquire resources to achieve success such as part or full-time employment, or engages in delinquent acts of selling drugs or stealing.

*Ritualism* refers to the passive truant who acknowledges the importance of the cultural goals of society for educational and economic achievement but lacks the zeal to overcome institutional barriers (Merton, 1996). In other words, the passive truant has the

interest to pursue educational goals, but lacks the willpower to refrain from truancy. The ritualist assumes that the pressure an individual undergoes should not be compounded by the frustration of achieving academic goals (Merton, 1996). According to Merton, the lower-class individuals often undergoes more pressure than middle- and upper-class people. Students from lower-class families have a greater tendency of being truant than those from middle- and upper-class families.

*Retreatism* describes the students who are classified as chronic truants. These students accept neither the cultural goals nor the institutional means (Merton, 1996). The students assume that abstaining from school is the acceptable way of life in the society. Merton explained that adaptation to this category, “Is most likely to occur when both the cultural goals and the institutional practices have been thoroughly assimilated by the individual and imbued with affect and high value, but accessible institutional avenues are not effective” (p. 148). Most of the students in this category tend to be frustrated by their experiences, which prevent them from meeting their goals as well as achieving success. In addition, the students in this category dissociate themselves from school activities, tend to hang on the streets during school time, and adapt more to delinquent acts such as alcohol and drug abuse. Briefly, the students’ educational experience may force them to quit school as their hope of academic achievement has been negatively impacted by cultural and institutional factors.

*Rebellion* refers to the students who have abandoned all aspirations about education but seek alternative ways to rebel against the existing establishment (Merton, 1996). The aim of students in this category is to withdraw from school, which may



modify their cultural approach to academic success. When the institutional system is regarded as a barrier to the satisfaction of legitimized goals, the stage is set for rebellion as an adaptive response. Youths who undertake organized political action tend to show strong commitment to the newfound group, while allegiance is withdrawn from the prevailing social structure, and transferred to the new groups that possess the new myth (Merton, 1996). An example is the emergence of the Bakassi Boys as a vigilante group, established, as a result, of incessant criminal activities in the southeastern region of Nigeria that killed about 200 people between 1997 and 1999 (Ibrahim, 2000). Out of frustration with the government's inability to provide safe and secure environment for its citizens and the high rate of unemployment in the area, Bakassi Boys gained prominence as an alternative security force in some towns in the Southeastern region (Meagher, 2010). Table 2 indicates that 70% of the Bakassi Boys are school-aged youths ranging from 16 to 21 years, and 50% have no formal educational background (Ibrahim, 2000). A majority of the vigilante group possesses firearms to deter criminal activities in the region (Ibrahim, 2000).

Table 2

*Age and Educational Background of Bakassi Boys in Aba Township*

Age	Number	Percent
16-17 years	4	40
18-19 years	1	10
20-21 years	2	20
22-23 years	2	20
24-25 years	0	0
26-27 years	1	10
Total	10	100
Education Background		
No Education	5	50
Primary	2	20
Secondary	2	20
Post-Secondary	1	10
Total	10	100

Note: Adapted from Ibrahim, M. (2000). An Empirical Survey of Children and Youth in Organized Armed Violence in Nigeria: Egbesu Boys, OPC and Bakassi Boys as a case study. Children in Organized Armed Violence (COAV). *Center for Democracy and Development*

### **Nature of the Study**

The nature of this study was a qualitative case study that provided a detailed analysis of the impact of forced truancy on youths' delinquent activities in southeastern Nigeria. A case study approach incorporated the broader framework of evidence needed to examine the truancy phenomena. Qualitative methods use inductive reasoning that emphasizes open-ended interview approach for conducting research (Yin, 2009). Inductive approach is the reasoning that leads to its probable conclusion (Shank, 2006). In other words, it is the process of thematic analysis that starts from the specific to the general. In qualitative research, hypotheses are not necessary; whereas, in a quantitative research a hypothesis is required prior to the beginning of the study (Yin, 2009).

According to Yin (2009), qualitative inquiry has no standard format; however, most of the research papers include an introduction and procedure. Although little is known of the impact of forced truancy on youth and people in the region, the participants for the study were drawn from the three selected secondary schools in southeastern Nigeria. Qualitative researchers sometimes seek out social change that affects people's lives (Shank, 2006). They embrace different ways of looking at the world and understand the meaning of a phenomenon to build knowledge to effect positive change (Shank, 2006). Qualitative approaches also use strategies such as hermeneutics, critical theory, phenomenology, and structuralism to inquire about existing phenomenon (Shank, 2006).

This qualitative case study approach investigated the effects of the forced truancy phenomenon in southeastern Nigeria. Yin (2014) observed that case study methods require rigor and good understanding of the investigated phenomenon for a credible and trustworthy research. As the primary instrument for the study, I interviewed the school principals, teachers, and students, as well as reviewed documents such as the students' attendance and academic records. I used open-ended and unstructured interview techniques for administrators and teachers who have experience and knowledge of truancy problem in their schools. Furthermore, I designed instruments to aid in collecting data from interviews and observations.

### **Definition of Terms**

*At-risk youth:* This term refers to youth exposed to criminal behavior if no intervention is in place to remedy the situation. Most of the at-risk-youths are from poor families and usually live in urban dilapidated neighborhoods.

*Bakassi Boys:* A vigilante group established by a group of traders in Aba Township with the goal of fighting crime and prosecuting offenders caught in the act of committing illegal activities. Members of the group usually carry guns and machetes and often use violence and torture on individuals apprehended while engaging in a criminal act. Their circle of operation is mainly within the southeastern region of Nigeria.

*Chronic truant:* This term refers to the student who frequently abstains from school without permission from the school or parents. A chronic truant is usually referred to the court for further review of his or her attendance record and intervention sanctions if applicable. Most of the youths classified as chronic truants tend to have poor academic performance and are likely to drop out of school.

*Community advocates:* In this study, community advocates are individuals who speak out in defense of youth truants. They ensure preservation of youths' rights and seek all necessary help for the youths through governmental and non-governmental agencies. Youth community advocates are familiar with the law and policy matters related to the rights of the child.

*Community-based:* In this study, community -based refers to youth intervention and prevention programs located within the community in which the individual resides. The agencies within the community collaborate with the family and the school to seek solutions to truancy and the delinquent behavior of the child.

*Court-based:* This is an intervention strategy used by some schools in addressing high-risk youth truants. School administrators refer youths considered chronic truants to the court for further intervention sanctions. The school collaborates with the court and the

youths' family in developing appropriate measures to prevent the youth from engaging in truancy behavior.

*Forced truancy:* In this study, "forced truancy" occurs because of teachers' strike action, unsafe learning environments, and inadequate infrastructures. Students stay out of school during the strike period and are exposed to inadequate school infrastructure and non-committed teachers and administrators. Furthermore, the government is unable to provide a safe learning environment for the students. In addition, forced truancy refers to non-commitment of families, schools, and communities in collaborating to establish programs or strategies for addressing youth truancy and delinquency.

*Habitual truant:* This term refers to a student who has accumulated more than five unexcused absences within a school semester. If the student continues to accumulate additional absences, the school authorities may notify the parents to assist in addressing the situation with their child, and in some cases, the student may be referred to truancy prevention program for treatment and rehabilitation.

*Push-out:* This is a strategy used by some school districts to help problematic students to leave school of their own accord rather than forced removal by the school. The school considers the voluntary withdrawal as a dropout.

*South East Nigeria:* One of the Nigerian's six geopolitical zones that comprises five states, namely, Abia, Anambra, Ebonyi, Enugu, and Imo.

*Strike action:* This term refers to the approach used by teachers for expressing public grievance towards the state and federal governments in Nigeria. The strike action

occurs when the government and teachers' meeting fails to resolve the impasse that hinges primarily on teachers' living wages, outstanding arrears, and other remunerations.

*Transition:* This term refers to moving from one location or level of experience to another. Youth truants have the tendency to relocate because of their truancy problem or poor relationship with their school district.

*Truancy Court Diversion Program (TCDP):* This is a family and school based program that holds the student and parents accountable for the student's truanting or other delinquent behavior. The program aim is not limited to truancy but helps in addressing other social deviant behavior like drug and alcohol abuse (Cahill & Liberman, 2012). Further, Cahill and Liberman noted that TCDP helps in providing information on how to improve parents and child communication, and helps the child to develop their career aspirations and build stronger self-esteem.

*Unobtrusive measure:* A data collection method in which the researcher has no control or influence on the data contained in the report (Frankfort-Nachmias & Nachmias, 2008). A good example of unobtrusive measure is archival records that include public or private documents placed in archives for future reference. A researcher using this record is prohibited from altering or falsifying the records in the document.

*Zero tolerance policy:* This refers to strict anti-social policy used by school district to eliminate all forms criminal or delinquent behavior within the schools in their area.

### **Assumptions**

This study was based on five assumptions, which included the following: first, that punishment is counterproductive in reducing truancy and youth delinquency. Hence, establishing effective truancy reduction program is necessary to curb youth involvement in truancy and other delinquent behaviors. Second, that establishing a partnership with the family, school, community, and the court helps to intervene and prevent truancy and youth delinquency. The partnership and collaboration among the stakeholders can reduce the rate of youth truancy and delinquency in the southeastern region. Third, that providing safe, educational environment with modern technology would improve the quality of education, which will help in reducing truancy and delinquency among the youths. Fourth, that paying teachers' salary on time will motivate and inspire them to commit more time to their profession in order to reduce teachers' absenteeism as well as reducing truancy among the students. Fifth, that government's investment in recreational programs would provide incentives for the youths to engage in skill development activities. Finally, that chronic youth truancy contributes to the high rate of crime and other criminal activities in southeastern Nigeria.

These assumptions are necessary to address some of the problems confronting effective truancy and delinquency reduction among the students in southeastern Nigeria. Detailed study of the assumptions can help to develop strategies for evaluating the impact of teachers' strike on student's truancy and delinquency, as well as their academic performance. Furthermore, the assumptions are necessary from a collaborative stance, so that the rift between the parents and educators can be resolved. According to Trujillo

(2006) and Danforth and Smith (2005), collaborative engagement among the families, the schools, the communities, and the courts will help in reducing youth truancy and delinquency.

### **Scope and Delimitations**

This study examined the impact of forced truancy and youth delinquency in southeastern Nigeria. Ideally, a study of this nature would cover all the secondary schools in the southeastern region, but this was not possible due to time and financial constraints. Therefore, the study focuses on three selected secondary schools in southeastern Nigeria identified with the following pseudonyms: Dorshawn High School, Immerson Secondary School, and Shahana Secondary School. The school selection was based on their unique location and the composition of the students in the area that represents students from all walks of life. Immerson Secondary is a coeducational institution, while Dorshawn Secondary School is girls only, and Shahana High is a boys only school.

The targeted population was senior secondary (SS3) students who have experience and knowledge of truancy and its impact on their academic performance. Excluded from this study were junior secondary students as well as students under 18 years old. The views of the students, teachers, and administrators on forced truancy and delinquent acts are transferable to other secondary schools not covered in this study. Although, the sample size may be small, the knowledge and experience of the participants provided information replicable in other schools in the southeastern region. Similarly, the location of the secondary schools that encompass students from diverse cultures enhances the credibility as well as the transferability of the study.



### **Limitations**

There are many secondary schools in the southeastern region, but only three secondary schools were used for the study. Considering varying opinions that students and teachers may have on forced truancy, transferability of the study can be threatened. Also, my presence during the interview may have created bias in the participants' responses, despite the fact that this study depends on the views of the participants, an issue noted by (Yin, 2009). Yin further observed that field observation might be seen as intrusive and may affect participants' cooperation. The outcome of the study may have been affected by my observational skills. Other methodological weaknesses may have included documentation of data. Not everyone is proficient and articulate in documenting and recording facts. Therefore, inadequate documentation of data may have affected the study. Moreover, documented data may be incomplete or may not be accurate.

To overcome these weaknesses, I made conscientious efforts to develop a quality data collection plan that focused on truancy and its impact on juvenile delinquency; member checking and peer reviewed data were used throughout the field observation. I applied concepts that promote trustworthiness and credibility in my data collection process. Efforts were made to minimize all factors that may have influenced my judgment during the study. Furthermore, I ensured thick description of the phenomenon that helped in eliciting more information. I also provided adequate information that guided my audience in understanding the purpose of the study.

Another approach used in ensuring credibility and trustworthiness is triangulation. Triangulation strategy encourages multiple sources in gathering data (Shank, 2006; Yin,

2009). Using a single source of evidence is not recommended in case study research (Yin, 2009). Utilizing various sources of data is helpful in examining the data in detail to ensure credibility in the study.

### **Significance of the Study**

No society or organization will prosper without designing effective truancy prevention strategies. The situation is difficult in Nigeria in that gang formation and vigilante groups are significant presence in all the six geopolitical zones of Nigeria: OPC in South West, Bakassi Boys in South East, and Egbesu Boys in South-South (Ibrahim, 2007; Meagher, 2010). Ibrahim (2007) noted that the age range of the Bakassi Boys in South East is 16 – 23 years. The study also indicated that 50% of the youth sample did not attend school, 20% attended primary school, and 20% attended secondary school. Bakassi Boys was selected for analysis of this section because the focus of this study is on selected secondary schools in southeastern Nigeria and because the structure of the group involves school age youth that need to attend school to earn their living through legitimate means. Jike (2004) observed that youths tend to rebel against the government as a way of venting their frustration with how the system fails to meet their needs.

Researching this topic provided valuable data that may aid in the formulation of policies that can help to establish best practice approaches for truancy prevention and reduction programs in southeastern Nigeria. Data collected can help develop strategies of allocating resources to address youth truancy and its social and economic effect on the families and the public. Gesinde (2004) observed that, many families are in disarray because of economic crunch/reforms of the present government in Nigeria. The aftermath

of economic hardship may force children to either fend for themselves or contribute to the economic needs of the family at the expense of school attendance (p. 122).

Salaam (2011) posited that rural urban migration has translated to the high rate of unemployment in urban cities because most of the youth are “semiskilled or unskilled” (p. 721). According to Salaam (2011) and Ibrahim (2007), unskilled youths with no stable home wander the streets, and join gangs and vigilante groups to better their lives. This study identified the impact of forced truancy created by frequent teachers’ strike action. The knowledge drawn from this research study may provide additional insights into forced truancy phenomenon, as well as seek solutions to address the increase of student truancy. It also contributes to the body of knowledge needed to explore the effect of forced truancy on and its relationship to the rise of youth criminal behavior in southeastern Nigeria. The research identified the factors that influence youth to lead criminal lives and provide recommendations that may help in minimizing youth criminal behavior, which can be achieved within Hirschi’s theoretical framework of social bonding. Effective implementation of the study objectives can encourage government and non-governmental agencies to formulate better policies to establish rehabilitative and preventive programs for the youth.

Additionally, the study provides insights and perspectives that may help policy makers to establish policies that will encourage parents to assume their responsibilities as parents of delinquent youth. Salaam (2011) indicated that parents abdicate their responsibilities of caring for their children to generate income for the family. Parents’

choice of long hours jobs, which culminates in negligence of their children, affects the parental bonding, support, and a sense of belonging.

### **Social Change Implications**

The social change implication of this study is crucial for these youths forced to engage in truancy and delinquent behavior because of the inability of teachers and government to reach an agreement. Danforth and Smith (2005) posited, “Critical constructive educators seek to help students heal their mind/body” to provide the foundation for social change that will satisfy the desires and aspirations of the students (p. 51). Further, Danforth and Smith (2005) noted that individuals cannot reverse social inequality in society; however, institutional structures established by government and non-governmental agencies can help mitigate inequality. Institutional structures like the United Nations Department of Economic for Social Affairs (2013) advocate social change in society. They advocate change and participate in activities that bring change to disfranchised people of the society. Effective implementation of the issues identified in this study will save the lives of these youngsters who may have been caught in the web of truancy and crime.

Furthermore, this study provides much-needed information to educators and policy makers to formulate policies geared towards eliminating truancy and delinquency among the youth in society. In addition, the study illuminates perspectives for social and economic programs to alleviate the suffering of impoverished youth of the society. The specific areas of social change implications include the following:

**Establishing Home Study Programs for Students**

Students forced to stay at home because of the impasse between the teachers and the state government must be provided with continued educational opportunities. They should not be the victim of the strike action or denied learning or career opportunities.

**Provision of Intervention and Prevention Support Programs**

Students forced into truancy must be connected to truancy intervention and prevention support programs. Receiving such intervention during adolescence can improve a student's school attendance record (Seeley, 2009). Chronic truancy that goes untreated can lead to increasing disadvantage throughout students' lives (Seeley, 2009). For example, if the school or the parents fail to provide intervention strategies to redirect the student, the chances of passing to the next grade level may be difficult.

**Targeting Students With the Greatest Need**

The intervention and prevention strategies target students from low-income families. Poor students and male students have the greatest risk for truancy and continued delinquency behavior. The intervention and prevention programs provide an opportunity to engage these high-risk students in support services that could help reduce and eventually eliminate their truancy behavior to improve their academic performance.

**Encouraging Parental Involvement**

Parental commitment for the educational development of the child should be encouraged for all levels of the child's educational endeavors. Trujillo (2006) contended that parents' involvement in the education of their child improves school attendance. Parents need to cooperate with the school in the process of identifying the causes of

truancy and collaborate in developing strategies for addressing truancy and delinquency activities. According to Seeley (2009), “when parents and school staff join forces to encourage attendance, the outcomes improve significantly” (p. 216). Similarly, Seeley (2009) posited that the conflict that emanates among the parents and the school during truancy conference could be resolved by engaging the services of the community trained volunteers or trained mediators.

### **Establishing Plans to Reduce Teachers’ Absenteeism**

Teachers absenteeism is a factor that influences youths to engage in truancy. According to Banerjee and Duflo (2011), a study of the World Absenteeism in six developing countries indicates that teachers are absent from school “one day of work out of five on average” (p. 98). The question arises concerning how students can learn when the teachers who are supposed to teach and mentor them are frequently absent from school? Developing a coherent strategy to address teachers’ absenteeism is essential to reducing truancy phenomenon in secondary schools in southeastern Nigeria.

### **Summary**

Most researchers and government’s studies have suggested that truancy and juvenile delinquency are endemic problems in Nigerian society and need urgent attention. Addressing this problem minimizes youths’ engagement in criminal behavior, creates pathways to leading law-abiding lives, and eliminates people’s anxiety on safety issues. An effective intervention program is necessary to combat the current gang activities spreading all over Nigeria including the Boko Haram terroristic group that recruits young people for suicide bombings (Salaam, 2011). Understanding the impact of forced truancy

and its effect on juvenile delinquency provides vital information to policy makers to formulate policies that may help to reduce truancy and delinquency among the youths.

In this study, I developed the problem statements and research questions to elicit the knowledge on forced truancy and its impact on juvenile delinquency. In addition, my application of differential association theory, social bond theory, and Merton theory as the theoretical framework that guides the study is crucial. Yin (2009) contended that the benefit of a case study is the technique of collecting data from various sources.

Furthermore, I collected data through interviews, observations, documents, and archival records from students, teachers, and school administrators.

In Chapter 2, I provide detailed literature review on the impacts of truancy and the contextual theoretical tradition that undergirds the research study. Also, I discuss variable dimensional approaches of evaluating truancy, as well as examine different strategies for addressing youth truancy problems.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### **Introduction**

This chapter examines, analyzes, and synthesizes the literature on forced truancy and its impact on youth delinquency. The literature review addresses issues of inadequate educational resources, frequent teachers' strike, insecurity, poverty, and lack of family support, factors that force the students to engage in truancy behavior as well as other criminal activities. The purpose of the study is to investigate forced truancy and its impact on youth involvement in criminal behavior. The problem for researchers is lack of referral data since most of the students' records are rarely updated in their attendance database. Truancy is frequently attributed to students poor academic performance (Claes, Hooghe, & Reeskens, 2009; Hunt & Hopko, 2009; U.S. Department of Education, 2009). Although, truancy is widely recognized as a major form of indiscipline among secondary school students (Henry, Thornberry, & Huizinga, 2009), there is a gap in the literature that exists on students' truancy in southeastern Nigeria. I will explore assumptions that underpin truancy and the current practice in the three secondary schools selected for this study. In this study, I examined, evaluated, and analyzed the theoretical foundations of truancy and delinquency behavior among the youths in secondary schools, in southeastern Nigeria.

Understanding forced truancy, and the government's efforts in combating the phenomenon is essential to determining its economic impact on the citizens in the region. In this chapter, I explained the theoretical foundation of forced truancy and delinquency and look at different dimensions of the problems emanating from forced truancy through



individual, family and school perspectives. The chapter also included other sections and sub-sections such as the factors affecting forced truancy, relationship between truancy and delinquency, and the role of government in addressing the effect of forced truancy and delinquency on the youth.

### **Literature Search Strategy**

In investigating different concepts of youth truancy and their impact on youth delinquency, I reviewed the literature relevant to truancy and youth criminal behaviors. Search key terms included truancy, youth delinquency, school dropout among secondary school students, truancy among secondary school students, delinquency among secondary school students, youth school attendance, youth criminal behavior, teachers' strike in Nigeria, teacher's job action, truancy rehabilitation program, kidnapping in Southeastern Nigeria, Bakassi Boys in Nigeria, social theory and cultural theory.

In addition, I used online library search and local libraries to investigate the truancy phenomenon and the after-effect on school age youth. I utilized online search engines like the Google Scholar, ESBCO, and ProQuest Dissertation in examining literatures relevant to truancy and youth delinquent behavior. Other databases included UNESCO, ERIC, Criminal justice periodicals, and Thoreau.

### **Theoretical Foundation**

Theoretical frameworks that underpin this study include Sutherland's differential association theory, Hirchi's social bond theory, Merton's social structure theory, and Colvin and Pauly's integrated-structural marxist theory. Sutherland's (1970) differential association theory argued that the youth delinquency is learned by association with their

peers. Sutherland further argued that youths who have a strong association with their peers could be influenced to engage in criminal behavior. On a similar note, Hirschi's (1969) social bond theory opined that the youth's attachment, commitment, involvement, and beliefs are the major factors that influence the youth to participate in delinquent activities such as truancy.

In addition, Merton's (1996) social structure theory explained the pressure that institutional social structure places on the people especially on the children from low-income families. Merton's social structure theory provided insights into how the institutional structure has become a barrier to the youth's ability to achieving their goals through legitimate means. Colvin and Pauly's (1983) integrated-structural Marxist theory explained the process that leads to youths' involvement in serious criminal and violent behavior. In this theory, Colvin and Pauly incorporated the elements of Marxist and traditional theories of crime. The theory postulated that capitalist and coercive social class structure is unfavorable to youth from indigent families. According to Colvin and Pauly, youths identified through the IQ and aptitude testing as problem students are placed in lower track level of the class (Regoli, Hewitt, & Delisi, 2010). The theory further argued that students alienated by their parents and their school are prone to being involved in delinquent behavior.

### **Defining and Theorizing Forced Truancy and Delinquency**

Truancy as a term has been defined in different ways across disciplines. For example, one can assume that youth truancy may emanate out of fear of bullies or fear of school discipline for not complying with the school policies. A study on school truancy

indicates “twenty-two percent of bullying victims were excessively absent from school compared to 15% of non-victims” (Gastic, 2010, p. 398). The difference is obvious that the school bullying can deter students from attending school. The fear of being bullied by other students may force the youth to skip school and engage in truancy. There is the trajectory of definitions of truancy by school educators, psychologists, and sociologists. Kearney (2008a, 2008b) defined truancy as a youth absence without the approval or consent of their parents. Zhang, Willson, Katsiyannis, Barrett, Ju, & Wu (2010) defined truancy as a “habitual engagement in an unexcused absence from school” (p. 229). The State of Colorado status law defined truancy as a student who has been absent from school for more than four times per month or has accumulated ten unexcused absences per year (Seeley, Tombari, Bennett, & Dunkle, 2009).

Most governments around the globe emphasize the importance of educating the children and young people although less attention is paid to the problem of youth truancy, especially in the developing countries. According to the World Bank report:

Developing countries, which invest in better education, healthcare, and job training for their record numbers of young people between the ages of 12 and 24 years of age, could produce surging economic growth and sharply reduced poverty. The report indicates that of the 1.5 billion young people 1.3 billion live in developing nations. (World Bank, 2007)

World Bank report further explained that the youth consists of half of the world’s unemployment and most of the youth cannot read or write. Banerjee and Duflo’s (2011) study of education in developing countries asserted that 35 percent of children between

the ages of 7 to 14 could not read a simple paragraph of the first grade level. As most educators and social scientists have observed, truancy is one of the factors that impede youth education and mostly is a factor that leads them into criminal activities. Wagner, Dunkake, and Weiss (2004) asserted that truancy phenomenon has gotten attention of policy makers in developed countries as United States and Great Britain, which is in sharp contrast to policies in most developing countries. Despite the efforts made in combating youth truancy, in these developed countries, more strategies are designed to eliminate truancy in public and private schools. However, in developing nations, little or no attention is paid to youth truancy and delinquency. Atilola (2012) lamented that a quarter of the youth of Sub-Saharan Africa who are vulnerable to the justice system are from Nigeria. Atilola further explained that the school dropout rate of these young people has increased over the past decade. Similarly, Gesinde (2004) noted:

It is a complex and multi-dimensional phenomenon, which cut across race, sex, and rank and of all institutions. The alarming rate at which number of students who engaged in this maladaptive behavior continues to increase on daily basis calls for concerted efforts against the illicit acts. (p. 117)

In Nigeria, for example, a reasonable number of school-aged children prefer to be on the streets than attend school. Aransiola, Bamiwuye, Akinyemi, and Ikuteyijo (2009) observed an increase in the number of children roaming the streets of most urban cities like Lagos, Ibadan, Kaduna, Kano, Enugu, Port Harcourt and Calabar. Some of these children are youth who presumably are supposed to be attending school rather than trading on the street or engaging in other deviant activities. School administrators and

policy decision makers have commented that truancy is a major problem school authorities encounter frequently with their students. In essence, I investigated forced truancy as a problem that arises from family detachment, lack of teachers' commitment, government inaction, and lack of intervention and preventive programs in schools.

Forced truancy can be linked to the government's inability to provide basic infrastructure for a safer learning environment for the students. Further, students learning in dilapidated school structures and unsanitary dormitories can demotivate the youth's interest in attending school. The learning environment can be a powerful tool for teachers to impart knowledge on the students (Kyta, 2006). Kyta added that good learning environment improves the students' engagement in their studies. Studies have shown that providing adequate learning and teaching environment helps in improving the quality of education service (Bailey, 2009).

The school systems depend on teachers' commitment to execute their duties and engage the students to learn and attend school (Adeyemi & Akpotu, 2009). Forced truancy on the part of the students can be attributed to teachers' unexcused absences from school. Adeyemi and Akpotu's survey of teachers' absenteeism in seven states in Nigeria indicated that 9055 teachers were absent from school without permission. Adeyemi and Akpotu (2009) reported that 66.3% of the absent teachers are from the urban area while teachers in the rural areas account for 33.7% of the absences. Although, there is no similar empirical study, the rate of student's truancy and delinquency in the area can be linked to teacher's non-commitment to their duties, and their inability to engage the students to improve school attendance. Even though unreported cases of truancy in

southeastern region are considerably high, efforts geared towards improving education in the area will increase school attendance (Adeyemi & Akpotu, 2009). Effective collaborative efforts on the part of the school, the students, and the parents can help improve students' attendance and at the same time reduce truancy among school age children.

Truancy and youth delinquency have been an issue confronting most governments in developed and developing countries alike. The increase in youths' dropout rate is compounded by incessant teachers' strikes because of non-payment of teachers' wages and other benefits, lack of skill development training, and delayed promotion (Abraham, Ememe, & Egu, 2012). The distrust between the teachers and government authorities can affect teachers' work performance and delivery of quality-learning skills to students.

As indicated, truancy is an endemic problem to parents, teachers, and school administrators, as well as economic burden on the state; however, this study focuses on forced truancy. Forced truancy is defined as unintentional absences from school caused by teachers' strike, lack of educational infrastructures and unsafe educational environment. Teachers' strike is a frequent occurrence in most states in southeastern region because of a prolonged period of working without payment of accrued wages, leave allowance, and other benefits. For instance, Osun State Workers' conflict of 2003, which included teachers was as result of non-implementation of the, "Harmonized Salary Structure (HSS)." The statewide strike action paralyzed most government services and kept the students away from school for a prolonged period (Okotoni & Okotoni, 2003). Frequent teachers' strike action leads to school closures, which demotivates the

students interest in attending school as well as teachers' interest in teaching the students (Iyamu, 2005). Urevbu (as cited in Iyamu, 2005) observed that:

The Nigeria school system in the last 20 years has been overtaken by monumental crises. These include the endless closure of schools due to workers going on strike and students' restiveness; poorly trained poorly paid and poorly motivated teachers; inadequate instructional materials and facilities; lack of basic infrastructure support; examination malpractice; and under funding of education by the government. (p. 97)

School closures as result of teachers' strike action create enormous problem for students and teachers, which impacts learning and teaching of students' curriculum. The effect of teachers' strike action cannot be overstated, Edinyang and Ubi (2013) noted that, "Secondary school education in Nigeria has suffered tremendous setbacks as a result of teachers' strike action" (p. 1). These incessant teachers' strike actions disrupt student academic program and affect their overall academic performance, especially prolonged strike actions. A study by Baker (2011) concluded that teachers' strike actions that last more than 10 days impact students' academic activities as well as their academic performance. The study also revealed that most of the strikes examined exceeded 10 days in that the students found it difficult to adjust to their academic studies. Furthermore, the study found that the news of the pending teachers' strike action may distract both students and teachers thereby affecting the learning and teaching time period.

Government and politicians alike have expressed their intentions to improve standard of education but have failed to develop constructive policies to address the

problem (Iyamu, 2005). Government's inability to provide educational opportunities for school aged children is caused by lack of funding for the school budget, corruption, decaying infrastructures, lack of accessible roads, and insecurity. As a result, most youths prefer to engage in truancy behavior, abscond from school for a long period, and eventually get involved in criminal behavior as evidenced by the incessant kidnapping and killing of innocent citizens in southeastern region and other parts of Nigeria. Although there have been extensive study on youth truancy, there is no evidence of literature on the relationship between forced truancy and the prevalent criminal activities in southeastern region.

### **Use of Punishment to Control Truancy**

As most school districts struggle with the issue of youth truancy and its consequences, policies are being established to address the problem. One of these policies is "zero tolerance," which attracts a severe punishment for students caught violating the school policy (Gage, Sugai, Lunde, & DeLoreto, 2013). Under the zero tolerance policy, school authorities are mandated to apply some form of disciplinary measure on student violator regardless of the gravity of the delinquent behavior (Gage et al. 2013). Critics of the zero tolerance policy comment that minority students and student with behavioral problems were disproportionately represented in the zero tolerance enforcement (American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force, 2008). The zero tolerance task force report also found no evidence that using the policy deterred truancy among students. In fact, the research study suggested that schools using punishment as a measure to curb truancy and youth delinquent behavior tend to encounter more resistance



than those with a firm and fair discipline program. Ovink (2011) argued that there are numerous studies on causes or consequences of truancy behavior, but that little attention has been paid to issues of power exhibited by school authorities that make students lose interest in school. Further, Ovink noted that schools employ some tactics such as “push” to remove difficult or disruptive students from the school (p. 81).

According to the National Center for School Engagement (NCSE) (2007), schools requiring attendance may have the needed justification “to push out students who have attendance problems” (p. 2). The action on the part of the school authorities can force the youth to engage in truancy and other delinquent behaviors. For example, the juvenile court statistics prepared by the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) between 1987 and 1996 showed an increase of 92% on truancy petition filing (NCSE, 2007). Forced truancy can occur within the context of disengagement among family, school, and government authorities. Akinseye-George (2009), writing on Juvenile Justice in Nigeria contended that a better approach to correct a child’s delinquent behavior is through rehabilitation rather than punishment. Akinseye-George maintained that the child offender deserves the best treatment to help reintegrate the child to lead a law-abiding life. Social workers and other juvenile justice professionals should make efforts to work within the justice frameworks to produce the best outcome in rehabilitating the child offender. Trujillo (2006) posited that:

Truant youths are often absent from school for a long time that makes it difficult, if not impossible for them to catch up. Sometimes, this leads to further disengagement from school, from teachers and ultimately can lead to serious anti-

social behavior like juvenile delinquency. The traditional method for disciplining student delinquents is to exclude them. The “push out” method sends a message to struggling students that they are not wanted, ultimately forcing a student’s situation from bad to worse. (p. 70)

Research has shown that there are two schools of thought in this debate on the best approach to address truancy among the youths. The first school believes that enforcement of stringent rules, as a measure of disciplining students is counterproductive because these truant students are barely passing their academic grades. A critical look of this line of thought shows that the social control applied by the government and school authorities is unequal and unjust (Ovink, 2011). The result of enforcing strict discipline is the youth’s avoidance school to engage in truancy behavior.

The second school believes that the enforcement of stringent rules is productive and provides better orientation, less truancy and discipline within the school environment. This school of thought assumes that the “social control structure is just, and truant students are flawed” (Ovink, 2011, p. 81). There are several truancy theories that emphasize healthy attachment to help forge lasting bonding for moral development. By the same reasoning, constructionist pedagogy encourages learning through social interaction with others (Danforth & Smith, 2005).

### **The Basis of Forced Truancy**

Forced truancy can be derived from socio-economic and political normative values. The social implication of family detachment contributes to truancy behavior. These students have their needs that require parents’ attention. For example, the student

may have a need to change their school clothes or sneakers, which may not be met by indigent parents. These parents may not have the money or the resources to acquire new school clothes or sneakers for their children. Parents' inability to provide their child's need may spur a revolt against them; the students may refuse to attend school; some of them may prefer to engage in drug and alcohol abuse as well as other delinquent acts. Although the students may exhibit unacceptable anti-social behaviors, the reality is that students from poor families tend to revolt against their parents. Igwe (2013) observed that some of the students leave their home under the pretext of attending school while they aimlessly roam the street. Olanrewaju and Akano (2011) described truancy as a "cankerworm that has been destroying many students, irrespective of gender" (p. 13). In addition, truancy is a habitual behavior that has taken root in the lives of the students, because of their non-commitment and lack of interest towards education. The authors maintained that truancy has contributed to increase in students' failure in their internal and external examinations, and most of them are unable to graduate or receive credit for classes attended. Furthermore, Olanrewaju and Akano noted that Nigerian Educational system has no sanctions or established policies for students' truancy.

Zhang et al. (2010) posited that the youth born in low income and drug abusive families show little or no interest in attending school. Zhang et al. observed that families from high socioeconomic status tend to pay close attention to their children's education than low-income families. For example, children from affluent families attend pre-school that prepare them at an early stage for their future academic studies, unlike children from poor families. According to Zhang et al., habitual truants often encounter serious

problems in achieving their educational goals such as completing high school and pursuing college education. Furthermore, Zhang et al. observed that students who miss school tend to engage in delinquent activities than non-truant students. On a call for action regarding the alarming rate of indiscipline among secondary school students, Asiyai (2012) lamented that:

To eliminate indiscipline in schools, school administrators, teachers, parents and the general public need to collaborate to identify problems and address the issue. Nigeria cannot remain complacent when large human and material resources are wasted, indiscipline is rampant, atmosphere of insecurity, frustration, and instability are created in schools leading to ineffective learning. (p. 41)

### **An Emphasis of Truancy on Relationship and Culture**

The effect of truancy affects the relationship between youths and the cultural fabric of the society. It affects the relationship the youths have with their family, school, and society. The social control theory (Hirschi, 1969) emphasized the family as the reference point of emotional attachment for youth. The family setting is the primary institution of socialization for the youngsters to formulate their social skills (Wagner, Dunkake, & Weiss, 2004). The social constructivist posited that the school environment is where most interactions occur (Danforth & Smith, 2005). The school provides the setting in which students can learn appropriate culture, exchange meaningful information with others, and interact with their peers. According to Danforth and Smith (2005), students should study the culture, “As students begin to understand that there are many worlds of meaning” (p. 43). Youth truancy tends to influence their relationship with their

peers, teachers and school administrators (Danforth & Smith, 2005). In contrast, most teachers as well as school administrators believe that the youth's relationship with their families contributes to their truancy behavior (Yeide & Kobrin, 2009; Messacar & Oreopoulos, 2013). There are no clear answers to youth truanting behavior; however, a constructive dialogue between the family and the school may help in addressing the problem.

### **Theoretical Context of Youth Truancy and Delinquency**

Interpretive constructionist argues that it is important to understand people's worldview and how they interpret the meaning of what they encounter (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). This study grounded in Sutherland's differential theory, Hirschi's social bond theory, and Merton's social structure theory, will aid in explaining the complexities of forced truancy in the selected secondary schools, in southeastern Nigeria. Truancy is a phenomenon that the youths often engage in to skip school and which makes them to prefer partaking in other delinquent activities. In his contribution, Reid (2010) highlighted the difficulty in calculating school attendance in most developed countries like USA, UK, Canada, and France. Further, Lindstadt (2005) opined that there is no universally accepted definition for truancy by schools and the state. Despite the variations in calculating school attendance, Reid (2010) remarked that the efforts made by school administrators and other professionals have not helped in ameliorating the problem of school truancy. Research has shown that truancy is a gateway to youth's involvement in delinquent behavior (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP)

2009; Reid, 2010; Trujillo, 2006). US Department of Education's (USDOE) (2009) study indicated that the average "five of every 100 high school drop out-of-school" (p. 213).

To understand the impact of truancy in southeastern region, it is important to apply some insights and perspectives of Juvenile Justice Administrations in Nigeria case. Considering the location of the selected secondary schools for this study, there is an increase of truancy and youth delinquency in the region. While truancy is widely acknowledged as a problem that has been destroying many students, irrespective of gender, this study will share the perspectives and insights on the factors that influence youth truancy and delinquency. Youth truancy behavior is attributed to various factors, and prominent among them are the biological and environmental factors (Onu, Eskay, Hassan, Leonard, & Igbo, 2012). Sometimes the youth are influenced by the environment they live in, based on what they perceive or what the culture presents at the moment (Onu et al., 2012). As noted by Fourchard (2006) during the colonial era, there was massive migration of Nigerian youth to urban cities like Lagos, Ibadan, and Kano, which led to increase in unemployment as well as increase in criminal activities. The environmental culture to migrate to the cities for better employment was a factor that influences the youth at the time.

According to Fourchard, most of these urban immigrants are young male that dropped out of school, leaving their parental homes for life in the city in quest of greener pastures. Although the research on truancy may be at its infancy in the Nigeria society, this study examines three selected secondary schools in southeastern Nigeria to evaluate the prevalence of forced truancy and its impact on youth criminal activities. To obtain the

relevant data for this study, I evaluated this phenomenon in three different theoretical dimensions, which include student, family, and school.

### **Student Dimension**

A variety of factors may influence a youth to engage in truancy behavior, which includes lack of personal and educational ambition, poor academic performance, gang involvement, mental problem, peer pressure, and dislike for school (OJJDP, 2009). When students begin school, they are faced with social factors that may lead to anxiety (Casoli-Reardon, Rappaport, Kulick, & Reinfeld, 2012). These social factors sometimes affect the students' ability to participate actively in school activities. Students who encounter such a problem may find it difficult to focus on their studies and complete their course assignments. Students' mental state can manifest in school attendance and academic performance.

Student may have a phobia of rejection or feeling of isolation that may make them vulnerable to bullying by other students (Casoli-Reardon, Rappaport, Kulick, & Reinfeld, 2012). Bullying may cause the students to fall behind in academic performance, and finally begin to lose interest in attending school. To overcome fear, Igwe (2013) suggested that there is the need to provide counseling services for students that are encountering these problems. According to Igwe, counseling services potentially enhance the student's efforts to complete the academic program, and provide the individual with an opportunity for a productive life in society. Another important factor is the student's relationship with the teachers and school administrators. Lack of interest and dedication on the part of the teachers triggers the student's apathy towards schooling (Igwe, 2013).

It is also important to note the effect of drug and alcohol abuse on youth truancy. Zhang et al. (2007) contended that youth substance abuse might influence their decision to attend school. According to Zhang et al., abusing drug and alcohol impairs their judgment and affects their social skills. Similarly, Corbett and Moon (2010) noted the national study of youth substance abuse. The study indicated that 17.6% of the youth between ages 12 and 17 admitted using drugs. A similar study showed that 47.1% of youth in 9th and 12th grades have used alcohol (Corbett & Moon, 2010). Most of the youth delinquency involving a violent act or aggressive behavior may be linked to substance abuse (Corbett & Moon, 2010). Youth addiction to substance abuse exposes them to other criminal behaviors such as gang fighting and aggravated assault.

### **Family Dimension**

Family upbringing plays an important role in raising a child. Also, truancy, school dropouts, and delinquency are disturbing issues confronting parents and teachers alike (Wilson, Malcolm, Edward, & Davidson, 2008). Children tend to perform better in their education when parents monitor their grades, homework and other school assignments (Lawrence, Lawther, Jennison, & Hightower, 2011). Children, as well as the youth, depend on their families to provide them with shelter and foundation for quality education. Parents' participation increases the probability of the students' academic success. However, Igwe (2013) and Gesinde (2004) noted that parental neglect is a factor that demotivates youth to attend school; some parents prefer their children to trade on the street to make a living to attending school. Some youths have neither cordial relationship



with, nor love affection for their parents and may eventually force the youth to engage in truancy and other criminal behaviors (Gesinde, 2004).

Gesinde (2004) enumerated other factors that might influence the youth truant behaviors, which include excessive discipline, frequent “family conflict and disorganization” (p. 118). A research study conducted by Nwankwo et al. (2010) posited that truancy is the third major prevalent anti-social behavior among the youths. According to Nwankwo et al. although the youth revolt against their parents by staying out of school, others perceive it as another way to vent their anger and frustration. Some of these frustrations may emanate from lack of financial assistance to fund their education, which may result in the youths decision to stop attending classes. In addition, poor relationship between parents and school, especially schools that have too weak or too rigid policies, is another important factor (Gesinde, 2004).

### **School Dimension**

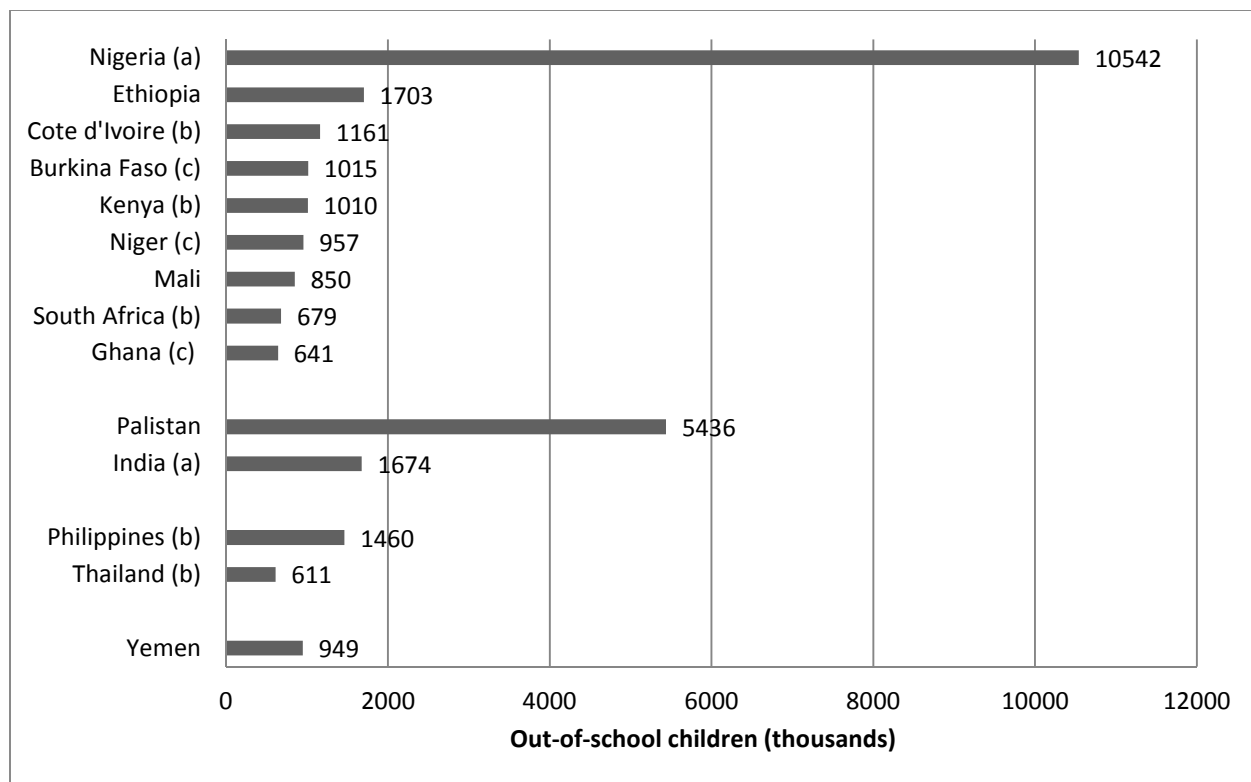
School policies and practices can unintentionally alienate students who have the tendencies to engage in truancy behavior (Losen, 2011). The school may react with a suspension or expulsion of the student, which can exacerbate truancy and delinquency among students in southeastern region. However, student and teacher relationship may encourage the students to embrace school. The role of the teacher is paramount in developing quality education in any nation. Teachers are expected to impart their knowledge and work force development in students (Abraham, Ememe, & Egu, 2012). Abraham et al. contended that providing quality education is the responsibility of the teachers, trained to teach and transfer their knowledge to students for positive realization

of educational policies. Teachers inculcate their skills, value and knowledge in the students as leaders. In southeastern area, teachers' apathy and poor relationship between the students and the teachers are factors that can discourage the youth from attending school.

There are other factors that affect youth truancy in southeastern Nigeria, which include teacher's dissatisfaction on their job compared to other professions. Most teachers complain about the lack of reasonable wage and unfavorable work conditions. The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), noted that developing nations spend an average of 25% of their annual budget on education. For example, Nigeria spends an average of 10% of its annual budget on education. As shown in Table 3 joint report prepared by UNESCO Institute for Statistics and Education for all Global Monitoring Report (EFAGMR) (2013), indicated that Nigeria has over 10.5 million out of schoolchildren, which is highest among the developing nations. The report also showed that four countries in the Africa region, which includes Burkina Faso, Cote d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, and Nigeria, have more than one million children out of school (UNESCO & EFAGMR, 2013). Furthermore, the report indicated that South Asia countries like India and Pakistan and West Asian countries such as Thailand and Philippines have made considerable efforts in reducing their dropout rates.

Table 3

*Number of out-of-school children by region, 2000-2011*



Source: UNESCO Institute for Statistics database, 2013

Notes: (a) refers to data from 2010, (b) to data from (2009), (c) refers to data from 2012.

The meager budget on education explains why it will be difficult for the government to provide basic amenities needed to create 21st century academic environment. For the same reason, providing adequate training and instructional materials will be hard to achieve, considering the small amount appropriated for education in Nigeria. Asita (2012) observed that the lack of instructional time for students affects the student and the society. It also affects the student academic performance. According to Abraham et al. (2012), teachers in Nigeria express their dissatisfaction about not earning a living wage compared to their counterparts in other professions.

Teachers on their part blame the government for late payment of salaries and allowances, poor working conditions, poor salary structure, lack of incentives, and poor motivation that lead to job dissatisfaction. The Nigeria Union of Teachers (NUT) has used strike actions to agitate for salary increase and better conditions of service. The non-professionalization of teaching has also compounded the problem of teachers, as teachers do not receive the same treatment as their counterparts in other professions who have better salary structure and conditions of service (Abraham et al., 2012, p. 2).

It is evident that teachers' dissatisfaction and low morale might affect the student's school attendance. When the teachers are not paid equitable wage salary, this result in frequent strikes. Also poor working environment that affect their desire to teach and motivate the students. Students in most public schools lose study time because of teacher's absenteeism and truancy during school period (Abraham et al., 2012).

### **Factors Affecting Truancy and Delinquency**

Research has shown that truancy is a strong predictor of youth involvement in delinquent behaviors (Seeley, 2009; Trujillo, 2006; OJJPD, 2009). There is a growing body of research on how to improve graduation in elementary and secondary schools in our society for better academic performance (Messacar & Oreopoulos, 2013). To achieve a sustainable academic growth, government, teachers as well as school administrators need to identify some of the factors hindering high rate of academic achievement. Identifying these factors is imperative to helping to keep the students engaged in school to minimize social deviant behaviors such as truancy, school dropout, and absenteeism (Messacar & Oreopoulos, 2013). There are three variables affecting youth truancy and

delinquency in southeastern region explored in this section - These variables include economic, sociological, and psychological factors.

### **Economic Factors**

Youth truancy and its economic impact weigh heavily on the school budget and are costly to the society. Truancy is an early warning that students may drop out of school to engage in other delinquent activities such as substance abuse or entertain suicidal thoughts (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2009). Combating youth truancy is costly and can put unbearable financial burden on the state and the society (Heilbrunn, 2005). According to Heilbrunn, the average cost of a secondary student who dropped out of school is \$200,000. Youth truancy creates and exacerbates economic hardship on parents and the public. Most of these parents frequently abstain from work to attend to school administrative hearing on issues related to their children's attendance or truancy related matters (National Center for School Engagement, 2005). These factors might contribute to parents' loss of income since they have to take time off work to attend their children's school activities (Heilbrunn, 2005). Lawrence et al. (2012) posited, "Parents that work long hours cannot monitor attendance" (p. 60). Research has shown that parents from higher socioeconomic status (SES) tend to be more involved in their children education compared to parents from lower economic status (Lawrence et al., 2012). Gesinde (2004) lamented the adverse impact of youth truancy and the students' refusal to acquire education, which is tantamount to waste of economic resources. Dittimiya (2001) opined that;

Truancy among students has greatly affected the development of human resources needed for social and economic transformation of society. ... truancy is a destructive and undeserving element of progress, training or mode of life. It is an impediment to national development. Truancy allows students to pervert the whole aim of education, examination, and public morality it does not encourage development rather it retards progress of the school and the entire society. (p. 11)

According to Sanni, Udoh, Okediji, Modo, and Ezeh (2010), the problem of juvenile delinquency in secondary schools should be a concern to parents, school and government authorities. Sanni et al. laments that the school and the government's war against youth delinquency is gradually losing grounds. Truants wander the streets during school time, and some of them tend to engage in shoplifting, vandalism, bullying, and burglary (Sanni et al., 2010). Furthermore, students may have other factors that can impede their desire to attend school. For example, Olagunju (2012) observed that the youths in the South East of Nigeria have no desire to attend school since after their education there are no prospects of employment to fend for themselves and their families.

Further, Olagunju contended that, in other parts of Nigeria, there is a large population of youth who drop out of school to join vigilante groups in urban cities like Aba, Lagos, Kaduna, and Port Harcourt. The consequence is that the youths are forced to engage in truancy and other delinquent behaviors for economic reasons at the expense of school (Lawrence et al., 2012; Zhang, 2007). Movement of the youth from one location to another tends to affect their school attendance.

Teachers' commitment in their students' education plays an important role in encouraging them to attend school. For example, teacher's residential proximity to the school provides social and academic support for the students (Lawrence et al., 2012). Teachers, as well as students' residential location are essential in considering the poor road network and lack of transportation in some parts of the town.

### **Sociological Factors**

Examining truancy from a sociological lens provided more insights and perspectives to the study. The social implications of youth truancy weigh heavily on the family as well as the public. The prevalence of youth truancy in southeastern Nigeria is a social menace that needs concerted efforts from school administrators, teachers, parents and government officials. Asiyai (2012) observed, "Public accountability presupposes that schools are places that turn out productive and useful school leaver" (p. 40). Research studies indicated that adolescents are likely to get more involved in antisocial behavior; however, boys commit more delinquent acts than girls (Mooij, Smeets, & de Wit, 2011). When students attend school regularly, they tend to improve their academic performance, which minimize their chances of engaging in delinquent activities.

Peer pressure is a major factor that influences most youth to engage in truant behavior (Mooij et al., 2011). According to Mooij et al., the prevalence of peer anti-social behavior is a factor that influences the youth to partake in drug using, buying, or acquisition of weapon. Further, Mooij et al. contended that the frequency of violence might lead to high rate of insecurity for students in a school setting. This violence may discourage student from attending school. Mooij et al. maintained that schools in urban

cities tend to experience more criminal activities than those in rural areas. Furthermore, Mooij et al. added that the teachers that work in these urban cities experience activities that are criminal in nature, compounded by the high rate of unemployment among the youth and the apathy toward education (Banerjee & Duflo, 2011). Henry (2010) postulated that truancy exposes the youth to drug and alcohol abuse. He indicated that the absence of “adult authoritative figure” might make it difficult to make the drug user to comply with acceptable social norm (p. 651).

Another major factor that affects youth truancy is bullying. Cazbah’s study in Wales indicated that bullying is a common concern that discourages students from attending school (Cazbah, 2008). Reid (2010) emphasized the negative impact of bullying on students’ truancy. According to Reid, the frequency of bullying has given rise to truancy, which eventually causes victimized students to drop out of school. The “Psychosocial effects of being bullied and behavioral outcomes...” is a concern in the minds of the bullied students (Gastic, 2008, p. 393). It is also apparent that parents use school bullying as a justification for their child’s truancy behavior during the court trial (Reid, 2010). Bullying can manifest in different forms, such as manipulation of one’s peers to gain advantage in an argument or issue of interest (Raby, 2013). Although the victimization of these students sometimes goes un-noticed by school authorities, efforts should be made to create awareness about bullying among the students to explain its impact on youth truancy.



### **Psychological Factors**

Youth truancy and delinquency is influenced by the prevailing emotional problem that prevents the child from performing and showing strong interest in attending school. DobleGist (2013) noted that children undergo parental neglect and abuse at home. Some of the youth may suffer from physical and mental ill health, which may prevent the youth from attending school (Onu, Michael, Comfort, Ugwuanyi, & Igbo, 2012). Students who sustain physical injury can elect to abstain from school for some time depending on the severity of the injury. Onu et al. also postulated that mental illness such as “anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, and antisocial disorder” could discourage the youth from attending school (p. 161). Students who suffer from such ill health will encounter some difficulties attending school and adjusting to other social challenges (Reid, 2010).

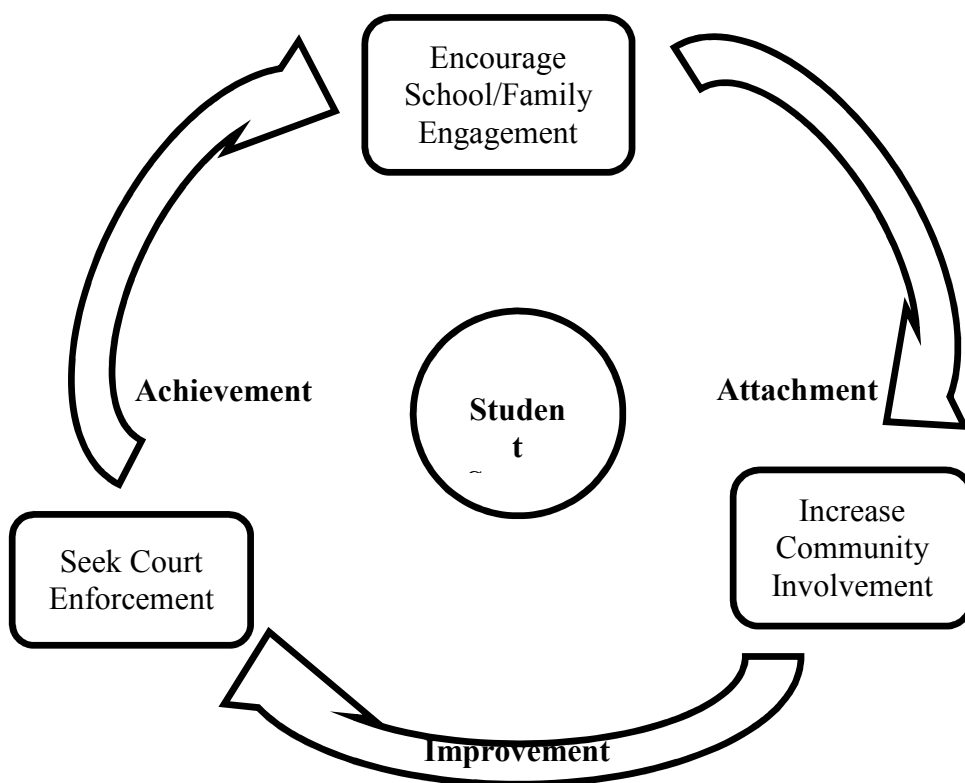
### **Truancy Reduction Strategies**

A research study conducted by Bye, Shepard, Partridge, and Alvarez (2009) suggested that the prevention and intervention strategies can be helpful in addressing school attendance. Bazemore, Stinchcomb, & Leip (2004) contended that truancy intervention should be comprehensive in nature, involving research on families, communities, school, and the students. Ingram and Schneider (cited in Bazemore et al., 2004) suggested that truancy intervention is influenced by two “policy lenses,” which include the “social welfare lens” and the “crime control lens” (p. 275). Social welfare lens focuses on the social and emotional problems the truant student may encounter in terms of developing grade level cognitive skills and other learning disabilities, while the crime control lens emphasizes the role of truancy as an indicator for the youth

involvement in criminal activities (Bazemore et al., 2004). To explore these social and emotional problems, truancy reduction strategies focused on the issues that motivate youths to engage in truant behavior, and delinquency can be addressed in three different methods: school-based, community-based, and court-based programs.

**School-Based Strategy**

The role of the school is to educate the children and provide a safe learning environment to all students (Reid, 2010). Reid observed that disruptive truants could create unsafe learning environment for students and teachers. Developing a comprehensive school-based strategy can encourage these young students to refocus their minds on their studies and improve school attendance. There have been numerous



*Figure 1.* Wrap around collaborative strategies for youth academic success

research efforts in developed countries like United States and United Kingdom toward improving school attendance (Reid, 2010; Wagner, Dunkake, & Weiss, 2004).

Considering the existing phenomenon of youths truancy in southeastern Nigeria, which many assume to be a factor for the high rate of street crime and youth delinquency, it is imperative that schools explore strategies that may help to engage the families in order to address their child's school attendance problem. Schools that engage families at an early stage of the child's truanting behavior may serve as an intervention mechanism that can prevent the child from becoming a chronic truant.

Establishing school-based mentoring programs will afford students the opportunity to receive on-site assistance that will benefit the student, the family and the school. Encouraging mentoring services in schools can provide support for the development of the child to grow to be a non-truant and law-abiding youth. According to Seeley (2009), most schools identify truancy as one of the three main reasons students receive suspension in school. Yiede and Kobrin (2009) suggested that engaging the students during the period of transition has a chance of reducing anxiety and reengaging the student to focus more on academic work. The authors described the transition as the time of "moving to a new home and school, beginning a new year of school, graduation from elementary to middle school and from middle school to high school, and reentry from absences" (Yiede & Kobrin, 2009, para. 26). Most schools spend a considerable amount of their school budget in fighting truancy and establishing strategies to prevent and reduce truancy and school dropout.

### **Community-Based Strategy**

Student's school dropout is a social problem that will affect not only the child and the parents, but also may affect the community. Developing a community strategy to curb truancy is necessary considering the negative impact of youth truancy in the community. Jacob (2006) observed that for social order to exist, "the community must uphold common goals" (p. 6). A Community working together to upholding a common goal is necessary for formulating policies and strategies that will help in fighting juvenile deviant behaviors such as truancy and school dropout. As some of the studies indicated, torture or incarceration of youths offenders may be counterproductive towards the efforts to reduce juvenile delinquency (OJJDP, 2009). Raby (2013), arguing on the school perspective, maintained that suspending or removing a problem child may be counterproductive in reducing delinquent acts. Community efforts in rehabilitating the offender play important role in addressing youth truancy and delinquency. For example, Colorado Project Plan establishes "community advocates" that work closely with the family, the school, and the court to ensure that the juvenile attends school, as well as comply with other school policies (Seeley, 2009). In addition, Seeley asserted that the community advocate could advise the court for further action against the juvenile as well as the juvenile's parents if the juvenile is cited for unexcused absences.

One example of community base programs that have made a positive impact in reducing truancy is the Project Respect in Pueblo, Colorado. The program uses community advocates that monitor the youth to ensure compliance, as well as work between the truancy court and the school district (Seeley, 2009). According to Seeley,

Project Respect made significant improvement in terms of school attendance and students' academic performance. It will also be noted that the changes that come along with community-based or inter-agency programs have not been that easy to implement in some areas (Reid, 2010). For example, (Ovink, 2011) observed that Midvale Truancy Center (MTC) was established as a school as well as a detention center for truancy youth. MTC detains the youth loitering on the streets during school hours and transports them to the center. According to Ovink, MTC focuses more on punishment and enforces the truancy laws than ensuring the students' education.

### **Court-Based Strategy**

In this section, I reviewed the role of court-based program in regards to youth truancy prevention and intervention. Although no research study was identified to have led to court-based truancy program in southeastern Nigeria, there are related studies in other parts of the world that one can reference to illuminate and explore various aspects of the program. Even though truancy has not gotten the attention it deserves in Nigeria compared to other countries of the world, it is equally important to review the benefits and the shortcomings of court-based truancy intervention and prevention program. In the United States, for example, states like Colorado, Kansas, Washington, and Texas have Truancy Court Diversionary Program (TCDP) designed to help rehabilitate at-risk truants (Cahill & Liberman, 2012).

Judge Joan Byer first established this program in response to increase of truancy in the area and the ineffectiveness of the Louisville, Kentucky Truancy Court (Hendricks, Sale, Evans, & McKinley, 2010). TCDP is a family based program that seeks to engage

family and the student for accountability and responsibility for the child's school attendance behavior and compliance (Cahill & Liberman, 2012). According to Cahill and Liberman, TCDP places judges with families in a non-adversarial role, and help to uncover and overcome major barriers to success. The judges' authority is intended to encourage youths and parents to participate in the program, regularly attend the program, and work to improve students' attendance. The judges' participation is also intended to help youths and parents to see judges in a nonthreatening way, to understand that judges do "get it," and to advocate necessary services on their behalf.

TCDP has weekly-individualized plan that supports parents' involvement in developing a plan for their child (Hendricks et al., 2010). The program is voluntary for students involved in chronic truancy and their parents with collaboration of the Family Court (Cahill & Liberman, 2012). The purpose of TCDP is to work in collaboration with the student, the parents, and the community to address the issues influencing the juvenile to be a chronic truant. Cahill and Liberman posited that TCDP serves as a source of motivation for the juvenile and discusses barriers that hinder the child from overcoming the challenges of truancy. In Spokane County, Washington, the juvenile court collaborates with family, school, community, and the student with the aim of broaching the truancy problem in their school district (Johnson, Wright, & Strand, 2012).

The four truancy reduction programs in Table 4 share a common goal, which is to reduce truancy among the students and increase school attendance. Implementation of a similar program will aid in addressing truancy problem in secondary schools in the Southeastern region. The program will also assist students from low-income families that

may not afford the exorbitant cost of private institutions or private tutor during teachers' strike action. Additionally, the success of the program depends on the collaborative efforts of the stakeholders that include the school, parents, communities, and courts.

Table 4

*Truancy Reduction Program*

<b>Pueblo, Colorado</b>	<b>Isanti County, Minnesota</b>	<b>King County, Washington</b>	<b>Houston, Texas</b>
Program Description: 1. Identify the causes of truancy 2. Implement effective intervention program to provide educational programs 3. Increase student and family access to services in the community 4. Decrease juvenile delinquency and recidivism	1. Program Description: Pre-truancy intervention for all students 9 – 12 2. Primarily Caucasians, ages 14 to 18 Case Management: 1. The probation Caseload of 5 to 15 juveniles 2. The Truancy Intervention Caseload includes all students in the high school	Program Description: 1. Attendance Workshops 2. Community Truancy Board 3. Four case managers serve youth and families 4. Becca Court in two sites in King County 5. Youth R.E.A.C.H.: Three-tiered graduated diversion & intervention program	Program Description: 1. Comprehensive Public Awareness and education Outreach program 2. Early identification Assessment and intervention Case Management Services 3. Juvenile and Parental Accountability for Truancy

*Notes.* The Becca Law established in Washington State in honor of Rebecca Hedman, who was murdered in Spokane while she was a truant in 1993. Adapted from National Center for School Engagement, 2007.

### **The Role of Government Regarding Forced Truancy**

Government has a responsibility to ensure that every child has the right to quality and affordable education. Article 28 of UNICEF's ratified Right of the Child provides that:

All children have the right to primary education, which should be free. Wealthy countries should help poorer countries achieve this right. Discipline in schools

should respect children's dignity. For children to benefit from education, schools must be run in an orderly way – without the use of violence, UNICEF (2013).

According to Seeley (2009) and Trujillo (2006), chronic truants have a greater chance of committing delinquent acts. Rochester Youth Study indicated that students who abstain from classes are four times more likely to commit assault crime than non-abstainers (Seeley, 2009). Understanding these risk factors will provide insights into youths involvement in these criminal behaviors. Research studies on youth truancy have shown that truancy is an ubiquitous nuisance in most school districts and poses a major challenge to school administrators and education policy makers. Chronic truancy is widespread and is considered a status offense in most states in the United States (Gage, Sugai, Lunde, & DeLoreto, 2013). Students' poor attendance has effect on their academic performance and sometimes leads to chronic truancy behavior: "Recent research in Chicago and Philadelphia has documented that poor attendance is a primary driver of course failure in the secondary grades and that course failure is at the root of high dropout rates" (Balfanz et al., 2008, p 1). When students miss class instructions and class assignments their chances of catching up with other class work are reduced, and teachers may have no time to help the truant student.

Most governments in developed countries expend a reasonable amount of their resources on fighting students' attendance problem, truancy and other delinquent acts in schools (Waldfoegel, Garfinkel, & Kelly, 2007). Government uses the court system, the law enforcement officers and truant hearing officers to compel the students and families to comply with a court order, contrary to the situation in developing countries. The Child



Rights Act (CRA) mandates the local, state, and federal governments to provide free education to all children. Unfortunately, the success of the CRA mandate is yet to be seen, considering the high rate of youth truancy and delinquency in southeastern region and other parts of the country. The inability of the state government authorities to provide safe and conducive environment for learning contributes to youths' abandoning school to join gangs and vigilante groups.

### **Cost of Truancy**

The time and financial resources invested in fighting truancy outweighs the cost of implementing truancy prevention and intervention program (Trujillo, 2006). According to Trujillo, truancy has an adverse effect on the student, family, school, and community. The cost of developing truancy reduction programs is minimal compared to the financial burden of enforcing truancy laws in the society, which may involve more truant officers in the schools as well as police officers needed to arrest and prosecute the truant youth. Many research studies have shown that encouraging high school graduation can benefit the students as well as the school and society. Rouse (2007) observed that the high school graduates obtain employment and pay taxes to improve the economy, contrary to high school dropouts that may remain unemployed and depend on government's welfare services. Muennig (2007) asserted that high school graduates save the US taxpayers an average of \$39,000 in health care cost over a lifetime from age 20. Similarly, Moretti (2007) emphasized the need and benefit of encouraging high school students to complete their education. According to Moretti, increasing the rate of high school graduates may reduce the cost of fighting crime and add billion dollars of wage-

related income to the economy. Waldfogel, Garfinkel, and Kelly (2007) contended that poor education puts huge financial burden on taxpayers. The authors opined that single-mother high school graduates are 24 to 50 percent less likely to depend on welfare service than high school dropouts are.

In Nigeria, for example, the cost of truancy is enormous when juxtaposed with the cost in developed countries. Some of these costs are attributed to teachers' indifference to education. Students' education depends on teachers' commitment and willingness to teach and follow through on educational programs (Adeyemi & Akpotu, 2009). According to Adeyemi and Akpotu (2009), teachers frequently use unauthorized absences because of lack of motivation and lack of job satisfaction. In fact, teachers are compelled to teach in overcrowded and dilapidated classrooms (Adeyemi & Akpotu, 2009). A study conducted between 1997 and 1999 indicated the cost of teacher's unauthorized absenteeism in Nigeria secondary schools is N56 million naira (Nigeria Currency) equivalent to (US \$800,018) at N70/\$1 the prevailing exchange rate at the time.

Comparing this trend with schools in developed nations like USA, schools may lose state and federal funding based on attendance and academic performance (OJJDP, 2009; Trujillo, 2006). The funding can have a major effect on the school's budget and may affect the implementation of special programs such as truancy reduction, before and aftercare, and other school-based and community-based programs. The high rate of teachers' absenteeism is a problem that needs the cooperation of school administrators and education policy makers. If teacher's absenteeism is allowed to persist, it will

demoralize the youth attending school and may further encourage the youth to abstain from school.

### **Review of Theoretical Foundations and Methods**

In this section, I reviewed and analyzed the theoretical framework and the methods that guided the study.

#### **Review of theoretical foundations**

This study focuses on the impact of truancy, school dropout, and other family related issues as a major influence on youths' delinquency in southeastern Nigeria. Family characteristics such as lack of parenting or monitoring, family criminal behavior, excessive discipline, parents' conflict, family rejection, are some of the factors that may influence juvenile delinquent behavior (Sanni, Udoh, Okediji, Modo, & Ezeh, 2010). Onu et al., (2012) opined that family life of the youth determines their willingness to attend school. Using social bond theory, juveniles that have social institutional support are less likely to engage in delinquent acts (Hirschi, 1969). Proper understanding of truancy phenomenon and its impact on family and society helps in guiding the research and providing relevant information crucial to the problem.

As indicated earlier that the intent of this study is to determine the factors influencing youth truancy and delinquent acts. This research study helps in understanding why youths violate the rules and policies of their school district as well as the laws of the state and organization. The research also explores other factors that might minimize youths' delinquent activities in southeastern region. The role of social institutional support system like families, schools, and communities will be evaluated to ascertain its

importance in redirecting the youth delinquent behavior. Understanding these factors, one needs to know the risk factors that influence the students to engage in truancy and delinquent acts. Most researchers have identified substance abuse, school dropout and family breakdown as major factors that influence youth delinquency (Seeley, 2008).

The aim of the research is to look at the ultimate outcome of truancy, whether the youths proceed to live a law-abiding life or get involve in gang and other criminal activities. We must look beyond the statistical measurable outcome of the truant, but focus more on the numerous factors that force the students to engage in truancy and delinquent behavior. How can malnourished students focus in class and complete other class assignments? What can a student who has no money to acquire the needed textbooks, has no money for school clothing, and has no money to pay tuition and other fees do to overcome these challenges and comply with the school's attendance policies and guidelines? Additionally, what can the student do to overcome the apathy among the teachers due to nonpayment of wages and other compensations? How can the student focus and learn in overcrowded classrooms? Moreover, how can the student overcome the challenges of learning in unsafe dilapidated school buildings with no efficient air condition, inoperable electrical system, and poor sanitation? These issues need the attention of the administrators and the government policy makers.

The stated theories have provided insights into how the economic deprivation and social structure can force students to engage in truancy, violent crime, and other delinquent acts. The theories also illustrate how the social status of families can affect their children's education in a negative way.

## **Review of Methods**

Qualitative case study research approach is essential in examining complex situations and exploring solutions for addressing the problem (Stake, 2006). Case study tradition is acceptable in many disciplines, hence its popularity among social scientists. Stake opined that a prerequisite for a case study is for the researcher to understand the case. Merriam (2009) noted that case study paradigm has three characteristic lenses, which include the “particularistic” lens, stating that the case study focuses on a particular “situation, event, program, or phenomenon” (p. 29). Using a case study approach, the researcher can take a specific interest in a phenomenon or event with a holistic approach in addressing the problem. The “descriptive lens” aims at providing thick description of a phenomenon or an event’s problem. According to Stake (2006), the description has to be qualitative in nature rather than quantitative methods that involve statistical data. Finally, the “heuristic lens” provides insights and perspectives for people to understand the phenomenon under study. Heuristic approach seeks diverse ideas that may emerge from the analysis of the case study.

To expatiate this issue of truancy and its effect on youth delinquency, it is necessary to understand the effect of naturalist paradigms that guide the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Lincoln and Guba described positivist as a concept that is operationally laden, shallow with facts, focuses more on theory with little or no efforts to deal with the implications of the study. Positivist researcher seeks to collect data that can be tested or identified in other cases. Interpretivist aims in developing the body of knowledge that examines and describes individual case (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). According to Lincoln

and Guba, interpretivist researcher seeks to carry out research in its natural setting or context. Conducting the research in its setting involves creating field notes, observations, and documentation of the data collected in the field of study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008).

The ontological assumption focuses on the holistic qualitative case study rather than the parts. Naturalistic ontology worldview aims at the detailed study of the system to understand the phenomenon and develop strategies for tackling the problem. It is an approach suited for examining and exploring what living a life of truancy and delinquency means in their naturalistic setting. The constructivist argues for collaborative strategy among students, teachers, and administrators as a strategy to reduce school absences (Danforth & Smith, 2005). Danforth and Smith (2005) argued about the crucial role of constructivist lens and worldview to interpreting and understanding the reality of the prevailing phenomenon. Using a constructivist approach, the study will highlight the literature focusing on the perception of the students, teachers, and administrators regarding truancy.

The epistemological assumption seeks to inquire on the relationship between the researcher and the data being studied (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). The qualitative researcher's active participation in the field brings the researcher closer to the people that have knowledge of truancy phenomenon. Denzin and Lincoln asserted that the epistemological worldview is the interpretation and analysis of data through interaction with the social context. The methodological assumption deals with the process of collecting empirical data through interviews, observations, documentation, and reflective

sessions. The methodological framework provided the investigative data that were analyzed and synthesized in making an informed decision on the phenomenon.

Researchers are sometimes faced with the dilemma of the best approach to use in their research studies. Most scholars agree that, the best approach depends on what the researcher intends to achieve with the study and an attainable, realistic approach that produces a valid result. Proponents of the quantitative approach argue for the objectivity of the research tradition, and the statistical measurement of data collected through testing and experimentation of hypothesis. On the other hand, qualitative tradition asserts the superiority of detailed description of empirical materials in their natural setting (Denzin & Lincoln, 2008). Stake (2010) maintained that the qualitative tradition is built around the researcher's experience and understanding of the case under investigation. Qualitative case study tradition provides the framework that under-girded my research on forced truancy. Yin maintains the uniqueness of the case study, which relies on different sources of evidence such as interviews, observations, documentation, and archival records to provide information-rich research study. However, the quantitative paradigm focuses on experimentation and manipulation of data on two or more isolated variables (Yin, 2009).

### **Summary**

A detailed review of truancy literatures has shed light on the importance of forced truancy and, provided an overview of the problem it may create for students, families, schools, and the society, if it remained unchecked. Some of the youth spend a considerable amount of their lives on the street because of lack of motivation to stay in school. Truancy, in southeastern region, requires a concerted strategy from the family, the

school and the community. Graduating secondary students should have a career pathway to college or university as well as career development training for students that may elect to work rather than pursuing post-secondary education. Accurate record keeping of students' attendance and absences will help school administrators and policy makers develop better approaches for addressing the problem of truancy. Balfanz et al., (2008) argued that the prevailing attendance problem could be attributed to the manner of reporting attendance. According to Balfanz et al., most schools have their approach of reporting attendance, which may eventually skew the outcome of the attendance report.

The effects of students' bullying in schools will be explored as a factor that influences forced truancy. Studies indicate that bullying is one of the factors that deter students from school. Some of these bullying students carry weapon, and some of them are involved in substance abuse and other violent acts. The thought of being bullied by their fellow students can discourage students from attending school (Gastic, 2008). Other factors that influence forced truancy include the teacher's unabated absences from school because of teachers' union - government impasse and frequent lateness to work without repercussion. Lack of effective punctuality policy is considered a factor that may encourage teachers and administrators to be late to work (Nakpodia & Dafiaghor, 2011). When teachers who are supposed to teach and mentor the children come to classes late with no adverse consequence or no accountability for their action, chances are that the students may choose to be late or abstain from classes as well. Factors that encourage teachers to be late or abstain from school include lack of job satisfaction, infrequent payment of wages, inadequate career advancement, and low morale.



Using punishment as a preventive measure to curb truancy has been ineffective. Removing or suspension of students for being absent from school tends to affect their academic performance since the student is required to stay at home while on suspension. However, truancy reduction program that involves collaboration with the family, school and the court has been effective in addressing truancy phenomenon in some states, in the United States. A better understanding of the phenomenon of forced truancy is crucial and requires financial resources from the government and non-governmental agencies to address the problem. Enforcing and prosecuting truancy can be costly. Most school districts spend a reasonable amount of their budget on fighting truancy, including its collateral impact on society.

Chapter 3 offers a detailed discussion on the methodological approach of collecting and analyzing data. The chapter deals with the research design, theoretical method of inquiry, justification of the case study, researcher's role, sample methods, data collection strategies, data management and analysis, steps to ensure trustworthiness of the study, researcher's bias, and participant's protection.

## Chapter 3: Research Method

### **Introduction**

The case study method is necessary for this study based on a variety of information needed to explain forced truancy phenomenon and its impact on the youth of southeastern Nigeria. The field study used existing literature on truancy and review of publication reports from the selected secondary schools, board of education, UNICEF, and UNESCO. This study examined the impact of forced truancy on youth delinquency in the selected schools in southeastern Nigeria. It provided insights into teachers' frequent strike actions and its aftermath such as school closures and forced staying at home without learning opportunities. The qualitative case study facilitates the process of collecting data from individuals that lived the experience for a particular period (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007). Leech and Onwuegbuzie noted that data collected and analyzed have the great potential to address complex problems. They also noted that data collected for the research study helps to answer the research questions that guided the study.

Yin (2009) observed that the strength of case study lies in "its ability to deal with a full variety of evidence" (p. 11). Stake (2006) indicated that experiencing qualitative case study requires understanding its context and particular situation. The situation here is one of using different data collection techniques effectively in order to illuminate the impact of forced truancy phenomenon in southeastern Nigeria. Yin (2014) suggested using a case study approach that provides the researcher with invaluable resources beyond what might not be available in an experimental study or other qualitative methods such as phenomenology, ethnography, grounded theory, and narrative study. Yin noted

that case study research encompasses the other related qualitative methods. Further, Yin described the case study as a research method that focused on the contemporary phenomenon and used “how” and “why” in research questions to solicit in-depth data in real life context. Shank (2006) suggested that the researcher and the informant are important in the case study research, which confirmed the crucial role I played by establishing a relationship with the participants that served as key informants to the study.

Chapter 3 addressed the following major sections: research design, rationale for the case study, role of the researcher, the theoretical method of inquiry, sample methods, data collection, and data management and analysis. Further, this chapter explored the steps to ensure trustworthiness, the researcher’s bias, and the participant’s protection.

### **Research Design**

In a qualitative case study, a single-case design is selected for holistic study of a phenomenon or the multi-case design that involves the collection of individual cases (Yin, 2014). Since the aim of this study is to conduct a critical analysis of forced truancy, and its impact on youth delinquency in southeastern Nigeria, a single-case design is most appropriate. Using single-case instrument aids in a detailed and descriptive qualitative analysis of forced truancy phenomenon in southeastern region of Nigeria. The overarching research question that guided the study is, to what extent does the perception of the teachers’ strikes affect the behavior of secondary school students? The research questions are restated as follows:

1. What effect do teachers’ strike actions have on the students and their studies?

2. How do teachers and administrators describe their experiences during the strike action period?
3. How can students, teachers, and administrators collaborate to encourage students' attendance and graduation?
4. How do teachers' strike actions affect students' attendance behavior among the secondary schools in the Southeastern Nigeria?

In this study, three secondary schools were used as shown in figure 2; they included Shahana Secondary School, Immerson Secondary School, and Dorshawn High School. The selection was based on the location and diversity of participants drawn to participate in the study. I designed single case study of three secondary schools, which provided variation for data analysis and evaluation. According to Yin (2014), using a single case design is less costly and easier to manage for individual study compared to multiple case designs.

### **Rationale of Case Study**

Delimiting the research scope guided the researcher to focus on specific issues that shed light on perspectives on the study. It also provided the justification and rationale for the researcher in selecting the case study because the approach was the most suitable among other qualitative frameworks. Other qualitative methods explored but were not considered for the study included:

Ethnography: Shank (2006) observed that ethnographers study lives of people within their culture. Ethnographic study is essential in describing and interpreting the culture of a group or organization with detailed descriptive data (Shank 2006; Yin, 2009).

It is an ideal approach to study forced truancy, in southeastern Nigeria because data collected were analyzed in determining the relationship between youth truancy and juvenile delinquency. However, ethnographic method restricts research study to the culture or people under investigation; whereas, case study design provides the researcher with variable sources of collecting data such as interviews, field observations, documents, archival records, and video and tape recording (Yin, 2009).

Phenomenology: Like ethnography, phenomenology investigates cultural groups. While narratology focuses on stories and experiences of participants in designing the research study, phenomenology aims at lived experience and in-depth knowledge of participants in developing a research study (Hays & Wood, 2011). Phenomenology is an empirical inquiry grounded in experience that transforms the experience into consciousness (Shank, 2006). Using phenomenological approach will greatly undermine the aim of this research in terms of the content and context of the phenomenon under investigation. This approach relies on the data collected from the individual or participant's experience as a framework for the study. The biographical data of few participants are not suitable for this study in terms of restrictions the researcher may encounter in collecting data. In addition, the researcher may be in a dilemma about whose data will be collected to achieve the targeted goal of the study

Narrative Analysis: Merriam (2009) described narrative analysis as how we understand the world around us by focusing on stories and interpretation of events. Merriam noted that the key to narrative analysis is the emphasis on describing stories of experiences lived or told by the participants. Hays and Wood (2011) observed that the

meaning of the study comes from the story. In other words, narrative analysis is a process of deriving meaning from the story, which forms the central theme of the narrative research. Moreover, narrative inquiry involves an in-depth interview and a detailed collection of data from the participants; the researcher collects stories and life history of the participants to help gain insights into the problem. Hays and Wood (2011) opined that the social and political contexts of narratives are a necessary component of the qualitative inquiry in expressing the overall meaning of the data. In addition to using meaning to structure a story, narrative analysis uses a variety of strategies in exploring the study. These include observations, interviews, documents, and audio visuals.

Although narrative analysis applies most of the methods similar to those of case study, case study requires an in-depth interview with thick description more than storytelling to explore the impact of forced truancy phenomenon in southeastern Nigeria. As Yin (2014) posited, it is important that observation in the case study should take place in its natural setting. In this case, the observation of the participants takes place in the three selected schools in southeastern Nigeria rather than relying on storytelling.

Grounded Theory: Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss developed grounded theory in 1967 (Shank, 2006). A theory grounded in data collected during the field investigation to substantiate the theory. It focuses on experienced participants that have knowledge of the phenomenon. These experienced participants help the researcher in developing the data needed to establish the theory. Grounded theory moves researchers from the descriptive analysis to generating theories grounded in detailed data (Shank, 2006). The goal of this study is not to develop a theory; rather, to provide a vivid account of the

truancy phenomenon in southeastern Nigeria. Additionally, the study will stress effect of forced truancy on the youth.

### **Researcher's Role**

In qualitative inquiry, the researcher is the instrument, and the success of the research is based on the researcher who is responsible for collecting and analyzing the data (Stake, 2010; Merriam, 2009). Merriam (2009) opined that the researcher is the “primary instrument” of collecting data for the study (p. 15). Lincoln and Guba (1985) contended that the human instrument is the “viable axiom” of qualitative research that enumerate the critical roles researcher plays as an instrument of the study, which include researcher’s responsiveness and the emphasis on a holistic approach. Moreover, my adaptability to the environment became an invaluable access to collecting multiple data for the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

My research skills, experience and commitment to the research helped in addressing the issue of validity. Furthermore, I used triangulation and member-checking approaches of data source to ensure credibility and at the same time minimized bias in the data collection process (Yin, 2009). Establishing trust from the onset with the participants was necessary; pretending to be someone else in order to gain access to data was deceitful. My responsiveness to the intricacies of the case under study and the people identified for interviewing and observation were crucial for this study.

### **Theoretical Method of Inquiry**

Yin (2009) defined case study as “empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries

between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (p. 13). Miles and Huberman (1994) postulated case study as a “phenomenon of some sort occurring in a bounded context” (p. 25). Merriam (2009) asserted that the phenomenon could be intrinsically bounded to qualify as a case. Diverse variations and sampling for the case study was an ideal approach that focused, simplified, and facilitated the interview process (Yin, 2009). Since interviews were conducted in three selected secondary schools in southeastern Nigeria as shown in figure 2, utilizing random purposeful strategy helped in eliminating bias and ensuring validity and reliability in the case study qualitative tradition. The underlying tradition of a case study inquiry is that it investigates the case within its natural setting (Yin, 2009). Using interview techniques facilitates the data collection and analysis of the study.

Interview techniques provide a methodological approach in researching and collecting data to understand human behaviors in relation to their environment. Recording of the interview process was helpful for collecting valuable data as well as analyzing the problem. Approximately, 21 participants were interviewed during the study. In addition, documentation of data collected during field observation helped to analyze and prepare the report for the study.

Although case study researchers rely on data collected from individuals that lived the real life experience, data collected from a variety of sources helped to ascertain the essence and the validity of information or phenomenon being investigated (Yin, 2009).



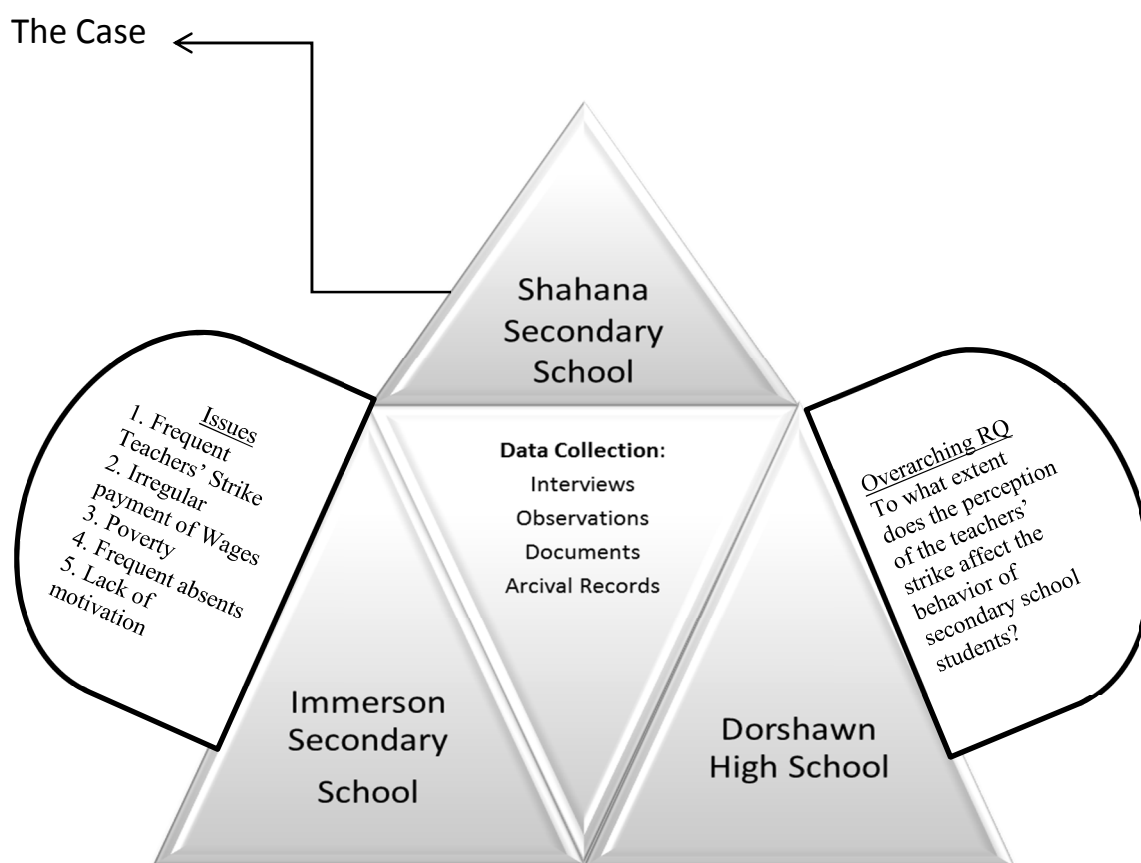


Figure 2. The Sites and Study Plan

To ensure validity and reliability in a research study, triangulation and member checking strategies aided to eliminate personal bias in the study. The use of any evaluative criteria without methodological quality introduces potential threats to the validity of the data collection review. Shank (2006) contended that there were many perspectives of establishing the validity in qualitative research.

Maxwell (2013) alluded to other perspectives that contrast qualitative design and quantitative approach. Maxwell further argued that qualitative tradition that embraced positivist research approach was more acceptable and credible for promoting qualitative research. According to Maxwell, validation for qualitative inquiry seeks new methods

and concepts for obtaining trustworthy data. To ensure quality research, there must be detailed evidence of the source of the data and the procedures used in collecting the data. Maxwell asserted that all forms of preconceived knowledge or experience of the phenomenon should be avoided at all costs.

NVivo software is a computer-aided technique that uses coding in annotating, memoing, and analyzing data (Bazeley, 2007). Bazeley contended that NVivo software provides the perspectives and valuable tools in linking data to external files and designing tables or charts for presentation and detailed analysis of the subject. Also, using NVivo software for the case study qualitative research enhances the researcher's capability to analyze the data as well as ensure synthesis of the theoretical framework.

### **Sample Methodology**

Lincoln and Guba (1985) observed that, in a qualitative study, naturalist sample intends to “maximizing the scope and range of information obtained...” (p. 224). Obtaining a quality and purposeful sampling enhances the validity and credibility of the study. Miles and Huberman (1994) suggested that using purposeful sampling; the researcher needs to set attainable boundaries within its time and means that address the research questions. In addition, Miles and Huberman contended that the researcher needs to establish a framework that would aid in qualifying and confirming the basic constructs that undergirded the study. In this section, the sampling procedure and the sample size describes the approaches needed in collecting data for the study.

### **Sampling Procedure**

The sampling procedure used for the qualitative research is purposeful sampling that describes and captures the heterogeneity of the population (Maxwell, 2013; Miles & Huberman, 1994). As Lincoln and Guba (1985) observed, the researcher uses purposive sampling with some purpose in mind within the qualitative tradition. This strategy is also important since case study approach allows the researcher to collect data from diverse sources. Purposeful sampling provides a better reflection of the population than the researcher's personal selection of the participants (Maxwell, 2013). Purposeful sampling aided in selecting participants that have experience of the information and voluntarily contribute their understanding of the phenomenon under study (Merriam, 2009). In addition, it helped the researcher to have an in-depth knowledge and more insights about the sample required for the study. Merriam asserted that the purpose is to generalize from a sample to the population of which the participant belongs. The purposeful sample is an ideal approach necessary in sampling school principals, teachers, and students that have had the experience of youth truancy and delinquency.

One of the strengths of purposeful sampling is credibility of the study. Participants were purposefully selected to ensure reliability of the data. In addition, it provided the researcher valuable information for selecting the participants, the setting and time of answering the research questions (Maxwell, 2013). The primary purposeful sampling type used for this study is the maximum variation. Using maximum variation sampling for the case study was an ideal strategy that described and captured the central themes of the study. In other words, utilizing maximum variation approach helped in

documenting pertinent information from various sources relevant to the phenomenon under study (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Since the interview was conducted in three secondary schools as indicated in figure 2, maximum variation strategy aided to optimize the interview focus to three unique location sites that consisted of three public operated secondary schools from different education districts (Shahana, Immerson, and Dorshawn). It also aided the interview of the supervising principal from the state education board. The aim was to identify knowledgeable individuals familiar with truancy phenomenon.

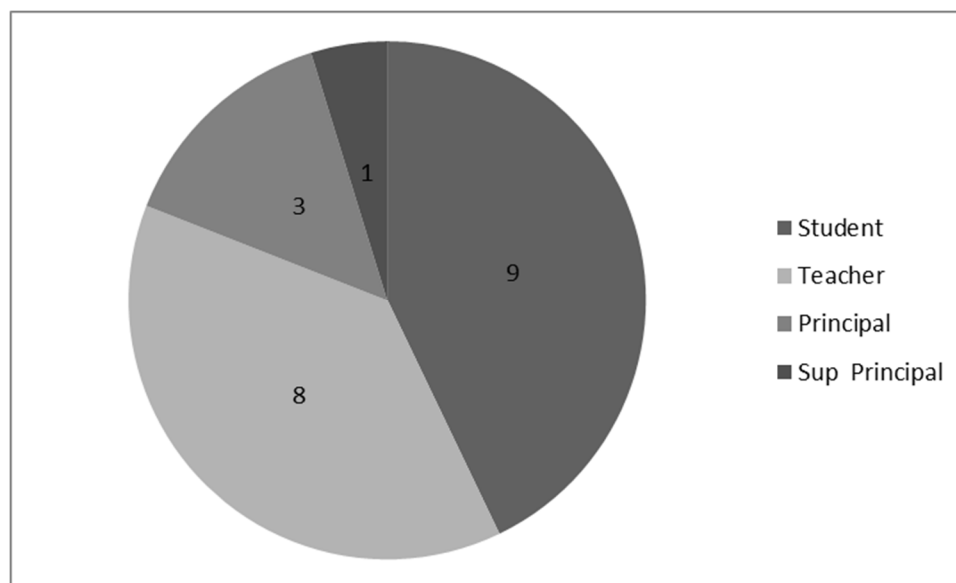
Although maximum variation has its strengths, there were some limitations worth noting. The research procedure may be rigorous and sometimes it may be costly to complete the research. The factors that influenced the researcher's decision in selecting the aforementioned sample strategy included, first, the drive to ensure credibility of the study, which entailed rigorous interview process with proper documentation and coding of the data. Second, a diverse sample size that helped in addressing issues impacting youth truancy and delinquency in a timely fashion with reasonable economic cost.

### **Sample Size**

A sample size of 30 individuals was anticipated to participate in the study. The participants were drawn from the three selected secondary schools, an average of 10 participants from each of the selected schools, which included students who were at least 18 years old, teachers and principals. The identified participants were considered based on their knowledge and experience of the phenomenon. Merriam, (2009) observed that purposeful sampling strategy focuses on the participants that understand and have

knowledge of the phenomenon under investigation. The naturalist seeks qualitative sample of representative data and diversity of the phenomenon of the case under study (Jansen, 2010). Jansen argued that purposeful sampling facilitates the process of obtaining divergent insights into the target population until saturation is attained. Attaining saturation depends on the participants selected for the study, knowledgeable informants that can provide “depth and richness” of data to my understanding of the phenomenon (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Lincoln and Guba recommended that naturalistic inquiry should focus more on maximizing information rather than positivist stance of generalization. Lincoln and Guba also suggested that sampling of data should be terminated when no further new information is drawn from the sampled unit; hence, saturation is achieved. After interview with 21 participants, saturation was met for this study since no new information was forthcoming.

Focusing on the participants that have rich and detailed information helped in maximizing the time and means available for this study (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). In this case, the principals, teachers, and students with truancy experience that lead to delinquency were primary informants that met this category. Figure 3 illustrates the categories of participants interviewed for the study, which included a supervising principal, three principals, eight teachers, and nine students. All the participants were interviewed individually after the consent forms (Appendix C) have been signed.



*Figure 3. Categories of Participants Interviewed*

### **Data Collection**

As indicated earlier, the benefit of a case study is its technique of collecting data from various sources (Yin, 2009). I collected data through interviews, field observations, documents, and archival data. Interview with students, teachers, and school principals provided the data in analyzing the truancy phenomenon in secondary schools, in southeastern Nigeria. The findings of this study assisted in addressing the needs of the students that experienced the teachers' strike action, which might have led to juvenile delinquency.

### **Interviews**

Interviewing is a skill that a researcher needs to conduct quality and comprehensive, qualitative research design. Interviewing is an act of communication that most researchers of qualitative methods use in their research study. Yin (2009) noted that interviewing techniques in case study research seek in-depth information from the

participants about the fact of the matter as well as their opinion. Interviewing provides the researcher an opportunity to collect substantive data to assist in establishing a meaningful and valuable report as reflected in the case study protocol (Yin, 2009). Meho (2006) observed that the increase in demand of scholars that used qualitative studies for an in-depth interview and observation rather than a questionnaire and structured interview calls for other alternatives for collecting data. Interview plays an essential role in qualitative methods that provide perspectives and insights into research studies.

In addition, I used different interviewing techniques in eliciting important information needed for the study. These interviewing approaches included face-to-face or in person, phone, and email. Face to face or in person is considered the oldest form of interviewing and more acceptable by the people (Janesick, 2011). In today's business and with the advent of internet technology, interviewing over the phone, email, video conferencing or synchronous chat have gained enormous grounds among businesses and governmental organizations. Furthermore, Rubin and Rubin (2012) noted that the emergence of online interviewing is a strong indicator of people's interest in internet communication.

With the advancement of technological usage in our everyday service, internet communication has afforded educational institutions and businesses opportunities of doing business at a reasonable cost. For example, in addition to face-to-face interviewing, qualitative researcher has the luxury of conducting interviews through the email, phone, video conferencing, and synchronous chatting. Using the technology saves traveling time to a distant location for interviewing (Janesick, 2011). In other words, with modern

technology I can conduct an interview with participants regardless of where they are located. This study utilized face-to-face interview techniques that provided an in-depth investigation of the phenomenon as well as the opportunity of probing into the information given by the participants (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Telephone interview was used as a follow-up strategy in clarifying some information collected during the face-to-face interview with the participant. I used interview protocol (Appendix A) for the participants identified for the study. The interview protocol guided me in asking the participants questions that were nuanced and detailed with pertinent materials.

Collecting data through open-ended interviews provides this researcher the avenues in reformulating questions needed for the study. Merriam contended that a researcher needs to remain neutral throughout the course of the data collection to ensure credibility and reliability of the process. Interviewing strategies could be structured or unstructured; quantitative research tradition embraces structured interview underpinnings, whereas unstructured interviewing technique was used in most qualitative research studies.

Maxwell (2013) asserted that structured interview seeks comparability in data analysis based on time and the natural setting of the study. On the contrary, unstructured approach lacks comparability and generalization of the outcome. However, unstructured interview focuses on a specific issue under investigation and favors rigorous and in-depth understanding of the phenomenon needed for the qualitative inquiry. In this case, in-depth understanding refers to the history, context, and contending views on the problem. Santiago (2009) observed that the unstructured approach does not stick to the pre-defined



data collection protocol. Rather it engages the participants in deep conversation in which the researcher can inquire about any topic of the study. Miles and Huberman (1994) explained that a structured approach provides clearer and more focus for the study. Similarly, they emphasized the importance of unstructured interviewing in qualitative research: especially if the researcher has enough time for the study.

Despite its strengths, Miles and Huberman (1994) contended that the unstructured approach has no predetermined framework and lacks comparability. Further, Miles and Huberman argued that the unstructured interview might involve huge data that may take months to review. They contended that the research study could be achieved by proceeding through deductive technique to inductive strategy.

### **Documents**

Documentation is an essential source of collecting credible data through interviews and field observations (Merriam, 2009). Documentation of data collected during the field visit may require much time in planning, gaining access and analyzing data (Stake, 2010). Using the documentation for the case study qualitative research helps to explore available resources in establishing cohesive data collection strategies for answering the research questions. As Yin (2009) observed that documented data tends to be more authentic, stable and provides a broader range of information. According to Yin, documentation enhances corroboration of information from other sources as well as detailed perspectives on the study. Using documentation approach helps in editing the information obtained during the interview and observational periods since documented data tends to retain the source of information. During the data collection process, I

reviewed the student's attendance records, subject diaries, and other relevant documents that facilitated the study. No truancy policy was reviewed, as the selected schools have no written truancy policy.

### **Observations**

Observational skill is an attribute a researcher needs when collecting and analyzing data in a qualitative study (Shank, 2006). Observation is an effective data collection strategy in a qualitative study that provides the researcher access to face-to-face contact with the observed. Human beings tend to reflect on the information observed with their eyes (Shank, 2006). Further, Shank noted that observation is a difficult task in the qualitative study. According to Shank, there are three basic difficulties a researcher may encounter when using an observational approach. The first difficulty is the observation by "maintenance," which Shank described as casual observation of events with little or no preparation. The second difficulty in observation is the "challenge of time" required in conducting an effective observation. The third issue is what Shank calls the "convergent observational focus," which occurs when the researcher's attention is drawn to a sudden event (Shank, 2006, p. 23). Shank suggested that qualitative researchers needed to use both divergent and convergent methods to ensure effective observation. Lincoln and Guba (1985) argued that the research study could be understood when carried out within its natural setting.

Considering the identified difficulties, I was conversant with all the pitfalls that may create problems while conducting field observation. Merriam (2009) asserted that the field note was imperative and stressed the need for the researcher to write a note upon

completing the observation. According to Lincoln and Guba, “naturalistic ontology suggests that realities are wholes that cannot be understood in isolation from their context...” (p.39). Observation is crucial in qualitative case study because it provides the opportunity to collect data within its natural setting or context (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Collection of data must be determined on the focus of the study. I designed the observation protocol (Appendix B) to conduct observation of the schools and students selected for the study as well as the location of the school environment.

### **Archival Records**

To ensure comprehensive and in-depth collection of data, I examined the archival records of the schools selected for the study. Yin (2009) observed that some of the archival records tend to lean towards quantitative methods but cautioned that the numerical data alone is not enough to ascertain the reliability of the data. Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias (2008) described archival records as “unobtrusive measure” of data collection. Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias defined unobtrusive measure as a “method of data collection from any direct contact with the interactions, events, or behavior being investigated” (p. 287). Unobtrusive measure refers to the examination of public or private archival records. According to Frankfort-Nachmias and Nachmias, using archival records approach, encourages collection of data from diverse sources and eliminates data contamination.

Review of archival files and records are essential for this researcher to gain a better knowledge of the school policy, students’ attendance records, as well as their academic performance. In addition, reviewing government’s archival records can reveal

vital information about teachers' strike action record and the reasons that led to a strike action. Accessing legislative documents can provide insights about politicians' behavior in terms of their legislative record on appropriating funds for teachers' wages in education budget as well as sufficient funds for truancy enforcement. Unfortunately, no record from the board of education district was reviewed since there was no prior approval from the board. In addition, no online reviews of the websites as the selected schools have no accessible public internet service.

### **Data Management, Analysis and Representation**

Safeguarding data collected for research purposes is an enormous task and the researcher must develop a plan and strategy for addressing the challenge. Even though safeguarding data can be challenging, the use of computer technology for research purposes has helped in simplifying data management process. As noted by Miles and Huberman (1994), computer-aided software assists researchers in editing, storing, linking, and managing data. The use of computer-aided software has assisted qualitative researchers to manage and contextualized data more efficiently (Bazeley, 2007). Using computer-aided software as NVivo assisted in coding and categorizing data for thematic analysis (Saldana, 2009). According to Saldana, categorization of data enables the researcher to group memos and reflections in a more descriptive design.

NVivo software has the capability of formatting document to ensure richness in data design as well as incorporating the coded data into word processing document (Bazeley, 2007). Schonfelder (2011) noted, that the NVivo software provides the option to "undock the contents of source browser" (para. 38). Undocking the contents gives the

researcher the opportunity to accessing other sources while working with the memo document. In addition, NVivo software facilitates management of data that may be overwhelming during this study. The data collection process and the transcription of the data were completed within three months, and the follow-up interview included face-to-face contacts, as well as telephone and internet interviews.

The issue of data analysis in qualitative research might be difficult compared to quantitative research (Rudestam and Newton, 2007). Emphasis on this point is necessary because there may not be a numerical or statistical procedure involved in qualitative inquiry as in quantitative methods. Rudestam and Newton (2007) postulated that qualitative researchers have to establish a framework on which data can be specified for detailed qualitative study. Merriam (2009) argued for intensive and holistic description of data analysis. Analysis of this study focuses on identifying and analyzing the themes and patterns drawn from the data collected. By this approach, I thoroughly reviewed the data collected and sought more insights until saturation. Miles and Huberman (1994) emphasized the importance of identifying themes and patterns to help organize and analyze data. Using case study research method provided perspectives through the interview with students, teachers, and school administrators that were knowledgeable of the truancy phenomenon. Discrepant data were discarded to eliminate any form of bias in the design and analysis process.

### **Steps to Ensure Trustworthiness**

In qualitative interpretivist approach, the steps to ensure trustworthiness of this study is explored through credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability in

place of the quantitative positivist terms of validity, reliability, and generalizability (Denzin & Lincoln, 2009; Shank, 2006).

### **Credibility**

Application of the qualitative paradigm is crucial for the study to be credible and trustworthy to the readers. Miles and Huberman (1994) asserted that for a researcher to ensure validity in a qualitative study, the researcher must be objective in collecting data through detailed interviews, observations, and adequate documentation of facts. In other words, the researcher should remain neutral and have an open mind throughout the research process. Triangulation of data as well as in-depth description of the phenomenon would help to achieve credibility and trustworthiness in the study (Yin, 2009). Using triangulation provides the researcher other multiple sources of collecting data to address greater array of issues (Yin, 2009). Furthermore, Yin noted that the proper triangulation of data ensures convergences of evidence rather than data collected from single evidence.

Validity was achieved through member checking of the data collected for confirmation and authentication of the source (the participants), as well as peer review comments and suggestions from colleagues or scholars familiar with the study (Merriam, 2009) There are two major threats to validity that researchers must keep in mind: researcher bias and reactivity (Maxwell, 2013). Maxwell suggested that it is essential for a researcher to recognize bias to ensure that it does not have an adverse effect on the study. However, reactivity refers to the researcher's influence on the setting or the individuals being investigated.

**Dependability**

Dependability provides insights into how the data is collected to ascertain its reliability for the study (Shank, 2006). Qualitative research is more focused on gathering data to investigate the phenomenon in its natural setting (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007). According to Leech and Onwuegbuzie, qualitative approach is helpful in seeking insights and perspectives into any phenomenon for better understanding of the meaning and experiences of the participants. Miles and Huberman (1994) asserted that ensuring reliability of the study depends on the familiarity of the researcher with the phenomenon and the setting under investigation. The essential element of dependability of the study is the audit trail that shows a track record of the data collected (Shank, 2006). In addition, member checking is another strategy that can be used to increase dependability of the data collected for the study (Shank, 2006). Understanding the details needed to ensure dependability is critical for me to produce a trustworthy and credible research study.

**Confirmability**

Confirmability refers to the appropriateness of methodologies used in collecting data such as interview, observation, documentation, focus group, and archival recording techniques, with semi-structured and open-ended approach as a strategy for collecting data (Shank, 2006). Determination of confirmability can be addressed utilizing audit trail (Shank, 2006). Audit trail technique deals with the process through which the raw data were collected, and how they were analyzed (Shank, 2006). Triangulation strategy that involves using multiple sources of checking and confirming data helps to increase

confidence in the study (Stake, 2010). As indicated, confirmability of the data depends on the methodologies used in this study as well as the strategies used to check and confirm the data.

### **Transferability**

Transferability is another approach of investigating the trustworthiness of the study. Although, the sample size may be small, the theory developed during the study can be transferred to another setting or population (Shank, 2006). Transferability is achieved when there is similarity between two contexts or settings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Lincoln and Guba argued that transferability can be identified based on the “degree of fittingness” of similar contexts to meet the criteria of transferability (p.124). The primary strategy for ensuring transferability is a detailed description of the phenomenon and variation in selecting participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). External validity in qualitative research is essential as it is in quantitative study (Leach & Onwuegbuzie, 2007). Random sampling and probability strategies help in eliminating bias in quantitative research design. In quantitative research, the criteria for ensuring external validity are frequently based on scientific and experimental studies because they are measurable with standardized instruments. In contrast, qualitative methods are not based on a standardized instrument, which are often used for smaller sample size compared to quantitative methods that use large randomized samples.

The four concepts described in this section represent alternatives to validity, reliability, and generalizability. As a researcher and the instrument for this study, establishing trustworthiness is imperative to earn reader’s trust. In addition, applying the



concepts helps in designing detailed study to understand the impact of forced truancy in southeastern Nigeria.

### **Ethical Procedures**

As observed by Lincoln and Guba (1985) ensuring objectivity in qualitative methods “is an unattainable state” (p. 108). Yin (2014) emphasized the need for qualitative case study researchers to aspire to the “highest ethical standards while doing research” (p. 76). However, to overcome this challenge, adequate safeguards need to be in place against researcher’s bias. These safeguards included member checks that helped refer data to its sources for corrections and verifications (Stake, 2010). Other approaches may include triangulation that involves cross checking of data and interpretation through multiple data source and in-depth or prolonged observation of truancy. Placing adequate safeguards in this study is imperative since human subjects are involved in the study. Firstly, the participants were briefed prior to the study that participation is voluntary, and the participants have the option to withdraw from the study (Yin, 2014; Shank 2006). Secondly, the participants must vet all data collected from the study prior to publication. The names of the participants must remain confidential; identifying information were removed to safeguard the participant’s name. Thirdly, I must explain the contents of the consent form and obtained participants’ signature for acknowledgment.

### **Participants Protection**

The focus of the qualitative research stems from its concerns for ethical issues to effect change (Julian Cheek as cited by Denzin & Lincoln, 2009). Participants’ protection and identity is a crucial ethical issue I am committed and determined to pay great

attention to in order to earn the trust and respect of the participating group. Protecting the vulnerable population in our society is an area in which I have the knowledge and experience in my profession as a juvenile justice official and the administrator of the juvenile probation detention alternative program. Furthermore, my professional background in working with the juvenile clientele helps in protecting the participants' interest. In addition, my familiarity with protecting the interest of the at-risk population ensures their confidentiality, as well as protection of their human rights (Yin, 2009; Merriam, 2009). Conducting research on youths in Nigeria requires adequate care and diligence and must be in compliance with the Walden Institutional Review Board (IRB approval number, 12-01-14-0298308) and the standards of Nigerian government. The guidelines ensure that the participants who are 18 years or older signed the consent forms (Appendix C), and minor students were excluded from this study.

I honestly explained the risk and benefit factors of the study to the participants prior to commencing the interview and other data collection processes. In addition, I handled the participants with utmost care and ensured their safety throughout my field study in Nigeria. Data collected from the participants were voluntary and free of coercion. In other words, the participants were not pressured to participate if they choose not to partake in the study. In order to ensure adequate protection of participant's information, the data collected from interviews, field observations, audio tapes, and transcripts were stored in a locked cabinet. Additionally, the participants were encouraged to select a pseudonym of their choice to maintain the confidentiality of the participants' involvement in the study. The participants were debriefed after writing the

interview notes for their approval and acknowledgement in an honest and credible manner.

### **Summary**

Chapter 2 provided the literature and theoretical framework on the causes of youth delinquency, the cost of truancy to the society as well as the impact on schools and families. In this chapter, I discussed the methodology design of the study. The four sources of data collection included interview, observation, documentation and archival record collected from the participants that have had the life experience of the phenomenon. Merriam (2009) observed that data collection in case studies is “interactive and holistic” (p. 148). Merriam made the assertion because the field researcher can observe and document data while conducting the interview.

After evaluation of other qualitative study paradigms, case study method was selected as the best approach for this study. The case study method provided me the opportunity to obtain the participants’ consent to conduct in-depth investigation and examination of the responses to the research questions using the three major sources of data collection: interviews, observations, and documents. Other techniques of data collection used include archival recording and tape recording. Maximum variation technique was used in collecting data. This technique assisted me in identifying participants’ cooperation to divulge important information pertinent to the study under investigation.

My dual role as the instrument of the study and the research investigator is essential to this study, especially in terms of the ethical concerns and the issue of bias.

Researcher's biases in a case study are inevitable; however, being aware of these biases and keeping them in check at all times will enhance the overall credibility and trustworthiness of the study. As Yin (2009) asserted, being conversant with possible bias is a good test of the researcher's accommodation of divergent opinions. The emphases on trustworthiness – credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability – were helpful in guiding the study and taking adequate precaution in order to minimize or eliminate threat to the data collected.

Finally, ensuring trustworthiness, semi-structured interviewing techniques with open-ended questions were used in encouraging participants to share their insights and perspectives on forced truancy phenomenon. Furthermore, validation of data is achieved through member checking, rich thick description, and multiple sources of data collection. Next is Chapter 4 that deals with the data analysis, findings, and answer to the research questions for this study.

## Chapter 4: Data Collection and Analysis

### **Introduction**

Chapter 4 deals with the data collection methodologies that include interview, observation, documentation, and review of archival record. As indicated earlier, the purpose of the study is to investigate how the teachers' strike action (TSA) affects the students' truancy and their academic studies. The central question that guided the study is to what extent does the perception of the TSA affect the behavior of secondary school students in terms of truancy and academic achievement? The research questions also provided the insights that helped to explain the effect of the teacher's strike as restated below:

1. What effect do teachers' strike actions have on the students and their studies?
2. How do teachers and administrators describe their experiences during the strike action period?
3. How can students, teachers, and administrators collaborate to encourage student's attendance and graduation?
4. How do teachers' strike actions affect students' attendance behavior among the secondary schools in southeastern Nigeria?

In terms of data presentation, the chapter is organized into seven key sections: (1) Setting, (2) demographics, (3) data collection, (4) data analysis, (5) evidence of trustworthiness, (6) results, and (7) summary.

### **Setting**

The observation of the participants and the setting were the integral part of the field study. Bloomberg and Volpe (2012) indicated that contextual information describes the participant's environment. An unobtrusive measure is an observation conducted without the awareness of the participant (Angrosino, 2005). In this instance, I conducted an unobtrusive observation of the school premises and took photographs of the classrooms, walkways, and the laboratories. The two key areas observed were urban and rural areas. Two out of the three secondary schools studied were in the urban areas while the third was in the rural community. The names used for the three secondary schools were pseudonyms.

To understand the structure of the school, I designed the organizational chart in Appendix I to help explain the management structure of the schools in the region. The organizational chart of Dorshawn Secondary School, as shown in appendix I, is a replica of the structure in other schools visited in this study. The chart shows that the vice principals and sectional heads report to the Principal II, who in turn reports to the Principal I. In addition, the organizational chart indicates that the form teachers report to the Head of Sections, while the subject teachers report to the Head of Department. The three schools investigated have guardian counselors that report to the principal and oversee students' tardiness and absenteeism from school. Moreover, the school prefect reports to the Head of Department while the class prefect report to the form teacher. According to the three principals interviewed for this study, the guardian counselor is responsible for counseling students that have truancy problem or other delinquent acts.

A walkthrough observations of the school premises provided insightful meaning of the school setting. Stake (2010) noted that most researchers prefer observation because it provides a clearer picture of the setting under investigation. Stake (2010) emphasized the importance of qualitative research in collecting data through different means that include “numerical measurement, photographs, indirect observation,” (p. 89). In this case, pictures of some sections of the secondary schools were taken to illustrate the environmental conditions of the school setting. Figure 4 shows the picture of a classroom in Immerson Secondary School. Most of the classrooms observed were untidy, and the students’ desks broken and in disrepair.



*Figure 4.* Picture of a classroom at Immerson Secondary School

As shown in the picture the dilapidated walls and floors of the classroom have not been maintained for years. The observed classrooms were not painted, have no electricity, with windows and doors broken. Some of the classrooms have no windows and doors at all. The classroom setting is discouraging and creates an uncondusive learning environment. Based on the interview with some of the teachers and principals, most of the students in the public schools are from poor families.

Another important observation was the unsafe condition of the school structures as shown in Figure 5. The picture depicts a rotten roof about to cave in: the roof is by the hallway leading to the teachers' workstation of Shahana Secondary School. The hazardous conditions of some of the observed structures raise serious concerns about the safety of the students, teachers, and the public that visit the school.



*Figure 5.* Picture of the roof at Shahana Secondary School



Although there is no evidence that the poor conditions of the schools have effect on the students, it is not impossible that it might. The students might prefer to join gangs or hang out in the streets with friends during school hours.

### **Demographics**

The participants for this study were drawn primarily from the Ibo tribe of southeastern region of Nigeria. The primary language spoken in the region is Ibo, and the secondary language is English. Bloomberg and Volpe (2012) observed that demographic

Table 5

#### *Participation by School District*

School	Number of Participants	Percentage of Participants
Shahana – AB District	5	24
Dorshawn – OS District	8	38
Immerson – IS District	7	33
Semb – UK District	1	5

data is necessary to understand the underlying factors that may influence an individual's worldview of a phenomenon. Bloomberg and Volpe (2012) also asserted that understanding the demographic information of the participants would provide better insights and help to explain the findings that may emerge in the study. The secondary schools were purposefully selected because of their unique location and composition of the students. Shahana Secondary School is boys only; Dorshawn is girls only; while Immersion is a co-educational institution, a mixture of boys and girls.

Table 5 depicts participants by school districts, which shows that out of the 21 participants interviewed, five participants were from Shahana, AB School District; eight

from Dorshawn, OS School District; seven from Immerson, IS School District; and one from Semb, UK School District. The study comprises 21 participants including the supervising principal from the Semb, UK school district. Table 6 explains the position and the gender of all the participants. Out of the 21 participants, 48% of the participants were male and 52% were female.

Table 6

*Participation by Gender*

Gender	Supervising Principal	Principal	Teacher	Student	Number of Participants	Percentage of Participants
Male	1	2	3	4	10	48
Female	0	1	5	5	11	52
Total	1	3	8	9	21	100

**Data Collection**

The case study approach is the most appropriate method for the qualitative study. Yin (2014) posited that case study method provides a wider range of data collection sources compared to other methods. This researcher utilized interviews, direct observations, review of documents, and pictures of the school premises and the environments. The sampling strategy used for data collection is maximum variation. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), maximum variation allows documentation of data from other sources to identify common patterns. Using the maximum variation provided this researcher with different sources of collecting data to explain the emerging themes. The researcher interviewed 21 participants that shared their experiences of teachers' strike actions and its impact on students' truancy. The sample size initially proposed was 30 but saturation reached after interviewing 21 participants and no new

information was forthcoming. The participants interviewed include a supervising principal, 3 principals, 8 teachers, and 9 students.

### **Location**

Upon arrival in Lagos, Nigeria on January 3, 2015, the researcher made phone contacts with the supervising principal of a school district and the principals of the three selected schools. The principals contacted were from the following secondary schools: Shahana, Dorshawn, and Immerson. These principals were the gatekeepers that provided access to the teachers and the students in their respective schools. The participants' names were coded with the first letters of their title, two first letters of the name of their school district, and a number assigned based on their position on the interview schedule. The supervising principal code starts with SP, The principal code starts with the letter P, teacher code starts with T, and the student code starts with S. As indicated in table 7, the students were purposefully selected from four school districts coded as follows: AB, IS, OS and UK:

Table 7

#### *Code Designation by School District*

<b>AB-District</b> Shahana Secondary School	<b>IS-District</b> Immerson Secondary School	<b>OS-District</b> Dorshawn Secondary School	<b>UK-District</b> Semb Educational Zone
PAB1	PIS1	POS1	SPUK1
TAB1	TIS1	TOS1	
TAB2	TIS2	TOS2	
SAB1	TIS3	TOS3	
SAB2	SIS1	SOS1	
	SIS2	SOS2	
	SIS3	SOS3	
		SOS4	

The secondary schools selected for the data collection were three secondary schools from southeastern region of Nigeria. Teachers and principal participants were selected based on their experience on teachers' strike and their knowledge about youth truancy while the students were also selected on their experience as well as their absenteeism and truancy records. Also considered in selecting the participants is the school district, which is a variation of the initial proposal. Two of the schools are located in the urban area, while the third school is located in the rural area. The unit of analysis was the participant's experience and not the schools.

The initial setback was the ongoing teachers' strike during my arrival in the state selected for the study. However, through the assistance of the supervising principal and principals, I was able to contact the teachers and the students to participate in the study. Once the contacts were established, I scheduled the interview dates with the participants. The principals and the teachers wasted no time expressing their frustration toward the government for nonpayment of their wages and other allowances for the past three months. The student participants also expressed their concerns on how the teachers are being treated: they felt that teachers' salary should be paid on time to empower them to perform their job better. Establishing trust with the participants was a challenge since I am not familiar with them. However, my honest explanation of the study purpose and consistent engagement helped in improving better rapport with the participants. Participants were interested in knowing the purpose and the implication of the study.

In spite of these concerns, participants were willing to cooperate and share their experiences. The first participant interviewed was the principal of Dorshawn Secondary

School, POS1. I explained the consent form, which was signed by the participant prior to the commencement of the interview. During the interview, POS1 provided insights into the organizational structure of the school and the attendance register for my review and documentation.

All the interviews were recorded and transcribed by this researcher. Prior to the interview recording, all participants were instructed their right to decline being recorded for the interview and their right to turn off the tape recorder at any time during the interview process. Pictures of the organizational chart and attendance register were taken since the school has no copy machine to run copies of the reviewed documents.

Additional pictures of the school premises and the classrooms were taken and stored in my password locked personal computer. Two teachers introduced as participants for the study were scheduled for the next day, while the researcher proceeded to the Zonal Board and interviewed the Supervising Principal, SPUK1. The supervising principal who indicated that he will retire soon was excited to participate in the study. The supervising principal demonstrated strong knowledge of the teachers' strike action and its effect on the students' school attendance. SPUK1 was critical of the government's nonchalant attitude towards the teachers' financial hardship, especially government's failure to pay teachers' wages and allowances.

Interview questions were divided into two sections, the first section designed for the students, and the second section was for teachers and principals. The students' questions aim at elucidating their experiences during TSA and coping mechanisms during the impasse. In addition, the interview questions helped to identify different types of

activities the students engaged in and their feelings during the TSA. Table 8 indicates the activities the students engaged in to occupy their time. As the table indicates, only three out of the nine students spent some time at home reading. Others stay home, running errands for their parents or guardians while other students engage in trading or hawking to earn some income.

Table 8

*Student Activity during TSA*

Participant	Activity
SAB1	Stay home; Errand; Read
SAB2	Hawk; Errand
SIS1	Stay home; Play
SIS2	Stay home; Read
SIS3	Do little trade; Watch Movies
SOS1	Play games; Read
SOS2	Help guardian, Errand
SOS3	Stay home; Teach Sibling
SOS4	Play football; Hang out with friends

The teachers and the principals' questions focus on their experiences and effects of the strike on their students. Interviews were semi-structured, in which the researcher designed the interview protocol tool to help facilitate the process. Rubin and Rubin (2012) noted the advantages of interview protocol that encourages the interviewer to prepare questions prior to the interview. Further, Rubin and Rubin (2012) asserted that using protocol technique promotes follow-up questions to draw the participant in a conversational discussion. Open-ended question strategy was used to elicit more information from the participants. Two participants declined to be tape-recorded; the researcher took copious notes, which was transcribed immediately after the interview.

The observation was another source used in collecting data. As Janesick (2011) opined, researchers need to use all their, “Senses to undertake the research act. Sight, hearing, touch, smell, and taste” (p. 146). Researcher’s commitment and undistracted attention are desirable strategies for collecting credible data. Detailed notes of the observations of the participating students were taken and transcribed immediately after the observation. I observed students’ demeanor and nonverbal cues and noted in the field journal. One of the student participants was shy and had some difficulties maintaining eye contact with this researcher. My persistence of explaining the importance of the study encouraged her to remain focused throughout the interview period. In addition, I observed the school premises, and the classrooms of each of the schools investigated and used the observation protocol to note all the observations. Furthermore, I took pictures of the school premises and classrooms and noted in the observational protocol form. I also conducted a detailed review of the archival documents that include attendance register and class diary. The researcher kept detailed reflective journal of the field notes of the observations, documentations, and interviews.

Stake (2010) argued on the importance of “rich description “in a complex environment. Data emerged through the process of thematic coding and categorization that helped to explain the common patterns and the themes. Harding (2013) asserted that coding in qualitative study is to seek commonality of data through the review of the transcript. In this instance, I uploaded the transcribed document from Microsoft Word 2010 into NVivo 10. Uploaded file saved by the assigned participants’ code name for easier identification during analysis and categorization of themes. I coded the transcribed

interview and took notes of pattern of occurrence an idea in a particular category. NVivo query tools such as text query search (Appendix I).and word frequency were used in establishing common pattern of the contextual themes. Findings of the coded data were validated through triangulation member checking, peer review, and accurate explanation of the participants' views. According to Harding (2013) the essential element of qualitative findings is to ensure accurate representation of the participants' ideas and experiences. Using the member checking strategy provided the opportunity for the participants to verify and acknowledge the findings.

A significant event that occurred during the data collection process was the teachers' strike action because of nonpayment of wages and other remunerations. This concern was ameliorated because I had already established contact with the key participants: the supervising principal and the three school principals were instrumental in contacting the participants in their respective schools. Through the assistance of these principals, phone contact was established with the purposefully selected participants. The interviews, observations, and review of documents were completed as originally planned.

### **Data Analysis**

The case study data analysis began with the completion of the interview transcript, review of the field notes and editing of the pictures. As Harding (2013) observed the importance of thorough review of the interview transcript is necessary prior to coding, I reviewed each line of the transcript to help identify areas of interest that addresses the research questions and took copious notes for holistic analysis of the study. Miles and Huberman (1994) insights into data analysis were instructive and supports



immediate documentation of field notes, which helps for an accurate reflection of my contacts with the participants. I documented key observations and salient points in my contact summary sheet. The multiple sources provided triangulation of data and presented comprehensive framework of issues influencing youth truancy, its effects on students' academic performance and graduation. According to Yin (2014), application of the "single case design is eminently justifiable under certain conditions, where the case represents a critical test of existing theory..." (p. 56). Yin further emphasized the need for researchers to attend to "all the evidence collected" (p. 132). A thorough review of the transcribed data is essential for the unbiased analysis of the issue of TSA and its impact on youth truancy.

The transcribed data were coded into the NVivo 10 software for categorization and analysis. The coding process incorporated with detailed review of field notes helped in categorizing the responses from the interview questions in relation to the research questions. Miles and Huberman (1994) noted the importance of coding and categorizing data for easier retrieval and analysis. NVivo 10 software was used in analyzing and coding the transcribed data from the interviews, observations, as well as the documents reviewed during data collection. The software was helpful in analyzing word frequency and text search query analysis as shown in Appendix I. Coding is cyclical and requires the researcher to code more than once to obtain a better outcome (Saldana, 2009). I coded the transcribed data a couple of times, which I classified into categories to identify the emergent themes. Table 9 indicates the codes, the categories, and the six themes that emerged, which include, student perspective during TSA; Teacher/principal perspective

Table 9

*Codes, Categories, and Themes Classification*

Codes	Categories	Themes
1. Student Experience	1. Participant Experience of TSA	1. Student perspective during TSA
2. Student Activities	a. Student	2. Teacher/Principal perspective during TSA
3. Strategy to Improve Performance	b. Teacher	
4. Teacher Experience	c. Principal	
5. Principal Experience	2. Factors influencing truancy	3. School attendance and consequences for non-attendance
6. Students Attendance	a. School base	4. Parents and school collaboration
7. Government Role	b. Peer group	
8. Types of Strike Action	c. Economic	
9. Use of Incentives	d. Family	5. Factors Influencing students' absenteeism and truancy
10. Effect of GSM and Social Media	3. Strategies of reducing truancy	6. Intervention, incentive, and sanction
11. Private Institution or Private Tutor	a. Intervention	
12. Experienced Strike Action	b. Incentive	
13. Issues Influencing Truancy	c. Sanction	
14. Effect of TSA on Students	4. Tools used in monitoring attendance	
15. Safety and Security	a. Class register	
16. Impact of Strike Action	b. Subject diary	
17. Reasons For Strike Action		
18. Truancy Rate		
19. Strategies of Curbing Truancy		
20. NUT Action		

during TSA; school attendance and consequences for non-attendance; parents and school collaboration; factors influencing student's absenteeism; and intervention, incentive, and sanction. The themes were identified from coding of the transcribed data until saturation had been achieved. The evolved themes were triangulated with the theories mentioned in chapter 1 and chapter 2. Sutherland's differential association theory of the youths influenced by associating with their peers and other significant individuals in their lives was re-echoed by the teachers and principals. TIS1 responded that peer pressure is a major factor that influences the youth to engage in delinquent acts. According to TIS1 who said:

Another one is peer group: An adage says tell me who is your friend let me tell you whom you are. Another one says, "Birds of the same feather flock together. "So if you are keeping a bad company, definitely if you cannot convince that person, that person will convince you. You can see a good student today that is moving with a bad one, the next two or three days you see the second one maybe smoking drugs, smoking Indian hemp, or all the rest. That is influence of peer group.

The supervising principal, SPUK1 added:

Again, peer group today we see in our society that there a lot of students that have joined society that has given rise what we call cultism; we see students that because of trying to acquire power or trying to pass exams those of them who are not trained so they join certain groups and these groups end up initiating them into cult and these have actually brought out this incident of truancy in the society. So the home, the school, and the group they are all contributing factors to truancy.

As envisaged in sutherland's theory, peer pressure plays a crucial role in influencing the youths engagement in various acts of delinquent activities. Some of the students that seek popularity among their peers tend to encourage others to support their illegal criminal behavior that leads them to a long-term jail sentence.

Hirsch's social bond theory asserted that the positive relationship people have with their families, teachers, and friends in directing their behavior on the right part. Hirschi's insights were in line with the SPUK1 observation of more parental involvement in raising their children.

The parents do they take time to ensure that their children actually put up conducts that are not inimical to good behavior; because today we see parents who don't even care if their children are trained in the fear of God. They do not care if their children give themselves to the norms of the society. Our society today is having a lot of moral decadence because the parents have delegated their responsibilities to the teachers or to the school. The aspect of what they ought to do they have shifted it to the school. So it is not only the responsibility of the

school. So the parents have to ensure that they make every effort to monitor their wards actually associate with. Because even the Bible says “evil communication corrupts good manners. When these students are not influenced, because there is an adage that says, “You can mold a child character, but it is difficult to repair the adult.” So when from the home this character molding is not given priority then the child would actually find it difficult to assimilate or to actually imbibe the instructions that are given by the teachers.

SPUK1 noted that parents have abandoned their primary responsibilities of raising their children in pursuit of their trading business as a result of the economic hardship. The economic hardship is a key challenge that most students and their families in the Southeastern region have to overcome. Most of the students pay little or no attention to their educational needs but rather prefer to pursue economic needs. TIS1 lamented on the youth’s quest for economic survival and said that:

Youth of nowadays, their interest is based on money. None of them is willing to go to school, even finish their education. Half of them are dropped out. Even you will not even see some of them going for apprenticeship or skill acquisition. What they want is "Okada." They want anything that will give them money immediately. If they do not have it you see them either taking drugs, stealing etc.

Colvin and Pauly’s integrated-structural marxist theory posited the effect of coercive economic condition on the people. TIS1 observed that students dropped out of school for economic pursuits for their upkeep as well as their families. This adverse harsh economic

condition affects the student's education and impacts their chances of succeeding in the real world. Colvin and Pauly's theory of reproduction of coercive control posited, "The differential placement of lower-class students into lower class-levels tracks will lead to a greater strain on and separation of those students" (Regoli et al., p. 242). The economic strain on the students from lower-class families can affect their upward mobility in the society, especially the student's educational advancement. The strain on these students isolates them from the popular culture that makes it difficult to focus on their academic studies. PAB1 noted the challenges encountered by the students when they are not properly fed to sustain the lectures offered by the teachers. According to PAB1,

When you have this money, you will be able to feed your children very well and that goes a long way to building them. And when you build them, their brain will be supplied with the adequate nutrients. The child will be able to download these things and have a retentive memory, and be able to sustain himself during long lecture like that.

Students under the age of 17 abandoned class assignments and dropped out of school to fetch for their livelihood: some embark on the risky motorcycle transportation business known as "Okada" to earn a living. Others engage in internet betting and pornographic video, which create more problems for the students and their families, as well the society in general. As SPUK1 and TIS1 observed, the dropped out students sometimes resort to other delinquent activities like truancy, drug abuse, and stealing.

Another key theory is the merton's social structure. The theory maintained that the social structure has a strong impact on student's educational success. In this theory,

five modes of adaptation were identified, which includes conformity, innovation, ritualism, retreatism, and rebellion (Merton, 1996). The first adaptation, conformity is a compliant student that has legitimate means to accomplish educational and economic goals. The innovation adaptation has the desire to achieve educational goals but lacks the legitimate means. The remaining three adaptations: ritualism, retreatism, and rebellion mirror the characteristics of an occasional or habitual truant student. Under the ritualistic adaptation, the student can engage in truancy based on the sustainability of the economic pressure. Merton (1996) indicated that lower class people are more vulnerable than the upper-class individuals. In other words, students from poor families are more likely to engage in ritualism because of their parents' economic status. Next is the retreatism adaptation that rejects cultural and institutional means. Students in this category prefer hanging on the streets to attending school. Most of them engage in other anti-social behaviors that cause major risks to the student and the society. The frequent occurrence of teachers' strike action in southeastern region breeds students that fall into retreatism. PAB1 observed that:

Definitely, there will be no teaching and no learning when the teachers are on strike. In fact, they will be playing on the streets doing menial things, constituting nuisance on the road and the public because they are not... So, definitely those of them that do not come from very good environment will waste into the society, and at the end of the day they become hooligans and hoodlums, which will, constitute a nuisance to the society if the strike lasts so long.

The last adaption is rebellion – students in this category are school dropouts that have lost all interests in higher education. These students are habitual truants that make their living by hawking on the streets or engaging in criminal acts. Some students quit school during the TSA because they lack motivation to continue striving ahead. POS1 noted that a majority of the students quit school after the strike action:

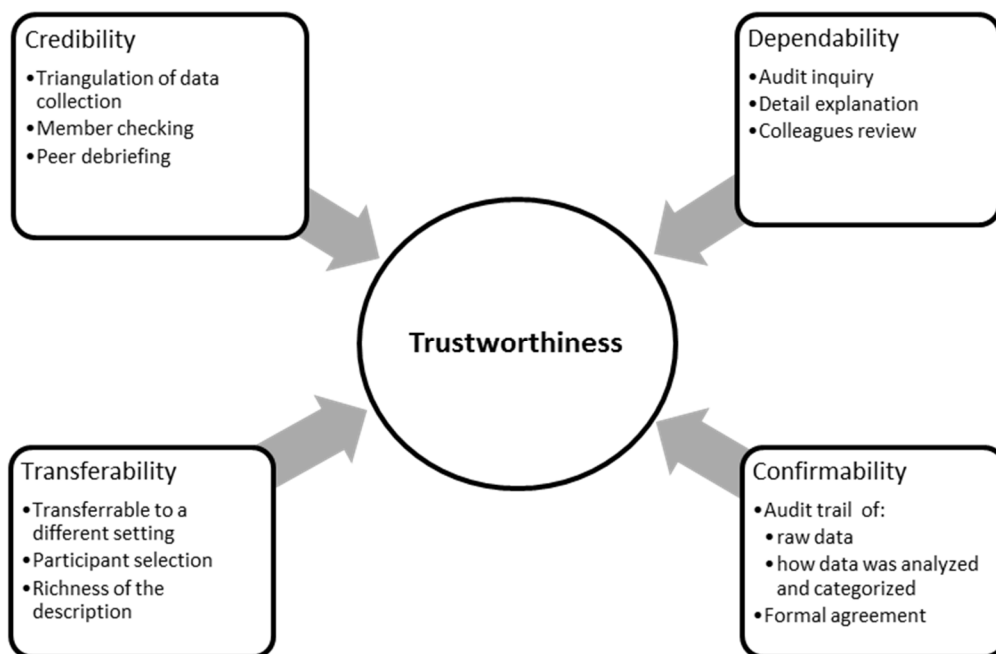
Now by the time the strike is over, coming back to the school you would find that many numbers of students are gone.

The students' realization of being isolated, use the strike action as an opportunity to quit school. POS1, TOS2, and PAB1 indicated that it takes approximately a month to attain full attendance in spite of the ones that dropped out of school. POS1 and TOS1 also noted that some of the students transfer to private institutions if the strike action lasts for a long period. The reviewed theories identified the adverse effect of the strike action on the students ranging from the economic impact of the criminal activities to poor academic performance encouraged by the ineffective educational system.

### **Evidence of Trustworthiness**

The acceptable approach of ensuring credible and convincing qualitative research is establishing convergence evidence of trustworthiness (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). While quantitative approach adheres to validity and reliability of the research being studied, the qualitative method emphasizes evidence of trustworthiness as an essential element of the research process needed to ascertain the honesty in the study.





*Figure 6.* Convergence of four concepts of trustworthiness

Ensuring trustworthiness enhances the ethical standard of the research process. Saldana (2009) asserted that qualitative researchers must be, ‘Rigorously ethical,’ especially during the coding process (p. 29). Saldana further argued of the need of a qualitative researcher to possess unique attributes that will encourage the high ethical discipline to treat their participants with respect and dignity. Figure 6 depicts the convergence of four concepts of trustworthiness, which include credibility, dependability, transferability, and .confirmability.

### **Credibility**

In an effort to ensure credibility in my study, I employed Moustakas bracketing strategy to avoid all preconceived prejudices and approach my data collection process

with openness, anew with a conscious mind (Moustakas, 1994). Given such nuances in rigor, bracketing is one of the useful methods in mitigating the subjective perceptions of qualitative research. Using the strategy demonstrates the rigor involved in the study (Tufford & Newman, 2010). Moreover, using bracketing in my field study was instrumental in keeping me focused during the data collection phase. As indicated in my description of credibility in chapter 3 about the need for the in-depth interview, observation, and detail documentation of data collected in the field study. I used prolonged interview engagement with the teachers and principals that have experience of the TSA and the impact of truancy in the Southeastern Nigeria. I spent an average of 90 minutes with each of the teacher and principal participants and 45 minutes with each of the student participants. Additionally, I spent an average of 30 minutes in observing the school premises and taking pictures of the key interesting areas of the school.

Member checking of participants were completed during my second visit to Nigeria on February 21, 2015. All identified errors were corrected and updated. I also had a follow-up telephone interview with the supervising principal regarding the recent strike action that ended on January 24, 2015. The participants reviewed and acknowledged the transcribed interview data. Obtaining participants' perception of the data collected is essential to ensuring the credibility of the study (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). Furthermore, triangulation of data was achieved through the multiple sources of data collection and data crosschecking among the three secondary schools studied.

**Transferability**

As a criterion of trustworthiness in qualitative research, transferability of study was mainly adjudged by the thick description as well as in-depth analysis of data (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012; Shank, 2006; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The intent of this study is to establish detailed perspective of the TSA, and its impact on the students' truancy and their academic performance. Data collection from three school settings in different educational districts made it possible to understand the research context as it applies to other settings. Lincoln and Guba (1985) contended that the essence of the thick description of the database to encourage transferability of the concept to another setting. Bloomberg and Volpe (2012) asserted that in-depth review of the phenomenon under investigation provides insightful knowledge shared within the site that fits the context. Detailed analysis of the effect of TSA phenomenon and its impact on the youth truancy could be replicated in another setting.

**Dependability**

Establishing dependability is paramount in my mind during the data collection and the analysis. Bloomberg and Volpe (2012) opined that in order to establishing dependability researchers needed to demonstrate the process of collecting and analyzing data. Dependability in qualitative research ensures reliability of the data source based on debriefing by colleagues or key participants (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). Participants' were interviewed separately in an undisturbed and secluded location. Participants were able to share their experiences regarding the teachers' strike and its impact on student's truancy and academic performance. All interviews were recorded, transcribed and saved

in NVivo 10 software for analysis. In addition, detailed observation and photograph of the school setting were recorded and uploaded to NVivo 10 for audit inquiry and easier access to the data. This explains the importance of consistent member checking that helps in reducing bias in the study (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012). The transcribed data were also shared with peer reviewers and participants for their acknowledgment and feedback on the study.

### **Confirmability**

Shank (2006) and Lincoln and Guba (1985) observed that confirmability is determined by keeping an accurate audit trail of the raw data. Several steps were used in determining trustworthiness in the research study. One of these steps included audit trail, which was recorded in NVivo 10 for safe storage and accessibility. This includes field notes of interviews and observations, and the unobtrusive measures of the attendance record and subject diaries. In addition, using the audit trail approach ensures the analysis and categorization of data with a connection to the existing literature. In line with this approach, I ensured that all the tape-recorded data, observation notes, and photographs were stored in NVivo 10 for thematic analysis and categorization. Systematic use of NVivo software helped in triangulating the coded data with other sources of information that include my field notes and a reflective journal.

### **Results**

Investigation of the impact of the teachers' strike action, its effects on youth truancy, as well as the impact of the deplorable conditions of the schools were crucial in ascertaining students' and teachers' perspectives. The findings confirmed incessant

teachers' strike actions (TSA) and poverty as determinants of students' involvement in truancy and other delinquent acts. The result also indicated inadequate school infrastructure and access roads as another key factors in students' absenteeism and truancy. The following emergent themes were helpful in addressing the research questions and understanding the participants' experience of the investigated phenomenon.

### **Research Question 1**

What effect do teachers' strike actions have on the students and their studies?

The question sought to investigate the impact of TSA on the students and their academic studies. Analysis of interview transcripts, documents, and observations revealed that the students received no teaching instructions during TSA. In addressing this issue, the researcher used probing questions to uncover the effect of this phenomenon, its effect on the students, as well as the teachers. Detailed inquiry on this phenomenon helped in revealing the perspectives of the principals, teachers and students. Identification and categorization of the relevant themes provided the insights and the understanding of the impact of TSA.

In addressing the effects of TSA, I utilized interview questions divided into two sections to identify the impact of TSA on the students and their studies. The first section is the student's interview questions and the second one is for the teachers and the principals, including the supervising principal. Separating the questions into two sections provided insights into the students' perspectives as well as the teachers' and the principals'.

**Academic performance.** SAB1, SAB2 of Shahana; SOS1, SOS2, SOS3 of Dorshawn; and SIS1, SIS2, SIS3 of Immerson indicated that the TSA affects their academic performances. The students lost a lot of teaching time that resulted in rushing their lectures when the strike is called off. SOS2 responded as follows:

The strike action affects my academic performance in the sense that when they are on strike when they come back to school, they will find it somehow difficult to cover our scheme. So they would be rushing it to be able to help us cover our scheme so that we will not slack in any way during our exam. So the strike action seriously affects our academic performance because those subjects that we should learn are a rush for us. We will not find it easy to be able to grasp everything that is involved.

SAB1 stated that:

The strike action affect my performance because I don't read that much during the strike action and the worst part of it is that by the time the strike action is over I have forgotten most of the things taught in class. I just wish the government pays the teachers so that the school will not close again.

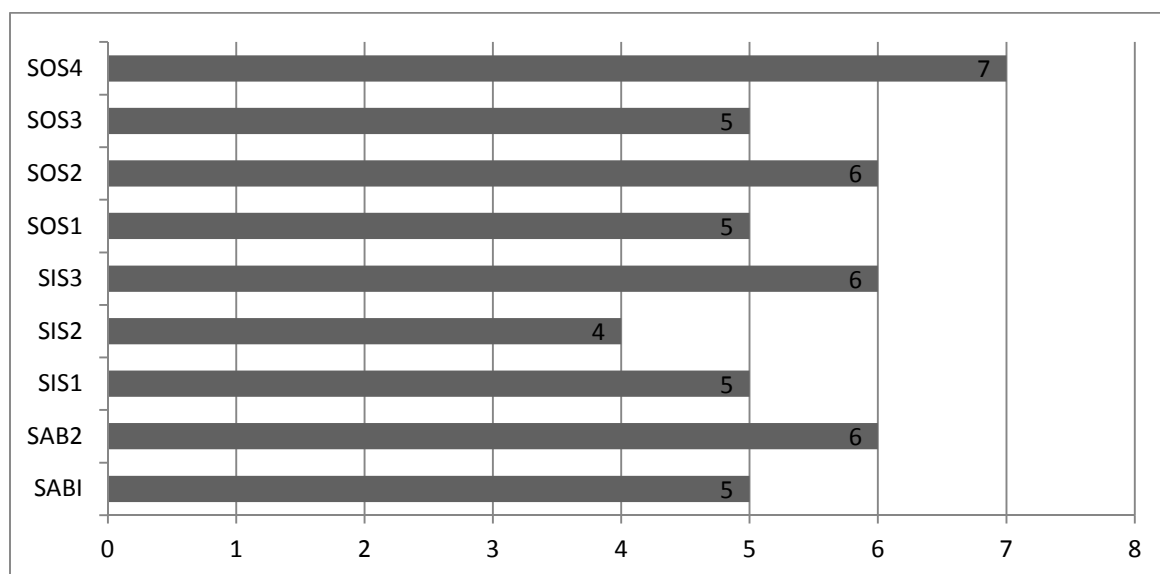
Although the teachers may have the real intention of helping the students to catch up with their lost ground, the approach of rushing the lectures may be counterproductive. The strategy may not be the best practice because comprehending the topics covered will be difficult for the students and can affect their academic performance. As research has shown, poor academic performance demotivates the students, which sometimes leads to truancy and the student eventually dropping out of school. SAB1's experience is peculiar

to most students, especially during protracted TSA. Staying out of the classroom for an extended period may be difficult for some students to overcome because students' have other competing items that may need their attention.

**Student Attendance.** Although the selected schools have no computerized database record of students' attendance record to share with this researcher, the attendance register, and the subject diary were reviewed and recorded in my field notes. The interview with the participating students indicated that they were absent from school a couple of times as shown in Table 10

Table 10

*Participating students' days absent from school*



TOS2 explained that the students suffer a lot because of the strike action because they stay home and waste their learning opportunities. Attendance rate dropped during the strike action because of low morale among the students. TIS3 indicated that some

students do not feel happy returning to school especially those of them that are not much interested in learning.

You see them in the park and some other places where they embark on mini trading activity or the other. So you hardly see them back in the school, or see them going to a summer class, and so on and so forth. In most cases, most of them would desert their class. Even when the strike action would be over some of them may not return on time because they would be feeling they still have some time to waste. Some students want idle time. Because even at the normal school period when there is no strike you see some of them not coming to school, talk less of when there is strike. When there is strike, they see it as an opportunity to make some money in some of their mini businesses. That is the situation.

TOS2 noted the reluctance of some students to return to school when the strike is called off. TOS2 stated:

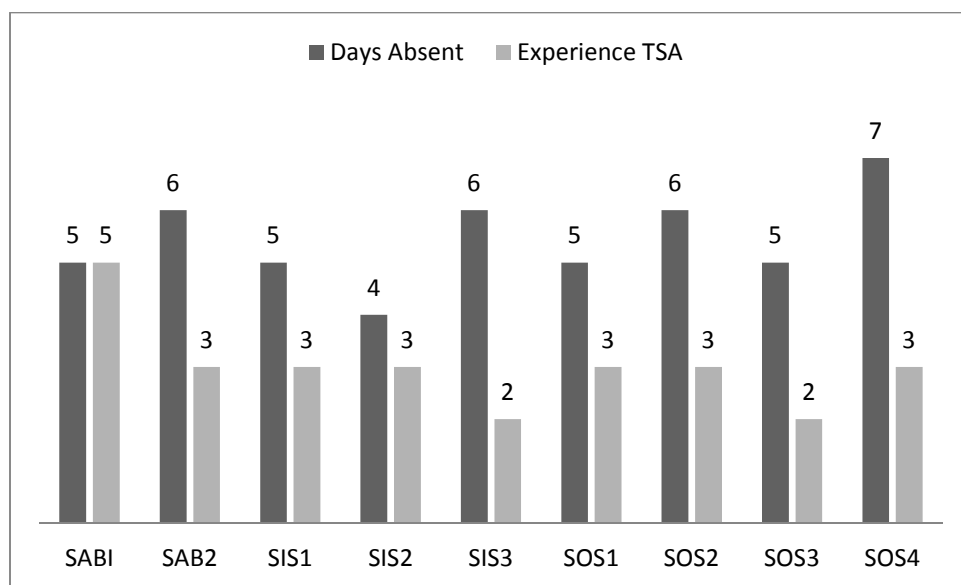
Now when the strike is called off only few students normally returned in that first week, and it affects academic works. With a school of one-thousand students, when a strike is called off its going to take them the next three weeks for them to come back and readjust. That first week you will see maybe two-hundred coming as against one-thousand who is supposed to come. In the next one week, the number will increase by one hundred or two hundred. It takes up to three or four weeks for them to resume normal attendance.

TIS2, TOS3, TAB1, PAB1, and SPUK1 emphasized that the students' poor attendance is partly affected by their drive to engage in trading to earn some money. However, they



agreed with TIS3 that lack of interest in schooling contributes to low attendance when the strike action impasse ends. Table 11 illustrates the relationship between students that experienced TSA and the number of days they were absent from school. The analyzed data focused only on the participating students that have a record of absenteeism, but did not include students that dropped out of school because of TSA. The table indicates that SAB1 has experienced TSA the most, which is five times, while the average experiences of all the participating students are 2.6 times for the past three years. SAB2, SIS3, SOS2, and SOS4 recorded the highest rate of days absent from school with an average of 3 times experience of TSA.

Table 11

*Experienced TSA compared to days absent*

Some of these students stay in their homes alone with no alternative plan for home studies. As observed by some of the teachers and principals that the TSA affected the students in many ways. SIS1 of Immerson Secondary School stated:

I have experienced up to three strikes since the last three years. And in this we use to withdraw back a little because when we are out of school sometimes we use to lack some of the things that we have to acquire from our teachers most of the time. So for that three times I know that I have somehow gone back from my academic works.

SIS1's experience was shared among all the students that participated in this study. Their frustration of staying home rather attending school studying for their examination gives them a serious concern. Table 12 shows students' feelings about TSA. Students expressed their experiences that TSA affected their studies and school attendance. SIS1, SIS2, and SOS2 stated that they felt unhappy during the TSA. The feeling of staying home running errands or the exposure to other delinquent activities is a concern to most of the students that participated in the study. Frequent TSA impacts Senior Secondary 3 (SS3) preparation for the school certificate exam. On the other hand, some students that have no interest in attending school feel happy and wish for a prolonged TSA.

Table 12

*Participant Feeling During TSA*

Participant	Student Feeling of TSA
SAB1	Boring; Missing Something
SAB2	Makes me not to attend school
SIS1	Find it difficult; Feel bad
SIS2	Makes me angry and affects my academic performance
SIS3	Don't feel like going to school
SOS1	Get bored; Makes me lazy
SOS2	Feel very bad; Forgetting things
SOS3	Boring; frustrated
SOS4	Very boring; frustrated;

**Private Institution.** The impact of the TSA weighs much on the students; especially for students whose parents cannot afford private tutoring. In addition, TOS2 asserted that:

Only the gifted students can learn on his or her own, only the students from an elite group. If there is a strike in any states, in any school for a very long time, academic work will be completely paralyzed and it has adverse effect on the students. So, there is nothing like academic work, they will only manage to read on their own. Unless if you belong to the elite class, the parents can now look for a home teacher. But if it is in school setting nothing happens, because even if you are there, organizing some lessons secretly, the aggrieved union may even stop you because they are not happy of the social injustice being meted out to them.

TOS2 believes that TSA impacts students from low-income families. Only the students from “Elite class” can afford a private or a home teacher to provide learning opportunities for the privileged few, while the impoverished students continue to languish on the street hawking and partaking in other anti-social behaviors. SIS2 noted that students in private schools attended school regularly without any concern for teachers’ going on strike like the public schools.

When I supposed to be in school, and I am home, I do not feel happy because I should be in school learning. But to find myself at home makes me angry because; maybe if it’s only government school that has the strike, my mates who are in private school will be attending school, and then I will be left at home. I don’t feel happy about it.

According to SIS2, the teachers' strike demoralizes most students and sometimes encourages students to engage in other activities that may eventually get them in trouble with the law. TOS1 is of the opinion that most of the private institutions are substandard and have no basis learning facilities to prepare the students to pass their West African Examination Council (WAEC). On a similar note, TOS3 added that private schools charge exorbitant school fees, which students from poor families cannot afford.

Furthermore, POS1 observed that:

When a student is removed parent will take them to a private institution where they will cut their throats as school fees. Now they will pay high prices and the teachers are not qualified in the private schools. So the resultant effect again will be that there will be poor attendance in academics because of the strike action that drifted the children from the normal training of study to the backyard mushroom schools.

In spite of the concerns raised by the participants in this study, private institutions are alternative to students that can afford the tuition and other fees. Based on the responses above from the teachers and principals, the students receive no teaching or learning during the TSA. PIS1 pointed out that students from wealthy families can afford to provide private educational instructions for their children during the strike impasse while students from poor families stay home or engage in street hawking or other mischievous activities.

**Research Question 2**

How do teachers and administrators describe their experience during the strike action period?

The intent of this question was to understand the teachers and school administrators' perspective about the effect of the TSA. The teachers also undergo similar challenges as the students. The teachers and administrators who were responsible for providing teaching and conducive learning environment for the students complained about the unfair treatment and nonpayment of salaries and other remunerations.

**Nonpayment of wages.** The teacher/principal's views were very enlightening and clear in addressing the concerns of the effects of TSA. The direct responses by the principals, teachers, and students were helpful and succinct in guiding the researcher in this study. The teachers lamented the government's inability to pay their wages for the past three months. The supervising principal, SPUK1 noted that:

When this grievance of non-salary payment for months, non-payment of leave grant, non-payment of increments, and also non-payment of some of the promotion allowances, these things will actually demoralize the teachers. And when the teacher channeled their grievances to the government through the N.U.T and the government failed in her obligation to meet these needs, then a teacher is left with no other option than to go on strike.

Some teachers believe that the only way they communicate their grievance to the state government is engaging in the strike action. Teachers used the strike action to agitate for better living wage to ensure that their salaries are paid on time and as when due.

POS1 indicated that the students stay at their respective homes because the teachers and principals are on strike agitating to the state government for nonpayment of their salaries and leave allowances. POS1 indicated that no teaching or learning take place during the TSA period. She said:

Everywhere is deserted, the teachers go home, and the students go to their various homes. So there are no teaching there is no teaching; there is no learning during TSA, no matter the length.

POS1 noted that some students could receive teaching when their parents or family members employ or seek the services of a private tutor. The principal of Immerson Secondary School, PIS1 echoed similar sentiments that there is no teaching or learning for the students during TSA because of government's inability to pay their salaries as at when due. He pointed out that teachers and principals do not make contact with the students until the strike action is called off.

As long as the teachers are on strike, the students do not normally learn except for some whose parents can decide to put them into part-time lessons. That is the only way, but not all the parents, because it has to be a well to do parent that can do that. Otherwise, the other ones will remain at home.

PIS1 added that the teachers spend extra time to teach the students to ensure they cover their scheme of work for that period. PIS1 also noted that the TSA has an adverse effect on students' learning behavior, which leads them to delinquent acts and other criminal activities.

**Nigeria Union of Teachers (NUT) role towards TSA.** TOS2, a teacher and a

union representative described NUT as the umbrella organization for all the teachers both primary and secondary school, except the tertiary and private institutions. NUT plays an important role in ensuring that the welfare of teachers is adequately addressed during their impasse with the state or federal government. The NUT enforces the strike actions to ensure that no learning or teaching takes place during the strike action. TOS2 maintained that teachers are unfairly treated compared to people in other professions. NUT task force enforces the union mandate to ensure that no teacher or principal violates their order. According to TOS2:

Even if you organize some lessons secretly, the aggrieved union may even stop you because they are not happy, because of social injustice being meted out to them. So nothing works. (*When you say social injustice, what do you mean?*) I mean like a kind of dehumanizing actions on teachers. Sometimes they will not be paid as when due. Sometimes we always experience some cut in salaries without our expressed permission.

The supervising principal, SPUK1 and the principal of Shahana High School, PAB1 were unequivocal in their stance, when SPUK1 stated:

There is no way the students can learn when the teachers are on strike because when the teachers are on strike the students are not in school. The N.U.T. insures that the classrooms are under lock and key and no teacher is meant to be seen. When the students are at home most of them, do not have that assess to learn because they involve themselves in some miniature work, others also give themselves to a antisocial behavior, and more often than none, most of them

travel to their relations far away or near. So it affect the students learning because no teaching or learning goes on, and more often than none students are found to be idle.

And PAB1, the principal of Shahana noted:

Definitely, there are no teaching and no learning when the teachers are on strike. In fact, they will be playing on the streets doing menial things, constituting nuisance on the road and the public because they are not... So, definitely those of them that do not come from very good environment will waste into the society, and at the end of the day they become hooligans and hoodlums which will constitutes a nuisance to the society if the strike last so long.

As indicated, NUT ensures that the classrooms are locked to deny teachers that may sympathetic to the students. The union's prevention of access to the classrooms makes it difficult for students to receive educational instruction. The responses of TOS1, TOS3, TIS1, TIS3, TAB1, and TAB2 confirmed that no teaching or learning go on when teachers are on strike. The teachers maintained that no education was offered to the students except for few teachers that may give the students home assignments to do during the TSA. In certain situation, especially during protracted TSA, some teachers may take the risk of offering lectures to interested students, especially when the Senior Secondary 3 (SS3) students are preparing for the West African Examinations Council (WAEC). According to TOS1, a teacher from Dorshawn said that teaching was voluntary and offered secretly to avoid detection and possible reprimand by the NUT Task Force.



Further, TOS1 and TOS3 added that teaching the students during TSA is difficult because the teachers offer their free time to teach the students but frequently are chased away by the NUT Task Force. TOS2 said:

During the period of strike, preparing the students is not always easy. They are the people that are suffering it while the teachers will also be suffering because, at the end of it all, they will do their best to make sure that these topics are being covered.

TOS3 noted that teachers sympathize with the students considering the effect of TSA on the students. TOS3 said that some of the teachers provided their GSM (Global System Mobile) phone to their students for easy contact for academic assistance during the TSA. According to TOS3, some of the students quit school because of TSA. As noted earlier the students that dropped out of school join gangs to make quick money through illegal means. Some of them engage in street trading or hawking to earn money support their families. On the contrary, TOS3 said that affluent families transfer their children to private institutions to continue their education.

**Effect of Government's Role.** The state government is the employer of all the public secondary school teachers and principals that has the responsibility of maintaining the schools and ensuring that teachers' wages and remunerations are paid on time. Abraham, Ememe, and Egu (2012) noted the importance of teachers in imparting quality knowledge to students to learn the skills to survive in society. Abraham et al. maintained that for teachers to continue performing their job they must be taken care of like other workers. One of the key reasons of TSA is nonpayment of teachers' salary and other

contractual benefits associated with their employment. The government's noncompliance with the agreed contract has caused the teachers to embarking on numerous strike actions as the only tool to force the government to comply with the agreement negotiated with the NUT.

The teachers and principals interviewed for this study expressed their dissatisfaction with the state government for nonpayment of their salary for the past three months. TOS3 stated that:

There are couples of factors that can be attributed to students' truancy. One of them is that the government has failed to provide the enabling environment that makes learning fun and interesting. When I reflect how the secondary schools were during my time, I feel so much for this generation in the sense that the government has neglected these poor children and squander people's resources for their selfish political gain.

TOS3 noted that government inefficiency affects teachers' ability to teach the students. The teachers and principals interviewed for this study expressed their financial problems because of nonpayment of their salaries. Below is TIS2 response to one of my follow up questions on how they survive without their monthly salary:

By engaging in petty trading, that is why you see most of the teachers selling pure water. Go outside the junction, you will see some of them selling pure water. That is why you see them most of the time opening stores or just engaging in one work or the other so they will survive.

Other participants echoed TIS2's concerns that they engage in menial jobs and petty trading to be able to survive and cater for their families. TIS2 also indicated that some of the teachers abstain from school to attend to their stores because of their financial hardship. Teachers abstaining from school for their petty trading affects the students learning adversely. Below is a response to my follow up question to PAB1 on how the teachers survive without regular payment of their wages and allowances:

According to the maxim that teachers pay is in heaven and their reward is in heaven. In fact, we have gone to heaven until we have asked the Almighty God to be getting those allowances down. We are living on charity. We are living on God's own kindness otherwise nothing is happening, but as obedient and law-abiding citizens, what do we do, because if we stopped our children, Nigeria would have no future without education.

The question is why should teachers work and not be paid their living wage and allowances on a regular basis? SOS4, one of the student participants responded that:

The teachers come to school every day to teach the students, I think that they deserve to be paid for their work, and the government needs to make sure that they set money aside for teachers' salary. I know that the teachers' do not like strike and would like the problem to be resolved so they can start teaching. The government has to pay them so they can teach us well.

SOS4 expressed concern and appealed to the government to fulfill their contractual obligation by paying the teachers' basic wages and allowances. SOS4 added that the teachers deserved a better treatment and appealed to the policy makers to formulate

policies that will preclude the government from nonpayment of teachers' salary, as well as workers in other occupations.

### **Research Question 3**

How can students, teachers, and administrators collaborate to encourage Student's attendance and graduation?

The essence of this question is to understand the collaborative strategies among the students, teachers, and administrators to address students' attendance and graduation. To identify these strategies, I addressed the issues concerning attendance and truancy among the students in southeastern Nigeria. Furthermore, I investigated issues affecting youth truancy and identifying collaborative strategies for improving attendance and graduation, which include the following approaches: school-based intervention, student engagement, and parent engagement.

**School-Based Issues.** There are school related factors that might affect student learning abilities as identified by the participants during the study. TIS3 expressed concerns over the school system. TIS3 explained that:

Well, due to ineffectiveness of the school system. Because in some, as we are talking here now there are some subjects without teachers, especially in this area of Science, Physics, Chemistry, and mathematics. In some schools, they do not have the teachers. Incidentally for some time now our state, have not been employing teachers, even when some may go on retirement, and so on. New ones may not come. Like here presently, most teachers were retired some months ago, and as we are talking here now we do not have Math teacher.

When the school lacks the teachers in key subject areas, it demoralizes the students and affects their enthusiasm for education. TIS3 noted that the current math teacher is hired on a part-time basis, whose salary is paid through the Parents Teachers' Association (PTA). TIS3 explained that the PTA assistance of retaining a part-time math teacher was helpful in providing lectures to the students. TIS2 made a similar observation that lack of teachers to help teach and supervise the students encouraged truancy. TIS2 believed that when the students are reprimanded for not bringing their textbooks to class, they might decide not to attend class for a long period. Some of them may quit school due to lack of financial resources to acquire the textbooks and other school materials. TIS2 remarked:

We do not have enough teachers. This school is supposed to have up to thirty teachers, and here we have about sixteen. Now with this sixteen we teach sixteen subjects or more than that. So when there are no teachers to help these students when I am in this class, the other class will continue to disturb. So it will cause truancy. Another thing is the lack of equipment for the job. We do not have enough textbooks and there is no way they can learn. And the parents are poor. It is difficult for them to buy textbooks. They do not have textbooks for literature they do not have for social studies.

According to TIS2, Immerson Secondary School currently has a shortage of 16 teachers at the time of this interview and most of the students have no textbooks for the subjects. TIS2 shared a similar view that because the students' lack of textbooks, the teachers are forced to write their lectures on the blackboard. In addition, the teaching technique of the teacher sometimes affects the student learning and attitude towards education. TAB1 and

TAB2 indicated that the way and manner a teacher presents a topic determines the level of interest the student might have on that particular subject. In some situation, students abstain from classes if they dislike the teaching method of the teacher or outright dislike of the teacher.

The school learning environment is another factor that influences students' behavior and attitude (Bailey, 2014). According to Bailey, providing quality maintenance of the school buildings, classrooms, and the entire premises promotes students' attendance. On the other hand, Bailey observed that schools deemed substandard tend to distract the students' learning abilities and negatively impacts their morale and behavior of the students. A walkthrough observation of each of the three schools (Shahana, Dorshawn, and Immerson) helped me in assessing the learning environment of the students. As shown in Table 13, my observation revealed that the three schools failed to meet the reasonable standard of a quality learning environment. Among the three observed schools, only Dorshawn was rated fair (2) in the attractiveness of school premises because the school walls were recently painted. Dorshawn was also rated fair on the quality of furniture, availability of computers for students and equipped library. I observed few computers in the labs that were not operational because of power shortage at the time of my visit. The principals have no computers or printers in their offices. Since there is no printer available within schools premises, I took pictures of the reviewed documents with my camera. Table 13 also indicated that Shahana and Immerson were rated poor (1) in all the categories, except the availability of few computers in the lab.

In addition to the rating in Table 13, Figure 7 depicts a clearer picture of one of the schools hallways observed during the field study. POS1 said that the school environment could affect students' truant behavior. The overall school premises are in a bad condition.

Table 13

*Conditions of School Buildings and Features*

School	Attractiveness of school premises (freshly painted, good lighting etc.)	Condition, appropriateness, and quality of furniture	Ability to accommodate both large and small activities at same time	Availability of independent study areas	Availability of reading areas with comfortable seating	Availability of computers for students	Students access to the internet	Availability of equipped library	Availability of manicured football field	Availability of recreational facility for students
Shahana	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1	1
Dorshawn	2	2	1	1	1	2	1	2	1	1
Imerson	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1

*Note.* **1 = Poor** means that the feature or system is inadequate and in a dilapidated condition to meet the standards of the school. **2 = Fair** means that the feature or system meets minimal standards of the school. **3 = Good** means the feature or system is adequate and meets the reasonable standards of the school. **4 = Excellent** means that the feature or system exceeds the reasonable standards of the school.

The classrooms and hallways are unsafe for learning; the observed classroom walls are unpainted, and have cracked walls, and leaking roofs. In addition, the classrooms have no doors or windows as shown in the picture, which is unsafe for the students. The floors are broken, filled with debris by the main entrance of the classroom, and the walkways and hallways in the school are unpaved and some of them are covered with weeds. As shown in Figure 7, the floors are unsafe and are major health hazards for the children. The detailed description of the classroom observations and pictures were coded into the NVivo software and recorded in my field observational protocol.



Figure 7. Picture of Immerson Secondary School walkway

To address some of these deficiencies in the educational school system, the supervising principal, SPUK1 asserted that the School Based Management Committee (SBC) was established to ameliorate the problems confronting the schools in the area. SBC was made of professionals from different walk of life; the committee works closely with parents, teachers, and administrators in developing a better strategy to improve the educational system in the state. SPUK1 opined:

By this I mean that no aspect of the upbringing of the child is neglected; that is morally, socially, educationally, and otherwise. It is properly packaged so that the child is properly prepared to pick a leadership role in the society and not to become a misfit in the society.

Further, TAB2 observed:

We have been managing the little that we have. The infrastructure is where a child is now mandated to provide some for himself. There are students here; they can adjust to the little the school can provide for them. I know that the infrastructure,



that means if the environment is conducive. Being conducive means, everything has to be in touch for the child to learn.

School's physical appearance with modern infrastructure is an added incentive that motivates students to attend school regularly. Finally, Bailey (2014) asserted that well maintained school buildings not only inspire the students, They improve the teachers' and administrators' attendance and morale.

**Student engagement.** Numerous studies have shown that students' association with their peers mainly influences truancy behavior. The social bond theory argued that the youths interaction with their peers could help in discouraging them from engaging in delinquent acts (Hirschi, 1969). On the contrary, students' association with friends that have delinquent record can easily lure the vulnerable peer into criminal activities.

Merton's social structure theory emphasized the attachment people have to acquiring wealth with less emphasis on the norms governing their achievement (Akers & Sellers, 2009). As indicated earlier by the participants, some students quit school during TSA in pursuit of economic gains to support their families, and most of these students are from poor families.

This economic pursuit, however, is expected to be through legitimate and conventional means. Unfortunately, the participants' indicated that most of the dropped out students engage in illegal activities to survive because of the weak economic structure in Nigeria. Research studies show that strike impacts, "students that are poorest and weakest academically" (Wills, 2014, p. 27). This economic structure is regulated by societal norms that are skewed to favor the wealthy over the poor people. To address

these issues, most schools employ the services of professional guardian counselors to assist in counseling the students. SPUK1 noted that:

Students with the behavioral problem do not conform to the standard are actually called and counseled so that they can actually turn a new leaf. We equally have a situation whereby we organize education week. During this education week we invite speakers from different walk of life and these speakers come and actually give talk that will help go get some of the evil ideas or some of the misconception they may be having as far as life is concern. So these lecturers will actually take the time to instruct them in the proper way so that they will be in a position to align themselves with good moral behavior.

SPUK1 indicated that the teachers and the administrators' strategies of inviting guest speakers and providing educational workshops had helped in reducing truancy and drop out in most schools in the region. In some cases, the "copers" from the National Youth Service Corps (NYSC) are recruited to mentor the students. According to PIS1 and TOS3, the young copers who recently graduated from college inspire the students with their real life story about how they work hard to graduate from secondary school and college. Another strategy of engaging the students is a presentation of textbook gift and scholarship award for good behavior. PIS1, the principal of Immerson Secondary School, noted that providing an incentive to the student with positive behavior discouraged the student from partaking in truancy behavior or dropping out of school. Rather helps in improving their academic performance. PIS1 stated:

Now, at the end of the term, the student that was not seen outside throughout the term we normally give them some little gift. Maybe buy a textbook and give it to them as a prize or as an incentive since you were here all through the term take this so that the next term others will now aim to get the same thing. That is what we have introduced, and of course, the community also came up telling us that if we recommend the best well behaved student that we are going to give them a scholarship.

In an effort to encourage the students to remain focused in their academic pursuit and lead a befitting moral life, sometimes-spiritual leaders are invited to minister to the students.

**Parental involvement.** Establishing a strategy for improving the students' attendance poses a challenge to teachers and administrators. One of the techniques that most schools use in addressing truancy is engaging the parents. As indicated in the literature, students improve their academic performance when parents play an active role in monitoring their grades (Lawrence, Lawther, Jennison, Hightower, 2011). Hirschi's (1969) social control theory asserted that family setting as an integral factor in raising a child. Hirschi's social control theory further noted that the family is the primary framework for a child's emotional bonding.

All the participating teachers and principals indicated that they used PTA meeting to engage parents on issues involving their children. In addition to PTA meetings, parents also participate in the SBC meeting to share their views regarding their children. The meeting also provides the opportunity for parents to obtain feedback about their child's

academic performance and conformity to school rules and guidelines. Direct communication with parents through the PTA and SBC enables teachers and administrators to lodge formal complaints about students' attendance and academic performance. TAB1 stated:

We do invite parents; organize PTA to lodge a complaint with them to the parents. In fact, we work in partnership with the parents. To ascertain the problem of a child, while that child has failed to come to school for a particular period. Then if they give us a reasonable account why that child is absent, I think the child may be pardoned because it is not his fault. It is only when the parent provides those things that it creates an enabling environment for that child to return to school.

Parental involvement is a multidimensional construct that may improve the child's school grade to achieve the envisioned academic goals. Parents should be more involved in their child's education than relegating the responsibilities to teachers. Parental engagement is crucial in enhancing the children's psychosocial and overall academic skills (Mo & Singh, 2008). Mo and Singh added that parents are encouraged to participate in their children's school conferences and other school activities.

#### **Research Question 4**

How do teachers strike actions affect students' attendance behavior among the secondary schools in the Southeastern Nigeria?

The objective of this research question is to investigate the impact of the TSA on the students' attendance and their behavior towards education. The analysis of the

interview transcript identified three key areas that need further exploration, which include the effect of TSA on the students, attendance after the TSA, and consequences for non-attendance.

**Impact of TSA.** Understanding the impact TSA will provide some insights and perspectives on students' during the impasse between the NUT and the state government. According to SPUK1, the students stay at home during the strike period, while some of them help their parents in trading and farming. Others engage in disorderly and criminal activities that are not acceptable in the society. The supervising principal, SPUK1 opined that:

Some of them give themselves to some acts, like involving themselves in cultism, some equally engaged themselves in acts like this new GSM that has actually taken over the communications system of this country. Some use it to play games; others use it to involve in acts that are morally against the ethics of learning.

Some of them use it to open some pornographic images that are found in some Facebook.

All the participating students SAB1, SAB2, SOS1, SOS2, SOS3, SOS4, SIS1, SIS2, and SIS3 pointed out that the TSA affects their academic performance. The students indicated that after the strike period the teachers rush their academic schedule to ensure that all materials for the school period are covered. According to the students, rushing the academic schedule makes it difficult for them to grasp the materials taught in class and in most cases demotivates some students from attending classes.

The teachers and principals also felt that the TSA affects the students' academic performance. TAB1, TAB2, TOS1, TOS2, TOS3, TIS1, TIS2, TIS3, PAB1, PIS1, and POS1 contended that no teaching or learning during the impasse between the union and the government. The schools are vacated and the doors and gates are pad locked by the Union Task Force. TOS2 and TOS3 added that teachers who teach during the strike action are reprimanded for violating the union's agreed upon rules. Nevertheless, TIS1 and TIS2 noted that some teachers go out of their way to provide interested students with the scheme of work to study during the stalemate. According to TIS1, students from educated families get some help from their family members, while illiterate and poor families encouraged their children to help them in their farm work or petty trading. Some engage in other criminal acts like stealing and joining gangs. In addition, TIS2 said that some students attend summary classes, some visit computer centers to surf the internet for pornographic videos and other anti-social vices. Furthermore, PAB1 noted that some of the students hang around on the streets and constitute nuisance and waste into the society.

**Peer pressure.** Another key effect of TSA is peer influence that encourages some students to engage in one illegal act or the other because of more free time emanating from the closure of schools. SPUK1 observed that:

Again, peer group today, we see in our society that their lot of students that have joined a society that has given rise to what we call cultism. We see students that because of trying to acquire power or trying to pass exams those of them who are not trained so they join certain groups, and these groups end up initiating them

into cult and these have actually brought out this incident of truancy in the society.

SPUK1 and other participants emphasized the negative effect of peer pressure on the students. TOS1 noted that students join petty trading and selling sachet water, groundnut, etc. based on peer influence of their group. According to TOS1, students' involvement in street trading is more prevalent during TSA when students have more time to roam the streets.

Sutherland's (1970) differential association emphasized the learned delinquent behavior based on peer influence. As observed by TOS1, a teacher participant from Dorshawn secondary school who stated that:

At times, peer group has a lot of influences. When they come to school and discover that these people that engaged in one trade or another have money, can eat at any time, can buy little-little things, they will now join them. They will try to engage themselves. Some of them sell pure water. You see them going out to sell pure water, grand nuts, biscuits in order to make little-little money that they will use to come to school because they have seen others coming to school with money.

Students' association with their peers is the key factor that influences them to engage in criminal acts. SPUK1, PIS1, PAB1, TIS1, TOS2, and TAB2 complained that peer pressure is a challenge that the school administrators need to address.

**Student attendance record after TSA.** As indicated by all the participants interviewed for this study, the TSA affects students' school attendance. TAB1 noted that

the TSA severely affects students' attendance. He remarked that:

Most of the students, when the strike action is called off, you find out that the population will reduce. Some of them will switch over to private school. Their parents can decide to send their children to private schools where you do not have much incident of strike action.

TAB1 and TOS3 believed that by the time the students return to school they have already wasted two to three weeks at home, which adversely affects their studies. TAB1 further explained that the students' reluctance of returning to school as a result of the difficulty in adjusting their life style without bothering much about education and the incessant teachers' strikes. TOS1 said that most of the students lost hope of attending school; very few of the diligent students would like to contact the school to verify resumption dates, while others prefer hustling on the street to earn some income through the conventional approach or illegitimate means.

**Consequences for absenteeism or truancy.** Like any other mal-behavior, there is a consequence for unacceptable conducts. The teachers and principals interviewed for this study share their views about various types of punishment or sanctions used on their students that have habitual or chronic record of absenteeism. Below is Table 14 indicating the types of sanctions used on the students that violate the school attendance policy. Although none of the schools investigated, has a written attendance policy, the participants insisted that students know the school attendance policy in which an unexcused absence attracts a progressive discipline that ranges from an oral reprimand to suspension.



Table 14

*Participants' Responses to Types of Sanctions Used in their Schools*

Participant	Type of Punishment/Sanction Given For Absenteeism
SPUK1	Reprimanding, flogging, severe punishment like spending 2 to 3 weeks to uproot a tree, suspension
PAB1	Notifying parents, cutting grass, reprimanding, suspension
PIS1	Cutting grass, flogging, corporal punishment
POS1	Oral reprimand, flogging, suspension
TAB1	Notifying parents, reprimanding, cutting grass
TAB2	Cutting grass, flogging, suspension
TIS1	Apology letter, refer to guidance counselor, kneeling down on the floor
TIS2	Write to fill a note book, cutting grass, suspension
TIS3	Cutting grass, flogging
TOS1	Deny break privilege, cutting grass, suspension
TOS2	Refer to parents or guidance, fetching water, sweeping school premises, cut grass, flogging
TOS3	Write apology letter, kneeling down on the floor, cutting grass, flogging

SPUK1, who does not believe in using the capital punishment as a strategy of curbing truancy, indicated that intervention at the early stage of the student engagement in absenteeism would be more effective. According to SPUK1:

The solution to it is to device a means of actually trying to make sure that the students from the formative stage that were made for good behavior are imbibed into them. In addition, they are carried along the path of good moral upbringing that will help them. The Bible says; “bring up a child in the way he would grow and when he grows he will not depart from it.” I think that should be the best approach rather than sanction.

SPUK1 maintained that sanctioning the students for absenteeism is counterproductive and recommended a more humane approach to disciplining the child. Contrary to SPUK1 views on sanctions, other participants like TOS1 believe in using sanctions and other

forms of punishment to discipline students that violate the school rules and regulations.

TOS1 asserted that:

The truth is this if actually we do not use sanctions nothing will work. Then you cannot be able to curb truancy in Nigeria, in Africa. Oversea they can tell you do not use this, do not use that; I do not know how they are managing there. However, here in Nigeria, here in Africa, sanction works well.

Exception for SPUK1 that has the reservation about the effectiveness of punishment, PAB1 favor a more moderate approach, non and corrective measure. While other participants share similar views with TOS1 that believe in using sanctions in disciplining the errant student that fails to comply with the school's truancy rules and regulations.

### **Summary**

Research question 1 focused on inquiring about the impact of TSA on the students during protracted impasse between the union and the government. The identified themes address the issues concerning students' academic performance, students' attendance, and the need for private institutions. Regarding the issue of academic performance, all the students interviewed affirmed that TSA has an adverse effect on their academic performance. The students indicated that they found it difficult to cope with their scheme of work when they return to school. Some students even find it difficult to attend classes after much involvement in other activities they might have gotten themselves into for economic survival. The students, teachers, and principals agreed that attendance is usually low when the strike is called off. TSA demoralizes the students, which disrupts academic schedule and affects their attendance. The participants also complained that

they feel bored and unhappy during the TSA. The impact of TSA is felt mostly by the SS3 students that strive to complete their secondary education and proceed for tertiary education (Edinyang & Ubi, 2013). Most of these students entertain the fear that if the strike takes place, it will delay their graduation and hinder their chances of proceeding to higher education.

Research question 2 inquired about the teachers and principals' experience during the strike action. Nonpayment of salary is identified as a critical factor that contributes to teachers' incessant strike actions. The Nigeria Union of Teachers (NUT) plays an integral role in protecting the interest of its members. NUT initiates the strike and makes sure that the teachers and principals comply with the strike guidelines until their demands are met. In addition, NUT task force ensures that all the classrooms are locked, and no teaching goes on in any of the schools in the state. The participants felt that the government has failed in their contractual obligation of paying their salary and other benefits. They perceive the government as having abdicated their primary responsibility of catering for the welfare and safety of their employees. The teachers could not understand how the government expects them to take care of themselves and their families when they have not been paid for more than three months.

Research question 3 discussed the collaborative techniques among the school (teachers and administrators), students, and parents. The school-based approach emphasized the deteriorating conditions of the schools that may have contributed in discouraging student's interests towards education. Some pictures were shown to illustrate the poor conditions of the schools. The theories discussed in the literature were

used in explaining the effect of peer pressure as illustrated in Hirschi's social bond theory. Merton's social structure emphasized the effect of youth desire to acquire wealth rather than to attend school. To ameliorate this problem, some schools sought the help of community leaders to mentor the students. Also, graduates from college on their National Youth Service were invited to mentor the students. Parents' involvement is essential in encouraging the student's attendance. Parents' participation in PTA and SBC meetings were also encouraged to motivate the students to comply with the school rules and regulations. Literature and social theories reviewed in this study confirmed the need for parents to be more involved in their child's education.

Finally, findings in response to Research Question 4 explained the adverse effect of TSA on the students. Most of affected students stay at home or hang out with friends to engage in delinquent behaviors. Students are reluctant to attend school, feeling demoralized after the strike period. Students' disillusionment with education is reinforced by the high rate of unemployment in the region.

Chapter 5 focuses on the discussion of the findings and conclusions of the study. The chapter also addresses the recommendation for action and further studies. Finally, the researcher discussed the study's limitations as well as its contribution to a positive social change.

## Chapter 5: Discussion, Recommendation, and Conclusion

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this study is to investigate the extent to which teachers' strike actions (TSA) affected students' engagement in truancy behavior, as well as the effect on their academic attainment. The following research questions guided the study:

1. What effect do teachers' strike actions have on the students and their studies?
2. How do teachers and administrators describe their experience during the strike action period?
3. How can students, teachers, and administrators collaborate to encourage students' attendance and graduation?
4. How do teachers' strike actions affect students' attendance behavior among the secondary schools in the southeastern Nigeria?

### **Overview of the Study**

Case study approach provided useful tools needed in dealing with challenges associated with this study. The qualitative case study methodology is the most appropriate in which the researcher employed multiple sources of data collection like interviews, observations, and documentation of field notes. Participants were 21 that comprised students, teachers, principals, and a supervising principal. The teachers and the administrators were selected for their experiences in matters relating to TSA while the criteria of selecting student-participants were based on their school attendance record as well as their experiences on TSA. I interviewed each teacher- or principal-participant for an average of an hour and spent an average of 30 minutes with the student participants.

Observational field notes and pictures of the classrooms and hallways were included the data analysis. Documents used for this study include the review of the attendance, class registers, and subject diaries. I analyzed the transcribed data with Nvivo 10 software that provided rich descriptive information about the investigated phenomenon.

A brief review of the study findings confirmed the theoretical concepts described in the literature review. Findings from this study are the low morale of students, teachers and administrators caused by the incessant strikes that impact teaching and learning within the school environment. Another finding is the effect of the TSA on the students' school attendance. Most of them stay home during TSA, some engage in petty trading, and others waste their time on the street, partaking in different acts of criminal activities. Next finding is the disruption of the school academic calendar that shortens teaching period because of protracted strike action. More importantly among the findings is the effect of the TSA on the students' academic performance that delayed their graduation.

This chapter consists of four key sections, which include the discussion of the findings, limitations of the study, recommendations for action and further studies, and implications for social change. The theoretical framework that underpins this study emanates from sutherland's differential association, hirschi's social bond, merton's social structure, and colvin and pauly's integrated-structural Marxist theory. The aforementioned theories discussed in chapters 1 and 2 of this dissertation, were helpful in confirming the participants' responses analyzed in chapter 4.

### **Interpretation of the Findings**

Prior to the discussion of my findings, I would like to remind my readers that the three schools investigated have no written truancy policy. However, they have operational rules that guide them in enforcing sanction and discipline on the truant students. Since the schools have no written policy, I used the terms “rule or guideline” in this study. The literature confirmed by Akano’s (2011) assertion that Nigeria Educational system has no established comprehensive policy for truancy.

#### **Discussion on Findings for Research Question 1**

Research Question 1 inquired: What effect do teachers’ strike actions (TSA) have on the students and their studies? The results that emerged include the effect of TSA on students’ academic performance, the effect of economic pressure, and parent or guardian influence.

**TSA disrupts students’ academic program.** TSA disrupts students’ academic schedule and demoralizes them and hinder their interest of pursuing higher education. The frequent teachers’ strikes and school closures reduce students’ learning time and affect their graduation from secondary school. Edinyang and Ubi (2013) observed,

Teachers’ strike can be compared to students’ examination malpractice, corruption, and other social vices. Strike is a social ill not different from corruption because it eats into student’ time which makes it difficult for students to be fully and properly ‘baked’ within the designated educational time frame. As a result, ‘products’ that are ill-equipped in both character and learning are turned out to the society. (p. 2)

The impact cannot be over emphasized: the young students that are supposed to be in school bear the burden in this conflict between the teachers and the government. The findings confirmed Abraham, Ememe, and Egu's (2012) study that public school students lose study time because of teachers' absenteeism. The result indicates that the TSA affects the public school students from poor families, as they cannot afford the costly tuition in private institutions or the financial resources to retain a private tutor.

This finding also supports merton's social structure theory that explains the undue pressure the institutional system exerts on the poor people. The pressure of nonpayment of teachers' salary for months and government's inability to resolve the conflict with teachers' union poses a significant challenge to all students, especially the students from indigent families. Merton (1996) asserted that the institutional structure could be a barrier to the youth's ability to achieve their goals in life through legitimate means. When the school structures like the elementary, secondary, and college cannot function to provide an adequate learning environment for the students, it creates a problem for the families and the public. The strike action forces school closures and disrupts the students' academic schedule and aspirations. The aspirations of some of the students that aim to graduate within a record time will be shattered because of the incessant strike actions.

The research question further revealed that the students' frustrations and the agony they undergo during the strike frequently result in school closures. The students wonder why the government fails to compensate the teachers after performing their teaching responsibilities as provided in the contractual agreement with the state government. There are no contingency plans from the government or the school



administrators for the provision of teaching services to the student during the impasse. The strike action forces the students to roam the streets rather than staying in a structured environment for teaching and learning other life's surviving skills. As envisaged by Merton's social structure theory, the abandoned student may be vulnerable to join gangs to rebel against the people in the society since their chances of academic success through the institutionalized legitimate means has been affected because of the TSA.

Furthermore, Merton's adaptation modes of "retreatism and rebellion" support the findings in research questions 1, 2, and 4. In reference to my literature review, retreatism is described as chronic truant that rejects the cultural goals and institutional means, and rebellion is referred to as youths' abandonment of all aspirations about education. The responses from the participants confirmed that large number of students dropped out of school to join gangs, while some engage in other illegal activities. The TSA discourages the students from pursuing their academic endeavors and provides the vulnerable students the ample opportunity to quit their education. This social malady can help explain why UNESCO policy paper report on schoolchildren dropout, rated Nigeria highest among all the developing nations in the world (UNESCO & EFAGMR, 2013).

**Effect of economic pressure.** One of the prominent issues frequently mentioned during my study was the economic hardship encountered by the students and their parents, as well the teachers and school administrators. This section deals with the effect of poverty on the students and their families.

Financial hardship on families affects their level of care and control on their children. When children leave their family homes as teenagers to provide for themselves, it

adversely impacts their school attendance and encourages their involvement in truancy behavior. The finding from this study supports Colvin and Pauly's integrated-structural Marxist theory about children's separation from their parents, or whose schools are prone to peer influence. The theory further argued that the "Differential placement of lower-class students into lower level tracks, which leads to greater strain on, and separation of, those students" (Regoli et al., 2010, p. 242). This theory highlights one of the key challenges that poverty-ridden students undergo. The strain of poor academic performance sometimes confines them to lower level track since they are handicapped and lack the financial resources to prepare for more challenging or accelerated track.

Financial hardship forced parents to encourage their children to focus more on street trading rather than their education. The findings revealed that students spend much time on the streets or with their peers hustling for survival. Some of the students prefer to live on their own and try to forge ahead because of the family's financial hardship. According to the teachers and principals' interview transcript, some students do not return to school after the strike action because of the little income they earn on the streets hawking and engaging in other delinquent activities.

As one of the principals lamented, "People are highly penurious and cannot afford to raise the children they brought into this world." The principal further elicited the challenges the students undergo for survival. According to him, most of these students from poor families are driven out of their classrooms for nonpayment of tuition or other issues related to financial delinquency. The students have no financial resources to acquire the modern technology or textbooks to help achieve their academic goals.

Students deprived of these necessities lack the motivation to attend school regularly, which can eventually force the child into truancy behavior or dropping out of school.

**Parent or guardian influence.** The finding indicated that the decision of attending school is made solely by the students' parents or their guardians. Most parents perceive education as an investment in which they are the beneficiary (Banerjee & Duflo, 2011). Although most children reward their parents when they succeed in life, the concept is flawed in the sense that parents make their decision on who attends based on the availability of resources. This concept is also contrary to the UNESCO Millennium Development Goals (MDG) that provides basic education for all children in the world (Banerjee & Duflo, 2011). Developed countries like US and Britain cannot allow parents' selfish greed to determine the educational needs of their children. For example, education in US is compulsory for all children under the age of 18. Parents that fail to send their children to school may be cited to appear in court to explain why their child is not attending school. It is evident that parents or guardians' influence in determining who acquires education is a factor that affects school attendance and increases the rate of school dropouts.

The study revealed that parents or guardians prefer sending their children to attend to their stores or hawking on the streets to earn additional income for the family. Furthermore, the study revealed that the students run errands and partake in other household work for their parents or guardians rather than reading or engaging in educational inspiring activities. Cynical parents sometimes question the need for education because of the frequent strike actions that disrupt their children's education,

and prolong their graduation. In addition, they question the prospects of obtaining gainful employment after spending the time and financial resources on their education. This problem of selecting who will attend school is more prevalent among the poor families, and in most situations; the decision favors the male over the female.

On the other hand, students from affluent families have a real prospect of attending school if they exhibit the interest and willingness to learn. The wealthy families have the financial wherewithal and the professional skills to encourage their children to attend school regardless of their gender. During the strike period, private tutors were retained to teach them at home. In some cases they transfer to a private institution to complete their education.

### **Discussion on Findings for Research Question 2**

Research Question 2 investigated: How do teachers and administrators describe their experience during the strike action period? Overall perception by most teachers interviewed was government's ambivalence towards the well-being of the teachers and the students entrusted to their care by virtue of their profession. Teachers complained about government's indifference to their plight and having little value for the education of their citizens (Ajayi, 201). One of the experiences shared by teachers and principals that participated in this study is nonpayment of salaries and poor working conditions as well as government's noncompliance with the contractual agreement.

**Wages, allowances, and other remunerations.** The crux of the impasse between teachers and government is nonpayment of their wages as provided in the contractual agreement. Other key issues include failure to pay allowances, inadequately trained

teachers, lack of study materials, and inadequate maintenance of school infrastructures. The teachers indicated that nonpayment of their salaries in a timely manner affected their livelihood, especially the obligation to their dependent children. All the teachers and principals that participated in this study confirmed the nonpayment of teachers' wages and allowances for the past three months. The students also felt that nonpayment of teachers' salary affects their teaching profession and their services to the students. Some of the teachers that pointed out that unless their welfare and their working conditions are improved, confirm that it will be difficult for them to render quality service.

Although the teachers stated that, they assist the students, especially during external exams such as the West Africa Examination Council (WAEC), the students are still handicapped. Inability of the students to have direct communication with their teachers makes it difficult to ask pertinent questions related to their academic program. The aftermath of nonpayment of wages is poor quality service and lack of supervision of the students. This perspective supports Ajayi's (2014) assertion that the teachers' and governments' impasse disrupts students' academic calendar. The participants acknowledged experiencing strike actions once in every two years, and most of them last from two weeks to two months. This questions role of parents and students on the essence of furthering students' education when they lack the solid foundation to improve their academic performance and school attendance. Students staying out of the classroom for such a long period create a problem for their learning ability and skill acquisition. The long absence from the class setting demotivates the students' aspiration towards education and encourages some of them to engage in truancy.

As Ajayi (2014) observed, “It is not deniable that Nigeria is presently not doing enough, by world standards, in the funding of her children’s education” (p. 20). The aforementioned observation confirms the teachers and principals’ assertions that the government has failed to fulfill their key responsibility of providing quality education to her citizens, especially the children. The participants felt that the government has abdicated the contractual obligations in these following key areas: 1. nonpayment of teachers and staff’s wages, 2. inability to maintain safe working environment, and 3. inadequate trained teachers.

Nonpayment of wages is ubiquitous to strike actions in Nigeria elementary, secondary, and tertiary institutions. As has been discussed in this study, the key reason for the strike actions is failure to pay wages and other remunerations. The state government is responsible for funding secondary school education including paying the teachers’ salaries, leave allowances, and other benefits. The participants indicated that the union resorts to strike action when government fails to fulfill their part of the contractual obligation. Strike action is the agitating tool that the union uses to force the hands of the government to the negotiation table to discuss their salary and other work-related benefits. According to the participants, government has a record of renegeing on their agreement, which eventually lead to strike action after several warnings from the union. The warning is aimed at alerting the government about the imminent strike action that may affect the students’ school calendar if all avenues of resolving the conflict fail. As the findings revealed, some students may decide to drop out of school while others may embark on truancy behavior or engage in criminal activities.

**Poor school maintenance.** The findings showed poorly maintained school facilities as noted in table 9. During my field study of the three secondary schools, I observed that the schools lack basic infrastructure for the comfortable learning environment. Most of the classrooms have no doors or windows, providing an easy access for violent intruders. The roof and ceiling are in dilapidated conditions and are hazardous to the health of students, teachers, and other people that use the school facility. The study found that government's inability to maintain a safe learning environment for the students influences their interest towards education.

**Lack of accessible road.** The students and teachers ply impassable and treacherous roads to school on a daily basis. I had an interesting experience when I rode the yellow tricycle called, "Keke Napep" as shown in Figure 8 to Shahana Secondary School. The road to the school has numerous potholes and lake like flooded water on the road that makes it impassable during rainfall. The deteriorating roads make it difficult for vehicular transportation, except the yellow tricycle that students use most often as the reliable means of transportation to school. Most of the time, students and teachers walk a long distance to school or ride the yellow tricycle.



*Figure 8.* Picture of the yellow tri-cycle used by students for transportation to school

**Inadequate ventilation.** The researcher's field study found that the classrooms, laboratories, and principals' offices have no electricity or air condition system to provide a healthy learning environment for the students. Nigeria being one of the tropical countries in the Sub-Saharan region of Africa has a high temperature. The heavy rainfall in southeastern region attracts high humidity, especially in most places that have no air condition system. Teaching and learning under this high temperature can be uncomfortable for the students and the teachers as that may impact their concentration level. Perez, Montana, and Perez (2005) found that students who study in well-ventilated classroom perform better than the ones that study under poorly ventilated study environment. Adequate ventilation of the classroom temperature enhances students learning abilities (Wargocki, Wyons, Matysiak, & Irgens, 2005). The finding revealed that the students learn in an unbearably high temperature without air condition or fan



cooling system in the classroom and laboratories. Although the schools have no thermostat to ascertain the actual classroom or laboratory temperature at the time of the observation, I observed the students sweating furiously because of the excessive heat wave and some teachers and principals improvising with manual fanning.

**Lack of internet technology.** In addition, the schools lack the necessary technological tools to prepare the students to meet the challenges of the competitive global economy. Neither the students nor the teachers have any access to computer or internet technology for research purposes and enhancement of the students technological skills. The three investigated have no website technology for students to use for research purposes or communicate with their teachers or school administrators. Secondary schools need to be equipped with modern technology for the students to meet the challenges of tomorrow and compete with their counterparts in other parts of the world. Internet technology provides innovation and broadens the students' learning horizon with sustainable skills to compete in the global economy.

### **Discussion on Findings for Research Question 3**

Question 3 asked; how can students, teachers, and administrators collaborate to encourage student's attendance and graduation? This section reports the findings of the collaborative efforts of students, teachers, and administrators. As indicated in the literature review, collaboration is a critical strategy needed to engage the family, the school, and the community to work together in helping to improve the students' attendance, as well as the academic performance. The literature also revealed that most students receive suspension from school because of truancy and absenteeism

(Seeley, 2009). Studies have indicated that early school engagement with families is a real intervention mechanism in preventing the child's involvement in truancy and absenteeism.

**Collaboration among student, parent, and School.** The constructive worldview emphasized a collaborative strategy among the students, teachers, and administrators to reduce the rate of truancy (Danforth & Smith, 2005). The literature review has shown that school-based collaboration with students and their families at the early stage of their education helps in reducing youth truancy (Seeley, 2009; Reid, 2010). This supports the social bond theory that youth attachment to their significant others like family or school improves the relationship and better cooperation. The study found that students that lack parental and school attachment tend to engage in truancy and may be involved in other delinquent activities. The study further revealed that students' from poor families requires parental involvement because of the economic hardship. The young students prefer to engage in street trading, stealing, getting involved in gang criminal activities than attending school.

**Monitoring attendance record.** According to Reid lack of school engagement sometimes leads to disruptive behavior, which attracts severe disciplinary action from the school. Most of the students' suspension from school are truancy related (Seeley, 2009). The study found that the school disciplined the students for noncompliance with the attendance guidelines. The findings on the use of sanctions will be addressed in detail later in the following sections. The study also found that the schools use two different approaches to encouraging students' attendance behavior:

The first approach is the school efforts in monitoring students' attendance record on a daily basis, twice a day: morning and afternoon sessions. The class teacher who is responsible for monitoring the students' attendance conducts roll call during the morning and afternoon sessions. While the subject teacher monitors attendance of each student that attended the courses taught in class. The subject teacher ensures that the students are in class: absent students are promptly reported to the guardian counselor or administrative head. The strategy helps the school to identify students that attended morning session class but skip the afternoon class or vice versa. The class teachers have no computers in their classrooms; all attendance records are manually documented in the class attendance register.

The second approach is employing the services of the school guardian counselor. Teachers and principals refer truant students to the guardian counselor for counseling issues, specifically habitual truants with an extensive record of unexcused absences. Although the researcher did not interview the guardian counselors, the teachers and principals that participated in this study indicated that the guardian counselor counsels the students in attendance related matters. The findings revealed that the counseling strategy has helped in improving students' attendance and academic performance.

**Intervention and incentive strategies** These strategies are useful tools employed by most developed countries in addressing attendance or truancy related problem. In this study, the participants felt that intervention is a helpful strategy and necessary tool for fighting school truancy and absenteeism. The findings indicated that

the schools invite motivational speakers, community spiritual leaders, and other professionals to speak to the students.

According to the participants, the guardian counselors are responsible for screening the invited speakers to ensure that they speak on relevant topics needed to inspire the students. The speakers are encouraged to speak on their real life stories or share their reflection on their secondary years. The study found that the National Youth Services Corps (NYSC) is important to the students as a useful intervention mechanism to encourage them to focus more on their studies and to improve their attendance. NYSC comprises of young college graduates that mentor the students and help them with their school assignment. The spiritual leaders and other motivational speakers also act as mentors to the students to encourage the students to lead a law-abiding life rather than engaging in delinquent acts that are detrimental to their lives, as well as their families.

Use of incentive is another strategy employed to influence the students to comply with the rules and guidelines of the school. The study found that students are more receptive to incentive programs instituted by the school to reward good behavior. The program influenced the students to focus on their studies and attend classes regularly. The findings further noted that the use of incentives like scholarships and education-related books encourages students to continue their education and improve their academic performance.

#### **Discussion on Findings for Research Question 4**

Question 4 inquired: How do teachers' strike actions affect students' attendance behavior among the secondary schools in southeastern Nigeria?

The participants identified the following ideas that guided this section, which include the student quest for money, the effect of social media, use of sanction, and exam malpractice.

**The quest for money.** The predominant issue identified by the participant is students' desire for financial gains. The findings indicated that the TSA provides these students excellent opportunity to participate actively in their street trading business than spending time reading their books. Some of these students that chose truancy as a way of life believe that continuing their education may not earn them enough income to sustain their livelihood. The resultant effect is dropping out of school for full-time street trading of selling legal goods or engaging in illegal drug business. Literature revealed that truancy is a good indication of students dropping out of school (Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, 2009). The quest for financial survival is a critical factor that drives students to join gangs for easier acquisition of wealth (Olagunju, 2012). Olagunju added that most of these youths quit school and migrate to urban cities like Lagos, Kaduna, Ibadan, and Port Harcourt, and Aba to join vigilante groups. The participants felt that the motivating factor that drives the students to join these criminal groups was economic reasons at the expense of school.

**The impact of social media.** The advent of the internet and mobile system swept Nigeria nation like a wild wind. The youths' easy access to internet with little or no parental control to monitor the sites added more challenge to teachers and administrators. The findings indicated that some students spend a reasonable amount of their school time in the internet café shops surfing the websites or texting messages to their friends.

The participants alluded that the antecedents of this phenomenon was students' lack of interest in education. Given the high rate of employment in the country, which demoralizes the youths from committing more time towards their education, they rather prefer surfing the internet and using their mobile phones for engaging in other criminal acts to attending school.

**Effect of peer influence.** Students' behaviors are easily influenced by their friends and significant others, especially when they are idle with no school assignment or test to prepare for. The study indicated that peer influence is more prevalent when they stay home alone with no adult present to supervise them. The students are hanging out with friends and partake in any activity that draws their attention. This finding supports sutherland's differential association theory that alluded to the influence of peer pressure. The power of peer pressure sometimes affects the youths' school dropout in pursuit of extra income on the streets, while some of them engage in other delinquent behaviors.

The study attributed the antecedents of kidnapping and burglary to youth truancy and high rate of unemployment in southeastern region. Given the influence of peer pressure, students join gangs and partake in criminal behaviors that endanger their lives and are inimical to society. According to the participants, the students who partake in this conduct of truancy or doping out of school have lost all hope of pursuing education as a way of survival,. They rather prefer the illegitimate route that are detrimental to their lives. This conduct affirms Merton's social structure theory on the rebellion youth that adapts the illegitimate means of acquiring wealth to survive in the society.

**Use of sanction/punishment.** The findings that emerged in this study revealed that the schools enforce attendance rules through the sanctions for noncompliant students. All the teachers and principals agreed that to use one form of punishment or the other in disciplining the students. However, the participants preferred issuing mild sanction or punishment to students that violate the truancy rule. Most of the participants believe in punishment as a strategy of curbing student absenteeism and truancy. However, the supervising principal of one of the school districts argued that punishment is counterproductive, because it alienates students further from attending school.

The supervising principal's argument supports Akinseye-George's (2009) assertion that the appropriate approach to correct behavior is through rehabilitation rather than punishment. Literature also revealed that schools that utilize the "zero tolerance" policy to exclude delinquent students have received some resistance from the families and community leaders (American Psychological Association Zero Tolerance Task Force, 2008). On a similar note, Trujillo (2006) asserted that the traditional approach of suspension sends a negative message to the student. Trujillo argued that the "push out" policy of suspending students from school ultimately forced the student to drop out of school.

The school disciplines the culprits caught in the act of absenting from class without permission from the class teacher. The findings indicated that the punishment meted to the students that engage in truancy or sustain unexcused absences include the following: apology letter, oral or written reprimand, kneeling down, cutting grass,

flogging, uprooting tree, suspension, and corporal punishment. The participants affirmed that using the punishments above has helped in reducing truancy in the school.

### **Limitations of the Study**

In this study, the researcher identified five limitations that will help explain its trustworthiness, which include teachers' apathy towards the government, lack computer and printing materials, lack of truancy record and attendance database, and poor access roads, participants' fear of reprisal by the government authorities.

First is the credibility of the data as it applies to the issue of trustworthiness of the study. Among the identified limitations is teacher's apathy toward the government. Teachers' frustration and behavior toward the state government raises the issue of credibility of the data collected from these participants. Teachers' rage emanated from the government failure to pay wages and allowances for the past three months and non-compliance with the contractual agreement.

Most of the teachers interviewed made their frustrations known during their responses to the interview questions. They expressed their difficulties of surviving without a living wage for three months and without an assistance from the government to help cater for themselves and their families. The teachers felt that the government's inability to addressing their wellbeing and fulfilling their part of the agreement was unjust and unfair to the people that chose the teaching profession.

The second limitation, which is tied to the trustworthiness of the study is the dependability of the data collected from the schools. This issue arises based on lack of printing materials in all the three secondary schools investigated during my field study. I



was surprised when the principals responded that the schools had no printers for printing the documents retrieved from the filing cabinets. I improvised with my camera to take pictures of the documents that were legible for reading and ignored the illegible ones. Furthermore, the schools lack operational computer for easier accessibility to the internet at the time of this study. The few computers in the schools were located in the laboratory, but there was no electricity to power them. As indicated, unavailability of research tools like computer and print materials to print retrieved documents may have affected the result of the study.

Thirdly is a limitation of data because access to archival records to ascertain actual record of students' truancy and absenteeism was impossible. In addition, there is no attendance database for detail analysis of students' attendance and absenteeism. Some of the documents manually reviewed include the class registers and the diaries. I took pictures of the reviewed documents and saved them in my password secured laptop.

Large and valuable unobtrusive data from other sources may have been included but not available because of lack of attendance database and truancy record. In addition, the schools have no disciplinary policy for this researcher to review. Triangulating data may have been impacted because of lack of access to archival records. Contextualizing of data unobtrusively through various sources enhances the credibility of the study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Fourthly, another constraint is a lack of access roads to the schools selected for this study. The poor road condition was a key impediment to meeting the interview schedule, as well as the availability of transportation to the schools. For example, I

rescheduled my visit to Shahana Secondary School because of the tricycle transporters refusal to ply the treacherous roads leading to the school. Given the difficulty of obtaining transportation, I limited my visit to the school to two visits instead of three. Furthermore, the limited access to the school may have impacted confirmability of some the data collected for this study.

Finally, the participants' fear of reprisal by the government authorities is another factor that may have limited this study. Some of the teachers interviewed were apprehensive about the information they shared with me. A teacher at Dorshawn declined to answer one of the probing questions because of fear of reprisal for disclosing vital information. Two other participants declined being tape-recorded at the interview for concerns of reprisal action by their superiors or losing their employment. Despite this researcher's efforts to reassuring them that all information collected for this study is confidential. In addition, the participants were reassured of complying with all the agreement stipulated in the consent form and the letter of cooperation.

### **Recommendations for further Research**

This study confirmed that teachers' strike action is a contributing factor to students' truancy and an impediment to their academic success. This data analysis identified some serious issues that require further research beyond the scope of this study. The identified issues focused on the following items: (a) reasons for nonpayment of the teachers' wages and remunerations, (b) effect of educating secondary students in dilapidated buildings, (c), effect of inaccessible roads, (d) effect of inadequate technology, and (e) the role of NUT and teachers' strike.

### **Reasons for Nonpayment of the Teachers' Wages and Remunerations**

Although the study discussed in detail the effect of nonpayment of teachers' salary and allowances, it did not delve into the reasons for the nonpayment of wages and salary. Understanding the in-depth knowledge of this phenomenon is necessary to understand the reasons for noncompliance with the contractual obligations to teachers. Insights from the government's perspective will shed more light on this phenomenon and provide better understanding behind the reason for the frequent nonpayment of teachers' wages and allowances. In addition, understanding the reasons may provide the valuable insights for education policy makers to address the problem.

### **Effect of Educating Secondary Students in Dilapidated School Buildings**

The study revealed the negligence and lack of school building maintenance. There is no evidence in the study of the effect of education the young school-aged children in such dilapidated and hazardous building as shown in figures 6, 7, and 8. Students study with broken desk and classroom floors filled with potholes, which is unsafe and uncondusive for the students and other school employees. Bailey (2009) emphasized the need for adequate ventilation of the school classroom for healthy learning and sound academic achievement by the students. Unfortunately, all the classrooms observed have no air-condition, in spite of the high room temperature of over 90 degrees. With that said, research is necessary to investigate the effect of educating the children in these unhealthy and unsafe school buildings in southeastern Nigeria. Researchers will also study its impact on students' absenteeism and academic performance.

**Effect of Inaccessible Roads**

One of the key problems this researcher encountered during the field study was inaccessible roads to Shahana Secondary School. On my second day at the school, I packed my car in a secured location and hired the services of a tricycle (Keke Napep) driver to transport me to the school. I wonder how the young schoolchildren cope in using the road on a regular basis. Other schools within the town have a similar problem, which I believe calls for a comprehensive study to understand its impact on the children, especially regarding their school attendance and their studies.

**Effect of Inadequate Technology**

Another item that requires urgent attention is a lack of information technology in the three schools investigated. As indicated as one of my limitations in the preceding section, the schools have no printer for students or teachers to print their documents. Research findings revealed that the school principals have no dedicated computers, and neither do the teachers nor the students. Again, I wonder how these young children in this region can learn and compete in a global economy dominated by information technology. Therefore, this serious issue demands further research to ascertain its impact on the students and provide the appropriate action plan to education policy makers.

**The Role of NUT and Teachers' Strike**

The last but not the least is the role of NUT and its relation to teachers' strike. Studies have shown that teachers accumulate most of their absenteeism from school during the strike period that eventually affects students' academic performance (Wills, 2014). Research findings also alluded to this fact that protracted teachers' strike disrupts

students' academic schedule and sometimes affects their graduation. There is no evidence in the literature to confirm whether the union or the state government has alternative plans for the students during the strike period. Efficient and honest negotiations between the union and the government may help in resolving the impasse than resorting to strike that affects the students and their education. Further research is necessary to investigate the effect of the incessant teachers' strike on the students and a concretized solution for alternative education for the students when the strike occurs.

### **Implications**

This study provides convincing evidence that teachers' strike action (TSA) impacts the secondary school students in southeastern Nigeria. It contributes to the body of knowledge about students' truancy and its effects on their academic performance and graduation. In this section, I will first; discuss the impact of positive social change as it relates to the student, parent, school, and community, then the recommendations for policy and practice.

#### **Impact for Positive Social Change**

Addressing the impact for social change from the students' point of view is necessary to understand the implications of frequent TSA, inadequate school infrastructure, and deplorable road conditions. Understanding the phenomenon will help in improving students' attendance and reducing school dropouts. TSA phenomenon could have significant positive social change implications on the students' academic performance, especially the vulnerable students from indigent families. The theoretical foundations that guided this study confirmed that school dropouts and absenteeism is

prevalent among the students from low-income families. Merton's social structure theory argued about the pressure the institutional structure have on the low-income people in the society.

Furthermore, Colvin and Pauly's integrated-structural marxist theory contended that the coercive social class structure that adversely affects the lower class people. How schooling, a social relationship in school make students feel is the importance of quality education. However, the feeling of agony and pain of staying at home while their friends in the private institutions continue receiving uninterrupted education is an indication of oppressive policies that are unfavorable to these children from indigent families. To eliminate this inequality in education, the teachers' union and the government should find other constructive ways of resolving their conflict than resorting to strike actions.

To effect positive social change in the lives of these young schoolchildren literature encourages active parental involvement in the lives of their children both at home and at school. Parental attachment and commitment motivates the child and empowers them to excel in their academic endeavors. Hirschi's (1969) social bond illuminates the theoretical concept of attachment, involvement, commitment, and beliefs, which supports the argument for parental attachment and involvement in their child's education. Stronger parental attachment and involvement in their child's education reduces the risk of engaging in delinquent activities. Based on these theories and literature reviewed in this study, it is critical for constructive engagement of parents in the education of their children through active participation in parents /teachers' conferences and other programs. The result of this study indicates that effective parental

involvement will inspire the children and help them succeed academically, and lead law-abiding lives devoid of criminal activities, which will ultimately contribute to positive social change in society.

The school-based strategy is another aspect of viewing the impact of positive social change. Constructivist pedagogy believes in student connecting to their social context and with their environment (Danforth & Smith, 2005). Adequate maintenance of the school environment that includes the buildings, classrooms, libraries, and laboratories is critical for teaching and learning. The literature confirms that school environment enhances students' learning skills and their overall academic performance. Therefore, it is crucial for school administrators and education policy makers to create positive social change within the school environment that motivates the students to focus on their academic work than being distracted by non-academic related activities.

Finally, the study found the need for community involvement in raising a law-abiding child to contribute in a meaningful way to society. The findings support community participation, which is necessary for influencing the students in positive ways as evidenced by the scholarship and mentoring programs. The literature also encourages community collaboration with the schools and parents for healthy and successful upbringing of the child. Active collaboration among the stakeholders will provide a wraparound program for positive social change in southeastern Nigeria.

### **Recommendations for Policy and Practice**

Cognizant to the evidence in this study that linked the impact of TSA to students' truancy and poor academic performance, the researcher recommends the following

suggestions to aid policymakers and to help promote alternative practice to addressing strike action, truancy and its impact on academic performance.

Throughout this study, the result has shown a strong relationship between teachers' strike and nonpayment of wages and allowances. Teachers, principals, and school employees that render their services deserve full compensation as provided in the contractual agreement. Nonpayment of wages and benefits is unjust and tantamount to the arbitrary use of government authority. Nonpayment of wages and benefits affect not only the teachers and principals, but also their families. Most of them have children that depend on them for their daily living and survival. Therefore, the government needs to formulate a policy that will ensure mandatory payment of teachers' living wages and allowances as stipulated in the union's contract with the government.

If the state government compliance with the contractual agreement, teachers union must refrain from engaging in strike action as the only possible solution for resolving their impasse with the government. The result of this study revealed that teachers strike affects the students' behavior and their academic performance, especially the poor children whose parents cannot afford the high cost of the private institution. Therefore, this researcher recommends that the government and the union adopt an alternative approach of resolving conflict in the interest of the students and delivery of quality education in the area. Additionally, the union and the government must engage in a more constructive and collaborative strategy to improve working relationship, rather than allow incessant strike action that is destructive to students' academic learning and graduation.



For the students to succeed in pursuit of education, the government must intensify efforts to improve the school infrastructure by rehabilitating dilapidated school buildings in the area. The results of this study indicate that poor building condition affects students' behavior towards education. Direct observation of the three schools investigated for this study suggests that the building structures lack maintenance and have no windows or doors. Additionally, the schools have no functional electricity, inadequate ventilation and air-condition system. Government authorities should consider remodeling the schools with modern infrastructure and technology and ensuring retention of full-time maintenance staff for regular minor repairs and management of the buildings. There is a strong argument that truancy is a leading indicator for students' school dropout and involvement in criminal activities.

School administrators and policy makers should collaborate to establish a comprehensive truancy-focused policy, which will aide teachers and principals in monitoring and enforcing truancy and attendance guidelines. On a similar note, the policy guidelines should include online attendance database in all the schools in the area to provide accessible data for policy makers.

Lack of access roads to the schools is challenging factor associated with poor school attendance and truancy in the region. The deplorable road condition poses a major risk to the students, teachers, and principals. The roads are inaccessible, especially during the rainy period and they needs urgent attention by the government authorities. The poor road condition demotivates the students' desire for attending school. It has a similar effect on their teachers and principals as well. The government should formulate a

comprehensive policy for reconstructing all the roads leading to the schools and ensure adequate maintenance to enhance the transportation system in the area.

### **Reflection of the Researcher's Experience**

My initial proposed research topic was “Juvenile Detention Reform in Nigeria,” the study for which I intended using the phenomenological qualitative approach to design. Several factors influenced my interest of leaning towards researching the topic mentioned above. First was my experience as an administrator of a juvenile detention. Second, was my interest to contribute my knowledge and experience to help reform Nigerian juvenile system. My interest was drawn to this topic when I read an article written by (Alemika & Chukwuma, 2005) about the treatment of juvenile offenders in Nigerian detention facilities. However, the government's red tape and the time required to obtain approval to conduct research in the Nigerian juvenile system influenced me to change my topic to, “Forced Truancy and its Impact on Youth Delinquency in southeastern Nigeria.”

I made the decision to research the above topic based on the following assumptions: firstly, teacher' strike actions (TSA) affect the student's school attendance and involvement in delinquent activities. Secondly, TSA affects students' academic performance and graduation. Thirdly, dilapidated school buildings and inaccessible roads may influence students' school attendance.

The results of the study findings confirmed the three assumptions and provided additional insights into the connection between students' attendance and poverty. The study confirmed the first assumption that student bear the pain of teachers' strike action

because they stay home until the end of the impasse. The study also revealed that the strike action affects students from impoverished families. The study supported the second assumption as valid. Since the students receive no teaching or learning during the impasse, their academic work suffers, and graduation time is extended because of the protracted strike action. Students' academic performance was seriously impacted and sometimes leads to the students dropping out of school. Lastly, the study revealed that poor building infrastructure has an adverse effect on the student's behavior and their perception of education. Some students are easily influenced to quit school and join gang activities by their peers, which they believe will provide them quicker access to wealth than attending school.

### **Conclusion**

In this qualitative case study, there was compelling evidence that poses many problems to students and disrupts their academic calendar. The results of this study have shown that TSA is associated with students' truancy and has an adverse impact on their academic performance and graduation. Strike actions have become an impediment to the success of students in various institutions in Nigeria today (Ajayi, 2014), which encourages students engagement in the delinquents behavior. Many factors affect how teachers' strike action (TSA) impacts the secondary school students in the Southeastern Nigeria. However, the constructive engagement of the students, parents, schools, and the participatory community within the school setting will help in improving students' academic performance, graduation, and eliminate truancy.

Theories have also shown a strong association between poverty and youth truancy and delinquent activities. The theories emphasized the pressure that social structure imposes on the people that forces them to engage in illegitimate and criminal behavior. There was a need for intervention measures to ameliorate the hardship posed to the students that stay home during the strike period. There should also be intervention measures to establish alternative learning programs for students that cannot afford the tuition for private schools or the fee to retain a private tutor while waiting for the resolution of the conflict. Moreover, the intervention measures provide counseling and mentoring services to students that have truancy problem or considering dropping out of school.

I recommend collaborative efforts among the teachers' union and the government in order to formulating policies that will end incessant teachers' strike that adversely affects the students' education and academic performance. There should also be government policies that guarantee payment of teachers' wages and allowances to inspire them in the teaching profession. I also recommend improvement of the school buildings and infrastructure as well as improvement of internet technology and adequate ventilation of the schools.

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## Appendix A: Interview Protocol

### INTERVIEW PROTOCOL (Voluntary/Confidential)

Welcome and thank you for your participation today. My name is Bouyant Enyiorji and I am a doctoral candidate at Walden University conducting my research study on Forced Truancy and its Impact on Youth Delinquency. Thank you for completing the consent form and this interview will take about 2 hours and will include 5 questions for student and 10 questions for teachers and principals. I would like your permission to tape record this interview, so I may accurately document the information you convey. If at any time during the interview you wish to discontinue the use of the recorder or the interview itself, please feel free to let me know. All of your responses are confidential. Your responses will remain confidential and will be used to develop a better understanding of the impact of teachers' strike and its influence on students engaging in truancy. The purpose of this study is to increase our awareness of the voiceless students' and to promote their well-being.

Forced Truancy and its Impact on Youth Delinquency in the Southeastern Nigeria

Interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: Start \_\_\_\_\_ End \_\_\_\_\_

Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewee: \_\_\_\_\_

Position of Interview \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewee Number:

Brief description of the study

Interview Questions**For Students in 12<sup>th</sup> Grade:**

1. What activities do you participate to occupy your time for protracted strike action?
  - a. Since entering the 12<sup>th</sup> grade, how many days have you been absent from school?
  - b. Thinking about your response to my previous question, explain why you were out of school for \_\_\_\_ days?
2. Explain your experience staying home during the strike action when you supposed to be in school.
  - a. How will you describe the efforts made by the Teachers' Union and the State Government in resolving the strike action?
3. How many strike actions have you experienced for the past three years and what are your coping mechanisms?
  - a. How often do you use the intervention program when under stress because of the strike action?
4. How does the strike action affect your academic performance?
  - a. What strategies can you use to improve your academic performance?
5. What factors influence you to engage in truancy behavior?

**For Teachers and Administrators:**

1. How can the students learn when the teachers are on strike for a long period?
2. How do you prepare your students to meet their academic needs during the strike action?
3. How does the strike action affect the students' attendance?
4. How does the school keep record of student's attendance?
5. What factors can you identify as the major influence on youth truancy?
6. Describe your strategies of addressing truancy in your school.
7. How will you rate your school truancy record compared to other school within the district?
8. What are your thoughts about using sanctions to deter truancy?
9. What types of punishment are given to youth that have frequent record of truancy?
10. How effective has the intervention and prevention programs help in reducing students' truancy in your school?

## Appendix B: Observation Protocol

### OBSERVATION PROTOCOL

Research Topic: **Forced Truancy and Its Impacts on Youth Delinquency in the Southeastern Nigeria**

Observer's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Location: \_\_\_\_\_

Time Observation Began: \_\_\_\_\_

Time Observation Ended: \_\_\_\_\_

Observation Point:

1. Observe the interaction of the participants.
2. Observe and describe the behavior of the participants.
3. Observe and describe the nonverbal communication.
4. Observe the school and the environment of the participants (see observation checklist).

Observation Note:

Describe the observation note of events in 10-minute intervals.

10 min	
20 min	
30 min	
40 min	
50 min	
60 min	

Summary of the observation:

\_\_\_\_\_



### OBSERVATION CHECKLIST

Brief description of the school (include size of the premises, # of classrooms), arrangement of furniture, and distinguishing features:

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1. Are the roads accessible to the school? \_ No    \_ Yes
2. Does the school have area where students can interact? \_ No    \_ Yes
3. Are there any unmet maintenance needs? \_ No    \_ Yes
4. Are students' artwork displayed on the school hallway? \_ No    \_ Yes

If no, please explain:

---

#### **Walkthrough observation of the school premises:**

1 = Poor    2 = Fair 3 = Good    4 = Excellent	1	2	3	4	NA
Attractiveness of school premises (freshly painted, good lighting etc.)					
Condition, appropriateness, and quality of furniture					
Ability to accommodate both large and small activities at same time					
Availability of independent study areas					
Availability of reading areas with comfortable seating					
Availability of computers for students					
Students access to the internet					
Availability of equipped library					
Availability of manicured football field					
Availability of recreational facility for students					
Overall school rating					

## **Appendix C: Consent Form**

Impact of Forced Truancy and Youth Delinquency in the Southeastern Nigeria  
You are invited to take part in a research study of “Impact of Forced Truancy and Youth Delinquency in the Southeastern region.” The researcher is inviting you as a possible participant based on your knowledge and experience on the topic to be studied. This form is part of a process called “informed consent” to allow you to understand this study before deciding whether to take part.

This study is being conducted by Bouyant E. Enyiorji, a doctoral candidate at Walden University.

### **Background Information:**

The purpose of this study is to examine the Impact of Forced Truancy and Youth Delinquency in the Southeastern Nigeria. The research will provide insights and perspectives on the effect of youth truancy and its relationship to delinquent acts in the Southeastern Nigeria. This study seeks to get better understanding of intervention and prevention programs in the region.

### **Procedures:**

If you agree to be in this study, you will be asked to:

- Respond to questions asked by the researcher
- The interview may last for about an hour
- The interview will be audio taped and the transcript will be shared with you for acknowledgment
- Consent forms and other related forms must be signed prior to the interview

### **Voluntary Nature of the Study:**

This study is voluntary. Everyone will respect your decision of whether or not you choose to be in the study. No one in your organization or agency will treat you differently if you decide not to be in the study. If you decide to join the study now, you can still change your mind later. You may stop at any time.

### **Risks and Benefits of Being in the Study:**

Being in this study would not pose risk to your safety or wellbeing. In a situation that risk is perceived during the investigation process, you have the right to withdraw your participation from the study without any consequences. In the event you experience stress or anxiety, you can terminate your participation in the study. Pseudonyms will be used to keep participants name confidential.

The potential benefit of this study is to create awareness of the impact of forced truancy on the youth and their families. The study will provide recommendations to policy makers on how to address the matter.

**Payment:**

There will be no compensation for participating in this study.

**Privacy:**

Any information you provide will be kept in a private and secured location. The researcher will not use your personal information for any purposes outside of this research project. Also, the researcher will not include your name or anything else that could identify you in the study reports. Data will be kept in a locked filing cabinet and only the researcher will have access to the record. Data will be kept for a period of at least 5 years, as required by the university.

**Contacts and Questions:**

The researcher conducting this interview is Bouyant E. Enyiorji. If you want to talk privately about your rights as a participant, you can call Dr. Leilani Endicott. She is the Walden University representative who can discuss this with you. Her phone number is 001-612-312-1210.

The researcher will give you a copy of this form to keep.

**Statement of Consent:**

I have read the above information and I feel I understand the study well enough to make a decision about my involvement. By signing below, I understand that I am agreeing to the terms described above.

Printed Name of Participant

Date of consent

Participant's Signature

Researcher's Signature

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**Appendix D: Invitation Letter for Teacher/Principal**

<Date>

Shanahan Secondary School

Address.....

.....

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Bouyant E. Enyiorji, a doctoral student at the Walden University. I am conducting a research study as part of the requirement of my degree in “Forced Truancy and Its Impact on Youth Delinquency in the Southeastern Nigeria.” The study will investigate the impact of forced truancy on youth criminal activities.

With your permission, the interview will be audio taped so that I can accurately reflect on what is discussed. Participation is voluntary and anonymous (no participant’s name required on any of the study materials). All information from the interview process is strictly confidential and will be kept in a secure location.

For this study, I am seeking:

- Teachers and principals who have experienced the strike action

If interested and meet the above criteria, please contact me by cell phone 1-732-322-2045 or email [bouyant.enyiorji@waldenu.edu](mailto:bouyant.enyiorji@waldenu.edu). I will be happy to answer any questions you may have about the study. If you do not wish to participate, no one will contact you, and your anonymity is protected. There will be no compensation for participating in this study.

Thank you for your anticipated cooperation.

Sincerely,

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Bouyant E. Enyiorji

### Appendix E: Invitation Letter for Students

<Town and State>

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Name: \_\_\_\_\_

School Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

I Bouyant E. Enyiorji, a doctoral student at the Walden University, Minneapolis, MN, invite you to participate in a research entitled “Forced Truancy and Its Impact on Youth Delinquency in the Southeastern Nigeria.” The purpose of the study is to investigate how the teacher strikes impacted the students’ studies and identify possible solutions to encourage student attendance in and graduation from school.

Should you choose to participate, you will be asked to respond to interview questions that will take about an hour and permit the interview to be audiotaped. The researcher will seek your permission to review your attendance record to verify tardiness and absenteeism. In addition, I will be making observational notes during the interview. The interview transcript and the observational notes will be shared with you for acknowledgement.

Participation is voluntary and confidential (no participant’s name required on any of the study materials). All information from the interview and observation are strictly confidential and will be kept in a secure location.

For this study, I am seeking:

1. Student participants that are at least 18 years old
2. Student participants that have experienced truancy or have two or more unexcused absents in a quarter-year course will be included in the study.

If interested and meet the above criteria, please contact me by cell phone 1-732-322-2045 (alternate contact number in Nigeria is 08035823917) or email [bouyant.enyiorji@waldenu.edu](mailto:bouyant.enyiorji@waldenu.edu). I will be happy to answer any questions you may have about the study.

Sincerely,

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

**Appendix F: Letter of Cooperation**

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<Insert Date>

Name.....  
Address.....  
.....

**Name**\_\_\_\_\_. As part of this study, we authorize you to recruit participants, whose names and contact information we will provide, to participate in the study as interview subjects. Their participation will be voluntary and at their own discretion.

In our capacity as community Partners, we will also identify potential students, teachers, and principals in the field of your proposed study for your consideration for interview.

We reserve the right to withdraw from the study at any time if our circumstances change.

I understand that the data collected will remain entirely confidential, and may not be provided to anyone outside of the research team without permission from the Walden University IRB.

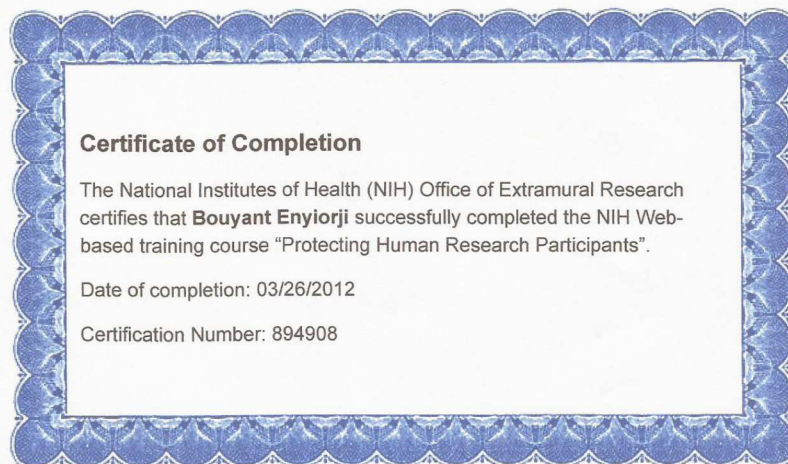
We hope your study will contribute to the understanding of the effect teachers' strike action and the phenomenon of youth truancy.

Sincerely,  
<Name of Authorized Representative>  
<Official Title>

**Appendix G: NIH Certificate**

Protecting Human Subject Research Participants

Page 1 of 1



## Appendix H: CITI Certificate of Completion

### COLLABORATIVE INSTITUTIONAL TRAINING INITIATIVE (CITI)

#### HUMAN RESEARCH CURRICULUM COMPLETION REPORT

Printed on 04/10/2014

**LEARNER** Bouyant Enyiorji (ID: 4096541)  
**PHONE** 732-322-2045  
**EMAIL** bouyant.enyiorji@waldenu.edu  
**INSTITUTION** West African Bioethics Training Program  
**EXPIRATION DATE** 04/09/2016

#### GROUP 4 - STUDENTS

**COURSE/STAGE:** Basic Course/1  
**PASSED ON:** 04/10/2014  
**REFERENCE ID:** 12700257

REQUIRED MODULES	DATE COMPLETED
Introduction	04/09/14
History and Ethical Principles - SBE	04/09/14
Defining Research with Human Subjects - SBE	04/09/14
The Regulations - SBE	04/09/14
Assessing Risk - SBE	04/09/14
Informed Consent - SBE	04/10/14
Privacy and Confidentiality - SBE	04/09/14
Records-Based Research	04/10/14
West African Bioethics Training Program Module	04/10/14

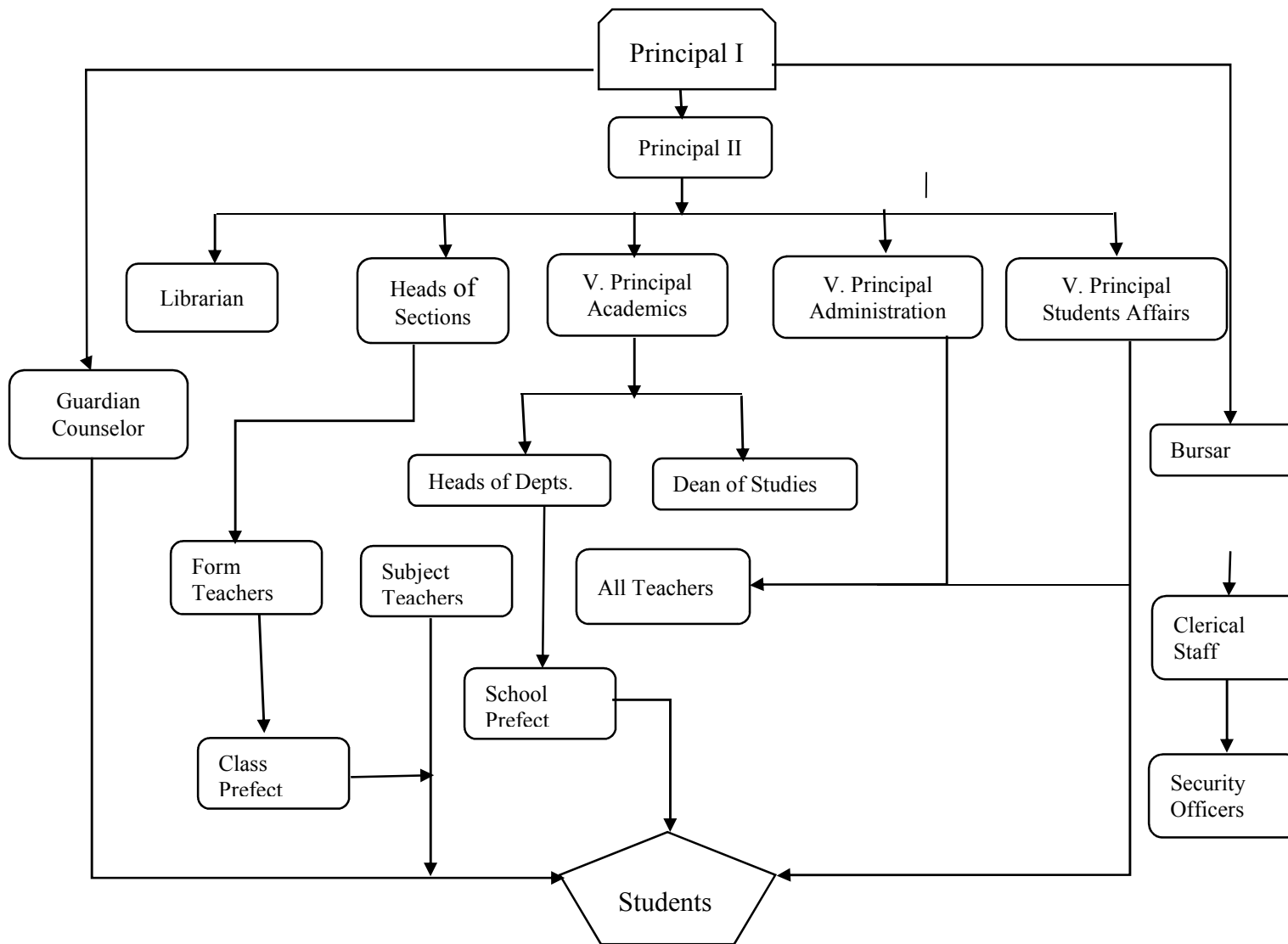
For this Completion Report to be valid, the learner listed above must be affiliated with a CITI Program participating institution or be a paid Independent Learner. Falsified information and unauthorized use of the CITI Program course site is unethical, and may be considered research misconduct by your institution.

Paul Braunschweiger Ph.D.  
 Professor, University of Miami  
 Director Office of Research Education  
 CITI Program Course Coordinator

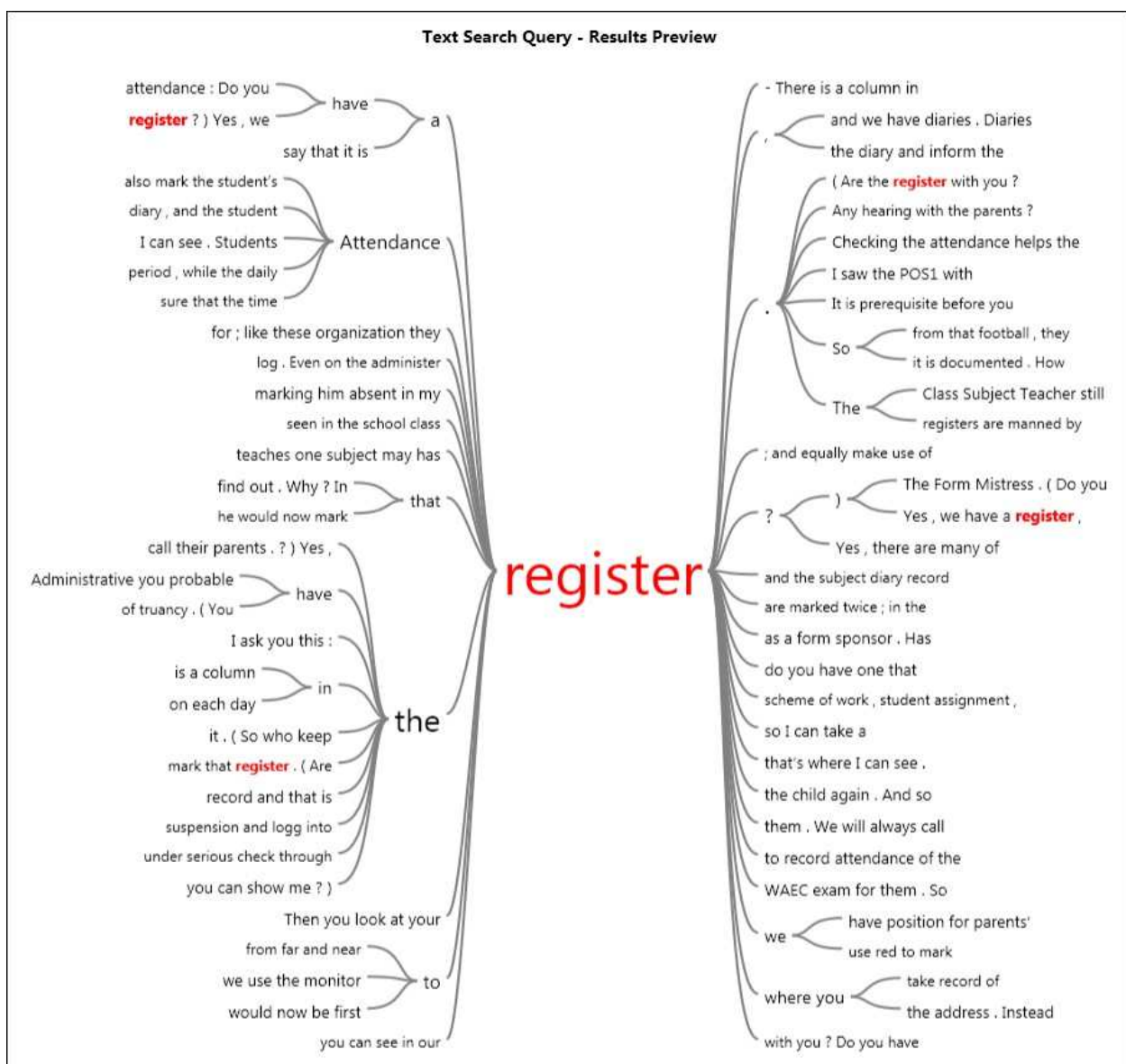
Collaborative Institutional  
 Training Initiative  
 at the University of Miami



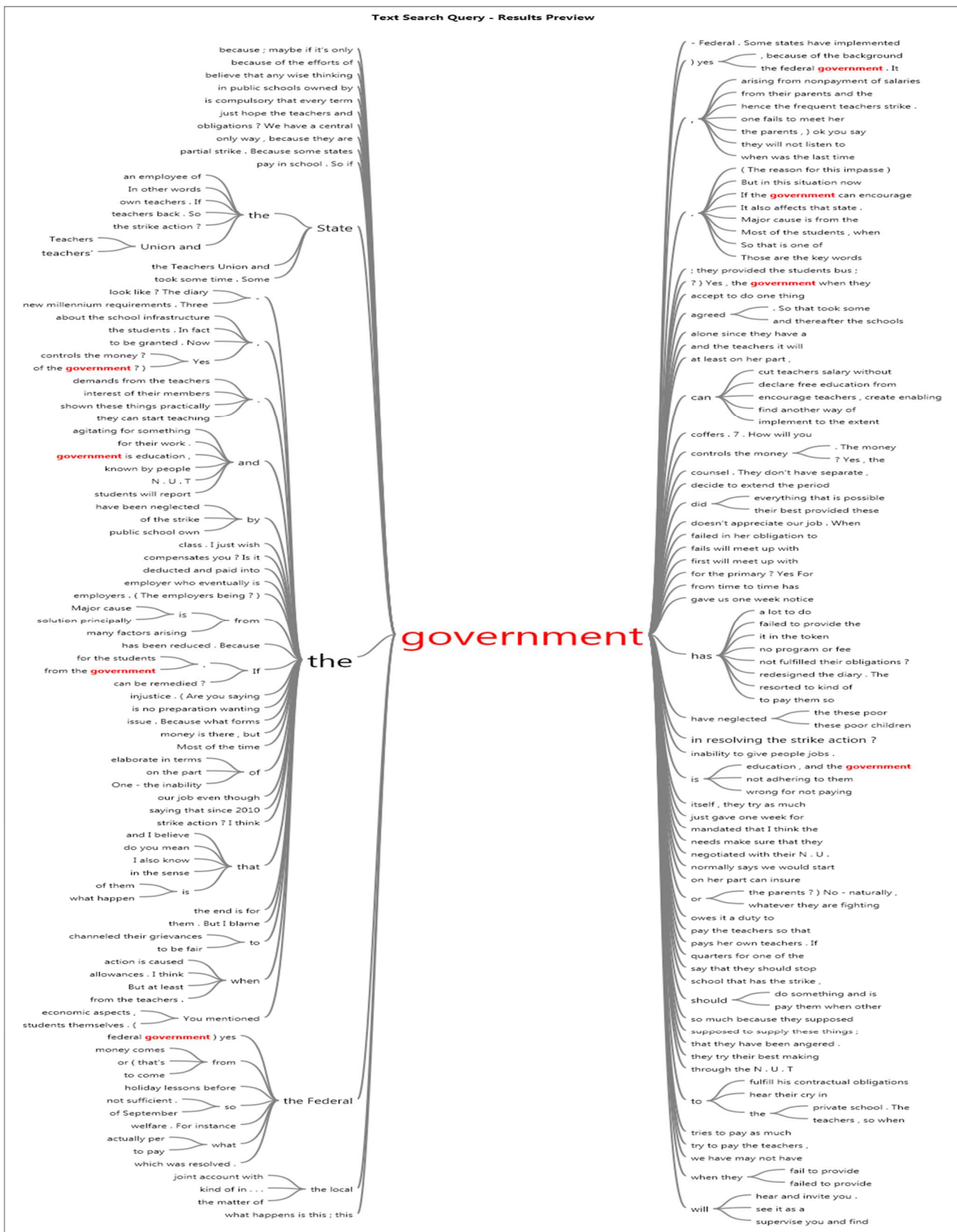
**Appendix I: Organizational Chart of Dorshawn**



### Appendix J: Nvivo Text Search Query



Text Search Query - Results Preview



### Appendix K: List of Acronyms

#### LIST OF ACRONYMS USED IN THE DISSERTATION PROPOSAL

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COAV	Children in Organized Armed Violence
CRA	Child Right Act
CYPL	Children and Young Person’s Law
HSS	Harmonized Salary Structure
JDAI	Juvenile Detention Alternative Initiatives
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MTC	Midvale Truancy Center
NCSE	National Center for School Engagement
NUT	Nigeria Union of Teachers
OJJDP	Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention
OPC	O’odua People’s Congress
PRI	Penal Reform International
PTA	Parents Teachers’ Association
SBC	School Base Committee
SES	Socioeconomic Status
TCDP	Truancy Court Diversion Program
TSA	Teachers’ Strike Action
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Education Fund (formerly United Nations International Emergency Fund)
USDOE	United States Department of Education
WAEC	West Africa Examination Council

## Appendix L: Partial Excerpts of the Interview Transcripts

### SEMB Educational District

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#### SPUK1:

There is no way the students can learn when the teachers are on strike because when the teachers are on strike the students are not in school. The N.U.T. insures that the classrooms are under lock and key and no teacher is meant to be seen when the students are at home most of them don't have that asset to learn because they involve themselves in some miniature work, others also give themselves to a antisocial behavior, and more often than none, most of them travel to their relations far away or near. So it affect the students learning because no teaching or learning goes on, and more often than none students are found to be idle. *When you say that the stay at home-what actually do they do at home?* Some of them assist their parents in petty trading; others help their parents in farm work, others equal engaged themselves in some acts that are inimical to the principle that upholds, You know good behavior. For instance some of them give themselves to some acts like some involved themselves cultism, some equally some acts like this new GSM that has actually taken over the communication system of this country. Some use it to play games, others use it to involve in acts that are morally against the ethics of learning. Some of them use it to open pornographic images that are found in face books.

---

Since I am Supervising Principal, I don't have students, or I don't work with students. My duty is to carry out within monitory strokes to supervisory roles to ensure that students who loss some grounds during the strike actions they make up the loss ground. These will actually you know tries to go about by ensuring that teachers go the extra mile by getting some extra time by way of organizing some extra moral classes after school and more so some of them get the things to come during the weekends, say Saturday. They organize practical classes. During the extra moral classes, the teachers put in two or three hours during the weekends and insure that the students cover their skin that they actually not covered while they were on strike. Also they go and move to areas which they feel the students have actually loss ground by way of the strike action. This I mean that there are some concepts which the students may have lost during the period of the strike action. The teachers will use this period to make sure that such concepts are concretized. So that so by so doing, the teachers would be in the position to make sure that the loss ground during the strike action would actually and properly regained and it doesn't affect the students because the students are to be examined based on the scheme that has been set for that exam. And if this part aspect of the curriculum or scheme so to say is not covered, the student will be the losers. So the teachers go the extra mile to cover up the scheme.

When we talk of the strike action, we have a strike action whereby we have the work to move; whereby the teachers come in they don't actually teach. They only attend school and sign their names in the time book and also mark the student's attendance register and

the subject diary record book where the names of the students are marked. But they don't actually carry out effective teaching and learning. The action here is that the students may come in and by after the noon sometime they leave the school. So the strike action will affect them because some of them may come in and leave and they not being in school may give room to a lot of antisocial behavior. The teachers ensure that they are regular in school making sure that the subject diaries are marked at the end of the school period, while the daily attendance register are marked twice; in the morning and in the afternoon. *You mentioned something very interesting, the diary. What is diary and how does it look like?* The diary-the government has redesigned the diary. The book only contains the scheme of work which the teacher is supposed to cover. The diary also contains the names of the students that are actually taking part or studying that course or studying that subject. So as the teacher start to teach, that teacher in the first place would mark the number of students who are in that class at that particular time.

---

I think that relates to the diary. Teachers make use of the diary, and the student attendance register; and equally make use of the subject diary, whereby each subject offering is marked present to ensure that the student actually took part in that lesson. *The subject diary; as a Supervising Principal, do you have access to the diary it?* Yes, this is one of the areas we supervised during our spot check monitoring supervision exercises. We make sure that the time attendance register scheme of work, student assignment, and subject diary are up to date. We ensure that these records are properly kept and that they are made available to us so that we may go thru them and any defaulting teacher is penalized by way of punishing the teacher by trying to get the teacher to recover the lost ground by putting in more hours that has been lost.

---

The major influence we have here, In fact multi-hydrant nature. It has multiple aspects. It is not school business alone, because the family, the home and also society, the peer group they belong too. They always play their own different role. For instance, when you talk of truancy, you talk of how the students are actually brought up in their homes. Are they given moral instructions? The parents do take time to ensure that their children actually put up conducts that are no inimical to good behavior; because today we see parents who don't even care if their children are trained in the fear of God. They don't care if their children give themselves to the norms of the society. Our society today is having a lot of moral decadence because the parents delegated their responsibilities to the teachers or to the school. The aspect of what they ought to do they have shifted it to the school. So it is not only the responsibility of the school. So the parents have to ensure that they make every effort to monitor the group their wards actually associate with. Because even the Bible says "even communication corrupts good manners." When these students are not influenced; because there is an adage that says "you can mold a child character, but it is difficult to repair the adult." So when from the home this character molding is not given priority then the child would actually find it difficult to assimilate or to actually imbibe the instructions that are given to the teachers. The teacher is on their own heart. The school has her role because in the curriculum of the school we have what you call "moral instructions" whereby you have two sections within

the school gates, whereby instructions and moral principles have been taught so that the students will not only learn academics, but they will equally learn how to make use of what they are taught so that they will become better citizens. Again, peer group today we see in our society that students that have joined society that has given rise what we call cultish; we see students that because of trying to acquire power or trying to pass exams those of them who are not trained so they join certain groups and these groups end up initiating them in cult and these have actually brought out this incident of truancy in the society. So the home, the school, and the group they are all contributing factors to truancy. (Now you mentioned something regarding the parents not playing the role. My question to you is: What strategy as a Supervising Principal your school have in your district for engaging the parents?) We have the School Base Management Committee. This committee is made up of professionals. It is made up of different professionals. We have religious men, men that belong to different professions. These people come up and put their head with the parents so that they can fashion out a way whereby the children can be given a balance education. By this I mean that no aspect of the upbringing of the child is neglected; that is morally, socially, educationally and otherwise. It is properly packet so that the child is properly prepared to pick a leadership role in the society and not to become a misfit in the society.

---

My district has not performed below par in terms of truancy because the new Executive Secretary came up with a new policy that mandated each Supervisory Principal to involve himself and routine check which is called “spot-check” of monitoring school and also full management supervision and this has actually reduced the rate of truancy within our district. Compare to other district within my own locality, within the River State, truancy rate is so minimal compare with other district. But notwithstanding, we equally have cases of truancy because when the teachers are on strike the students goes “haywire”. In fact, like people in school you find students along the streets, you find them selling fruits and you will find them equally some of them engaged in trading, hawk, and others who are so lazy give themselves to other antisocial behavior; like the use of G.S.M. which is the Global System Mobile phone which they use in carrying out mischievous acts. So the rate of truancy within my district or per district within my neighborhoods not as high. This is because of what has been put in place to checkmate this act of truancy. Notwithstanding, we still have cases of students who involve themselves in trading which we called street hawking, farming and also making use of their hand set these things..(in this case handset is the mobile phone)..Yes, which is called is Global System Mobile Phone. So this has actually done a little harm because they equally use it to carry out some examination malpractices. So it is aiding some acts of truancy. (Can you elaborate on aiding them to engage in examination malpractice?) The students use their phone to pass information to a fellow student. They have a need of trying to decode some of their admission solution. (Are they allowed to come in with their mobile phone?) Yes- in some schools that are in remote areas whereby the police in some cases are accomplices; they equally aid some of these acts. But according to WAEC, they are prohibited from coming into their admission. (You mentioned WAEC; what is WAEC? WAEC stands for West Africa Examination Counsel. Are you saying that they

collaborate with the police? Yes, the police strictly do not prohibit them from making use of the phone because some of them maneuver their way through the process of ensuring that the mobile phone. Some of them use it where calculation work arises in the absolute sense of it. It is prohibited, but the police overlook this, so they are not enforcing it.

---

Sanction here may not actually produce a desired effect because when you talk of sanction you are talk of an outright clamping down. Students and force has never done anything good for humanity. The best thing is to make sure that the school counselors do their work. In the sense that if we have 120-students entering in for exam we monitor their activities. I may come up with some ideology of employing the services of what I may call subject and counselors. Subject supervision stroke counselors. The supervision role will be to make sure that the students do their work as per the curriculum. That is to make sure every aspect of the curriculum is taken care of, both the cognitive, both psychomotor, and the affective. On the other hand the counselor would make sure that their behavior confirms to the norm. That will not actually give room to truancy. They go about this by organizing seminars. They organize a sought of moral instruction section whereby some of these ills. For instance I had the privilege of being called to render a talk on the evils of exam malpractices and how to curb it. So if the students at this tender age are told the evil of some of these antisocial behaviors, like cultism, exam malpractice they would do everything to get rid of it. It is easy to actually imbibe a behavior but it is very hard to get rid of it at a very advance stage. So I would believe that the best approach to it sanction is to engage the services of supervisors/counselors. (Let me ask this: Does your district has any form of sanction in place right now?) Yes, we have sanction students that caught are given suspension; some of them are given capital punishment. (Capital punishment meaning what?) Capital punishment means a situation whereby a student is not actually allowed to do a menial work by “flogging” or reprimanding that student. He can work by uprooting a tree that may take him one or two weeks and that would be so cumbersome for a student to do. (If someone is doing that punishment how would that student be able to catch up with his studies?) That was why I say sanction in the way of capital punishment may not be the solution to it. The solution to it is to devise a means of actually trying to make sure that the students from the formative stage that were made for good behavior are in imbibed into them. Also they are carried along the path of good moral upbringing that will help them. The Bible says; “bring up a child in the way he would grow and when he gets grows he will not depart from it.” I think that should be the best approach rather than sanction. Sanction like force have never done anything good. (You mentioned capital punishment, flogging, and anything like suspension?) Yes, we have suspension up to one week or two weeks. I don’t think that may serve as a deterrent. (Is this punishment as a result of their truancy?) Yes-the heart of truancy.

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We normally hold what we call the school base committee. Whereby parents come and share their views on the way how truancy and other related issues can be handled. In this process in our area where the school has some facilities to fight this act of truancy. The parents actually come out. For instance if it is a school where there are no staff to



actually enforce the discipline to recruit the youths within the area to make sure students attend school regularly and also to make sure that the students are exposed to other curriculum activities, We have other extra curriculum activities that will keep the students busy. They say “an idle hand is the work of the devil”. When the student is not properly engage there is a tendency that they can themselves to truancy. When they are properly engaged things are organize seminar for them. Also, take them out so they can share their views with some of their colleagues. For instance some of them can go on an excursion to some institutions whereby they are exposed to some aspect of activities that are carried out. Some of them imbibe some sort of good behavior that would help them. There are some of them that have been behaving in ways that are contrary to what the norm should be. At least there should be some sort of deviation and also the school on her own part would have means of monitoring the student’s behavior. It is very important and this is left in the hand of the school counselor. We have in the report sheets whereby the behavioral aspects of the students are recorded. A student with behavioral problem di not confirm to the standard are actually call and counseled so that they can actually turn to a new leaf. We equally have a situation whereby we organize education week. During this education week we invite speakers from different walk of life and these speakers come and actually give talk that will help go get some of the able ideas or some of the misconception they may be having as far as life is concern. So these lectures will actually take time to instruct them in the proper way so that they will be in a position to align them to good moral behavior. *How effective has intervention and prevention programs help in reducing student truancy in your school?* It has been of immense help. For instance, if you go to schools that have been actually noted for out of truancy; as a result of some of these intervention strategies, today this school has been rated as one of the best schools. For instance, we have in those days schools like township whereby there has always been on arrest. Because of these intervention strategies we now have schools whereby the students are now performing to the norms of the society as well as putting up good academic activities. Because this intervention programs geared towards occupying the students, they are instructive, they are also educative. Also they help to mold their character. So these intervention strategies have gone a long way in reducing the weight of truancy. So today we don’t have students’ unrest which has always been very prevalent in the time passed. No wonder in the past two year the Abia state have come up second in the West Africa Examination Counsel results. I think the strategies have paid off. (The strategies of the random supervision of school and other intervention

programs) *What causes strike action and how can that be remedied?* Strike action is caused when the government, one fails to meet her obligation with her trade union, except the measure trading now we have is the National Union of Teachers called the N.U.T. more often it is the trade union that negotiates teachers' welfare. For instance the federal government from time to time has always reviewed the welfare package of teachers by way of giving them incentive like twelve and a half percent increase in their salary or (that's from the federal government) yes the federal government. It also affects that state. So when the state fails to implement this policy that's what will actually not help in boosting the moral of the teachers, and the teacher when they meet. Their rallying point is the N.U.T. When this grievance of non-salary payment for months, non-payment of leave grant, non-payment of increments, and also non-payment of some of the promotion allowances, these things will actually demoralize the teachers. And when the teacher channeled their grievances to the government through the N.U.T and the government failed in her obligation to meet these needs, then a teacher is left with no other option than to go on strike. So these are some of the things that cause strike action. *In your opinion how do you think that this can be remedied?* If the government on her part can insure that salaries are paid regularly and as when due, I think it would remedy. When they equally try to implement; perhaps implementation here may not be actually plan for what the federal government pays her own teachers. If the state government can implement to the extent to which her financial ability can carry. Because the problem we have is not implementation of some of these allowances. For some years now leave bonuses have not been paid and also some people are equally not received some of their promotion allowances especially in the primary schools. Presently in the primary schools. (What about the secondary schools?) They do pay promotion and increments; but in the primary school most of them has not been paid. Salaries are not paid as of when due but when the salaries are paid as of when due, and live bonuses are paid regularly, and also promotion arrears are paid and also they ensure that the primary school teachers, because most of the primary school teachers complain that they are not paid their promotion allowances. I think when the government at least on her part, we know that we are presently having a down turn in the economy. But at least when the government tries to pay as much as her financial ability can carry her, then I think the teachers will have no reason to go on strike. *Who pays the secondary schools?* The state pays, but in the primary the payment ought to come from the federal government. But in this situation now the state has a joint account with the local government counsel. They don't have separate, they have a joint account. It is interwoven. It is not the matter of the local government alone since they have a joint account. In other words the state government controls the money? Yes, the government controls the money. The money comes from the federal government for the primary? Yes For the secondary schools the money comes from the state? *When the last time teachers' salary was paid up to date?* No we are not paid up to date. The problem is the governments come up with a policy whereby the salary is not paid. At times it is paid in parts-part of the zones. They pay two zones first; then later they pay the other zones. It becomes difficult for you to ascertain. *How do teachers and other officials survive?* That is an area that actually demoralizes a teacher. Because when the teacher is not paid as of when due, he is not

motivated. Because they say nothing great is achieved without enthusiasm. Nothing makes the teacher happy and ready to work when he or she is paid as of when due. When he is not paid as of when due there is that element of feeling of not being recognized and nothing an idea of not recognizing his or her services, so invariably it affects the productivity, resourcefulness, commitment, enterprise of the teacher and this will be translated and to this attitude to teach. And the resultant of this will be low productivity, inefficiency and ineffectiveness on the part of the teacher.

### **Shahana Secondary School**

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#### **PAB1:**

Definitely there are no teaching and no learning when the teachers are on strike. In fact they will be playing on the streets doing menial things, constituting a nuisance on the road and the public because they are not... So, definitely those of them that don't come from very good environment will waste into the society. And at the end of the day they become hooligans and hoodlums which will constitute a nuisance to the society if the strike lasts so long. *Based on your experience how long has most of the strike lasted? I mean based on your experience as a Principal? Apart from this time around strikes have always lasted for six months, four months, three months in that order. That is emanating from the disagreement between the teachers and their employers. (The employers being?)* The government. *(The reason for this impasse)* Most of the time the government accepts to do one thing and they would refuse. When the teachers give them the deadline at the time of the agreement when it has expired they will not do it. Because most of the people are politicians. They make fake promises. They don't stand by them for lack of morality and you know patriotism to the state. Because for any state to be a good state it is determined by the level or type of education; the functionality of its education and its teachers. And when the education and its teachers are no longer there, they have been demoralized. Of course you know-what would a demoralized workforce produce? The society would be headed to hell; because the teachers are their character molders. They make the governors, they produce the presidents. But it is very sad to note that when they have produced these people they turn around to see them as "lump sum illiterates." In fact they are only to be seen and never to be heard. And that is the beginning of the problem of the Nigerian society. That is the beginning of that. Unless the school system correct, the teachers are adequately taken care of, their welfare, they can never render the quality service. *(Now when you talk about their welfare, can you elaborate)* In short when a teacher is paid as when due, and when other incentives are paid to him as when due or fulfilled, he will pay his wards. In fact a teacher has not paid for his wards. In fact any human being that fails to take care of his family is a failed human being. The teacher finds it difficult to pay for their wards in the various schools. When you go to the University nobody is written on their face "this is a son of a teacher, this is a child of a teacher. Everybody is classified in group the same. And in terms of making the financial commitment the teachers won't be there. They have not been paid by their employer who eventually is the government. So that is one of the issues. And to get this nation back on the right track, the teachers first and foremost must

be carefully taken care of. There should be priority to teaching and learning. The teachers who are the architect of teaching and learning must be taken care of in all ramifications in terms of paying them good salaries, so that they can render quality service, and they will be assured on retirement they will be able to get into their own houses. Most of them don't have houses; they don't have bicycles, and so like that. They are demoralized. (*You are talking of means of transportation they don't have?*) Yes. (If I may ask-When was the last time the teachers in your district get paid? When was the last time?) To the best of my knowledge that was August and today is 12<sup>th</sup> January. (So what you are saying now is since August you have not been paid?) No way. (*So how do you sustain yourself you and your colleagues in this profession?*) In fact what would we have taken when we go to heaven? According to the maxim that teachers pay is in heaven. Their reward is in heaven. In fact we have gone to heaven till we have asked the Almighty God to be getting those allowances down. We are living on charity. We are living on God's own kindness otherwise nothing is happening. But as obedient citizens, law abiding citizens, what do we do? Because if we stopped our children, Nigeria would have no future without education. Nigeria would have no future. How can you produce a genius, how can you, how can you produce professors, how can you produce the governors? The quality will be sour. Nobody to pay the\_\_\_, and the little wonder you see the "Lilliputs, and nincompoops" coming to the political stage. Because of what they have. Most of them are equals. The game of politics is no longer to somebody who reads politics. No political scientist is in that game because they have no money.

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Most of the time, because teachers are fathers of the nations and mothers of the nation; no father that is annoyed forgives their children. Most of the time we give them some take homes and when the strike ends we intensify efforts to see how we can cover the subjects, like organizing some extension classes for them to be able to cover their loss ground. But most of the time it is difficult. (*Do you get compensated for the extended period that you said? Do you get compensated-I mean salary wise?*) No. It's a question of morality since we are going to present this candidate for an external exam and at the end of day when they fail if at the end of the day they realize themselves and happen to come and pass; if they realize themselves and come to pass. Now the time wasted and the knowledge these boys have lost or the lessons they have lost cannot be regained. So the only way to do it is to intensify efforts to fast forward them. When the matter is settled.

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Very poor! The students' attendance would be very poor and you see there are some people that are in decline; let's say they center this way; very close to the urban areas. The students will go outside to fend for themselves. And those that have gone so deep would not like to come back to the school again. They would like to live on their own and try to forge ahead. But at the end of the day they may not meet their target. They will resort to other social vices that would be inimical to the progress of the society. (

*Social vices meaning what?)* Like you know-robbery and so on like that-you know all those other things. Getting into drug abuse, drugs, something like that. And they want to play big boyism. And you know that one when the society will be governing to hell that time. You see by the time people; because they are hungry; they have not made their target, they have not achieved their aim, they are neither here nor there. So they will be doing what is available to them; that is pickpocketing. (Any specific example, as a veteran teacher in this school do you have specific example you can site, that you have come true based on your experience?) Yes em. Honestly, but for now most of those students, because this time around, the frequency has been reduced. Because the government has resorted to kind of diplomacy, dialogue. Even though most dialogue maybe fake, at the end of the day the promises would not be fulfilled. So what is done is that most of these students who should have been in the school; now when they have taken to the streets most of them die there. They lose their life; and when they lose their life that is a minus for the nation. But nobody knew if the person should have been an engineer, aeronautics, engineer, or a pilot, or whatever economic. In fact that person who dies has his own or her own contribution to make. In fact, the female folks they get into forced motherhood and by so doing they make first child rearing industry and now way they can. It's difficult; pretty difficult. And on our own area the Ibo when somebody, a student produced a child in the fathers house the value in the society, the societal norm for this, that, that person is seen as an outcast or something like that; a failure, a societal misfit. So that brings a kind of psychological depression on that person. And throughout her life she will be facing it. She will be suffering from it. And it may lead to transfer aggression to the neighbors around; and to the children. And when the children grows like that, it becomes it will become a problem to the society.

The school keeps a very beautiful records. If a child attends, is marked present in the morning, after break in the afternoon. Not only that, for every class, every subject you attend the person is marked present or absent; present if the person attends. And an assignment will be given, with that you can check those who are present. And it reduced the level of truancy. (*You have the register where you take record of this?*) Yes. (Can you provide when we are finish this interview because I would like to observe it) Yes, there are records! There are records!!

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It is multi-dimensional, one-the inability of the government to fulfill his contractual obligations by way of providing the structures, the teaching and learning materials. Two, their inability to pay their staff; their inability to reconstruct and keep the school with modern gadgets in line with the new millennium requirements. Three,

the government inability to give people jobs. Considering Nigeria as an oil producing area; considering the amount that is being budgeting every day. Nigeria is about, just say, two hundred million, but you are budgeting trillion. Bring one billion Naira, every Nigerian has a million every year-every month. Talk of trillions. But these things are siphoned. When they are side funds, no proper explanation. Even infrastructures are not improved at all. And that has, you know, make people impoverished people. People are very poor. In fact not even poverty. Poverty is better than penury. People are highly penurious and cannot afford to raise the children they brought into this world. The economy is so bad, they cannot afford. And more so, if you see when you have money you can acquire the new technology for safe survival. The money is not there and they have not acquire the technology with which to survive to adverse better economic conditions. So that is a broad spectrum that will make the children, the society. It encourages truancy and it forces people. Because when a child goes to the school and is driven away for not paying. Most states pay their fees. Only very few states. But for that in other advance countries, people are given, you know, they are given a lot of stipends to feed their children, but not here. But such money is there, but the government we have may not have recognized that. And with that you see that the children will not be properly educated. And if the children are not educated today; tomorrow will be very bad for us. Educate somebody today, tomorrow becomes bright. The technology would be there, the infrastructure would improve. OK can you imagine that; Nigeria, if you look at our roads. The roads are so bad. For us to repair the roads we have to go to India or Pakistan to take one street welder to come as an expert whereas we have them in Nigeria. And not only that, I don't know if you are aware that HND holders are not regarded in Nigeria. And where would the technology break through come from? These HND holders, who passed through the polytechnics, are the people who hold the key for technological breakthrough. Even the roads; the roads cannot be repaired by an axe man. These are technological areas; flying the plane. Ok, you hear about train services; who will build the train? Is it not the technicians and the engineers? They are not there, they are not in the shop. *(ok, PABI, I just want to redirect to you; the question here. I just want you to stick to this question. The major influence on youth truancy. You have answered it with your first comment. It says identify, what factors can you identify as the major influence on youth truancy? You mentioned about the economic aspects, you mentioned the government. Those are the key words that I am looking for).* At the same time the student's attitude. Not all students are gifted and because of our curriculum had not been design such a way to suit every "Dick and Harry", right; it is tailor that they do this; there are people who are only they can be artist when they are tailor toward this they become perfect; but when you want them to come and do mathematics; do all this they

dropped out. Are you getting me? There are some who can stop at level-let's say JSS3, the junior secondary.

Do you know secondary? They now go to know how to patch bicycle tubes; repairs motorcycles, and they feed on that. That is their own level. But when you want to force him to go because "my son reads medicine, so you must go and read medicine. That's where the failure comes. The role of the parent forcing their child to choose careers in which they are not properly fitted in. That is a very important aspect. And the genetic imbuelement, the genetic attributes. (can you explain that?) If two people got married; a man and a woman and it's either the two of them because what I find is level the illiterate will marry the illiterate to marriage literate. And when you look at the daft, they cannot produce anything better than a fellow daft. When you look at the chromosomal transfer it will be going like that. When the stars make their own kids, at the age of eight they are passed their elementary school; nine they are jumped into the secondary school and continued like that. But you have the middle class; the middle people who can fit. And when you have this money you will be able to feed your children very well and that goes a long way to building them. And when you build them their brain also will be supplied with the adequate nutrients. The child will be able to download these things and have a retentive memory, and be able to sustain himself during long lecture like that. But if you look at these "morons" they are usually tired out. (let me ask you this: Does this school provides lunch for the students?) That is a pleasure. No way; no way. I never heard of any place (no lunch?) No no-no lunch. (*Any means of transportation?*) No way. But some time ago; to be fair to the government; they provided the students bus; free bus, school buses. (*But I am talking about present*) I think they still have, but the only point is that they are limited to some routes. But this route; this Port Harcourt Road they cannot come. And we have never seen any this way. For sure we have not seen any, but I heard it is there. (in other words your school...) No no no.

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Honestly, we have designed programs and put some of them in place. You see, "an idle brain is a Satan's network. What we have done, we have done it to such areas where the students will use their hands. In fact there be the cycle motor areas, that's according to professor Ezewu, the recycle productive areas. They used their hands to do things. When you keep them busy like that they will be able to work on that place and take pleasure in doing it. Not as a punishment. We remove punishment. We have produced a method that is so friendly, teachers students, relationship interaction; it's that ok? You handle your students as you own child. In fact, we are the surrogate parents of all these students here. We managed them as if we manage your own kids; encourage them, reinforce them all the time to see if one is lacking behind. We have been able to go

beyond this. We try to know their homes. We've known them, know their predicaments and invite their parents to come. We relate very well now and the parents have been working, coming to know what is the problem in the school, and the kids' problem in the home. Now we are working as a group. We are moving today; we are carrying them along. Like last time we said the phone, the G.S.M. phones are so distractive to the students. We held a meeting and the parents agreed with us that if anybody that comes with a G.S.M. phone should be it should be seized and they reprimanded seriously. We have embarked on that and it has yielded a positive result. And not only that, we have planned a curriculum; a scheme of work to keep the student busy most of the time; and only to play when it is time for playing. So all the time they are playing around, they are still busy in the classroom and in the workshops and computer lab learning one trade or another. (*How has that help to address the issue of truancy?*) It has reduced it to the barest minimum in this school. More so, we have qualified teachers. One of the problems is that when you don't have qualified "no man can give what they doesn't have." No society has given what she hasn't gotten. Because each man is his product of his experiences. So we have after a careful research, we have fixed every teacher on his or her own area of specialization. And each teacher is operating on a lot of comparative advantage, so that there be very minimal hassle. So that has yielded a good result. Every teacher is handling their students, and is there on time and we would check. And there is an internal supervision. We go to find out who has not done his job and who has not done her job, and what next. And he or she will be reprimanded. And that's something we deduct. We reprimand the teacher (*by deducting their pay?*), that period you do not pay. You have to put in that, make your personal arrangement or your money will be deducted and paid into the government coffers.

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Here we, the rate is not more than one percent because of what you call "engineering in traction". Somebody might be sick or loss of parent, and so on and so forth. And like I said earlier on the economic crunch prevailing; in fact if you look at the students and look at their parents' poverty and anger is written on our faces-right. So, apart from that this school is a very good school, and the students don't even like to go because of the conditions. It is very conducive for them to be here. Everything that can make them happy within the school wall, they enjoy it. Even if you ask them to transfer to another school they find it difficult. Even parents come here to beg so that they beg as a special school. And that is why now, no place is Aba and in fact to attest to that, the reduction of that truancy, this school represents Abia this zone in both quiz and other exams, in football and so on, we show a connected program which shows how the student; the level



of discipline. And there has been no question of bullying here, so people enjoy the school, and the students enjoy.

When we use sanction-sanction however. As a teacher when you look at the broad law in Nigeria, the police can apply minimum force defect arrest. Sanction should not be so stringent. It should be minimal. It should not be punitive; so that the person would learn. It's corrective so that the boy comes in. Even at that, we operate on the biblical principle that "we sinned against our creator; but is sin to the mediator to reconcile man and his creator." We have been applying that principle. We know as surrogate parents it is our responsibility to take care of these children, correct them when they have erred, and show them the right path. So very stringent sanction cannot be applied otherwise you are making the society worst and callous. It would lead to Bokoharism. Anybody that drops out of stringent sanction would turn to somebody bad and that is not the best for the society. At the end of the day when the student grow they grow; they come to appreciate whatever measure you have taken to correct them and come to say "thank you sir." (*Now my question is: for students that are involved in truancy-let assume that you have students that are frequently absent-what measure or type of sanction does your school give to them?*) In this case there is a requirement a student should meet before he is promoted. If a student fails to take first time exam, second time exam, they are not coming to the third time exam. (*I am talking about truancy related*) That has to deal with truancy too. If a child fails to come to the school, you know, playing, gambling away and comes back the third time saying "now I'm come in", it means he is not going to pass. If he repeats that class he would be; he knows he has missed one session. And in order not to miss it, that person would be consistent, trying to come to the school to take his exams to meet the academic school requirement for somebody to be promoted. These are some of the things we have done. (*Does your school have any policy, attendance policy that for the school in term that if you missed five days unexcused absents, you would get this punishment or maybe he may be assign to cut grass, or suspended? Does your school have something of that nature?*) Most of the time like I told you we linked up with the home. The school has a lined with the home to find out if a student fails to come two or three days; even the second day the teacher would request; we would delegate friends to find out from parents to find out whether this boy is well or not ; to find out what has happened. And those of them that are hospitalized, the parent comes to us, tell us in time, like we are taking exams now, and they bring their medical papers. We can excuse them and organize an exam them. These are some of the things we do. We have our records. It's from this record we will know who is present and who is not present. Somebody can be present in the morning but absent in the afternoon. That is a way of checking truancy. (but what about those that are involve in truancy-what do you do if they are engage in (gambling and all that). They are reprimanded; they are seriously reprimanded. (*In what way?*) We will call their parent; we will draw the attention of their parents. (Draw the attention of their parents)( I am talking about the school-what sanction or policy does the school give out to those kids that are not in compliance?) There are counseled two or three times (you

have guidance counselor?) Yes. And when they are counseled, after that we invite their parents; look at their ways and cause for truancy. Then we would study that and if we are satisfied we re-admit the person. If we are not satisfied we ask them to seek for transfer. Because one bad hand can spoil the rest. Because the boys that are here are very good boys. So even the parents; because these boys is one of them here is an ambassador (that's correct) They go to tell what is happening here to other people. And when they go if you as a teacher fail in your duty, these students will report and the government will hear and invite you. So that means dereliction of duty we are failing in our duty. If we don't reprimand them or draw their attention; and the ones we cannot manage we sent them to another place. So it is left with their parents to send them to remand homes or reformatories.

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After invitation the students are not cogent enough, we place the person on a minimal punishment. In fact not punishment, like grass cutting. (grass cutting?) yes. We will give the assignment for him to cope. The time he has to submit such assignment. And to prove himself that he is ready to learn. (*When will he do the grass cutting? Is it during the school hours, or during the break period? When?*) What we have done is immediately after school or during the break period he can do it; under the close supervision of the teacher. If it's wrong, we give somebody what to do we give you a time you can finish it. (*any suspension for being a truant? Any students been suspended for being truant?*) Definitely so, as our job empowers us. (*but what about corporal punishment?*) No, it's not done. It's only the principal that has to do that and it must be logged, and approval must come from the employer; the headquarters ...

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Alright! In that aspect, this school is one of the best that have adopted a lot of strategies. One, we have provided certain things that will distract them. For instance, you will now hear that football is ruling the world. We have three football fields. At the play time they go there and they play. We organize inter-class, inter-house competitions and students take delight in that, because they are noted for that, and other games. In fact, every person is given the opportunity to excel and exhibit his own talent in this place. Not only that; there are certain; we organize the base, fees, inter-hose debates, inter-class debates, so on like that; on different subject, even on Fridays. Not only that morality is also very important. We invite the ministers of God to come and minister. Not even one church. We are not discriminatory provided as long as the person speaks the word of God that is undiluted. They come here (*to talk to the students*) we invite people to come and talk to the students on other aspect of life; we help people all the rest of them. Mostly those of them with Ebola diseases and so on; HIV; the regular talk to. We devise such thing. We even invite the parents, the teacher, the PTA to come and talk to their wards. They do. That is done on weekly basis. (How effective has intervention and prevention programs help in reducing student truancy in your school?) As a matter of fact, it has yielded a positive result. There is no way you can go the whole of this state and hear of any student from this school being involve in one nasty deal or another. So it has been able to check the level of truancy. And I can say in all scientific experiment if you only see one percent it all means that the scientific is highly

sensitive to recognize such an error. Because the truancy level here is not up to five percent, not up to three percent; if it is one percent, it is tolerable. It is not beyond economic threshold we would be managing them and you know some of them are underage, so we would be able to manage them until they get to their level. Some of them at nine years they are here when they should have been in elementary school. At the age they are here, we just try to manage them and provide and advice. In fact they are our children. We are the surrogate parents; we try to manage them like our own children, and begin to guide them. Our job is to guide students to learn. We have been guiding them until they come to the lime light and they mostly appreciate that. They appreciate our job even though the government doesn't appreciate our job. When they see us they say "sir, good morning sir", even when we go on the buses, they pay for us. They say you were my teacher, so, so so. Like you as me before, that why I say my reward is in heaven. The allowances they kept from us, we beg God to be giving us. That is what has been sustaining us. *Now how do you all engage the parents in terms of helping to curb truancy?* Honestly, any school that wants results must not deal without the parents. In fact, the community is the owner of the school. And what we are doing here is working in partnership. Whatever happens here we inform them, whatever happens at home they tell us. We know when we meet we will be able to curb that. Truancy comes when it is unnoticed. Either it happens this way, their parents don't know; or the parents they know but they don't want to inform us. So that one we grow geometrically.

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**TABI:**

Well, the possibility of children learning when teacher are on long strike is narrow, because students gain knowledge from the teachers and the teachers are the instrument to impact knowledge to the students. So when the teachers are not there; there is very likelihood that the children will not learn. They can't come to the empty class to stay because nobody would teach them. Even if some of them who come to stay in the classroom, when the teachers are not there to explain certain thing to them it is impossible for them to understand certain things. So the presence of the teacher there helps to throw light or help them to gain more knowledge in certain areas on some subjects. So the long strike may affect the students adversely because they will not learn. The classes in the absence of the teachers I doubt the possibility of these students learning adequately or effectively. Even though some of them can read, but without the teachers being there to explain those things to them they will not get the full understanding of their reading.

I think the government has a lot to do in this case. Because the teacher himself cannot prepare the school days or the term is prepared by the ministry for the students. If the government decide to extend the period of learning for that term, then the student can use it to make up. But left with the teacher himself internal arrangement is made for extension classes and afternoon lessons. Then that will help the students to cover their academic needs. So, it is during that afternoon lessons that teachers can use it to prepare them to cover the areas they have not covered during the strike action. *(have you experienced a strike action since you started teaching?)* Many times, in Nigeria here we

had a series of them. Mostly on the part of the government. Major cause is from the government, arising from nonpayment of salaries and other demands from the teachers. The government first will meet up with the demands, then the Union can declare a strike action, which adversely will affect the academic standards of the state or the needs of the students. (*can you talk about having experience of a strike action; can you tell me the duration. The one that you would considered to be one of the longest or whatever, the duration?*) I can't remember because as a teacher I served many years in this job and I can't readily mention, because we have series of them. Almost every two years or three years we have strike actions and this is why in these days in universities, we have batch A, batch B, and batch C, coming out, going to do this youth cop members. Why we have batched A, batch B and batch C, is as a result of this strike action. So, I can't really say this is the year we have the worst strike action. I know that we had the one that lasted up to two months or a month and the..., but I can't quote the particular year.

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The strike action has affected attendance of students, especially in public schools owned by government. Most of the students, when the strike action is called off, you find out that the population will reduce. Some of them will switch over. Their parent can decide to send their children to private schools where you don't have much incident of strike action. Two: by the time these students come back to resume studies, some of them waste almost two weeks later before coming. Assuming the school calendar is up to thirteen weeks. You see some of them coming at the tenth week to join, spending the other three weeks at home. And in that duration you find out it would have an adverse effect on those students. So the possibility of covering the scheme is very narrow. You see, within that ten weeks you cannot use it to cover lessons meant for thirteen weeks, or fifteen weeks because these students will not be there. At times when you go to the classes you may only see one student coming to school within that three weeks. So this is because they have gotten use to the outside environment within that strike action. So it takes them time to adjust themselves to be ready for academic work.

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We have records; the school has records. The Form Teachers are there; the sectional heads are there, to check the students, marked the attendance daily. We have weekly records. (*When you say Form Teachers do you have different type? I am hearing about Form Teachers and Subject Teachers*) Subject Teachers are different; Form Teachers are different. Form Teachers go to the class to take the total attendance of the students in that particular class assigned to him or her. The Subject Teachers take care of the attendance of those students offering that particular subject. So each teacher may decide to, or a teacher who teaches one subject may has register to record attendance of the whole total students in that particular class assigned to him or her. So we make provision for that. And at the end of the week those records are submitted to the school administration for record purposes. (*Can I ask you this: the register do you have one that you can show me?*) The register? Yes, there are many of them. Even the Subject Teachers they have records. They marked gift scores for attendance. Yes, each Subject Teacher has marks

for attendance. In fact, every term has at least ten marks for attendance if the students come to school regularly. That attracts about ten percent of the total score on an exam.

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There are many factors arising from the government, from their parents and the students themselves. (You mentioned the government, the parents,) ok you say the influence on the youth truancy? (yes, the factors which you identified. Can you elaborate in terms of the government?) Yes, the government when they failed to provide the facilities in the school. In fact, for instance in science classes, if a child offering science does not have the materials; the materials are not provided and he feels that those things are not there; the child may not have that interest to continue. And that may affect his performance. And if he does not do well in maybe the first term exam as a result of the non-availability of those things that will weaken the child interest in that particular subject and he will begin to shrink. You know, his attendance in school will reduce. Then the parent too. If the parents, fails to pay the required fees or money that is required; the child may not come to school regularly. I think It creates an adverse effect that particular child because he may not measure up. He will lose some topics the teaching will be teaching; and that will demoralized him, not to be coming to school regularly. Why? If the child fails to pay fees and today it drives him away, he will be ashamed to cope to measure up with his classmates. So to avoid that shame, that disgrace he may decide to stay at home for maybe a period of one day, or two days, or three days. After two days or three days, he may resume to see whether the measure has been reduced, to remove the fear and the trauma in his life. So I think that is how the parents contribute to this cause of this truancy. Again, on the part of the teachers, I know there are ways teacher's present topics; they are not considering the level of the child within that period. If the child sees how a topic is being presented he may not take; or whether he like the subject or he likes the teacher; then not bothering with the other ones. And at the end you find out that that child may not measure up. He will decide; when you look at the time table he has that particular teacher, that particular day he may decide not to come to school that day. Because he is coming to face a problems which he would not be able to solve, or facing a teacher he doesn't like. (Ok-interesting)

There are so many strategies the school has adopted; particular here at National High School. We do invite parents; organize PTA to lodge complain to them to the parents. In fact we work in partnership with the parents. To ascertain a problem of a child; while that child has failed to come to school for a particular period of time. Then if they give us a reasonable account why that child is absent, I think the child may be pardoned cause it is not his fault. It is only when the parent provides those things that it creates an environment for that child that he will come to school. So where the parent to provide that enabling environment, the child may decide to stay at home. So that's why the school go in partnership with the parents. They invite the parents, discuss with them, tell them the experiences they are having over the children and those who are coming and those who decide to boycott classes. So the school will organize a parent meeting. And then we will also invite professionals to come and ginger them. The importance of education so that the child will have that interesting value in education, to be coming to

school regularly. So we invite professionals, even the old boys who has made it in life. We invite them to tell them that these people have made it because they have been coming to school regularly. So these measures the school has adopted .to curb this truancy. (any other one?) These are the one that I vaguely remember.

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**TAB2:**

When the teachers are on strike for a long period in our own locality there is no academic work in the school. *So most students stay at home?* There is no way teachers can go to the houses to teach them. So on that section would be missed by the students. We don't teach them when they are on strike.

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When we normally prepare students if there is any strike, or during strike action we normally consider the exam class. The exam class we talk about is the SS3 and JSS3. We may organize on our own if the Union, because at times in involves the Union. The Union would tell you to go on strike. And the aim of the strike is to stop any academic work. So once the Union, if they would permit you, you now invite these students. Maybe a weekend studies. Saturday you use it to teach them, or days where the teachers, on their own, they will volunteer. Because they are going to write exams. Like SS3 they would write WAEC with other countries; like Liberia, Sierra Leone. So they are not on strike. In order to prepare our own student we normally meet during weekends, that is mostly Saturdays and any other day suitable for the teachers. That's the only way we meet up; but not for other sections. *Do you get compensated from your students' parents or from the schools?* I've try it twice. There is nothing like compensation you are just trying to satisfy yourself as a teacher.

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Because of our background here, most of the students are not from wealthy families where you would say they would invite private teachers to their home to teach them. So once the teachers are on strike; most of our students they go into the market to hassle for the little they would use to support themselves or support their parent. So the attendance is not encouraging at all; even when you are there to sacrifice your time to call them to teach them; their illiterate parents will tell them since teachers are on strike, I don't know what you are going there to do. So just a few of them that would respond that would now come. So we have poor attendance. *what would you say that causes the strike action?* When the demands of the workers; like if I'm trying to-let me generalize it: Once the workers' demands are not met; the only way, because they are government, they will not listen to you when you want to negotiates with them. The only way that they will hear is that the workers are gone on strike. That's the only way. It's just to push your demands, so that they will know to improve the welfare of the workers.

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We have Form Sponsors each class. Let's say that GSS1, there is a Form Sponsor who keep the students attendance. And if you are a Subject Teacher in that particular class you also keep the attendance of students. That's how we keep attendance. (Where do you keep the attendance: Do you have a register?) Yes, we have a register, and we have diaries. Diaries are provision for you to mark the attendance of students attending your

lessons. If there is any need for them to refer whether that child actually attended that class, they will call you as a Subject Teacher. Within that time the child supposed to be in the class. Then you look at your register, the diary and inform the school whether the child actually attended the class or not. (*Where do you all stored the data? Is it in that diary or you have it in the computer?*) No we don't have it in soft copies at all. (you don't have it on soft copies; hard copy only.)

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Family background: A child that is not properly raised; or a child with a problem. Maybe they have family problem where they, let's say the issue of a father and mother not living together. It can cause truancy in a child. Because who be looking for that thing outside and nobody to correct that child would be misbehaving at home. Another reason, where the school environment is not conducive for the child; where they are not being controlled; like when it is morning lessons; during the morning hours all the students are expected to be in their class assuming the teachers are on duty don't monitor them. Some of them would go. Because there are children below the age of eighteen. Some of them are not even up to eighteen. It is only SS3 where you find students that are up to eighteen years. So when you have these kids looking for where to hide and to play it may result to truancy. And where a child is not getting enough from that particular teacher that enters the class to teach; maybe the way the teacher teaches; the students does not appreciate that one. So the attendance that the child would not be in the class because that's the work children miss. The attendance of the child will be missing that particular class is there. So I believe the family background can cause that. The school also; the nature of the school and the friends, the peers (*peer pressure*) can influence a child; and it can make the child not to be in school. That is to be a truant. (When you talk about the school you talking about the school infrastructure, the government) Yes, because of the background we have here; most of us grew up in an environment where we don't have enough. We have been managing that little that we have. The infrastructure is where a child is now mandated to provide some for himself. There are students here, the can adjust to the little the school can provide for them. I know that the infrastructure, that means if the environment is conducive. Being conducive means everything has to be in touch for the child to learn.

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**SAB1:**

Many periods when teachers go on strike, I have nothing doing; I stay at home and help my parents in an errand. And I do combine my studies. I complete my readings because I have a time table at home. The time table I follow them especially in due process. So whenever teachers go on strike is another opportunity for me, to acquire more knowledge that to prove my own ability to see if I have been coping up with what the teaching has been saying. So I do read and go on errands for my parents. (run errand for them. Errands like what?) Errands like my mom is a tailor. She is a tailor so sometimes I do eve help her to stitch (sew some of the clothes. But do you go and do some of the trading? Do you go to the market or?) The last experience was yes. I go to market, the last I went to market, I do some hawking. But today I haven't been stitching. (ok). In

line with that question; since entering the high school how many days have you been absent from school? I can recall how many times I have been absent.

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The experience then was although there is nothing good as education. When you are at home, at least when there is no strike some certain knowledge that the teachers will be impacting on you. But since there is strike it looks as if you are missing something. Although you are studying at home but, there is some particular things you are missing which is that education, which is some certain knowledge which the teachers ought to pass into you. So when you are home during strike period, sometimes it looks boring. It looks boring to me. Sometimes I don't even to cope up sometimes. Although I even find it difficult to read; although I try as possible to read. It's not as usual when the teachers are not on strike. So that is my experience.

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The state government did everything that is possible in their own power to see that they resolve the strike issue. Because what forms the government is education, and the government itself, they try as much as possible even thought to reconcile with the teachers. Even though them themselves, they try everything making sure that; that is why during the strike period it doesn't stay for long. Just within a short period of time they called off the teachers back. So the state government they try their best making sure that everything comes to normal so that education will be effective in the society.

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For the past three years if I can recall the number of strikes were five; five times now. So my mechanism was during the periods I stay at home. Like I said before, I help my parents in some jobs and I also occupy myself with book reading in order to make some research. Because when teachers on strike, I myself, due to I have the syllabus. So through syllabus I went home; I start reading the slabs to cope up with the teachers; so that when the strike is being resolved, when the teachers come to teach I will not be lacking behind. I have already read it at home when during the strike. So these are my coping mechanisms.

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When the teachers, when they are on strike my intervention program, although the teachers on strike. So there are some words the teachers will be telling you as a student during that period of strike, you yourself; those words would be cut off. It's like those words are been cut off. So I myself, sometimes I even seek help. Sometimes even when I am ready and maybe I don't even understand such topics. I even reach some of the teachers with their phone numbers and call them on the phone to seek help and ask questions. When I called them such questions will be resolved immediately. And during the period of strike is like I say is boring somehow. It's full of stress because when I am coming to school I feel that freedom; that freedom is there. But when you are at home that freedom is not there; errand here; errand there; you would be running about. So these are my intervention programs.

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Like earlier on said it affects me, because what the teachers ought to taught me; then it was cut off because of the strike. So it affects my academics somehow. Although, I am striving to read to cope up with them, but still yet it affect me because if there is nobody to clarify you, you would be lost. So it has affected me somehow, though I'm striving hard to cope up with the syllabus books given to me. There is nobody to direct you unless you call on phone. So these how they affect my academics. *But what are your strategies to address your challenges you are facing?* The strategies that I use to improve my academic performance is that because I know that I myself being a student that desires to read can acquire more knowledge, because I still have a target and a vision. So I won't let it weight me down. So that is why I make time to read for myself. Using the syllabus books which the teachers already give me, using it to cope up with them; so it won't affect me; although it would affect me that much. So these are the strategies.

I thank you very much for your input. Your information I am going to put it together and write it up and share it with you and we will reach out to the authorities in your school and call you in so we can go through it. When I finish my final product then at time I will meet with you again.

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**SAB2:**

One of the things I do during the strike action is to help my parents in their trading business. I like going to the market with my mother because I get pocket money by the end of the week. How many times have you been absent from class? I have been absent from school for about six times this school year that starts from ... The reasons for the absents are running errands in the morning like fetching water and bathing my younger brother and getting him ready for school. How old is your brother? He is 5 years. Although I make some money doing trading with my mother, the strike action makes me not to attend school anymore. I don't like the idea that teachers don't get paid after teaching us. It affects the way they teach us sometimes because they get angry very easily for nonpayment of their salary, "An adage says that a hungry man is an angry man." The teachers in this school try their best to teach us and I believe that the government should pay them when other workers get their salary

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**Dorshawn Secondary School**

**POS1:**

Today's interview is POS1 regarding the subject topic Forced Truancy and its impact on youth delinquency. I will be interviewing POS1 to help me shed some light on to help us about teacher's strike and its impact.

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The question is an answered on its own. How can they learn when we are on strike? Everywhere is deserted. The teachers go home, the students goes to their various homes. So there are no teaching, there is no learning during the strike action, no matter

the length. (In other words any home schooling or assistant.) except where parents decides to employ an external teacher that is privately to teach their children at home. If not, no teacher is permitted or teachers are frown at when they are seen teaching while there is strike action.

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We don't prepare them for anything because they are at home and the teachers are in their own various homes. There is no meeting point for them to learn; so there is no preparation whatsoever. It's a period of agitation. Agitation meaning? Wanting the government to hear their cry in one thing or the another. Maybe their allowances; some salaries that are not paid. At times it might be for a wage increase. Are you saying that teachers work without being paid? It is the trend here in Nigeria. Say, our state in particular. Like this January we have not been paid for the last three (3) months; so it's the trigger of the strike action.

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Strike action as the name implies means that we stood off. Standing off this time means that no student is seen around the school compound; not to talk of their attendance. We have zero attendance. No child is recorded as being present during the period of strike. As you can see in our register we use red to mark any day there is no school meaning no attendance. So during strike this kind of thing happens.

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We have school registers and these school registers are used in classes as attendance and fees. Every fee that is paid is recorded against the child's name. So at a glance the attendance of each child is seen in the school class register. So it is documented. How often do you keep the attendance-is it on a daily basis? On a daily basis and twice a day-morning and afternoon. This is to checkmate the student movements. A child might decide to come to school in the morning and leave during break. In the afternoon attendance checkmates students who can leave the school after break.

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There are two dimensions or two dimensional: It could be home base factor, it could be school base or three base. It could be peer base. The home base is traceable to the family upbringing. In the school; the school can be uncondusive for the child maybe because of side attractions. They might decide to be a truant. Now the peer group constitutes the major set of truants we have in the school. It is a group that misleads each other if they don't take time. So, these factors; the home factor, school environment, and peer group are the major factors that can be identifiable to truancy. *Now, let's relate it to the strike action. Can you explain how the strike or the moment the school of strike how it affects the students' attendance when the strike is over- do you get the normal students attendance, or do you see some students...* In that case there will be deviation because any child who is in a cage and point in time liberated would like the liberation to continue. So while they were away on strike they did all sort of things. They could hawk. They could go to the market to help their parents. At times they go on peer group jobs. Doing this miniature job that can give them some stipends. So a child who now knows the value of money cannot be caught, would like to continue in the habit of going for this little little things, thereby constituting truancy in the school. I will site on

example of a place where I taught before now, where railway it passed thru the school, so during break or the time the once they hear the horn of the train they jump out of their classes to carry their wears to the train for sale. From there they can go home. Now if they know that the teachers are very strict over that; they may dodge, they may not even enter their class, but right there at home, they have left their homes, reportedly, their parent would now think that they are in school. That is part of truancy. At times they may have side attractions. Like cyber cafe, the phone, the GSM Syndrome that is with us now. GSM meaning what? GSM for clarification is? GSM is a handset. So at times they use it for playing games. They bet money; they take money to play some (the students?) In that case they move out of their class. They are not neither in their homes nor on the street or in their class. They hang around the school premises betting money and winning money. In that case that person is marked absent and that is a form of truancy resulting from the longer of the taste of the idleness they have during the strike action. The tendency is for them to continue. They love the strike action because it gives them freedom to do what they want too. Explain to me why teachers go on strike. Like the name sound-strike means hitting and running away. You strike and move. Now you don't strike without a target. When the teachers feel that they are being owed or people are stepping on their toes their infringements they don't get it. They resort to strike action. At times there are different ways of striking. There is one that is called "sit down strike". They come to the school, they don't do anything they can't go to their class. When a student comes to call them they say "we are on strike", but they are in school. The students are there. There is this one they called "total strike". The total strike is where no teacher no student is found around the school compound total; and there is penalty associated to anybody who defaults, who comes to school, or who is seen around the school compound. Now the end is for the government or whatever they are fighting for, whatever they are agitating for to be granted. Now, the government will see it as a slap on their face when teacher employed is to teach students say we are no more teaching. The students loiter, the students now move from the public school own by the government to the private school. The teachers might be asking for leave allowance. Like presently the teacher are owed up to four or five years leave allowance. Now there is this other agitation of twenty-seven percent (27%) increase in salary for restructuring. It is on paper. It has never been implemented. When did this one start? How long has it been in existence? 2010 or there about. Are you saying that since 2010 the government has not fulfilled their obligations? We have a central government-Federal. Some states have implemented theirs. Some changed it to suit themselves. Like Abia said we cannot pay this twenty-seven percent (27%) while others are paying. Now the teachers would say "is it not the same chalk", "is it not the same energy we are using", "is it not the same students we are teaching" If this other state can pay, we need our own. So this can lead to strike. This twenty-seven percent (27%) is for what? Increase in salary. Now there is another one that we call TRC "Teachers Registration Counsel". There is a salary increase for every registered teacher-every licensed teacher. The teachers in Nigeria have been categorized. I have a license and I can teach anywhere in the world. So, if you are registered there is a percentage of your salary that would be added. It is on promise. To get it you have to strike. Now there is

another type of called “sympathy\_strike”. Now the sympathy strike has an umbrella as the labor congress. Now in the Labor Congress all other labor bodies are attached: NLC- National Labor Congress is the parent body of NUT-National Union of Teachers, NBA: National Bar Association, MDA-Medical Association of Doctors. When these Labor Unions come under one umbrella-it is National Level Labor Congress. So if at any point in time a body is agitating for something and the government is not adhering to them they can rush back to NLC and say come to our aids. Now if the Labor Congress agrees, that means total strike for the whole nation-no matter what you do. The umbrella, no matter what you are doing; be it market women association, all of them will go to strike in sympathy for one labor union. So in that case it is stronger than even NUT strike we are talking about that affect the students’ performance. So in that case they are sympathizing like the MDA which is the Medical Association of Doctors. Maybe agitating for horsemanship, or call allowance. Since they have staged for some time quietly asking for that particular allowance and they are not giving it they will go on strike. The resulted effect will be patient dying, nervous, diversion to private hospitals, paying of high bills in the private hospitals, just as in NUT. When a student is removed parent will take them to a private institution where they will cut their throats as school fees. Now they will pay high prices and the teachers are not qualified in the private schools. So the resultant effect again will be that they will be poor attendance in academics because of the strike action that drifted the children from the normal train of study to the backyard mushroom schools. As a follow up are you saying that teachers are not be qualified in the private school-what do you mean by that? They don’t use qualified teachers. They hire middle level. They would charge high price from the parents and students and try to manage and pay less to the Lay Teachers. Now in effect they will now move to the private schools that are on strike to hire them come to their aid. Now by the time the strike is over, coming back to the school you wouldn’t find any number of students are gone. Will you teach empty classes? Then those who are left behind might be the chaffs or those whose parent cannot afford the high price in the private schools. They keep on waiting, begging on God to help the teachers come back. When the teachers come back there will be a tendency for them to rush to cover the scheme of work or syllabus; in that case the has the capacity. The teachers, the students will have problems.

The teachers in attempt to cover up the missed ground work will wound the students who may not follow up. In order to argument, extra lessons are organized outside the school period to help carry them. Extra lessons are organized on what you call organize to help cover the skin of work. You have dealt with question #5 excessively.

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One, they will be placed under serious check through the register. The registers are manned by the form teacher, or class teacher not the subject teacher. The class teacher is very close to the students and can monitor them at close range. These class teacher knows them individually and can give reports on an individual basis. Another way of checkmating them is giving the culprits by punishing them. At times we suspend; at times we invite the parents; at times to come to sign an undertaking which says that when a child is not in school they should be punish or their parents should be called and

let them know. At times they are expelled depending on the level of caution. When they are punished in any of the forms, it is recorded for future references. (We are going to deal with that aspect of punishment and sanction)

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**TOS1:**

When you are on strike you are not teaching. The teacher is not there, the students are not there which means that at that period there is no learning. Once the teachers are not there the students cannot be in school; which means most of them will be at home. Some will get engage in one trade or the other and in the past when we have had such strike, students go hocking in the streets. Some engage in agburu business, you know, for the males they will go into conductors and some they waste a lot of time. No learning takes place. *As a teacher how many times have you experience strike action?* I experienced two intensive one; then the other ones like the recent were just a few days strike. About three days we called it off. *The intensive ones was how long?* One lasted for one month, the other one lasted for three weeks. *During the period the one month and the three, were there any arrangements for the students or alternative plans?*

Yes. One of those long one took four months, we were starting West Africa Examination. So for those of us, I was taking the SS3 students. We had alternative arrangements. The students were coming on mofty for lessons. Because we knew then that we would start exams immediately the strike was called off. So we were making arrangement. At that time the Tax Force which they set was coming to schools. So what we had to do was changed venues for these students to come so that they will be able to make it in their exams. So that was the alternative arrangements at that time. It was difficult on the teachers. You were coming, people were chasing you around and you know you are doing a selfless service just because you wanted these students to make sure they pass the exams. So we were trying to manage some of the days when they tell you they are on their way so you have to tell them to go back. There are other times when you ask them to come may be in the evening so that by that time they must have retired. So that was the alternative we made. Then there was one time where the strike was planned. So what we do was to give assignments, give out a scheme of work to these students so that they will read. Because we a mind that once they leave school they will go to private schools and we wouldn't want that. Most of the private schools are sub-standards and you know most of the students do not have money for bigger private schools. So what we do is to make sure we give them assignments; photo-copy the scheme of work so it will help them to read while at home. So that was the only alternative arrangement we could make. *You mentioned the Tax Force; who are the Tax Force?* Usually the N.U.T. Before we go for any strike it can come from the Federal Labor of the N.U.T, or the State Labor. Recently we get orders from the Federal. When they tell us to go on strike most of us are reluctant. Why? Because of the environment we are in. This city is a place where business people, with too many private schools around, s. Sub-standards and we don't want to lose the student. So once the do that they will set up a Task Force that will be going around asking teachers to stay away from schools.

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Just as I have said before; we make arrangements either for the students to come. Mostly we in science, we ask them to come for practical. There was a period there was a strike and what we do was closed the windows that face the school and then the one behind the school compound we opened it so that we make an effective use of the time the students come to school. That was the alternative arrangement. At times we give them notes to write. When you are not there the people would come, they will not see you but something will be going on with the students. I know during those days the students didn't miss much.

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Most students lose hope. They will be told the strike is on, so most of them will stay home. It's only the very few ones that are very diligent to their studies that try as much as possible that will come around to survey the area and know whether the teachers are around to help them out in one thing or another. So most of the time most of them go out helping their parents in hawking; in their trade. Here in this area, this part of the country, we have many businesses. So they can go out selling their wears in the market.

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We have registers for class attendance. Attendances are taken in the morning, then later in the day after break period. When the students returned to the classroom we take another attendance record done by teachers in various classes. We have weekly conclusion and then we have a timely conclusion to check how many times a student was absent. In some cases we advise the student to send message across when they are sick and then when we see that some of them are becoming habitual absentees we try to find out. Why? In that register we have position for parents' addresses and their phone numbers. Recently, the communication has made it easier. So students are advise to give us their parent phone numbers. So most of the time we call the parent to find out what is wrong. *Who keeps the attendance record? The teacher or do you have a guidance counselor?* The class teachers keep the attendance. The counselor will come in when we have serious cases. Then we contact the guidance counselor who now comes in to advise the student. Most of the time they go to the class, they ask students to come for problems and then they meet with them. Most of the time we have problems with the student we contact the counselors. In fact we do, but in most cases it is more effective with the subject teachers. Most subject teachers will take attendances when we go in for teaching. There are times when some of them are absent and you find out why the students are not there. If they don't comply then you inform the school about the child. There is something I want to get into may be. Here, in most of the schools here we have too many house help and most of them have problems at home. At times when they cannot meet they stay back at home. So that's why we keep this attendance in order to encourage them to make sure they come in no matter what happens in their homes. So that is the problem we have. So we try to encourage them. *Most of them are house help?* Yes, most of them are house help. Living with other people they have a lot of problems. So we discover that some of these house help will come to school late. That's why we take them to counselors who advise them to get up early enough to get set and be able to come to school. *Do you have a guidance counselor's in this school?* Yes, yes, yes we have professionals. *We are still on the attendance policy. You say you have an*

*attendance policy? Can I see it when we finish? Can I get it from the Principal?* You wouldn't call it a policy, rather a record and that is the register. The Class Subject Teacher still have their own attendance kept by each teacher. *What is the difference between the Form Teacher and the Subject Teacher?* The Form Teacher mans a class. Sees to the welfare of the students in that class. Whereas the Subject Teacher are professional teachers in various areas. An English Teacher is a professional and is a Subject Teacher. Each class has a form sponsor. Like you use the word sponsorship. A form sponsor take care of the students, takes their rules every day. Any problem that arises in the class they give to her. If the Form Teacher cannot take care of it then it gets to the sectional head. From the sectional head it goes to the admin. From the admin it gets to the principal depending on the problems. So if it is something you can solve at the first sponsorship, you do it. Then maybe if it is not you can go to another level. Student knows this. They know that once they have a problem they go to the class Teacher.

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In a class where we have some students during drugs almost consecutively; almost a week, two weeks, and if the student is not cautious others will take to it. That is why we usually try to caution them in the class so as to make others know that you don't do something without being punished. *I am trying to get to the factors. What do you think as teachers that affect them to engage in truancy? What factors?* If I borrow a leaf when I was in a boy's school; this parts of the country the boys like making money and the environment here gives them room for that. Since you have places you can hawk they are always busy. So, most of them try to engage in one trade or another, which they do after school. There are times you see them engaging themselves before coming to school. Anytime they cannot make it they will continue without coming to school. So the quest to get money make them not to come to school. Then at times it may be from their parents. Parents that do miniature jobs. They will have canteen and then little shops. At times when they are not available they will keep the students at home to trade their wares. So once they are not available the students will tell you my parents travelled and they asked me to say in the shop. That is an excuse. Because they are their parents, they think everything their parents say is the correct thing. So they stay away; stay in those areas helping them to trade their wares. That is some of these factors. At times peer group has a lot of influence. When they come to school and discover that these people that engaged in one trade or another have money, can eat at any time, can buy little-little things, they will now join them. They will try to engage themselves. Some of them sell pure water. You see them going out to sell pure water, grand nuts, biscuits in order to make little-little money that they will use to come to school because they have seen others coming to school with money.

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One of them is punishment. We discover a student stays away from school maybe two or three times without concrete evidence of being sick. Because most of them claimed to be sick. We usually give them grass cutting not corporal punishment. We give them grass cutting, But in as much some schools engage in corporal punishment it is banned. *(Corporal punishment is banned?)* Yes. By right when a corporal punishment

is given it should be logged by the school. So the cane that is being used, you know flashing here and there, you just use them to frightened them not to use them. So punishment-that is grass cutting. Then at times when they claimed to be sick invite their parents. And another one is there was a case where the student said they auntie asked her to stay. So we had to invite the auntie to find out what really happened. That is the measures we take because we don't like suspending them. Because suspending them, most of them are happy to stay back at home. We don't like suspending them for being truant. So those are the strategies for punishment. *Now let me ask you this. Do you think the punishment strategy helps to control the students?* Of course. When a child comes to school, others will be in the class learning. You asked the child to use a period to cut grass. They feel it so much. And when you give it you supervise because you wouldn't want other students to help out to cut the period. We make sure that that period is use for grass cutting. At times we deny them their break period. The children learn in those studies in the class. Then at break period you make sure that she takes that thirty minutes to cut the grass before entering the class.

#### **TOS2:**

The truth is this. Only the gifted students can learn on their own. Only the students from an elite group. If there is a strike in any states, in any school for a very long time academic work will be completely paralyzed and it has adverse effect on the students. So there is something like in academic work they will only manage to read on their own. Unless if you belong to the elite class, the parents can now look for a room teacher, home teacher. But if it is in school setting nothing happens. Because even if you there, organize some lessons secretly, the aggrieved union may even stop you because they are not happy, because of social injustice being meted out to them. So nothing works. *(When you say social injustice what do you mean?)* I mean like a can of dehumanizing actions on teachers. Sometimes they will not be paid as when due. Sometimes we always experienced some salaries/cut in salaries without our expressed permission. Without the consent of the Union. We just see that the maybe the salary is 30 thousand naira this month and the other one is going down to 25, 29, and so and so on; without any explanation. Some of the salaries are in arrears; leave allowances; Nobody is constituting that. They will just forget about those things; and those things having adverse impact on the teachers. But while those of them who claim to be our employers are enjoying their own. That is why I called it social injustice. *(Are you saying the government can cut teacher's salary without an agreement with NUT? Can the state government take a unilateral action without consulting the Union?)* Yes-yes-yes- In fact we are currently on a warning strike. But they are telling us anytime from this week for full strike. I don't even know the exact date. To strike to place some adamant. Some of these adamant includes incessant deductions of monies from our salary without the consent of the teachers; without the consent of the union. It's one unpalatable situation. So we have embarked on that strike, but I don't know whether they received it or not. Because the thing is becoming too much unbearable. *When was the last time the teachers get paid?* That was in August. In fact not even salary; \$1,000 was removed; no explanation. \$1,000. Was removed?) There is also what we call social



injustice we don't know how to curb that one, it's what you call prorata. The school commences at 8:00; and if you should come like 8:31 or 8:32 they will say that you lose your entire salary for that. Even if you put in extra 100 hours they wouldn't even want to that into consideration. The is supposed to go by 2:00; vacate by 2:00; even if you come by 8:35 and leave at 6:00; attending to students and doing extra jobs that day; as long as our names are names are under that red ink, you will lose our entire salary. Instead of going by the true genuine prorata; according to the number hours, minutes, second you missed they will reduce your salary. We know it's an illegal entry. But we have been stomaching that nonsense. So it's part of social injustice. So some of these are going a very long way towards affecting the performance of students. It wasn't even encouraging students. If you tell me today that my salary today is cut, how would I feel happy to take of the students? They can be doing it in the right way; just ignore whatever thing they are doing. They can be moving from one thing to another to from pillar to post I will not be happy to where I been, what I do, why you not reading the books; because they have already told me that I am not in that school for that day. But yet you expected at the end of the terms to cover whatever is at scheme. And when you cover your scheme and cover all your tests, nobody is coming back to refund you what they have already taken out from your salary. That is why I called it social injustice. *Now TOS2, let me ask you once again are you saying the prorata wasn't agreed with the Union?* No-no no... In fact it is deem as illegality. (Now what is the Union doing about it?) Well, the truth is that. The Union has been making their earnest efforts, but they are handicapped. In a true democracy Union can work, can succeed. But while you have pseudo or false democracy Union because the so called false democracy or pseudo democracy, they are more wicked than the military, But when you stick your neck up and tell them you are unionist, your life is in danger. If you want to press home your demand the way it should be placed. So the Union has been making positive efforts to reduce this problem. Because of the powers that be nothing has been forthcoming, just only insignificant results only what have achieving. That's the situation.

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Just like I have already pointed out many factors may catapult the teacher to prepare or not to prepare. If actual during the strike teachers are somehow well taking care of, there is a kind on motivation; I want to tell you a little something. We have trained teachers; dedicated teachers who are ready to go out to make sure that these students are well taken care of academically, morally and otherwise. So the issue remains that some teachers they strived the hardest in spite of the odds to make sure that some of the students will be seen. But during this period of strike the students will go home. None of them will be seen in the school. The most serious one is so called the most serious one. They will be coming to the school; sneak into the school. Well some of these teachers who are still in their humane dispositions may also call them give them some secret assignments. Well, it's not ok now because they also doing it under fear. In case of the union people never see them. And it is a can of anti-union activities. They can be punished. So during this time, during the period of strike preparing the students is not always easy. They are the people that are suffering it; while the teachers will also be suffering. Because at the end of it all they will also do their best to make sure that these topics are being covered. And

further they will put in extra time without any pay, without any encouragement, without any motivation. So the truth is this the students normally suffer that is the truth. (*you kept on mentioning your union; what is the name of your union?*) The Union is Nigeria Union of teachers. The umbrella union for all the teachers; whether primary or post, is only the tertiary institutions that not under the union. (share with me your experience during the strike action and what your colleagues of same profession; what you go through when you guys have the strike action.) It is not all palatable during the period on strike. In fact, at times it is traumatic. On the side of the teachers. And during the period of strike some of them would come. You will not have the comfort the restless of mind; Then if you have sick person, sick wife, sick children, aged parents nobody to take care them. And in fact everything is always in shambles. I've always say the students are also affected. Some of these students belong to parent, and sons and daughters of teachers who are also passing through this experience. No cohesion. During the period of strike, nothing like coming together, nothing like team work, nothing like academic exercise, no salary, no comfort; nothing works. Every activity is paralyzed. Teachers those of them who are go getters can be looking outside to see whether they can have something that will help them to make both ends meet. But not all of them; a few who have eyes to do the same. The majority of them who depends on majorly on the salary will be suffering. So like I just said academic work paralyzed. The experiences shared by teachers play very very unpalatable. It's nothing to write home about.

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Whenever there is a strike action evidently you will not see any students in the school. They will remain in their homes. You will only see a few of them. ( I'm referring to like after you all return. ) Now when the strike is called off only few students normally returned in that first week. And the thing affects academic works. With a school of one-thousand students, when a strike is called off its going to take them the next three weeks for them to come back and readjust. That first week you will see maybe two-hundred coming as against one-thousand who is supposed to come. In the next one week the number will increase by one hundred or two hundred. It takes up to three or four weeks for them to resume normal attendance. Academically the strike is affecting them. Because when they resumed the teachers that are hardworking will begin with the few numbers they have seen instead of staying redundant and so on when other resume at their own pace. They will now suffer it academically, because the lesson already taught cannot be revisited. So generally attendance when strike is called off is nothing to write home about. Because a very big adverse effect on both the students and teachers and the entire teaching and learning aspects of education.

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Some of these factors may include the inability to concentrate. If a student is in attentive because of some lapses somewhere some where there will be truancy. He or she will not concentrate. You will see him or her moving from one corner to the other. Anytime a teacher is teaching he or she will not be able to concentrate. Her mind or his mind is somewhere then at times lack of teaching aids. A student need to be shown need to be

shown these things practically. The government supposed to supply these things; since they know that the money that they are giving the teachers is not for the purchase for all these things. So this has effect on the truancy level on the students. It's a very major factor. And again when there are no motivations on the side of the students. I strongly believe that when a student has done very- very well you have to reward, encourage, you have to praise. Praises is not come from the teachers alone, especially when the achievement is an outstanding. If the students are coming from an indigent home, I strongly believe that any wise thinking government should do something and is to help the students continue in that education. But if something of that nature is not given, you see the student becoming wayward because no help, no help. He or she cannot come down walking at the same time given the age. It can bother on child abuse. Hawking groundnut and bread. But some of them don't do this, because of lack of sponsorship. So you see them hawk groundnut, hawk bread after which they will still come back. Whatever is their proceeds they used to settled their debts in school. I am sure that this has a very negative influence on their concentration and eventually truancy will be on the increase. That's the situation. In that area another major factor which I've been able to identify is all of us are teachers, but not all of us are trained. They have undergone the training. But not all of us gifted to teach. So when you just modeled the things without following the procedures. The students may not grasp anything. So you may see them when they are coming in they just stay in their class; who is that and what are they coming to teach us. Some people would take their text books. Whatever there is; what is inside their own text book; they say let me copy the text book now. That is the note he is coming to give us ah I have a text book. They may leave their class and go somewhere. Later they will come has that teacher left, Let me copy that note for my textbook. So all these things is detrimental to influencing or increasing the rate of truancy. There many of them. *(you mentioned about indigent students do you mean that the government has no program or fee reduction or free education for indigent families?)* There is what you call free education at least in the state; but that education is not free. If it is actually free why would they come up with what they call approved levies? It is paid by all or whether you are coming from the richest family or the poorest family no reduction. If it is three thousand, it is three thousand all through. That is it. No special preference. It is the same and the same all over within that state. *The approved levy is it across the state or the school can...?* It is across the state. But the principal can also ask something of their own special interest, but this illegal. When such thing is being added we brand it illegal levy. Example, if you are asked to collect 2,500 and you added 500 naira for not just reason, and without clearance from the authorities that be, such addition is deemed to be illegal addition and so it is called illegal levy. So some principal are not morally upright, normally act.

Some of these strategies include making sure that the students are given assignments. If you see the truant students that are knee deep in truancy, all you need to do is to make sure that every day you give them work to do, to tie them down. And not only given work, when you give work monitor, supervise what they are doing. If you don't supervise that man is not serious. But if you come around and tell them please show me or hand in your assignment they will now know that you are serious. If they failed to do that; well there are many ways of killing a rat. I can give them some man punishment. Here flogging is allowed, though the principal has the sole authority to flog. But the principal will delegate that assignment to teachers on his or her behalf. So we can use flogging, you can tell the person to go and sweep, you can tell the person to fetch water from the borehole, and ask the person to clear the field; cut the grasses and you can tell the person go and call your parents or guidance, so that they will know what you are doing in school. So such things will discontinue truancy. Like other measures also include moral instructions. Telling them the advantages. Telling them the merits and the demerits of truancy. Tell them of those of them that has made it. For this female school, we have \_Okonji Iwuala. If they are playing truancy, they won't have made it. So it just bring those examples and then use those things to pin them down (*Okonji Iwuala who is she?*) *Okonji Iwuala* is the Minister for Finance and Economics in this country. So previous administration has been returning her, many of time right from Obasanjo all through his tenure, Because of? She is good. She is very hard working. Jonathan also came and picked her, she was the director of World Bank. They pulled her out from that World Bank only to make her the minister of finance and Economic planning. Other women of repute you can also quote them, using them as example so that they can follow the exemplary life to become fulfilled girls or students. Moral instruction plays vital role towards curbing truancy.

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I want to let you know that this school is discipline. Unlike what is obtained in other schools. Though truancy is in every school, but here it is on a very low rate because of some of these major I've already outlined which we use to reduced or curbed truancy. So it's not all that much with the school. It really exist in every school, but the rate at which is operating in this school is nothing to write home about.

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The truth is this if actually we don't use sanctions nothing will work. Then you can't be able to curb truancy in Nigeria, in Africa. Over sea they can tell you don't use this, don't use that; I don't know how they are managing there. But here in Nigeria, here in Africa, here in Aba, here in Osisioma sanction works well. Sanctions depend on the level. So I still believe suspension a kind of sanction, inviting the parent and scolding the child they award in their praises is part of it and other punishments that are not injurious to the students' health is part of sanction. So without sanction, I don't think that one can successfully curb truancy. But what we are saying doesn't dehumanize any student. Don't abuse any child in the name of sanction. Let it be done in a way it can be polite, it can actually be a corrective measure.

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 I think I have mentioned some of them. We can kneel them down. Just telling you a real life experience. We can kneel them down for one hour here in the school. When we see them loitering about, when we see them leaving their assignment undone; you can call them and kneel them down for one hour. Some of them can kneel down for two hours. We can flog them. Not only that we can ask them to write letter of apology that they will not do such a thing again. Up to five six pages of long full card sheet. Then you can also, as a punishment I let them go home and bring their parent. They will feel it. If they have been doing those things without the knowledge of their parent or guardian, they now know hey!!! my father; my guardian will kill me today. Such measures have been able to correct them. It has been able to make them to leave or retrace their devilish part ways. So there are lots of measures, I have already pointed it out; moral instructions play a vital role towards curbing truancy. And we do use them on Wednesday. And when it this; it's been around eighty minutes on moral instruction We invite pastors, the so called reverend gentlemen, religious leaders to come and talk to the kids and pray for them. These things have succeeded in curbing truancy. So many at time they will preach on truancy and tell them to be more committed to their studies. So these measures are very, very necessary. *(you all have this events on Wednesdays?)* On Wednesdays yes. By 8:00 o'clock. From 8:00 O'clock to 9:20. In fact at times they use to reduce it; instead of eighty minutes to give it forty minutes. Normal, many of the school is eighty minutes.(moral instructions?) Moral instruction, yes.

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I know that there is a department in this school called guidance and counsel department. Their major work is to counsel the students, they set up some programs, invite some resource persons from outside to talk on some of these juvenile delinquent behaviors. It's part of juvenile delinquency, so they will talk on those things. They have been doing well. So apart from them departments normally plans some programs. The English Departments, they will have debating societies. So some of those departments, some of those clubs was around; I think we have around sixteen clubs here. So they come up with rich programs. So these programs also tailored towards shaping or curbing some of these excesses from the students; of which truancy is one of them.

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I want to tell you it has been very very effective. That is why I told you today that for this school we have low record of truancy. But this school is special; it's unique. I've been trying to effect some students to practice. Some of these programs ground, they have yielded positive results. So we don't have much cases about that. So that why we have recorded a very low rate on that issue, and the programs are actually yielding dividends.

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### **TOS3:**

It will be difficult for the students to learn during the strike action and teachers that venture to teach may be seriously reprimanded for violating the union directives. The purpose of the strike is to agitate against unfair treatment to teachers. To answer your

question, the schools are closed and no learning for students until the strike is called off by the NUT.

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Most of the teachers feel for the students that stay home without any pre arrangement of providing education to them during the strike action. What I do in my little way is to provide my GSM to the students if they have questions regarding their assignments because I provide them with some assignments to be working while the strike action is in effect.

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It affects the student in many ways. Sometimes the students may not return to school, some of them will seek employment to help their families, some of them will join gang to make money through illegal means. Some of them that have parents that can afford private institution will transfer their child to a private school. I believe the strike action has adverse effect on the students.

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The form teachers keep the records of the students. Student's attendance is documented twice on each day in the register. Checking the attendance helps the teacher to monitor the students that fail to return to class after the break period. Why do the form teachers monitor attendance twice a day? They check in the morning and in the afternoon. The afternoon attendance is very important because some of the students will attend classes in the morning, and then leave in the afternoon to hawk on the street or join their friends to engage criminal acts.

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There are couples of factors that can be attributed to students' truancy. One of them is that the government has failed to provide the needed environment that makes learning fun and interesting. When I reflect how the secondary schools were during my time, I feel so much for this generation in the sense that the government have neglected the these poor children and squander people's resources for their selfish political gain. Another factor is lack of gainful employment for the youth. If you travel around this city, you will observe that majority of the youths are school age kids that supposed to be in school. These youth are on the streets because their parents need the money sustain their daily leaving, their young children have no choice than to step up to assist earn additional income to enable them to survive. The next factor is the low morale among the teachers that supposed to teach the children and motivate them to learn. I will tell you that teachers' morale is at all-time low because of how they have been neglected by the government, hence the frequent teachers strike.

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We use different forms of disciplinary measures to deter students that decide to abstain from classes. Some of these strategies include punishment such of grass cutting or flogging for unexcused absents. We also use suspension for habitual truants, but we use it as a last resort. One of the strategies the school uses in addressing truancy is inviting public speakers such as religious leaders to speak to the students. Sometimes we seek the support of invites respectful members in the community or old student of my school to

address the students. We also recruit Nigeria Youth Copers (NYC) to address the students. The Copers speak to the student and try to mentor the youth to be of good behavior for them to succeed in the real world.

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I am not saying this because I teach in this school but since I got transferred to the school, I have seen great progress on the part of the principal and teachers in reducing the rate of truancy in the school. To answer your question, I will rate the school about 90%.

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As I mentioned before, using sanction helps to deter the student from engaging in truancy and other social deviant behaviors. Most of the students I disciplined for abstaining from class have change their ways of truancy to attend school more frequently. I believe in using sanction to correct bad behavior but not in a malicious manner.

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We flog them or send them to the field to cut grass. Sometimes we use kneeling on the floor for about as a form punishing the student for abstaining from class. In some mild truancy behavior, I ask the student to write apology letter in which he will make promise of no more absent from school again without a genuine excuse. These punishments have helped in reducing truancy rate in the school.

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We use the services of the guardian counselor to help counsel the student if we observe any delinquent behavior. The guardian counselor helps in inviting motivational speakers to talk to the students. The students participating skill building program such the Debating Society, Students' Union, and other activities help redirect to some of these students. We also invite the religious leaders to talk to the students. *How effective has the intervention and prevention programs help in reducing students' truancy in your school?* The intervention programs have helped to refocus these students to refrain from their bad ways of behavior. The students enjoy listening to motivational speakers whom the students perceive as their role model. I also believe that involving the parents as an intervention is also helpful. As you and I know, parents have a lot influence on their children. For example, most of my students are afraid of their fathers. They feel that their will render a severe punishment on them if they are reported of abstaining from school without their knowledge. So they don't like me calling their father rather they prefer me calling their mother or older sibling. With that I will end our interview. And I thank you very much for your cooperation. When I finish transcribing the data, I will share the final product with you for your acknowledge.

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**SOS1:**

The activities I do participate in during strike action is reading of novels; those literature we do in school and the non-academic ones that I do buy in the market. I read them to occupy myself and most of the time I do play little games. Like ludo games, But first of all I do take my studies seriously. *Since entering the high school how many days have you been absent from school*

Let me just say I have been absent for not more than five days. I don't miss school. *Think about your response to my previous question. Explain why you were out of school for five days.*

Most of the reason was for the ailment and so forth. Those times I don't miss school, which was when I wasn't feeling ok. I wouldn't be able to cope when I go to school. So my parents would decide it would be better for me to stay at home and get well. It is once that I do stay at home. Since I enter this high institution I have had this thing. Having ailments for a number of things. So each one that is severe that would be the cause of my staying out.

My experiences- I wasn't very-very busy because staying at home is not my habit. I don't normally stay at home. And since we are to be in school but most of the time I do get bored staying at home doing nothing. When I get tired of reading I will just sleep. And that always makes me lazy. I'm supposed to read my books I would feel reluctant about it.

For the past three years I think it is once. My coping mechanism like I said before is reading. Most of the time I do give myself assessment, I do give myself test using past question or the previous examination questions; and I quiz myself. So that's my mechanism. Most of the time our teachers do give us scheme of work and with the scheme work it will enable me to read further ahead.

I use it most of the time because most of the time our Pastors counseled us that we should not let anything affect our studies. Most of the time I do go for church activities and we would be having concert. And during those times I wouldn't like to miss any of them so that would keep me busy since we are no longer go to school. So I would prepare in time and come in time. And also I do call on friends. I visit them. There was a time I was employed with reading alone, so I called up a friend and we arranged to meet and we studied together and interact.

How it does affect my academic performance is that most of the times I do lose interest in some of the of the topic maybe a topic but I don't understand. And because of the strike, I would then lose interest in that topic instead disturbing myself. Those things made me forget the things I learn I have to forget. It affected me not so badly since I do occupy myself with reading. I do good with the internet and seek for more knowledge. So it didn't affect me badly. *What strategies can you use to improve your academic performance?* You touched on it when you answered the strategies I used to improve my academic performance; like I said before is reading, studying, and going for researches. This is the strategies I will use. Most of the time when I am bored; there is a saying that "all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy," So most of the time when I am bore I will still go and entertain myself; like movies and any other games. This is how I improve my academic performance; mainly reading and studying.



**SOS2**

I stay with my guardian and helping them in doing some house activities. Like cleaning up the house, washing plates, running errands for them. *Since entering this school how many days have you been absent from school?* Hmm! I don't normally stay out, absent from school except maybe when I am sick.

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I feel very bad because when you are home you would just be busy working. You would not have the time to read. So it's really a bad time for us. And sometimes you see yourself forgetting the things you even know. *(When you say it is a bad time for you-can you explain why)* Like when you supposed to read your book, you will not have the time to read it. Because you are at home they are expecting you to do everything for them and you wouldn't find it fun and you won't be happy. So it makes very very unhappy during the strike. *(What do you normally do at home that keeps you so occupied?)* I cleaned the house, I sweep the house, I go to market, watch the kids.

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Well. Let me say that sometimes I do read novels and listen to news and read newspaper. Nothing very seriously:

It affected my academic performance because I see myself forgetting what we learned in the school and to others who are very loose; they don't have the kind of parents that good care of them. You would see them being prostitutes and some belonging to, engaging themselves in bad behaviors like following bad friends, stealing and all that, which may lose their future.

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**SOS3**

I engage in teaching, during the period of strike, during the weekend, or days I will be teaching a little boy who is in primary school, mathematics. So being during the time it will also engage my brain in some activities. So my brain will not be dull during the action. *Since entering the high school how many times have you been absent from school?* I've been absent from school for five days. *(Why?)* Because of burial and secondly was my health. I wasn't feeling fine so I went to the hospital for medications.

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It was boring because all the people in our house would be out. Some go work and even the little children will go to school. Why only me would be at home. So I feel quiet being at home.

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I have experienced probably twice. It was a time school was supposed to resume maybe the first week and it resumed in the third week. So during that time I read my textbook and go on research and need to be treated during that time. *How often do you use the intervention program when you are under stress because of the strike action?* I feel frustrated, I use that time to visit some of my friends and also being closer to people who are higher than me; and also church activities during the period of strike.

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It affects my academic performance negatively; meanwhile the topic that needs to be treated that period of time was left. It also makes me sometimes tempting examination malpractice because the topic that was left over I don't have the experience and also I don't have the knowledge. Although I read the text book, but I don't have the clearer knowledge of that topic so it makes me to go seeking for help in the examination which is not right. *What strategies can you use to improve your academic performance?* The strategies I can use is when the strike has been called off I will go straight to my teachers for private lessons the topic they were not able to cover. I will go straight to them and they will teach me. And also coaching, my parents will coach me at home by inviting some teachers who know more than me to teach me. Those are the strategies.

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**SOS4:**

During the strike period, I don't really do much to occupy my time. I play football with friends in the evening time and help my parents sometimes. *Since entering the High School, how many days have you been absent from school?* I know that I was absent two times in December was absent in October and later of September. I will say that I have been absent for about six or seven times. *Thinking about your response to my previous question, explain why you were out of school for 6 or 7 days?* I was late to school in September and October because of the heavy rainfall and the roads were so bad. I could not get Keke Napep to take me to the school. What is Keke Napep? It is the yellow try cycle you see running all over the town. That's a major source of transportation in most towns in Nigeria.

*Are you saying that because of transportation made you not to attend school?* Yes, you can see how the roads are; you can't get a taxi that will bring you to the school when it rains in this town. Another reason that made me to be absent was when the teachers were on strike for a short period during the Ebola disease problem, I was visiting my grandmother in the village and did not the information when school open on time..

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Staying home is very boring; I sleep a lot during the strike period. I hang out with my friends and video games with my mobile phone. I get frustrated staying at home because my father and mother always get angry with me, calling me lazy person for not helping with the house work. I get angry and frustrated when we have to stay home because of the teachers' strike. This is punishing students for doing nothing? Can you explain what you mean? When teachers' go on strike I found it hard to get my interest back on education again, I just hope the teachers and government can find another way of settling their problem without going on strike. *How will you describe the efforts made by the Teachers' Union and the State Government in resolving the strike action?* The teachers come to school every day to teach the students, I think that they deserve to be paid for their work. And the government needs make sure that they set money aside for teachers' salary. I know that the teachers' don't like strike and would like the problem to be resolved so they can start teaching. The government has to pay them so they can teach us well.

I have experienced about three strike actions, and my coping mechanisms was playing video and betting with friends. I make some money betting with other people because I know how to play the games like “fun run” and “air wings.”

*How often do you use the intervention program when under stress because of the strike action?*

The intervention program that my parents encourage me to use is seeing my pastor for prayers. I do that sometimes but not all the time.

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I cannot read without attending school and coming with some assignments because when I have the assignment given by the teachers, I must make sure that the assignment is done. Because I know if I don't do it, I will receive a punishment from the teacher. The strike action affects me because I don't have the motivation to study since I don't know how long the strike will last.

*What strategies can you use to improve your academic performance?* The strategy that has helpful is when I receive the some assignments from the teacher before they go on strike. For example, last time the teachers went to strike for about two months, my class teacher gave a lot assignments to practice with during the strike action. You know they are not obligated to do it, I am lucky that the class teacher is a friend to my parents; he gave me the assignments as a strategy of keeping me occupied so that I will not hang out with my friends that much.

### **Immerson Secondary School**

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#### **PIS1**

As long as the teachers are on strike the students don't normally learn except for some whose parents can decide to put them into part time lessons. That's the only way, but not all the parents, because it has to be a well to do parent that can do that. Otherwise the other ones will remain at home.

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Incidentally the students; what we do normally during that strike action of course we don't have any contact with the students because it is stated that you are not supposed to near the school near the school compound. We don't have any access to the students as of that period. But when the strike action must have been called off that is where we come in to do some extra lessons to make sure we cover up what they are supposed to do. We engaged the students after school so that we will now use more time to teach them. *(When you say that you engage them after school, which compensate you? Is it the government or the parents?)* No-naturally, what happens is this; this government has in the token fees the student paid. There is something they call lesson dues. So that is where we now get our little compensation. Because it is built into that token fees the students pay. But what happen is that instead of the government normally says we would

start it after school and it will take place for two hours. We might now extend it for four hours to make us cover what we lost during the strike action

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It has always has a negative effect on these students because when they have stayed for a long time in the house; when the school resumed there is this sluggish way of coming to school at the initial time; but after sometime now they would pick up. That's has always been our experience. That time that this called off, that first week you may not even see up to fifty percent of the students. But during the second week they keep increasing. The next three, four weeks then everything normalize.

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We have registers where each class has a Form Master. That Form Master is in charge of that particular class. Every morning as he comes to school, he will go to the class and take the roll call of the students. Then he would now mark that register. *(Are the register with you? Do you have it in the office here? Ok, I would like to see it just to review it.) (You mentioned about Form Master; someone mentioned about the subject teacher. What is the difference between the Form Master and the Subject Teacher?)* The Form Master is responsible for taking record of attendance of the students in a particular class; while the Subject Teacher has to do with the subject he or she is teaching. It has nothing to do with taking the record of the attendance of the students. He only goes there when it is his period to teach; he goes there and teach. That becomes the Subject Master. Whereas the Form Master is the person that goes direct with the students knowing who is present and who is absent in that particular class.

What is happening now is that in the school system because of the hardship in the country a lot of things have been influenced. You discover that most majority of the parents are in the rural areas can't buy this book, buying uniforms to send their wards to the school. These are some problems we encounter. Whereas in the urban area the story is a little bit different. Those are the issues we normally experience in the rural area. And of course that also goes to affect the students in term of truancy. Because when they are not in school they always engaged themselves in one device or another in the village. That is the major thing. Because of the difficulty, poverty level, in the rural area; and these students they have the mind to go to school; but they don't have the implement. They would come to school but they don't even have text book. To buy textbooks becomes a problem. To even buy notebook where you copy the lesson that the teacher is delivering at times is tug of war. But when they are in the house they are subjected to all evil forces. That's why during that period most of these students engaged themselves in pilfering. We had a experience after the strike somebody came within that period so so person went into my house and broke something and stole my handset and the rest of them. So those are the influences we normally record. Especially in the rural areas. And of course this idea of smoking has increased in the society because of this truancy. It has increased not only igboh is the worst, now sending many of them mental. So those are the things we see here and affect the youth as far as truancy is concern. *(We are still on the factor that you can identify. Do you have any other factor that you can identify regarding that influences youth engaging in truancy?)*

One other thing we have experience here is the arrival of this G.S.M. has also impacted negatively in a way to these students. Like what I have observed here I have made it clear to come to school with handset. Because most of them come with pornographic; like my teacher got one of them assembling some girls somewhere showing them this pornographic something. So we have stopped that. The effect of GSM has also help in affecting these children. And in most cases we discover that while we are here some of them would move to the village because of the handset and pornographic something. Going over to the village to practice this thing. We discover and made it a point of duty because I called a meeting of the committee telling them from that day onward no students is supposed to come to school with a handset. If he comes it will be seized and they give me that mandate to go ahead. So since that time has subsided a bit.

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What we have done effectively is to make sure that the classes do their work very well. No class is left without any teacher; unattended. And of course every other teacher makes sure to have six periods in a day. You must cover those six periods. That has helped us to minimize the truancy. That is one. Two: We have also engaged them like every Friday now we do what we call social gathering on Friday. So that has given us a lot of successful results. I hear they would dress very well. We do drama, we do quiz. So on Friday everybody will be rushing to be here because that type of thing will take place. At times we will bring in music instrument. We would dance and we want to choose the best dancer and the best well behave. So this has helped us bring them in. Truancy has been reduced relatively as a result of this introduction of this social gathering. And of course we have also introduced football something. Incidentally, one of my students was among the Nigerian students that participated in South Africa because of this football and we came third in the whole state in Karibojigwe Football competition. So since that time every other person has embraced football. It has also helps us to cut off truancy among them.

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Ours has been relatively curtailed because of all these measures we have put in place; social gathering, football activities and the rest of them. And of course, since I came on board we've made compulsory, our result has been very very good since I came on board and that has, you know help to make us increase the rating and of course you can see that the time we had an award kind of in Okpuala Ngwa the local government quarters for one of the best behave school. Because my students are never seen much along the road during school hours. We had the neighboring school there; two of their students were killed during school hours because of truancy. So because of that they are now using us as an example and look at NSGS the students are always there that why that accident did not happen to them, why is it in other place, why is it so? We have had an edge over contemporaries because of these measures we are putting in place.

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The sanctions we bring in here are very minor sanctions. Maybe by the time we catch you, you are not in school, or during school hours you stray toward that place we would now give you some grass cutting or minor flogging. And that has helped to restrict their

moving out after school hours, and that what we use to do. And we have made it compulsory that as long as you are coming in here you must obey our rules and our major rule is against truancy. If you don't want to come to school, you dare not come, stay at home. But as soon as you decided to come you will be here from 8:00 – 2:00. That's our rule here.

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We do flog, we do give corporal of punishment, go to the field and cut the grass. We flogged and it depends on the level of truancy. If we catch you in the village then we might give you a portion of the field to cut. But if we catch you around that our street we might give you some flogging; one or two strokes. That's what we do. But in the village it becomes more severe.

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Those interventions; we have also brought in a kind of prize. Now, at the end of the term, the student that was not seen outside throughout the term we normally give them some little gift. Maybe buy a textbook and give them as prize or as an incentive since you were here all through the term take this so that the next term others will now aim to get the same thing. That's what we have introduced. And of course the community also came up telling us that if we recommend the best well behaved student that are going to give them scholarship. That's what came in now during this session. So we are now compiling our records, so that by the end of the session we would now give the Ntigha community one or two students who behave very well in terms of this truancy that person will now get scholarship. (What about bring the spiritual pastor how to talk to the students) Exactly, like last week a Copper something-something came here. Last week when it was the exam they were here; they came and preached. They talked to the students and it was wonderful. After talking to them, the Coppers came around telling them what you are now, we have been and if you did not behave well we will not have been where we are now. So you better begin now to behave well and do the thing and they were collaborating these things with the quotations in the bible. It has done a lot for us. Thank you for that remembrance, because is one of...; like today the other people was to come, but they call me and would come next week. Another Cooper, the same fellowship will be coming next week to check on the students.

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I have told you that ever since we introduced this social gathering and the reward system the rate has dropped drastically. I think we have eliminated it because we hardly record any truancy in the school because everybody is rushing; they say "I'm going to get scholarship hoping "I would be the person". On Friday you need to come here; everybody is coming to show case. So that has helped us a lot.

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#### **TIS1:**

Now when the teachers are on strike for a long period; before a strike action each teacher, each team use to give the class a scheme of work for the term. So when the teachers are on strike it is expected that the students will go ahead to make use of the scheme of work; read the prepared lessons, and read ahead of the teachers. Especially, those from educated

homes. (*when you say those from educated homes, what about students from indigent families, how do they cope?*) Yes- that times the percentage is very-very low because those from indigent families the parents do not know the need for them to read during the strike action. And that is the reason why when that strike action is being called off the teachers find it very difficult with such a students. (*when you said find it difficult, can you explain*) What I mean is this; because of long strike action, some of the things has been forgotten, that's what I mean.

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One- something like peer group, unemployment; illiteracy. Let me take them one after the other. In peer group. When I mean the first one, unemployment; “an idle mind is the devil's workshop”. If you don't have something to do the devil tell you what to do. Instead of you to think positively we start thinking negatively, because there is nothing tangible at what we are doing, But if you are occupy you won't have this thing to think negatively. There is something in front, there is something at speck you are doing. So you won't look for one thing or the other. There will be no truancy. That is one. Another one is peer group: An adage says, tell me who is your friend let me tell you whom you are. Another one says “birds of the same feather flocks together.” So if you are keeping a bad company, definitely if you cannot convince that person, that person will convince you. You can see a good student, a good you today that is moving with a bad one, the next two or three day you see the second one maybe smoking drugs or smoking Indian helm or all the rest. That's influence of peer group. Another one is- ok- there is a factor quick test for money. Youth of nowadays there interest is based on money. None of them is willing to go to school, even finish their education. Half of them are dropped out. Even you won't even see some of them going for apprenticeship, skill acquisition. What they want Okada. They want anything that will give them money immediately. If they don't have it you see them either taking drugs, stealing. That is high bid for money. It's another factor. (thank you very much)

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For addressing truancy in my school- for example there is a type of offense. It depends on the type of offense or truancy the student committed. That determines the solution that will be given to it. For example if a student fought a teacher he or she will be sent home to come back with their parents. There is something a student can do. You give him or her grass cutting. There is something a student can do; you warn him or her, orally, oral warning. That one is the first one, orally. You handle them gently first before punishment to make sure you will get that change in them. (*I want you to relate it to truancy because when you have student engaging in truancy, being absent from school, how do you address the issue?*) Ok-if somebody is absent from school for a long time; first of all you will be asking what is wrong with the person. Every day you are taking attendance you will asked “is there anybody from his or her side here?” “do you know anything about him or her?” One person may say I know him or I know her. I'd say what is wrong? In the evening go to their house tell him or her that auntie is asking for him. What is wrong with him? Report the next day what is wrong. Then the next day that person will report, you know what is happening and what you will do. If it is sickness by the time the person recovered you will encourage that person that he or she will cope with everything. And if

it means going back to his place to explain certain things privately to him or her you can do that so that the person can cope up since It is something like illness. But if it is something like some of these people that are not use to coming to school every day; they can come today, the next day, they will go to Ajaiyi; they will go to do one thing or another. You see that those ones are not serious. There is a way sometimes we do send home to bring their parents, or we put down a letter with the school letter headed paper, give to the student or somebody that know their parent; inviting the parent to this school to ascertain or to know if the parents are aware that this child is not coming to school. The two heads will be put together to know how to correct that particular child. Because if the school is correcting and the parents are doing anything, it will be difficult for that correction to take place.

If I am rating our own school now the truancy record here is very very low, very small because of some of the strategies we are using. Like here if you are absent from school today you will be aware that your Form Teacher has ask of you today. The next morning you will be the first person to be called and nobody would like to come to the staff room where all the teachers are. All the students will be scared. So if I am rating I would say that the truancy here is very, very low.

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Sanction like correcting truancy in schools. It helps a lot, because if sanctions are not use you see these students they will go ahead; but in schools we use sanctions to correct them in a mild form depending on the offense or the type of truancy that is involved. It might be apology letter, it might be orally that say I am sorry; it can be written, or you can even say please will you kneel down there for a few minutes. The person would be released. Everybody “ah-why are you doing this.” The whole class say shame to him. Nobody would like to do that. So it’s one of those things we are using.

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Frequent record of truancy...If it is-with the word frequency; frequent record it means that it happens always and maybe the school have tried to correct that person one way or the other; the next thing is to report him to the board; The zonal because any action taken must be backed by the Zonal Board and the SEMB (Secondary Education Management Board). If it involves expelling the child it is the Secondary Education Management Board that will give that order to the principal to expel that child. That is how it is being done. Especially, for the one that the truancy is frequent instead of corrupting others that person can be reported to the board.

To fight truancy and youth delinquency; we have one guidance and counseling (do you have it on site in this school?) We have a counselor here; because some of these students they don’t know the implication of what they are doing. But when they are being counseled, you see some of them; they would be coming from those things that they don’t know. The won’t even indulge in them. So we use guidance and counselor as one of the ways in correcting them. Two: Make sure that they are engaged we make sure that they are engaged. Make sure that they are engaged in the school, home. Give them assignments as they are going so that when they move back home they have something to occupy



them. That is another one. Again is we also have social gathering. Here we use to do it every Friday. The social gathering starts from 12:00 – 1:50. That is another way of teaching by the students. May be thru acting of drama, cinema, all these things. Those things you know that you will use to correct the truancy in students. You make sure that they are the key things that they will be acted on during the social gathering to correct them.

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In reducing truancy? It has helped us a lot. For example, a girl in SS1 stayed out of school for more than two weeks living with a boy. When she came to school that day I called her and say aah that you have been absent and everybody have been reporting about you that you are absent. We have sent words across to your parents, this and that; what happened? Then that girl; I reduced myself to her level as if we are friends, as if we are mates. At the end she opened up; she had not even open up to her parents. So that day I told that girl. I counseled that girl, informed her of the consequences of what she is doing. And if care is not taking she is ruining her life. Do you know at the end that girl begged me to even come and live with me. There was a very big change. Some of them are entering into what they don't know due to lack of knowledge. All these strategies we have been using; this counseling; oral this thing; education. I have gone a great way in correcting truancy.

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**TIS2:**

When the teachers are on strike most of the students don't learn. At times some conscientious teachers they give them the scheme of work. Those who are interested, those who are willing. At times we give them the scheme of work and those of them are willing will study and when they come back to school it becomes easier for the teachers to continue. But at times most of them don't. You see them doing one thing or the other. So when they are on strike most of them don't learn. *Can you share your experience of strike action? The one that you have experience.* There are so many of them. I have experienced up to five strikes. And with these strikes most of them is because we are not paid; or because of one thing or the other. When the strike is on we come to school and most of us you see us engaging in one work or the other. Some will either do trading. So when the strike is on it's really a very big problem on us. *(during the strike action you mentioned, related to nonpayment of wages. How long, in terms of months without getting pay?)* At times it can be three months, it can be four months. *(Without any pay)* even right now. *(even right now?)* They paid us last in August. *(Last in August?)* Yes. *(during the period how do you survive?)* By engaging in petty trading. That's why you see most of the teaching selling pure water. Outside if you go to junction you see some of them selling pure water. We open up stores. That is why you see them most of the time opening stores or just engaging in one work or the other so they will survive.

In the beginning I told you that those are willing to study; during this time we either call them in our homes or give them our scheme of work to study. At times we teach them secretly. For myself I had a student who was very, very brilliant. And during that time she was not happy. So most of the time she would come to me and start pestering me; auntie

won't you teach me this; won't you help me do this. She even writes her essays and bring to me to mark. So this time we try to encourage those ones that are interesting; but those are not interesting we leave them because there is nothing we can do.

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It affects them very much. It really affects their attendance. Most of the time the strike is so long. It affects the attendance of the student in that when the strike action is so long you see them engaging in one thing or the other. Some of them would be doing this manual job, so many of them. So when they see the test of this money it's difficult for them to come back to continue. Some of them we chase them to their homes, they will not come.

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We have our registers. We keep the attendance of the students in our registers. It marked two times daily; in the morning and in the afternoon. That's how we do it. (*So who keep the register?*) The Form Mistress. (*Do you have any with you?*) No, I don't have any.

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There are so many things that can make them to be truants. One is this problem of; this strike can cause them to be truants. Because when the school is not on you see them going from one job to another. And when they see this money; like yesterday was market most of them did not come to school because they are wilbarrow pushers. As they continue to push wilbarrow to collect money. It becomes difficult for them to continue. So the influence of money tries a lot to make them not to; it influences them. (What other factors?) Lack of teachers, lack of teachers. We don't have enough teachers. This school is supposed to have up to thirty teachers and here we have about sixteen. Now with this sixteen we teach sixteen subject or more than that. So when there are no teachers to help these students, when I am in this class, the other class will continue to disturb. So it will cause truancy. Another thing is lack of equipment for the job. We don't have enough textbooks and there is no way they can learn. And the parents are poor. It is difficult for them to buy textbooks. They don't have textbooks for literature they don't have for social studies. They don't have any. So that is why even when you are doing reading or comprehension you have to write it on the board before they can read it. If you ask them to go out from there they wouldn't come back. And if teachers punish them for not bringing in of this textbook they will stay back; they won't come again. So is a very big problem.

One of the things we do to check truancy in our school is the teachers must be here earlier than the students. So that you know the number that comes to school and then how they would live. We have bushes around and when they are late you see them jumping into the bush in order to stop being punish. Because of that teachers come early and they stand at a strategic point so when they come in they don't go out. (*So it means that the school doesn't have any fence?*) We doesn't have any fence. So it means every day the teacher on duty must be here earlier to make sure that they stand at the strategic point, controls the student that comes in and number them. We don't allow students to go out during break. They must be here until school is over. That is why we have vendors, sell them biscuits and we engaged them in assignments. That's another way. And like giving them assignment like writing and essay, or telling a story or something like that. Others need

work. They will be engaged in doing one of the works (*That's for the female student?*) In physical education, they will engage in playing ball.

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In our school here at times we give suspension, and we give them punishment like cutting grasses. At times you can ask them to write something. You can ask them to write a page of something. Buy an exercise book ask them to continue writing until they fill that book. So when you give them that will make them sit, and they cannot leave until they finish it. (*How do you see suspension compare to grass cutting?*) Grass cutting depends on the level of truancy. So if a child comes from home and then every day he or she will not get to the school compound something is wrong. So the parents may not know because parents don't know when they leave the houses, maybe because they are on their own business. So we notice that two or three times. We either invite the parents and tell the parents what the child is doing. If that child continues we suspend him.

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Just as I have said before we give them punishment to check it. At times we invite their parents. (*I am looking for intervention programs*) At times we call people outside to speak to them. At times we invite the Pastors and resource persons to come here and speak to them. Like the other day the Coppers came here and did something very good for them. So when they watch these students they know that they were one day just like them and then that can help them change. (*The Coppers being. Can you explain?*) Ok- the Coppers came here; there were about twelve. So that day they speak to the students; they give them assignments, they give them quiz, and impromptu speech. They were doing all those things in order to check truancy. And then we made a composite that every student must be here. We give them number, so that if we call your number and you are not here that means you did not come. So that's the intervention we had to make sure we check their truancy. Now based on all these strategies how effective has intervention and prevention help in reducing students truancy? Yes, it has really help to reduce it. At least that of the Coppers. When they came and saw what the Coppers did some of them knew that one day they will be like the Copper. So we try to curtail them going out and coming in. As an experience teacher (*I am just asking a follow question*) what do you think is the causes of this strike action? Strike action: One of them is lack of payment-salary, no equipment. And we use teaching aid when teaching. It's the one the teacher provide; improvise one. So when these things are not properly available, you know there is no way we teach very well. So (*that's a follow up question*) (*You talk about the teachers' salary*) Teachers are not paid as of when due. They don't have enough text books and other equipment necessary for learning. Like if somebody is teaching English language, that person is to have tape recorder. So if the teacher don't have it, unless you provide it and you don't have money to provide it; don't you see that that aspect of teaching would lack; because there are no equipment. So lack of equipment also cause strike. But the major thing that causes it is salary. If you placed the teacher on the right salary the teacher will work. Now when you are not paid, and when you are paid you are not paid what you are supposed to receive.

**TIS3:**

Usually some students go on a summary classes. Summary classes are organized in some places where the students go to have some lessons. Others also read on their own. So they have they have to make time for themselves to go; and then they read on their own. Some go to the computer centers and to browse using the internet. Some of them that are computer literate, so they go to the computer centers and use the internet and get some ideas. While other embarked on group discussions where they discussed past question papers. Sometimes to go with past question papers and discussed them. These are some of the things.

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Usually some teachers may not do anything because strike is as a result of nonpayment of their wages, salaries and some allowances. So in effect they don't feel happy to come back to their students. In fact that is what we usually observed here. Once there is strike the teachers would desert their students and go to their respective homes. (*You said it's a lack of wages?*) Nonpayment of wages and salaries. Like as we are talking here now we are owed for three months. (*for three months?*) As we are talking here we have not been paid September salary. So it is easy for us to go on strike now. If we go on strike you don't expect us to come to the students. Because strike is protesting; protesting that you are not happy with the way you are treated. So you can't go again gathering the students and begin to teach them. It's not possible.

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Once there is a strike action the students; some of them would feel happy especially those of them that are not much interested in learning. Some of them would find their ways. Some would go to selling pure water; they will become street traders. You see them in the park and some other places where they embark on mini trading activity or the other. So you hardly see them back in the school, or see them going to a summary class, and so on and so forth. In most cases most of them would desert their class. Even when the strike action would be over some of them may not return on time because they would be feeling they still have some time to waste. Some students want idle time. Because even at the normal school period when there is no strike you see some of them not coming to school; talk less of when there is strike. When there is strike they see it as an opportunity to make some money in some of their mini *businesses*. *That's the situation*.

A lot of them. One of them would be this social media. Now people interact with the internet. You see them at time abandoning their classes to go to look for internet; especially the pornographic sites which interest the students; the youth most. So sometime they abandoned their classed. Even when they tell their parents that they are going to class, you may see them going to some of these videos clubs, computer centers, internet centers, and maybe where they can be exposed to pornographic displays, and so on. Sometimes too, some of them go to their friends. Some of them would keep boyfriends and girlfriends. And sometimes they abandoned their class and go to their boyfriend. And even this handset, the GSM something; sometimes they use them to play their music. They would go to their friends with the handset and play music and watch pornographic films, and so

on. At the end of the day you would not see them in the schools. (*What other factors can you identify beside the GSM and the pornographic?*) Well, too, ineffectiveness of the school system. Because in some, as we are talking here now there are some subjects without teachers. Especially in the areas of Science, Physics, Chemistry, mathematics. In some schools they don't have the teachers. And incidentally for some time now our state have not been employing teachers, even when some may go on retirement, and so on. New ones may not come. Like here presently, most teachers were retired some months ago, and as we are talking here now we don't have Math teacher. (You don't have math teacher?) Yes-we only make improvise through the PTA arrangements. We engaged someone on part time. So that is the case. It is also the case in some other schools. (*Who pays this one on part-time? Is it the governor?*) It's the PTA. The token the PTA could raise could be used to engaged the person on part time basis. So this is also the situation in some other places. It's a problem.

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We have a lot of strategies. One as soon as it is 8:00 we are not expecting any students to leave the gate. If you are caught you will be in trouble. A punishment will be given to you. Either you will be ask to cut the field or do some other manual labor, and so on. And two we will make sure that the time table is followed. We insist that teacher will go to their classes and teach regularly. And if you see that others are in the class studying, you have no option. So we will always insist to ensure that the time table is followed and the classes are busy. We don't give opportunity for students to roam about. We don't do that. So class is always effective. Then we also give punishment when we see you outside. ( I will get to that I think in question 8 or question nine when we talk about the punishment.)

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Truancy it has to be discouraged. We use some measures like I have stated. Truancy is an air wind. It blows no one good. Because one: if a child is not coming to the class he may not be studying and at the end of the day if he fails the exam; it will be assumed that the teacher is not performing. So that's why it's an air wind. So no teachers should encourage any child to be moving about unnecessarily. Even to parents; result is an indicator that maybe the school system is effective. So if at the end of the day if a child fails the exam the parents may feel that either that school is not serious, or that something is wrong along the line. So because of that you would not encourage truancy. No school will encourage truancy.

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### **SIS1:**

During these practices for these long vacation of the strike by the government to the teachers, so when staying at home I do read for some times and sometimes I do play, because it is said that "all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy". So when we play we make sure that after playing we go back to read and study harder. Because whenever we stay without doing something from the book we use to find it difficult when we go back to the school. So we have to read harder in order to encroach on what to do.

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I have experienced up to three strikes since the last three years. And in this we use to withdraw back a little because when we are out of school sometimes we use to lack some of the things that we have to acquire from our teachers most of the time. So for that three times I know that I have somehow run back from my academic works. (*the other question that I would like you to ask what are your strategies, what are your coping mechanism when you are going through strike; what are your strategies to reduce the stress level*) To reduce the stress level we can now try on how to call on our fellow students to ask them on how they are managing the strike because I know it should be managed because it is not comfortable at all.

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It affects us so much because when we don't read for some time, like I said before, we use to withdraw and we don't catch up as we should do whenever we are in school; because when we are not regular in a class and we have something to do at home we do not have the time to read. When we come back to school we use to find it difficult to coping.

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## SIS2

*What activities do you participate in to occupy your time for protracted strike action?* The last time that they had strike for example during the Ebola outbreak, we had holiday lessons before the Federal Government say that they should stop any gathering of the students. So my father enrolled me in a computer center at SS computer. So I stayed there and learn some programs before the school re-opened and then I started this school. I resumed.

When I suppose to be in school and I'm home I don't feel happy because I should be in school learning. But to find myself at home makes me angry because; maybe if it's only government school that has the strike, my mates who are in private school will be attending school, and then I will be left at home. I don't feel happy about it. (*You don't feel happy about it?*) No. *How would you describe the efforts made by the Teachers Union and the State Government in resolving the strike action?* The efforts that they made, I think I appreciate it because most of the time I think the strike might be extended. But because of the efforts of government and the teachers it will not stay too long. So that we are able to come back to school and continue our academic activities.

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When I was in JS3 they had a strike action. So my; that was when I wanted to take my Junior WAEC examination. So my father wanted to enroll me in another private school, so that whenever they called of the strike I will return to this school. (*So what are your coping mechanism during the time? What do you do to reduce the stress level that you are undergoing for the long strike action? What do you normally do to occupy your time?*) Yes, we have an extra moral lesson center in a neighboring village. Though the lesson is free. So I do attend it when we are on holidays or the teachers are on strike to keep myself busy.

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The strike action affects my academic performance in the sense that when they are on strike, when they come back to school, they will find it somehow to cover our scheme. So

they would be rushing it to be able to help us cover our scheme so that we will not slack in anyway during our exam. So the strike action seriously affects our academic performance because those subjects that we should learn are a rush for us. We will not find it easy to be able to grasp everything that is involved. (*Do you think that the teachers do anything to help during the period?*) Yes, they engaged us in extra-moral lessons. (The teachers?) Yes. (*Is the extra-moral lessons free or do you pay for it?*) I think we pay for it when we pay for our school fees. We don't pay separately for it.

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**SIS3:**

1. *What activities do you participate to occupy your time for protracted strike action?*

I participate in lot activities such as visiting friends, going to video stores to watch movies. I read sometimes but no too often what type of movies do you watch? Movies like Tom Cruise and some adult movies. How much time do you spend reading during the strike period? I don't read that much because of lack of motivation.

*Since entering the High School, how many days have you been absent from school? I have absent for about six times. Thinking about your response to my previous question, explain why you were out of school for 6 days?* I was absent because of not paying my school levy, sometime I don't feel like attending school because my teacher's gets angry with me too often. Why? I know a teacher complaining that she has not been paid and don't want to be bothered by any student. What was your reaction then? Well, I did not say anything because I understand how she feels, like after working not getting paid.

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Our teachers try to teach us when they get paid and they feel happy teach the students, but I know the reason some of them get angry is because they have not been paid for months. Some of them do trading and other things to survive and feed their families. I also know that the government try to pay the teachers, may be the money is not there to pay them. But I blame the government so much because they supposed to make sure that the teachers get paid every month.

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The strike action affects my performance because during the strike I don't have the urge to study. Anytime I pick up my book or handouts given to me by my teacher, I feel like sleeping. Why feeling like sleeping? Because...because... I lack the motivation; I ask myself all the time if I will make it going further in education. Can you explain? You see how often the teachers go on strike and when they go strike we don't learn anything. Sometimes, my parents have no money to meet my school expenses. *What strategies can you use to improve your academic performance?* The strategy I use is to study with my friends and go to my teachers for help. I will also study harder on my own to help me pass my WAEC.